CHAPTER VII

How a horn-book was made—Horn-books badly made and horn-books well made—
How a leather or paper covered horn-book was decorated—Brass blocks used in
decorating—St. George and the Dragon gilt horn-books—The brass rimmer or
“latten” on horn-books—Peculiar tacks used in fixing—How the tacks were made
—Letter from Professor W. Flinders Petrie—The horn facing, or “lantern leaf,”
used on a horn-book—The Horners’ Company—Impossible statements about the
horn-book—Horn-covered labels on old books—A horn washing-tally—A horn-
book cover.

ORN-BOOKS made in immense quantities at a low price were at times
turned out in an unworkmanlike and slovenly manner. The oak, roughly
split, might be nearly a quarter of an inch thick at one end and fine down
to a sixteenth at the other. On the same horn-book the brass rimmer
would be of different widths; it might begin at one end an eighth of an
inch wide and slope off to almost nothing, the “vanishing point” being
tucked in under the next piece. The horn was roughly cut and projected
beyond the edges of the brass. More frequently, however, we find the oak
uniform in substance, planed smooth

and the horn-book in its details properly finished.

Specimen of early engraving.

Armed knight—specimen of early engraving.

(From Caxton’s “Game of Chesse.”)

(1913). Victoria Park Exhibition Grounds, Thomas Mawson fonds, Canadian Architectural Archives, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

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CHAPTER THREE

The Introduction of the Press into the Province of Quebec

It is the general opinion that printing only began in Canada, properly so-called, after the country had been conquered by the English. Some bibliographers, however, find it hard to concede that, during the whole century and a half of its existence, New France could have remained deprived of a useful tool which all other civilized nations, especially its own neighbours, vied with each other in obtaining. They claim that at least one press was in operation towards the close of the French regime, and we must admit that some of the arguments which they marshal in support of their theory cannot be lightly rejected. It would be difficult to write the history of the beginnings of printing in Canada without first considering this preliminary question, which is, moreover, of the greatest interest.

One thing is certain, that, even in the very early days of the colony, the question of

James C. Teague. (1912). Plans for Lancaster Building, Lancaster Building collection, Canadian Architectural Archives, Archives and Special Collections, University of Calgary

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