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McGILL UNIVERSITY.

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THE opening of the McDonald Chemistry and Mining Building at McGill University on the 20th December, by His Excellency the Governor-General, marks the moment opportune for a brief review of the growth of that University and for some remarks upon its present prospects.

The event to which allusion has just been made suggests the reflection that, unique in this respect among Canadian Universities, McGill owes nothing to the State, but everything to the enlightened liberality of private citizens. As one stands on the time-worn steps of the old Arts Building, bearing the name of the first benefactor, the eye falls successively on buildings associated with the names of the merchant princes of Montreal—the Molsons, Redpath, Workman, McDonald, and the present noble Chancellor, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal. And, as in the old Arts Building and its somewhat irregular extensions and additions we read the record of the University's past struggles, so in the group of stately structures which have sprung up around it, and in their unrivalled equipment, we see the testimony of its achieved prosperity and success and mark the prophecy of a brilliant future.

Founded under the will of the late Hon. James McGill, who bequeathed lands and money to the value of £30,000 for the purpose, the Univer-

sity was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1821. Its existence was threatened from the outset by vexatious and protracted litigation with the heirs of the founder, and it was only in 1829 that the teaching work of the University began. Nor was its safety then assured. The University records for the following thirty years tell a plain, unvarnished tale of crushing financial embarrassments and of almost insuperable administrative difficulties. But the noble efforts of the few undaunted spirits who supported it through these trials were not without effect. In 1855 the citizens of Montreal at last awoke to an appreciation of the value of the institution struggling in their midst, and with the appointment to the Principalship of Dr. Dawson, now Sir J. W. Dawson, C.M.G., F.R.S., the University took new life and vigor, and the history of its progress may be said to have begun. Dangers had yet to be met, innumerable difficulties to be overcome, financial crises to be stemmed and averted; but its resources were carefully nursed; its development, if slow and labored, was sure and in the right direction; and a firm foundation was laid for its future greatness. It is not too much to say—though it may be needless to say it in THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY—that for a period of forty years the name of the revered Emeritus Principal was inseparably connected with every step in the rise of the University, and, indeed with