

University to be so erected should bear the name of the donor. Moreover, he gave under the same conditions to the Royal Institution a sum of ten thousand pounds, for the maintenance and support of the said college or university, which sum was also to revert to Mr. Desrivieres in case of non-compliance with the intentions of the donor. This sum, if not paid immediately, was to bear interest after three years.

The estate of Burnside is situated near the mountain of Montreal, on the road that leads to the Priests' Farm, in a commanding position, and its value, like that of all properties lying in the same direction, has been daily increasing since the bequest that was made of it by Mr. McGill.

As to the other part of the bequest, when paid over to the college authorities, after a long protracted suit with the heirs, who had been advised by eminent counsel that the legacy was null, it amounted to £22,000.

The intentions of Mr. McGill did not meet that prompt execution which they merited (*). Great delay occurred before any movement whatever was made for securing the bequest and giving effect to his wishes. At last, a Royal Charter was obtained in 1821. In 1829 the estate of Burnside was surrendered by the residuary legatees, and in 1835 judgment was rendered against them for the legacy of £10,000 with interest.

The first step towards giving to the University a practical operation, was the establishment of the Medical Faculty, which, with the exception of two years, has always since been kept in activity. It has always been the most flourishing department of the institution, and has been for many years the only one in active operation. It was created by the merging into the University of a preexisting institution, "The Montreal Medical Institute."

Our readers will remember that the faculty of medicine of the Laval University had a like origin, and was also the first department organized in that institution. The want of professional education in the science of medicine is in fact *ex necessitate rei* the first and the most forcibly felt in a new country, and while for years the study of the law has been

left to voluntary and private tutorship, on the contrary, even at a very early period, previous to the establishment among us of any medical college, many young men were sent by their parents to France or to England, to enable them to compete more successfully with those in the same profession who had come to Canada with the great advantage of having followed regular courses.

The first Principal of the McGill College, under its Charter in 1829, was the Ven. Archdeacon Mountain, (now Bishop of Quebec) and in the month of June of that year, a formal opening of the institution took place.

Archdeacon Mountain having resigned in 1835, the Rev. Dr. Bethune was appointed in his place, and after some unsuccessful efforts to obtain a change in the provisions of the charter, and the consumption of much time from misunderstandings between the governors under the charter and the Royal Institution, which held all the funds, it was at length agreed upon, that buildings for the use of the University should be erected; and accordingly those now standing on the west side of Sherbrooke street were commenced in 1839.

During a long period of time, however, a want of harmony among the governors, and of sympathy on the part of the public, kept the college in a very unsatisfactory condition.

If I may gather a correct opinion of the causes of such a state of things from the pamphlets that were published, and from the letters that found their way into the columns of newspapers, bearing on the subject, the cause of those difficulties was of a double nature, and partook of the char-

acter of a literary as well as of a religious controversy.

By his will the donor had not defined in any particular, the character of the institution, and neither from an educational nor from a religious point of view was it in the power of the governors to find in the words of the bequest a solution to the many problems which are standing in bold relief on the threshold of any new undertaking of the same kind.

True it was, that the Honorable James McGill lived and died a member of the Church of England, and it was even surmised that his will had been originally prompted by the Ven. Archdeacon of Toronto, an intimate friend of the testator, and that it must have been accomplished with a view



Sir

*Your obedient & very
humble servant
James McGill*

(*) Address of the Board of Governors to Sir Edmund Head on the inauguration of Burnside Hall, (1836.)