

V. JAMES MCGILL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MCGILL COLLEGE,

MONTREAL.

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IN the British American colonies there have been few founders of educational institutions. This may have arisen in part from the rarity of ample fortunes, in part perhaps from the tendency of amassers of wealth in colonies to regard the land of their paternity rather than that of their adoption as their country, but more than all from the incessant demands which the material progress of new countries makes on the capital of their inhabitants. The gentleman whose name stands at the head of this article, has hitherto been the most eminent exception to this general statement, and deserves, on that account, honorable mention among American founders. But great though the benefits are, which he has conferred upon his country, his life was one of those which, in their quiet and uneventful tenor, afford few materials for biography; and I can but present on this subject a very few facts and dates, for some of which I am indebted to a valuable series of articles on the colleges of Canada, now in course of publication by the Hon. Dr. Chauveau, in the "*Lower Canada Journal of Education*."

JAMES MCGILL was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on the 6th October, 1744, and received his early training and education in that country. Like many of his countrymen, he emigrated, when a young man, to the new world, in search of fortune. He settled in Montreal, and engaged successfully in mercantile pursuits. In 1776 he married a lady of French parentage, the widow of a Canadian gentleman, and whose father had held some of the highest positions in the colony. His long residence in Montreal, his integrity, public spirit, and practical good sense, gained for him the confidence of his fellow-citizens. He was elected the representative of Montreal in the provincial legislature, and was subsequently appointed a member of the legislative and executive councils. In the war of 1812 he acted as a colonel and brigadier-general of militia. His contemporaries describe him as a man of large and liberal heart, social and public spirited in disposition, of moderate ability, but of sound practical judgment, and extensive information. He died in Montreal, on the 19th December, 1813, at the age of sixty-nine years.

Not having any children, he had determined to devote a large portion