

A PLEA FOR UNIVERSITY EXTENSION.

INTRODUCTORY.

The following pages relate to a subject which has employed the thoughts and energies of the writer, in conjunction with other friends of education, for the last fourteen years,—the erection and permanent establishment of a University worthy of this great city, and fitted to be the centre of the higher education for the English of the Province of Quebec, and to shed abroad the practical influence of scientific training and the amenities of literary culture throughout Canada. Montreal has already, as becomes its pre-eminence in population and wealth, distinguished itself by its liberality in the support of the higher education; and I cannot doubt that it will receive, at least, with patient attention, any suggestions that may be offered with reference to the extension and improvement of its own University,—the creation of its own wise liberality, the sharer of its fortunes, and the enhancer of its prosperity and renown as a centre, not only of wealth, but of liberal education.

The circumstances which induce a reference to this subject at present are the following. The University has continued, with a careful economy, to treasure up and use for the purposes of the higher education, the estate bequeathed by Mr. McGill, and the sums subsequently placed at its disposal by the liberality of the citizens of Montreal. It has now reached the utmost point of development which these resources will permit. The hope was at one time entertained that the pledges of public support, given to the Royal Institution by the Government of Canada, would have been redeemed; but after a long and ineffectual struggle, the University is obliged to admit, that by the New Constitution of the Dominion, and the subsequent action of the Legislature of Quebec, these questions have been settled in a way adverse to the interests of the higher education. The McGill University must now depend almost entirely for its support and extension on the City of Montreal; and it is for its friends in this city to determine whether, by being left to be stationary, it shall in effect retrograde, relatively to the increasing