

## WILLIAM MOLSON

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Prior to the time when Sir William Dawson became Principal of McGill University, the University had received no important contribution of money or buildings from the citizens of Montreal. Dependent almost entirely upon the original endowment, it was unable to do work of an advanced type or even to maintain, without serious sacrifice, its position as a small college. Valuable lands were then sold for what they would bring, merely that the institution might be kept alive. Indeed, it was a full generation after James McGill's death before the Protestants of this City suffered their interest in higher education to take a practical form.

The portrait which furnishes the present number of the MAGAZINE with its frontispiece, recalls something more than the generosity of one individual. During the past fifty years many members of the Molson family have added to the funds of McGill,—testifying a permanent interest in the University and what it stands for by gifts of the most varied character. The Hon. John Molson, who came to Montreal from Lincolnshire in 1782, had three sons, John, Thomas and William. Through the efforts of these four men a large number of important enterprises were started in Montréal during the period when the fur trade was dwindling, and when, as a consequence, it became necessary to find some other basis of commercial prosperity. The founding of Molson's Brewery, the opening of steam navigation on the St. Lawrence, the development of the Bank of Montreal, the building of the first railway in Lower Canada, and the creation of Molson's Bank, were only the most conspicuous of the many activities in which John Molson and his three sons engaged. This family was also the first to assist by large donations in the upbuilding of McGill. Within a year from the time when Sir William Dawson became Principal, the three brothers, John, Thomas and William Molson, had founded the first of the endowed chairs (the Chair of English Literature) and, as is shown by the recent subscription to the endowment of the Union, the same spirit still appears in their descendants.

William Molson, besides helping to found the Chair of Literature, gave, in the Molson Hall, the first building which McGill had received