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A second circumstance which may have aided Mr. McGill in his resolve, was of a different character. In 1799, General Simcoe, the first Governor of Upper Canada, and the Executive Council, had decided to establish a seminary of higher learning in the Province. They had invited Mr. Strachan, a graduate of St. Andrews, to organize this institution. He arrived early in 1799, but only to find that his patron, General Simcoe, had been removed, and that the plan had fallen to the ground. Greatly disappointed by this, Mr. Strachan opened a school in Kingston, and subsequently occupied, as a clergyman of the Church of England, the mission of Cornwall, and commenced the grammar school at that place, where many men subsequently of note in Upper Canada were educated. A year before McGill's death, Strachan was transferred to Toronto, of which diocese he was afterwards the Bishop. The precise circumstances which introduced to each other the future Bishop and the Montreal merchant are unknown to me. It is certain, however, that they were friends, and that the young man who had come to Canada with such bright hopes of educational usefulness, destined for the time to be disappointed, and the wealthy citizen meditating how best to disarm the opposition which had so long deprived Lower Canada of the benefits of education, had much in common. It seems at least probable that Strachan had a large share in giving to Mr. McGill's wishes the form which they afterwards assumed, and there are some reasons for believing that Mr. McGill had hoped that his college might have attracted to it the abilities of the young teacher who seemed slighted in Upper Canada. It is also known that, in the first attempt to organize McGill University in 1823, Strachan was invited to a professorship; but the career opening to him by this time in Upper Canada was too tempting to permit him to aid in this way the project of his old friend.



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EARLY HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE.

For several years after Mr. McGill's death, there seemed actually some danger that his bequest would prove abortive, from the difficulty which attended the immediate utilization of it for the purposes indicated. The terms of the legacy required that lectures should be held and a class formed before the close of 1830, and 1829 arrived without any attempt being made to carry out these conditions.

It was in this state of things that the Trustees, looking around them for a means of carrying out the benevolent intentions of the testator, cast their eyes upon the newly established Medical Institution. This institution had been started five years previously by the efforts of Drs. Holmes, Stephenson, Caldwell and Robertson, to whom the trustees now applied to prevent the lapse of the McGill bequest, by holding lectures in accordance with its conditions. Thus the Medical Institution became the Medical Faculty of the new college, and its handful of students the original members of the new university.

For the early history of the College, previous to its reorganization about 1850, a very few words will suffice. Two courses were open to the original administrators of Mr. McGill's bequest. One was to limit their aims to that narrow range of scholastic studies which seemed indicated by their scanty means and the small educational wants of the time. The other was to survey and mark out on the ground wide fields of operation which they might hope in the future to cultivate, and to occupy such portions here and there as seemed likely to yield an adequate return. Fortunately, their own foresight and the natural ambition of a new country pointed to the latter course, and the comparatively early development of the Medical Faculty indicated the probable path of success. Hence it has come to pass that the McGill course of study in the faculty of Arts has taken a wide scope.



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