



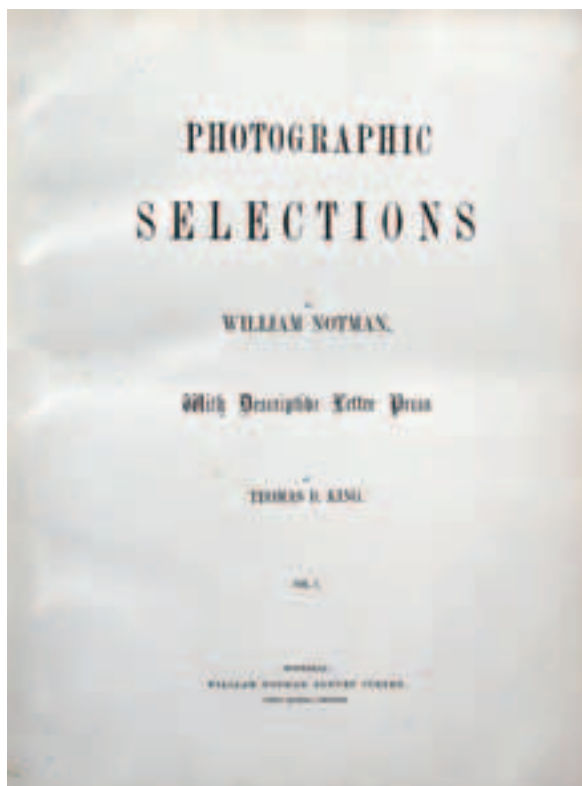
Detail, Thomas Faed, *From Dawn to Sunset*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

William Notman's *Photographic Selections* (1863)

LOREN LERNER

Over the years I have researched various portrait photographs by William Notman (1826–1891) held by the Notman Photographic Archives at the McCord Museum of Canadian History.¹ This led to an enquiry into his publishing ventures and the marketing of photography. The first of his four publications was *Photographic Selections* (Fig. 1), a portfolio published by the Montreal printer John Lovell in 1863 for approximately 360 subscribers. It was also the first art history book printed in Canada. The selection of forty-seven plates included two of his own landscape images, *Fort Chambly, near Montreal, QC, 1863* (Fig. 2) and *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains* (Fig. 3),² as well as ten photographic copies of engravings after Renaissance and Baroque paintings and twenty-seven photographs of pictures by contemporary British, French and American artists, some of which came from local collectors.³ The remaining eight images of recent British and North American paintings in Montreal collections were originally photographed by Notman.

The arrangement of the forty-six by thirty-six centimetre loose leaf portfolio was typical of the time: the albumen print is mounted on the recto side; on the facing verso, a short text ranging from a paragraph to one page in length provides a context for the image. Although Notman undoubtedly had a strong influence on the ideas and content of the text, its author was British-born Thomas Davies King (1819–1884), a Montreal connoisseur of prints, antiquities, and rare books, who probably also supplied some of the engravings to be copied for the book.⁴ King introduces the artist and describes the original work, including its location and how it relates to other works of a similar convention or style. When the photograph is of an engraving, the engraver's name is given alongside glowing comments about his artistry in capturing the painting. Other comments emphasize the excellent quality of the photograph, which is defined by Notman's ability to faithfully reproduce the subject: "Those who saw the picture will exclaim, what a faithful translation! It shows the adaptability of photography to render with great exactitude, not only the painter's idea, but also his very touch, or method of handling."



1 | Title Page, William Notman and Thomas D. King, *Photographic Selections* by William Notman, with *Descriptive Letter Press* by Thomas D. King (Montreal: John Lovell, Printer, 1863). (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Although King does not name Notman as the artist of the two photographs taken “From Nature,” he defines the pictures as works of art. He praises *Fort Chambly* for “its beauty as a composition,” noting that “the picture is much assisted by the cattle which figure in the composition.” Concerning *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains*, he writes:

If any artist who is in the habit of composing his pictures, would but take the first copse he meets with, and would carefully study and paint its trees, with their wreathed branches, “robed in their proud prosperity of leaves,” and its thick leafy foreground of tangled creepers, he would be more satisfied with the picture than the best and most elaborate he ever invented. This granted, will be reason sufficient for the selection of this bit of road scenery – photographed from nature, it will be refreshing to all true lovers of landscape painting, and specially those acquainted with the works of Creswick, Hunt and Linnell – artists who are not content to compose and imagine, but who do draw from nature, and try for nature – nature in her liberty – and who feel with Wordsworth that “Nature never did betray ... is full of blessings.”



2 | William Notman, *Fort Chambly, near Montreal, QC, 1863*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

These sentences establish Notman as an artist who knows what to photograph and how to photograph it, so that the image resonates with the sensations of a landscape painting. At the same time King confirms Notman's knowledge of art history and his familiarity with landscape painters of the period.

In the January 1865 edition, the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* proudly announced that *Photographic Selections* by William Notman, published two years earlier, was:

a work that would be a credit to any London publisher. It is a reproduction of many choice engravings and paintings by means of photography, and perhaps has thus given to the art its most important function. There has never been a work published in Canada better calculated to cultivate and elevate the taste in art; because it has put within the reach of the many, faithful translations of the works of the best masters, ancient and modern. In no way can photography take a form so useful to the community, so useful to the many who have never seen and may never have the opportunity of seeing European



3 | William Notman, *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains*, in *Photographic Selections*.
(Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Galleries, as by allowing the pictures to reach them in the form of a photograph; it secures the thought of the artist, and enables art to go hand in hand with literature, the cheap pictures thus keeping pace with the cheap newspaper and cheap book.⁵

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, to a father who manufactured Paisley shawls and was a commission agent for wholesale woolen cloth, Notman was raised in a home that valued the arts. As a young man he had trained in painting and drawing and learned how to take photographs using the daguerreotype process. He entered the family business where he worked as a salesman and junior partner, but when the company slid into bankruptcy he immigrated to Lower Canada, arriving in 1856. As a Scotsman, Notman felt at home in Montreal where his countrymen were a prominent force. They led the wave of British immigrants who sought a better life in a new land and by 1861 the Montreal census records that 3,235 out of a population of 50,000 living in Montreal were natives of Scotland.⁶ Although they made up only a small part of the citizenry, these skilled labourers, artisans, carpenters, tailors, bookkeepers, and large numbers of business and professional people including many teachers and clergymen, had an impact far beyond their numbers. Montreal Scots were instrumental in the building of the Lachine Canal, and were leaders in the rapid industrialization that began in the late 1840s, heading companies such as the ICR (Intercontinental Railway) and the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) that linked Canada from East to West. They also founded McGill University and dozens of other institutions and associations, including the Montreal General and Royal Victoria hospitals, the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, the Beaver Club and the Black Watch of Canada.⁷ A cross-section of Montreal's intellectual, commercial and cultural elite, many became Notman's clients: Sir George Alexander Drummond (1829–1910), director of the Bank of Montreal; Sir Hugh Allan (1810–1882), shipping magnate, railway promoter and financier; William Watson Ogilvie (1835–1900), owner of Royal Mill, the largest milling company in the dominion; and John William Dawson (1855–1893), geologist and principal of McGill University.

Recognizing the potential that lay in the wealth and education of Montreal's middle class, Notman established his photographic studio at No. 11 Bleury Steet in late December 1856.⁸ In 1860, Notman along with Thomas King and other influential Montrealers formed the Art Association of Montreal.⁹ Its stated purpose was “the encouragement of the Fine Arts by means of the establishment and maintenance, in so far as may be found practicable of a Gallery or Galleries of Art, and the establishment of a School of Design in the City of Montreal” as well as a “Museum, Library, Reading Room or other subsidiary undertaken of the like description.” The first order of business of the Association was to organize an exposition of mainly European paintings from Montreal private collections for the visit of the Prince of Wales, who had recently announced a tour through British America for the following August.¹⁰ Presented in the newly-built Crystal Palace in

downtown Montreal constructed in the Prince's honour, the exhibition was held in conjunction with industrial, manufacturing, scientific and agricultural displays and was considered a major success. For Notman it was also a professional achievement as his photographs of the Victoria Bridge were awarded a medal. Strategically, when he produced *Photographic Selections* three years later, Notman included two of his landscape photographs in the collection. Thus, the publication advertised both his professional work and the artistic possibilities inherent in photography.

The reproductions were unbound, allowing the book owners to remove the prints and frame them, an appealing option at a time when prints often decorated the walls of middle-class homes. The images could also be kept in portfolio form and, as part of the home library, serve to educate children and entertain guests.

The introduction to *Photographic Selections* defines the intentions of the publication: "In order to foster the increasing growing taste for works of art in Canada, and to meet a demand which cannot otherwise be generally supplied, consequent upon the scarcity in these provinces of choice original works of art, or even of proof engravings by the old or modern masters, the 'Photographic Selections' are published." Thus Notman positions himself as both a manufacturer of a new line of products and someone who knows about art. He and his collaborator King attempt to convey their authority "to foster the increasing growing taste for works of art in Canada" by virtue of considerable knowledge about "choice original works of art, or even of proof engravings by the old or modern masters." This statement also implies that Notman can easily respond to a "demand which cannot otherwise be generally supplied" because of his expertise as a photographer.

A review of the prints in *Photographic Selections* suggests that there is nothing unusual in the choices. Artists such as Rembrandt, Gerard Douw, Guido Reni, and others who were represented in Notman's book, were also among the examples of Old Master Dutch, Flemish, and Italian engravings and lithographs of paintings purchased by the Reverend Egerton Ryerson, Canada West's Chief Superintendent of Education on his tour of Europe, for the Educational Museum in Toronto opened in 1857.¹¹ Also familiar was Notman's selection of contemporary British religious art. For example, William Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* was a bestselling print found in numerous middle-class parlours because it responded to the religious sentimentalism and iconography of Victorian painting so popular during this era.¹² Genre paintings full of didactic meaning and moralizing content were also typical of this period, exemplified by Notman's choice of *The Golden Wedding* by Ludwig Knaus, *Wedding Procession at Alsace* by Gustave Brion, *The Invalid Soldier at Home* by Joseph Noel Paton and *Derby Day* by William



4 | Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Titian's Schoolmaster*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Powell Frith. As well, the growing market of this consumer culture for landscapes and country scenes was also evident in *Photographic Selections*.¹³ Four landscape paintings by English artists were found in Montreal private collections and three were by Montreal artists John Arthur Fraser (1838–1898), Robert Stuart Duncanson (1817–1872), and Charles Jones Way (1834–1919).

Photographic Selections also includes three portraits: *Shakspeare* (Shakespeare) by Jacobus Houbraken, *Tennyson* by George Frederick Watts, and *Titian's Schoolmaster* by Giovanni Battista Moroni (Fig. 4). Again, this was a response to the conventions of the era. With people newly enthusiastic about having their portrait taken and convinced that phrenology could be used to analyze the faces of individuals, portraiture had once again become



5 | Joseph Noel Paton, *The Invalid Soldier at Home*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

a cultural phenomenon.¹⁴ The inclusion of such images is also an obvious expression of Notman's self-interest as a portrait photographer.

Furthermore, it is not a coincidence that the critic and thinker John Ruskin admired many of the artists in *Photographic Selections*. Ruskin had published the first volume of *Modern Painters* in 1843, followed by four more volumes over the next sixteen years.¹⁵ Thomas King's text on Paton's *The Invalid Soldier at Home* invokes Ruskin's combination of praise and



6 | Frederic Edwin Church, *The Heart of the Andes*, in *Photographic Selections*.
(Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

disapproval: “the drawing is almost faultless and beyond criticism, although the colouring had some sweeping censures bestowed upon it, foremost amongst them was Ruskin’s” (Fig. 5).¹⁶ In his description of *Mercury and Argus* by J.M.W. Turner, King confirms that he has read the first volume of *Modern Painters* in its entirety when he notes that Ruskin “has eight distinct references to the ‘Mercury and Argus’, citing it as a glorious example of cloud-painting; as shewing the fullness and spirit of repose pervading it.” Other choices in *Photographic Selections* can also be connected to Ruskin’s critical approval; for example, Frederic Church’s reputation was enhanced when his *Heart of the Andes*, which was shown in London in 1859 before being engraved for wide distribution, caught Ruskin’s attention (Fig. 6).¹⁷ *Sunday in the Backwoods* by Thomas Faed, exhibited that same year, also received a somewhat favourable review from the British critic (Fig. 7).¹⁸

Nevertheless, a closer viewing reveals something special about *Photographic Selections*, inasmuch as it represents a particular view of the history of art. The evidence points to Notman not King as the decision-maker in the selection of art works and the editor of the texts. King was chosen by Notman to write the texts because he was a connoisseur of art but interestingly, his collection of paintings, drawings, and prints sold by auction upon his death in 1886 reveals that his taste was significantly different from that of Notman and overlapped only in the case of two Montreal artists,



7 | Thomas Faed, *Sunday in the Backwoods in Canada*, in *Photographic Selections*.
(Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Charles Jones Way and John Fraser.¹⁹ Perhaps more importantly, Notman's admiration of the art and culture of Scotland seems to have motivated the book's references, set of presuppositions, and evaluative criteria for the choice of works reproduced. From this perspective, *Photographic Selections* can be read as a constellation of images that are connected, at times self-consciously, at other times unconsciously, by Scottish motifs or ideas. The publication reveals an adherence to a certain taste in fine arts along with attitudes and beliefs that originated in Scotland.

A Scottish bias is also evident in some of the names and places cited in the introduction to *Photographic Selections*:

when contemplating the wondrous productions of the great battle pieces of Horace Vernet, Vandermeulen, and Wouvverman; the sea fights of Loutherbouurg, Stanfield, and Vandervelde; the humors of Hogarth, Teniers, and Wilkie; the playful children of Collins, Mulready, and Webster; the animal life of Cooper, Landseer, and Potter; the landscapes of Claude, Turner, and Wilson; the historical

pictures of Cope, Lebrun, and Maclise; the dramatic compositions of Frith, Leslie, and Stothard.

It is presumed that readers will recognize a number of these artists as part of Scotland's cultural heritage. For example, the English painter Frederick Clarkson Stanfield got his start in Edinburgh, where as a young boy he was apprenticed to a heraldic painter. The English illustrator Thomas Stothard, wishing to collect material for illustrating the poems of Robert Burns, went to Scotland in 1809 to visit the locations frequented by the poet a few years previously. David Wilkie, a Scottish painter and etcher who moved to London in 1805, was known as "the Scottish Teniers" after the Flemish painter. Wilkie's *Card-Players*, composed during a visit to his native village of Fife in 1807, was considered to be reminiscent of Teniers' painting of the same title, also reproduced in *Photographic Selections*. Sir Edwin Landseer, the English animal painter, travelled to Scotland for the first time in 1824 to visit Sir Walter Scott. He fell in love with the Highlands and returned every year to draw and hunt. The career of the Irish painter Daniel Maclise, whose family came from Scotland, was launched when the print of his portrait drawing of Sir Walter Scott, done in Ireland, achieved wide acclaim.

While these artists, in one way or another, have ties to Scotland, a close look at *Photographic Selections* discloses that Notman intentionally and pervasively underscores Scotland's importance in the history of western art. Notman begins his book with *The Heart of the Andes* by the American painter Frederic Edwin Church, first exhibited between April 29 and May 23, 1859 at New York's Studio Building in the city's first "studio edifice" designed for artists.²⁰ The text acknowledges the fact that 12,000 viewers, an unprecedented number in the United States, came to see the single-painting exhibition. The entry for *The Heart of the Andes* ends with this statement: "F.E. Church is an artist that America may well be proud of; and Scotia may congratulate herself upon having such an engraver as Wm. Forrest." It is significant that Notman begins his book with Forrest, a Scot well known for his landscape engravings, and Church, a seventh-generation American who was a devout Presbyterian of Scottish origin.

Turning the pages of *Photographic Selections*, the reader finds that again and again Notman returns to the special meaning of Scotland and Scotland's artists. Joseph Noel Paton's *The Invalided Soldier at Home* presents a corporal in the Scots Fusilier Guards who has just returned from the Crimean War and is attended by his sweetheart and mother. His *In Memoriam*, a depiction of women and children with Scottish highlanders coming to their rescue, is dedicated to the Christian heroism of "British Ladies in India during the Mutiny of 1857." The reader learns that James Eckford Lauder, who painted *Ten Virgins*, is "a member of the Royal Scottish Academy: his works are held



8 | Thomas Faed, *From Dawn to Sunset*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

in great repute in England, he is a vigorous and self-thinking painter, and one whose selections of subjects generally indicate a lofty and original mind.” In describing Thomas Faed’s Canadian rural scene *Sunday in the Backwoods*, the sentimental attachment for Scotland is emphasized by quoting lines from Robert Burns’ *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*: “From scenes like these, old Scotia’s grandeur springs / That makes her lived at home, revered abroad.”

While the words of the texts were written by King, the emphasis on Scotland and things Scottish suggests that the content of the texts was strongly determined by Notman. Moreover, the texts adjacent to the paintings by Scottish artists are conspicuously more descriptive and longer than those for the others. In this excerpt from the text on *From Dawn to Sunset* (Fig. 8), the book’s second painting by Faed, each person in the narrative is described:

Firstly, there is the radiant baby in the mother’s arms, smiling in her face, unconscious of the solicitude on her brow, or the sorrow that weighs upon her heart, as she raises her hand to enjoin silence upon

the boy just returned from school, and the girl just arrived with a bottle of medicine, and with a basket containing perhaps some delicacy sent by some considerate angel to comfort and relieve the sick ... Look at the calm resignation of the father ... The female at the bedside is abandoning herself to that grief which words cannot utter, but which can only find utterance and relief in tears ... The figures are all harmoniously grouped; they tell their story admirably: there is even thought and care bestowed upon the accessories, and there is great significance in the flickering candle against the wall, nearly burnt to its socket.

This passage reveals a determination to fully describe a scene of Scottish family life, to please readers eager to see and also read about every detail of this work.

Even when the artists are not Scottish, threads linking them to Scotland are discernible. The entry on *Farm-Yard with Horses* by the English painter George Morland also includes remarks that praise artists who have Scottish connections, such as the animal painters, George Landseer and Thomas Stothard. The piece about *Kill in a Fog* by C.H.A. Lutyens ends by mentioning one of his later pictures, an equestrian portrait of the Marquis of Ailsa, whose title derives from an island in Scotland's outer Firth of Clyde. Although the texts do not specifically say so, other artists included in the selection are connected to Scotland: Turner travelled extensively in Scotland, and Sidney Percy and Henry John Boddington also found themes in Scotland; Edward Duncan was known for his maritime subjects, including the coast of Scotland; and Rosa Bonheur visited Scotland in 1854, the year she completed the monumental painting *Horse Fair*, and where she also met Queen Victoria and began two paintings on Scottish subjects, *Highland Shepherd* (1859) and *A Scottish Raid* (1860).

To be sure, *Photographic Selections* is an unabashed compilation of images that overtly or covertly relate to Scots and Scotland. In a talk he gave to a group of young people in Montreal titled "Ruminating," Notman makes his emotional connection to his homeland abundantly clear.²¹ He states his conviction that "his storehouse is like the mighty deep – a thousand rivers keep pouring in of their abundance" and how "the subtle chain of memory" draws him back to his "scotch village picturesque in the extreme." He recalls "the heather clad hills ... blue curling smoke ascending from the homestead ... many fishing boats lining the shore ... dwellings with thick stone walls." Such memories, which he links to feelings and ideas, are "the mental food" that can be renewed when "looking on the wondrous works of nature or their similitude when placed upon the canvas by the hand of genius."



9 | Charles Jones Way, *The Falls of Shawanegan*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

In his contribution to *Transatlantic Scots*, Colin McArthur explores what he calls the “Scottish Discursive Unconscious,” a range of “images, tones, rhetorical tropes, and ideological tendencies, often within utterances promulgated decades (sometimes even a century or more) apart.”²² He explains that memories of Scotland and its people rely on nostalgia and a “preexisting and hegemonic bricolage of images, narratives, sub-narratives, tones, and turns of phrase.” Clearly, Notman was emotionally invested in Scotland and Scottishness and held dear a construct of memories, myths, and historical events. This includes the Romantic symbology associated with Scotland that was adopted during the nineteenth century when the Highlands, with its splendid natural scenery and historic sites, became a significant source of inspiration for poets and artists. For example, in August and September 1803, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge made a six-week journey through the Scottish Highlands to better understand the writing of Robert Burns. Their own Romantic poetry addresses a landscape that was not pastoral with the classical tradition of rustic settings peopled by shepherds, but filled with the hills, lakes, downs, and cliffs typical of Scotland.



10 | Robert Duncanson, *City and Harbour of Quebec*, in *Photographic Selections*.
(Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Perhaps of more immediate interest to Notman was the emergence in mid-nineteenth-century Scotland of the “photographic tour” as a distinctive cultural art form. A well known example is *Sun Pictures in Scotland* by William Henry Fox Talbot, inventor of the calotype. Published in 1845 in London with a limited edition of 120 copies, *Sun Pictures in Scotland* was his second of two photographically illustrated books. Containing twenty-three pictures of abbey ruins, Gothic-style monuments, rivers, and rolling landscapes, the photographs, which were not accompanied by text, were taken during a tour of the sites and locations most connected with Sir Walter Scott. Notman’s awareness of this new type of photographic tour likely informed his strategies for his own book. Like Fox Talbot, he included images of picturesque and historic sites; Notman chose Canadian locations, such as *The Falls of Shawanegan* by Charles Jones Way, a Montreal artist from Dartmouth, England, whose painting is described as “these wild and romantic Falls ... well known to all tourists” (Fig. 9). *City and Harbour of Quebec* by Robert Duncanson, an acclaimed American artist who had lived in Montreal during the Civil War, represents another popular tourist destination with a majestic view that also played an important role in both the founding

of the French colony and the British conquest (Fig. 10). For his own photographs, Notman similarly chose views associated with Canada's early history. *Fort Chambly* is accompanied by a text that explains that the building "was erected about the year 1710, at the termination of the wars with the Iroquois Indians, and is pleasantly situated on the border of Lake Champlain, near the confluence of the River Richelieu. It has played a conspicuous part in the struggles between the English and French at the time of the Conquest of Canada, and subsequently at the time of the American Revolution." Although no mention is made of the historical significance of *The Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains* as the place where an Indian mission was built in the seventeenth century, it was probably well known to local families who were farming large tracts of land in the region.

As for Scotland's connections to European countries, Notman's inclusion of famous works by Flemish and Dutch artists, *La Deiveuse* and *La Liseuse* by Gerard Douw, Teniers' *The Card Players*, and *The Supper at Emmaus* by Rembrandt is also a covert reference to the historical relationship between Scotland and the Netherlands. By the seventeenth century a trading partnership had developed in wool, textiles, and coal, and it was commonplace for Scots living and working in Holland to complete their education at the universities of Leyden or Utrecht. Scotland had strong traditions in poetry and music, but virtually no tradition in painting. As early as 1585 the Dutch painter Adrian Vanson (Vanyone) was made a burgess of Edinburgh "to be employed in his declared craft in the town and to instruct apprentices."²³ Scotland and Holland also shared social, intellectual, and religious beliefs, so much so that Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century mirrored the Calvinist Protestantism of the Scots. The belief that holiness is situated in practical, daily life, in contrast to the *otherworldly* perspective of the Catholic religion is purposefully described by the text for Rembrandt's *Supper at Emmaus*: "no theatrical effect, – on the table are the simplest utensils; the room is more like a prison than a palace, – the only light seems to emanate from Christ." Moreover, the genre paintings by Douw and Teniers can be seen to reflect the preferences of Montreal's Scottish art collectors who identified historically with the aesthetic taste of Dutch merchants.²⁴

Even the Italian and French paintings in *Photographic Selections* can be seen to have a Scottish rationale. When the Union of Parliaments in 1707 led to Scotland's prosperity in the second half of the eighteenth century, many professional men embarked on a "Grand Tour" of Italy to study the monuments as classicism was considered central to Scottish culture. Acknowledging that Montreal's Scottish merchants and businessmen had an interest in things Italian, Notman selected *The School of Athens* by Raphael

and Guido Reni's *Aurora* and *Dejanira*.²⁵ In a long passage King explains Raphael's depiction of the "many teachers of Philosophy with their scholars ... Plato and Aristotle ... disputing on their doctrines." Classical art is also directly referenced in Reni's ability to combine "the freedom and grace of the Italian School with the severer practice of the ancient Greek bas-reliefs." As for *Dejanira*, King assumes that the owners of *Photographic Selections* like "all readers of Grecian mythology are acquainted with the story of Dejanira."

At the same time Scotland had earned its own reputation as a country that contributed to European art and culture. Voltaire confirms this in 1762 when he writes, "to-day rules of taste in all the arts, from the epic poem to gardening, come to us from Scotland."²⁶ Notman, perhaps unintentionally, affirms Scotland's relationship with France and adds to an unacknowledged history of Scottish art by including copies of *The Ploughing Field* by Bonheur, *Hemicycle du Palais des Beaux Arts* by Hippolyte Delaroche, and *Bienfaisance* by Édouard Dubufe. By the mid-eighteenth century, educated Scots had developed an interest in European art and by the nineteenth century, Scottish art historians such as Allan Hidallan Cunningham, William Bell Scott, Frederic George Stephens, and Sir William Stirling Maxwell were writing major texts on European art history.²⁷

According to William Gershom Collingwood, who was a professor of fine arts at University College, Reading, Ruskin was another of these Scottish art historians.²⁸ Collingwood was a student of Ruskin's in 1872 and they remained in close contact. He writes in his preface to *The Life of John Ruskin* (1891) that his British teacher was above all a Scotsman: "If origin, if early training and habits of life, if tastes, and character, and associations, fix a man's nationality, then John Ruskin must be reckoned a Scotsman." As well, "the combination of shrewd common-sense and romantic sentiment; the oscillation between levity and dignity, from caustic jest to tender earnest; the restlessness, the fervour, the impetuosity – all these are the tokens of a Scotsman of parts, and were highly developed in John Ruskin." Thus the Scottish factor in Notman's work is further enhanced by the fact that several of the artists selected for *Photographic Selections*, particularly Paton and Faed, were admired by Ruskin.

In addition to his pride in being a Scot, Notman also strongly identified himself as a British citizen. In this he was not alone. The nineteenth century was the most "British" in Scotland's history and many of Notman's Scottish contemporaries thought of themselves as patriotic Britons. This feeling of solidarity had taken centuries to develop, starting in 1603 when King James VI of Scotland inherited the English crown. For the next 100 years the kingdoms remained linked but separate, until the Act of Union in 1707. By Notman's time, there was a comfortable intermixing of artists from Scotland



11 | Robert Duncanson, *Land of the Lotus Eaters*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

and England, so much so that Scottish artists like Wilkie and Faed, who lived in London, were considered British artists. Scottish artists like Lauder who stayed at home, would receive recognition by exhibiting their paintings in London.

At the same time as Scots living in Britain were comfortable feeling both Scottish and British, those living in the colonies, like William Notman, were intent on celebrating their achievements as Scotsmen, as John MacKenzie notes in “Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland.”²⁹ Although England considered Scotland to be a junior partner in the British Imperial State and most Scotsmen abroad had no argument with the British colonial enterprise, people with Scottish heritage often saw the imperial field as a place to express their distinctive identity. In large measure, the intellectual foundations of the Scottish Enlightenment and the cultural apparatus associated with empire building became key components in the construction of Scottish national identity. Notman’s interest in two artists of Scottish origin probably reflects this mindset. Robert Duncanson was born to a Scottish-



12 | John Arthur Fraser, *Sunshine and Shower*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Canadian father and a freeborn black or mulatto mother. His painting *The Lotus Eaters*, inspired by Tennyson's poem of the same title and reproduced in *Photographic Selections*, was on view at Notman's photographic studio as early as September 1863, according to the *Montreal Herald* newspaper (Fig. 11).³⁰ John Arthur Fraser, who was a close associate of Notman, was born in London, England but his father was from Portsoy, Scotland. When writing about Fraser's *Sunshine and Shower*, King notes the artist "has not had more opportunity of following a branch of art in which he would be successful" (Fig. 12). This refers to the fact that Fraser was supervisor of Notman's art department, where artists were employed to hand-colour photographs, to paint studio backdrops, and do fine retouching work.³¹

Photographic Selections reveals the two sides of Notman. The first is the Scottish merchant and manufacturer's son who was determined to become successful through creating and selling a line of photographic products. As

such, *Photographic Selections* can be seen as a trade catalogue that advertises the business of photography. Its intent was to convince customers that Notman was the best supplier of photographs that either reproduced works of art or were of themselves, works of art. From this perspective every strategy, whether it related to educating and entertaining the public, or presenting new ideas or inventing new products or processes, can be understood as an appeal for business from Montreal's middle class. During this period Notman also prepared several other books for publication. In 1864, he published *North American Scenery*, composed entirely of photographic reproductions of landscape paintings by Montreal artist Charles Jones Way.³² He also produced a three-volume set, *Portraits of British Americans, with biographical sketches* (1865–68), in collaboration with John Fennings Taylor (1817–1882),³³ an author and public servant at the Senate of Canada who had access to the parliamentary library and was also well acquainted with many of the books' eighty-four subjects. Furthermore, Notman submitted his own photographs to local, provincial, and international exhibitions; he organized showings of paintings and his own photographs at the gallery in his studio; and he was a regular contributor to the *Philadelphia Photographer*.

The second side of Notman is the man of culture who aspires to disseminate his knowledge of art to Montrealers and to assist in developing a vibrant civic community of artists and art patrons. These ambitions can be linked to the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. In his discussion of aesthetic taste in Scotland during this period, Andrew Hemingway writes: "In general, Scottish social thought placed refinement and the arts among the main advantages of commercial societies ... The authority of aesthetic norms was linked with that of prevalent moral and political ideologies in various ways."³⁴ By the nineteenth century such ideas were embedded in Scotland's culture. In 1859, three years after Notman came to Montreal, Samuel Smiles, the Scottish physician-turned-journalist and publicist, defined these characteristics in the last chapter of his best-selling book *Self-Help*: "The True Gentleman" was "one whose nature has been fashioned after the highest models."³⁵ In nineteenth-century Scottish society, it was assumed that gentlemanly conduct would lead to rewards. Writing in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, Smiles also championed the virtue of hard work. Many pages of *Self-Help* are devoted to the tireless inventors of new machines and mechanical operations. By virtue of how hard he worked at inventing and merchandising his own photographic products, Notman unquestionably saw himself as one of these men.

Many of the subscribers listed in alphabetical order on the last pages of *Photographic Selections* were individuals from Scottish families who were "true gentlemen," like Notman, men "of like faculties and impulse." They include prominent Canadian lawyers, military men, physicians, Members of



13 | Franz Verheyden, *Fête de la Maitresse d'École*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Parliament, publishers, merchants, bankers, manufacturers, clergy, artists, and literary men. Through nurturing his contacts with this community Notman maintained his Scottish national identity and at the same time he undoubtedly acknowledged the business benefits of these connections. Significantly, amongst the subscribers are the names of three men of Scottish origin whose Montreal homes Notman visited to photograph their paintings. Benaiah Gibb (1798–1877), co-owner of a haberdasher and tailoring company, was the son of a father by the same name who came to Canada in 1744. Although his father was born in Northumberland County, England, Gibb's heritage was Scottish. The text that accompanies *Fête de la Maitresse d'École* by Franz Verheyden in *Photographic Selections* emphasizes Gibb's "kindness" as "Vice-President of the Art Association of Montreal" and thanks him "for the privilege of photographing the original picture ... The picture is full of interest, and must be acceptable to all, who, next to their love of Nature, enjoy, and can participate with the innocent amusement of children" (Fig. 13).

Dugald Lorn MacDougall (1811–1885), born in Auchdoonan (Western Isles), Scotland, was a stockbroker and capitalist who immigrated in 1840. Although *A Kill in a Fog* by C.H.A. Lutyens is described with less enthusiasm, readers learn that MacDougall “possesses several of his works” and that “the present illustration of his talent is not to be taken as an example of his powers to-day.” Thomas Reynolds (1820–1859), who was born in Canada, trained as a doctor in the early 1840s in Edinburgh, then at McGill College in Montreal.³⁶ Reynolds’ *Taken Aback* by Edward Duncan (1803–1182) is reproduced with the comment that: “The original formed one of the chief attractions among the water colour drawings exhibited at the late conversazione of the ‘Art Association of Montreal.’” Notman reproduced these paintings not only because the paintings were easily available, but also to demonstrate his admiration for, and acquaintanceship with, the city’s art connoisseurs and patrons of culture. In fact many of these collectors were fellow members of the Art Association of Montreal as well as clients who sat for portraits at his photography studio.

When the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* published its congratulatory announcement in 1865, it stated that the importance of *Photographic Selections* (1863) was its “reproduction of many choice engravings and paintings by means of photography.” In 1860, the *Journal* had announced that initiatives undertaken by the Committee of Council for Education at the South Kensington Museum in London would soon make it possible to produce photographs of art and engravings by old masters in large quantities and to sell them at “nominal prices.”³⁷ The *Journal* reported that arrangements had been made to photograph “a vast variety of subjects” as well as “copies of paintings, drawings, sculptures, carving, and the fine arts generally.” Nearly 2,000 objects were on the list of works to be reproduced, including all the original drawings by Raphael and Michelangelo stored in museums in Great Britain and France. The intention of the South Kensington committee was to “send forth to the public reproductions of the greatest works of art of all ages – works which could not otherwise be obtained at all, and they will be issued at prices unexampled for moderation. Purchasers may obtain single pictures or the entire series ... and when we consider that these are the cheapest and best photographs existing, we have the means of carrying art into the houses of the very poorest people.” Publications like Notman’s *Photographic Selections* were produced the same way, no matter their size or mode of presentation, regardless of whether they were purchased individually or gathered into an attractive book and embellished with complementary texts. The increased accessibility of art reproductions may explain why Notman did not continue to produce illustrated books as part of his commercial enterprise.³⁸ He did sell, however, individual plates at his studio.

The *Journal of Education*'s most important announcement was: "There has never been a work published in Canada better calculated to cultivate and elevate the taste in art." In fact, William Notman's *Photographic Selections* of 1863 is not only the first art history book published in Canada. Thanks to Notman's collaboration with Thomas Davies King, it is also the first to include a discussion of Canadian works of art in a survey of British and European art. Furthermore and most unusually, Notman's book, which became a keepsake in the homes of numerous subscribers, was an accurate expression of the Scottish cultural legacy and the art preferences of a Scottish-Canadian middle class that influenced life in Montreal from the 1860s into the early years of the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 For example, Loren LERNER, "William Notman's Portrait Photographs of Girls Reading from the 1860s to 1880s: A Pictorial Analysis based on Contemporary Writings," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 47, no. 1 (2009): 45–73; and "William Notman's Portrait Photographs of the Wealthy English-speaking Girls of Montreal: Representations of Informal Female Education in Relation to John Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens' and Writings by and for Canadians from the 1850s to 1890s," *Historical Studies in Education* 21, no. 2 (2009): 65–87. My first mention of Notman's *Photographic Selections* can be found in "Canadian Art Publications: History and Recent Developments," *Art Libraries Journal* 8 no. 1 (Spring 1983): 4–57.
- 2 William NOTMAN and Thomas D. KING, *Photographic Selections by William Notman, with Descriptive Letter Press by Thomas D. King* (Montreal: John Lovell, Printer, 1863). The book is available in a limited number of libraries and on microfiche at CIHM/ICMH Microfiche series = CIHM/ICMH collection de microfiches no. 88994.
- 3 In the text accompanying *Aurora* by Guido [Reni], George Frothingham, who had numerous portraits taken of himself and his family by Notman, is thanked for supplying the engraving: "To the Engraver's art we are indebted for the present translation, and also to the kindness of Mr. George Frothingham, the possessor of this beautiful example of the burin of Raphael Morghen, an artist, who, by his rendering of the *Last Supper*, (Da Vinci), and of the present subject, will be immortalized as a line engraver."
- 4 "The Late T.D. King," *Gossip* 1, no. 16 (20 Dec. 1884): 1. "Mr. King was so well known and outlines of his life have so lately been given that we need merely say for the benefit of strangers that Mr. King was one of our best known *literateurs*, an authority on antiquarian lore, and an unrivalled art critic. His *nom de plume* was 'Rex' and so widely known that letters from England merely addressed 'Rex' Montreal have often reached him." King's reputation appears to be based on writings that he began about a decade after the publication of *Photographic Selections*. These include: "A Gossip on the Portland Vase," *Canadian Illustrated News* 9, no. 13 (28 March 1874): 194–95;

- Bacon versus Shakespeare* (Montreal: Lovell, 1875); *A brief chronicle of the chapel of Ste. Croix, Tadousac [sic], at the mouth of the River Saguenay, on the River St. Lawrence: embodied in an appeal to Canadians of all denominations for their generous support in aid of its enlargement and decoration* (Montreal: 1879). King's Shakespearean library is located in the Rare Book Collection of McGill University.
- 5 Anon, "Literature and Art in Montreal," *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* 18, no. 1 (January 1865): 10.
 - 6 Heather McNABB, "Montreal's Scottish Community, 1835–65: A Preliminary Study" (Masters thesis, Concordia University, 1999), 15. McNabb provides an analysis of the census records of the City of Montreal for 1861.
 - 7 Pierre WILSON, Heather McNABB, and Annick POUSSART, "Montrealers of Scottish Origin in the 19th Century," from *The Scots, Dyed-in-the-Wool Montrealers*, exhibition text, McCord Museum, 2003–2004. Accessed 20 Dec. 2011, <http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/info/pressreleases/119d.html>.
 - 8 See for example, Stanley G. TRIGGS, *William Notman, The Stamp of a Studio* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario; Coach House Press, 1985); Roger HALL et al., *The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century through a Master Lens* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1993).
 - 9 Mr. DUNKIN, "BILL, An Act to Incorporate the Art Association of Montreal. Received and read, first time, Tuesday, 20th March, 1860. Second reading, Wednesday, 21st March, 1860, 3rd Session, 6th Parliament, 23 Victoria, 1860 (Quebec: Thompson, 1860)." Accessed 3 Jan. 2012, http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_02435/3?r=0&s=1. See also, Jean TRUDEL, "L'Art Association of Montreal. Les années d'incertitude : 1863–1877," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 29 (2008): 117–43.
 - 10 Stanley G. TRIGGS, "The Man and His Studio," Virtual Museum of Canada. Accessed 12 Dec. 2011, <http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/keys/virtualexhibits/notmanstudio/themes/portrait/page3.html>.
 - 11 E. RYERSON, *Appendix to the fifteenth volume of the journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada ... 26th February to the 10th June, 1857 ... twentieth year of the reign of ... Queen Victoria : being the 3rd session of the 5th Provincial Parliament of Canada* (Toronto: R. Campbell, [1857]. Accessed 3 Feb. 2012, http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_00955_15_10/3?r=0&s=1.
 - 12 Martha TEDESCHI, "Where the Picture Cannot Go, the Engravings Penetrate: Prints and the Victorian Art," *Museum Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 8–19, 89–90.
 - 13 Rachel TEUKOLSKY, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
 - 14 George COMBE, *Phrenology Applied to Painting and Sculpture* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1855).
 - 15 John RUSKIN, *Modern Painters* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856–1860). See Anita GRANTS, "Selectivity, Interpretation and Application: The Influence of John Ruskin in Canada" (PhD thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, 2006) on the impact of Ruskin's writings on Canadian architecture, art education, and trends in painting.
 - 16 In his comments on Paton's work, Ruskin wrote: "Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour." John RUSKIN, "The Royal Academy," in *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: G. Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1904), 35.

- 17 Virginia L. WAGNER, "John Ruskin and Artistical Geology in America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 23 (1988): 151–67.
- 18 RUSKIN, "Academy Notes on Prout and Hunt and Other Art Criticisms, 1855–1888," in *The Works of John Ruskin*, 310. "This will of course be a very popular picture, and deserves to be so, having every claim to our observance which kindly feeling and steady average painting can give it. It does not possess any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos. The figure of the healthy sister, looking up, seems to me the best."
- 19 *Catalogue of the rare and curious collection of etchings, engravings, drawings, watercolors, oil paintings, old china and curios of the late Thomas D. King, Esq. [microform]: to be sold by auction, at his late residence, no. 75, City Councillors Street, on Saturday afternoon, April 3rd, 1886, M. Hicks & Co., Auctioneers* (Montreal, 1886?), CIHM/ICMH Microfiche series = CIHM/ICMH collection de microfiches; no. 56359.
- 20 Kevin J. AVERY, "The Heart of the Andes Exhibited: Frederic E. Church's Window on the Equatorial World," *American Art Journal* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 52–72.
- 21 William NOTMAN, "Ruminating," unpublished and undated manuscript, Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History.
- 22 Colin MACARTHUR, "Transatlantic Scots, Their Interlocutors, and the Scottish Discursive Unconscious," in *Transatlantic Scots*, ed. Celeste Ray (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 341.
- 23 John WARRICK, *Domestic Life in Scotland, 1488 – 1688 Lecture III – The Rise of the Burghers; A Cloth Merchant's House; and Some Decorative Arts* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1924). Accessed 3 Jan. 2012, <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/domestic/domesticlife3.htm>.
- 24 This interest in Dutch art extended to future generations and came to include paintings from a group of artists who lived and worked in The Hague between 1860 and 1890. See Alena BUIS, "Ut pictura poesis: Edward Black Greenshields' Collection of Hague School Paintings" (Masters thesis, Concordia University, 2008). Greenshields, a prominent Montreal businessman and art critic, worked in the wholesale dry goods firm, S. Greenshields, Son and Company, established in 1833 by his father, John, and his grandfather, Samuel, who was a merchant from Glasgow, Scotland.
- 25 During the 1860s the wealthy Scots of Montreal were building large residences reminiscent of the urban palaces of the Italian Renaissance. Silvia Sorbelli explores the appeal of Renaissance art for later generations of Scottish-Canadian art collectors in Silvia SORBELLI, "Renaissance in Montreal: Collectors of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts" (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 2010).
- 26 P. HUME BROWN, *Surveys of Scottish History* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1919), 112: "'It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit,' wrote Voltaire, 'that at the present time it is from Scotland we receive rules of taste in all the arts from the epic poem to gardening.' The words were meant ironically, but they point to what was an indisputable fact, the intellectual activity of Scotsmen in every important sphere of thought and their original contribution in each of them."
- 27 In fact, Maxwell, a historian of Spanish art, was the first to use photo-reproduction in an art history book in 1859, when he published a limited edition titled *Talbotype Illustrations to the Annals of the Artists of Spain*.
- 28 William Gershom COLLINGWOOD, *The Life of John Ruskin* (London: Methuen, 1900), 3–12.

- 29 John M. MACKENZIE, "Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Sixth Series*, 8, (1998): 215–31. Recent writings on the Scottishness of the British Empire have focused on colonial administration, military service, and the crucial role Scottish emigrants played in shaping British imperial culture. Michael FRY, *The Scottish Empire* (East Linton and Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press and Birlinn, 2001); T.M. DEVINE and MACKENZIE, eds., *Scotland and the British Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011); T.M. DEVINE, *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora 1750–2010* (London: Allen, 2011).
- 30 Allan PRINGLE, "Robert S. Duncanson in Montreal, 1863–1865," *American Art Journal* 17, no. 4 (Autumn 1985): 28–50.
- 31 In 1868 Fraser became the managing partner of Notman and Fraser in Toronto, a position he held until 1880 when he sold the business to pursue his painting career; see TRIGGS, *The Man and His Studio*.
- 32 *North American Scenery: Being Selections from C.J. Way's Studies, 1863–64* (Montreal: W. Notman, 1864); twelve mounted albumen prints of landscape scenes, photographed by William Notman, Roberts & Reinhold, Lith.
- 33 William NOTMAN and Fennings TAYLOR, *Portraits of British Americans, with biographical sketches*, 3 vols. (Montreal: W. Notman, 1865–68).
- 34 Andrew HEMINGWAY, "The 'Sociology' of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment," *Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 2 (1989): 3. See also Arthur HERMAN, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).
- 35 Samuel SMILES, *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and, Conduct* (London: John Murray, 1859). Accessed 17 Sept. 2012, <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext97/selfh10h.htm>.
- 36 Paul ROBERTSON, "The Doctor was Framed: Portrait of 19th Century Physician Joins Collection," *The Bailliewick* 10, no. 2 (June 2007): 1.
- 37 *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* 13, no. 2 (1860): 29.
- 38 TEDESCHI, "Where the Picture Cannot Go," 8–12. Martha Tedeschi points out that claims regarding the uniqueness and quality of the "proofs" were a marketing device with little basis in fact.

Photographic Selections (1863) de William Notman

LOREN LERNER

Le portfolio *Photographic Selections* (1863) de William Notman (1826–1891), publié par l'imprimeur montréalais John Lovell, consiste en quarante-sept clichés de peintures de maîtres anciens et contemporains britanniques, français et nord-américains. Notman avait photographié ces peintures à partir de gravures obtenues de marchands et d'œuvres originales chez des collectionneurs montréalais. Son admiration pour l'art et la culture de l'Écosse ont inspiré l'ensemble de présuppositions et de critères d'évaluation pour le choix des œuvres reproduites dans ce portfolio. Né à Glasgow, Écosse, Notman est arrivé à Montréal en 1856. Peu après, à la fin de décembre, il installe son studio de photographie au numéro 11 de la rue Bleury. En tant qu'Écossais, Notman se sentait chez lui à Montréal où ses compatriotes occupaient une place éminente dans le domaine des affaires, de l'éducation, des professions libérales et comme leaders religieux. Bien que l'auteur des courts textes qui accompagnent les illustrations dans *Photographic Selections* ait été Thomas Davies King (1819–1884), né en Angleterre et spécialiste montréalais de gravures, d'antiquités et de livres rares, Notman a sans aucun doute exercé une forte influence sur les idées et le contenu du texte. L'introduction à *Photographic Selections* définit l'intention de la publication : « Afin de promouvoir au Canada le goût croissant pour les œuvres d'art, et répondre à une demande qui ne pourrait être satisfaite autrement à cause de la rareté, dans ces provinces, d'œuvres d'art originales de qualité, ou même de gravures par des maîtres anciens ou modernes, nous publions ces 'Photographic Selections' ». Ainsi, Notman se situe à la fois comme fabricant d'une nouvelle ligne de produits et quelqu'un qui s'y connaît en art. Il cherche, avec King, son collaborateur, à faire savoir qu'ils peuvent avec autorité « promouvoir au Canada le goût croissant pour les œuvres d'art » en vertu de leur connaissance étendue « d'œuvres d'art originales de qualité, ou même de gravures par des maîtres anciens ou modernes ». Cette déclaration laisse aussi supposer que Notman peut facilement « répondre à une demande qui ne pourrait être satisfaite autrement » grâce à ses connaissances en tant que photographe.

Un premier examen des clichés de *Photographic Selections* suggère qu'il n'y a rien d'inhabituel dans le choix de l'art religieux contemporain britannique, les peintures de genre pleins de sens didactique et de contenu moralisateur, de paysages et de scènes rurales et de portraits. Cependant, une étude attentive révèle que Notman a intentionnellement et de manière subtile souligné l'importance de l'Écosse dans l'histoire de l'art occidental. En tournant les pages de *Photographic Selections*, le lecteur découvre que Notman revient encore et encore sur la signification spéciale de l'Écosse et des artistes écossais. Dans sa contribution à *Transatlantic Scots*, Colin McArthur explique que les souvenirs de l'Écosse et de ses habitants s'appuient sur un sentiment de nostalgie et un « bricolage préexistant et hégémonique d'images, de récits, de récits dérivés, de tons et de tours de phrase ». Notman s'était clairement investi dans tout ce qui concernait l'Écosse et la *scottishness*, et restait attaché à tout un ensemble de souvenirs, de mythes et d'événements historiques. Cela comprenait la symbolique romantique associée à l'Écosse et qui avait été adoptée au cours du XIX^e siècle, alors que les Highlands, avec leurs magnifiques paysages et leurs sites historiques, étaient devenus une importante source d'inspiration pour les poètes et les artistes. Mais d'intérêt plus immédiat pour Notman était l'émergence, dans l'Écosse du milieu du XIX^e siècle, des « tours photographiques » en tant qu'activité culturelle et artistique distincte. Un exemple bien connu est la publication de *Sun Pictures in Scotland* par William Henry Fox Talbot. Notman connaissait ce nouveau genre d'excursion photographique et s'en est probablement inspiré pour la préparation de son propre livre. Comme Fox Talbot l'avait fait pour l'Écosse, il a inclus des images de sites pittoresques et historiques du Canada par Charles Jones Way (1834–1919) et Robert Duncanson (1817–1872), ainsi que ses propres photographies de paysages associés à l'histoire du Canada. Quant aux rapports de l'Écosse avec les pays européens, l'inclusion, par Notman, d'œuvres célèbres d'artistes flamands et hollandais est une référence voilée aux rapports historiques, commerciaux et religieux entre l'Écosse et les Pays-Bas. Même dans les tableaux italiens et français que l'on retrouve dans *Photographic Selections* on peut déceler une raison d'être écossaise.

À travers tout le XVIII^e siècle, l'Écosse avait développé des liens plus profonds avec le continent européen que pendant toute la période antérieure, et s'était forgé la réputation d'avoir contribué à l'art et à la culture de l'Europe, à tel point que, dès le milieu du XIX^e siècle, les historiens de l'art écossais écrivaient des textes majeurs sur l'histoire de l'art européen. Selon William Gershom Collingwood, son professeur John Ruskin, le plus important critique d'art anglais de l'époque victorienne, était avant tout un Écossais. L'élément écossais dans l'œuvre de Notman était encore plus évident du fait que plusieurs des artistes choisis pour *Photographic Selections* étaient admirés

par Ruskin. Les fondements intellectuels des Lumières écossaises et l'appareil culturel associé à la construction d'un empire sont devenus, dans une large mesure, des éléments clés dans la construction de l'identité nationale écossaise. *Photographic Selections* révèle deux aspects de la personnalité de Notman. Le premier, c'est le marchand écossais, fils de fabricant, déterminé à réussir dans la création et la vente de produits photographiques. Ainsi, *Photographic Selections* peut être vu comme un catalogue de vente qui fait la promotion du commerce de la photographie. L'intention était de convaincre les clients que Notman était le meilleur fournisseur de photographies qui reproduisaient des œuvres d'art ou qui étaient elles-mêmes des œuvres d'art. Le second aspect est celui de Notman en tant qu'homme cultivé qui aspirait à transmettre ses connaissances en art aux Montréalais et à contribuer au développement d'une communauté civique dynamique d'artistes et de mécènes. En entretenant ses relations avec cette communauté, Notman conservait son identité nationale écossaise tout en reconnaissant indubitablement les avantages pécuniaires de ces relations.

L'accessibilité croissante aux reproductions artistiques sous forme de portfolio pourrait être la raison pour laquelle Notman n'a pas continué à produire des livres illustrés dans le cadre de son entreprise commerciale. Fait important, *Photographic Selections* de William Notman est le premier livre d'histoire de l'art publié au Canada. C'est aussi le premier à inclure l'examen d'œuvres d'art canadiennes dans une étude sur l'art britannique et européen, grâce à la collaboration de Notman avec Thomas Davies King.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette