

## MCGILL THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

A Montreal newspaper a few months ago characterized McGill as the "National University." It was at the time of the opening of the MacKenzie Memorial Fund, one of the objects of which was to endow a chair in Political Economy in one of the Canadian colleges. The necessity of such being established in McGill is too clearly recognized by us all to require promulgation here. The paper contended that the chair to be provided for out of that fund should be given to McGill, McGill being the "National University" in contradistinction to a certain other "provincial" University which had preferred a claim. The propriety of this designation as applied to McGill may not be evident to all, particularly the Students of sister universities, who will likely regard it as conveying a meaning which is not necessarily implied. It is not a claim to pre-eminence, derived from a comparison of educational standards or a flat assumption of superiority: we support it as a simple statement of the character of the institution, based upon the circumstance of its foundation, the fact of its location and of the area from which its Students are drawn.

Founded by the liberality of an individual (to whom such worthy successors have arisen), not owing its existence to funds dealt out from the Treasury of the Province, to whose supervision it is in no wise subject, McGill is in no sense a provincial establishment, while its intimate connection with the Royal Institution and the Crown, and through the latter with the Supreme Government of the country, emphasizes its national character. "As for McGill," Sir William said once, "the colors are nailed to the mast." She is pre-eminently British, and consequently pre-eminently Canadian. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts has referred to Queen Victoria as the ultimate foundress of McGill, as Queen Elizabeth is regarded as the foundress of Trinity. The Governor General of the Dominion constitutes one of the governing body of the University.

The national character of the institution is further emphasized by its central location. The seat of the National University should be the metropolitan city. And Montreal is not only the metropolitan city,—the central city, the city to which ability and intellect converge as naturally as trade and commerce,—it is the city most distinctively Canadian. Anyone who wishes to feel the significance of Canadian history to be impressed by Canada as an historical fact has only to wander for a few hours in the more ancient parts of the city. Let him walk down old Notre Dame some sunny morning, past the French Cathedral and the Place d'Armes, down where he may look out through the narrow streets upon the blue St. Lawrence. He is back in the old régime with its chivalry and its poetry, and he almost expects to see the old-time barges sail in sight on their way to land a gay detachment for the garrison of Ville Marie from the little army of Frontenac. And side by side with this old Canada and mingling with it, is the Canada of to-day, in the height of its commercial and intellectual activity.

Montreal too, more than any other Canadian city of about its own size, has resisted the Americanizing influence of the time: whether it will continue to do so in the future, and whether it should continue to do so, are not questions for us to settle. But that it has done so in the past is a fact, and Goldwin Smith may talk with perfect justice of the British tendencies of the Montreal hierarchy. That these tendencies are calculated to assist the advance of our country may be doubted, but they are at any rate an indication of national conservatism.

The University of a neighboring province lately published its annual report. Of the Students in Arts (and it may be presumed that the percentage is not less for the other faculties, as the Arts course is there most efficient) ninety-eight per cent., it was stated, belonged to the province. In McGill alone of Canadian universities does the majority of Students consist of men from without the province in which the University is located.

Looking at the question in these lights, it is scarcely likely that anyone will deny the claim. Of course, no one can prevent McGill Students from justifying the epithet on other grounds. They look at the progress of nearly three-quarters of a century, they look at the men who fill the professors' chairs, they look at the new Science buildings—. But an exoneration of McGill from the possible charge of provincialism must not adopt the tone of provincialism.

## UNIVERSITY EXTENSION.

We have long been desirous of making mention in these columns of the various courses of lectures delivered by different professors of the University under the auspices of University Extension Movement, but have unfortunately been unable to do so through pressure of other matters, and also it must be confessed, from an imperfect knowledge of the workings of this new manifestation of energy on the part of certain members of our teaching staff.

The idea seems to have originated with Professor Cox, who has imported into our own University the benefits derived from the large experience he has had in such matters on the other side of the Atlantic, and more especially in connection with a similar movement organized and carried out by the University of Cambridge. Both the courses organized by Professors Cox and Moyse respectively, on a general course of Physics delivered by the first named professor, and on English Literature by the latter, have been largely attended and thoroughly appreciated by large and attentive audiences.

The synopses of the different subjects issued by the lecturers at the commencement of each of the courses have been ample, well digested, and most suitable in every respect, and we cannot help expressing the opinion here that such would appear to be the true method of all teaching, and if this species of instruction were to find its way more largely into the ordinary courses in the various faculties, nothing but benefit could result. A general synopsis of a subject with