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## Original Communications.

### THE CONSTITUTION OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

BEING THE ANNUAL UNIVERSITY LECTURE OF SESSION 1888-89.

BY PRINCIPAL SIR WILLIAM DAWSON, C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S.

The subject of this lecture has been suggested by the departure from among us, within a few years, of several old and valued members of the university, and by the fact that the men who took part in the revival of McGill University under its amended charter of 1852, have now almost entirely passed away, while the few who remain must soon follow. It is therefore desirable that the new generation which has come upon the stage should know something of the causes which gave our university its present constitution, and which have in some respects moulded that constitution as time has proved its original excellences or defects. Great universities are not usually created by any sudden or arbitrary act of establishment. They grow by slow accretion of men and means, and adapt themselves by degrees to the changing conditions of their existence, while the value and stability of their organization are proved by the vitality and vigor of growth which they exhibit, and the capacity which they show to continue in efficiency after their originating minds have passed away. McGill is now in the position to show the capabilities of its constitution in this respect.

Of the original band of citizens of Montreal who constituted the first board of governors under the new charter, Mr. Ferrier, the late Chancellor, was the sole survivor. Mr.