

feel in looking around this ample, yet crowded hall, honored by so many of the highest rank and the foremost in intelligence, and last, but not least, graced by those fair friends of many a good enterprise whose propitious smiles strengthen the labor which commands success, and give to the success itself its most valued charm. As in human life there are periods of repose and retrospection, so in arduous undertakings there are points from which men look back upon the trodden road and seek in what they have already accomplished a measure of the means and limit of future progress. Such a period is now reached by this University, and it is fitting in order that its position may be truly appreciated, that a brief outline should be given of its history and operations. Its existence is due to the benevolence of the late Mr. James McGill, formerly a merchant of this city. He died in 1813, leaving a will by which he bequeathed to the Royal Institution (a corporation established by the Provincial Parliament for the advancement of learning,) his estate of Burnside, consisting of some forty-six acres of land in the immediate neighborhood of the city, and the sum of £10,000 in money, as a foundation for a university. The will was contested, and with the exception of obtaining a Royal Charter in 1821, no action was taken upon it until 1829. The first step toward the establishment of a university was the organization in that year of the Medical Faculty, which, composed of men ranking the first in the profession, has been and still is sustained with admirable ability and vigor. In the same year the Rev. Dr. Bethune was appointed principal of the University, and after a further interval of some years, it was formally opened, in Sept. 1843, in the buildings erected for that purpose. The undertaking, however, was not successful. The college received no support, and at length its utterly prostrate condition attracted attention, and the Provincial Government was moved by a number of gentlemen to aid in an endeavor to place it on a better footing. A careful report was prepared on the state of the University, and suggestions were made of the course which it was advisable to follow for its amelioration, which became the basis of much that has since been done. A new charter was applied for, and was received in August, 1852, differing favorably from the former one in many of its most important provisions.

Upon the reception of the Charter the newly-appointed Governors immediately entered upon the labors of their trust. They began by reforming the Statutes of the University, in a manner to introduce a more simple administration, and absolutely to do away with all religious tests and privileges. The College was involved in debt, and its income, about £400, fell far short of its expenditure. Measures were at once taken to stop the increase of the former; and, in order to improve the latter, a Provincial Act was obtained, modifying that of 1801, under which the Royal Institution existed, and granting authority to sell such portions of real estate bequeathed by Mr. McGill as the Governors might deem advisable. By the sale of lands under the sanction of that law the income of the University has been from time to time augmented, until it has now reached the sum of about \$7000. Application was also made to the Legislature, before the adoption of the present system for the distribution of the fund in support of Education, and pecuniary aid was granted, but in sums less than the governors had reasonably expected, and altogether inadequate to place the University on the footing which it ought to occupy. In consequence of the want of substantial support from the Government, which the governors had relied upon in accepting the charge, it now became evident that they must either so contract the operations of the University as to render it of little value, or obtain assistance from other sources. An appeal was consequently made, in December of the year 1855, to the Protestant population of Montreal, and met, as such appeals always have been by its citizens, in a spirit of ready and unrestrained generosity. An endowment fund, amounting to £15000 was subscribed by a number of gentlemen, not exceeding fifty. Of this sum £5000 was given by the Messrs. Molson (the three brothers, for founding a chair of English Literature); the remainder was made up in sums varying from £500 to £150. It will be gratifying to the subscribers of this fund to know that their help, both in money and moral support, came at a time of great need, and has been of incalculable benefit. Their names will stand upon the records of this institution as long as it endures.

It would be tedious and unprofitable to follow in detail the difficulties and embarrassments which have been encountered in the progress of the University, and the efforts made to surmount them. The last formal application to the Legislature was made in 1858. The applicants asked for a sum of money large enough to free the University from debt; and also for a permanent endowment sufficient for its maintenance upon an extended scale of usefulness. The application was based upon grounds formally set forth in the

Petition, from which, with the permission of Your Excellency and the audience, I will now read an extract:—

First:—The late Mr. McGill undoubtedly made his bequest under the expectation and implied promise that a further and sufficient endowment would be made by the Provincial Government.

His endowment was long anterior to the establishment of any Protestant College in the Province and still is the only one made in it for that purpose. Since that time hundreds of thousands of pounds have been bestowed by annual grants on other Educational Institutions in Lower Canada: while, in Upper Canada, several Universities have been founded, all of them participating more or less in the grants of public moneys, one of them, the University of Toronto, enjoys an endowment of 226,201 acres of land conferred by Royal grant in 1828, from which a sum exceeding £293,883 has been already derived, and, in addition to this, it received during many years for the College connected with it a grant of £1,111 annually: Upper Canada College, established in 1832, was endowed by various grants between that year and the year 1835, with 93,805 acres of land, which has yielded £55,434, and has also received an annual grant of £1000, which still continues. Yet no permanent provision whatever has ever been made for McGill College, and all the moneys received by it from public sources (of which the first was in 1834) do not together amount to one-fourth part of the University of Toronto, or to one-tenth of the value of Mr. McGill's bequest.

The largeness of that bequest and the munificence with which the fund has lately been increased in the sum of £15,000 by subscription in the City of Montreal, coupled with the character of the University, justify the claim that a corresponding spirit should be manifested by the Legislature, and that after so much has been done by private beneficence, the work may be completed by granting the relief sought, and providing a permanent public Endowment.

Second:—The University of McGill College is the only one in Lower Canada which is non-sectarian. As such it possesses the confidence of the Protestant community of every religious denomination.

Third:—The University is not a mere private institution founded by individual benevolence, but is Public and Provincial in its character. It is prepared to confer degrees not only upon the Students of its own Colleges, but under just and salutary rules, upon those of any others which may be established in the Province,—thus rendering it unnecessary, as without doubt it is inexpedient, to multiply the number of Educational institutions possessing that power.

The Governing Body is appointed by the Crown and is removable at pleasure. The Governor General is its Visitor.

A large number of Scholarships in the Faculty of Arts are at the disposal of His Excellency, and he has the presentation to 30 Scholarships in the High School Department.

Fourth:—This Provincial character of the University, and the Prosperity and influence which it has attained, mark it out as the great centre and support of the higher Protestant Education in Lower Canada. As such, the establishment and management of the Normal School has been confided to it with the approbation of the whole community and the confidence has been justified by a complete success.

The importance and claims for support of such a Central Institution, great as they are, will be augmented by the increase of population, wealth and intelligence, bringing with them an appreciation of the value of Learning and a demand for the means of its general cultivation. The University of McGill College ought not then to be confounded with the ordinary Schools and other Educational Establishments, sectarian and non-sectarian, which abound in Lower Canada. It stands alone in its character and objects, and requires from the Government a direct and special support adequate to its importance and its wants. To place it, in the distribution of Legislative aid, upon the same footing with these minor establishments which share in the fund placed in the hands of the Superintendent of Education is an error and an injustice, not only to the University itself but to the whole Protestant community of Lower Canada.

The Petition was without result, in so far as the great end sought by it is concerned. I must, however, not be guilty of ungrateful forgetfulness of the cordial and active interest which was manifested by more than one of the gentlemen who then formed the Provincial Administration. Much was done by them toward the temporary relief of the University, and in its name I would return the thanks to which they are justly entitled. Nevertheless, the paramount object of a permanent public endowment was not accomplished, and remains still unattained. I have passed in brief review the various acts of beneficence by which the University has been established and hitherto sustained. I now arrive at the last one which it is my pleasing duty gratefully to acknowledge, I mean the completion of the College building by Mr. William Molson. I approach the subject of this munificent gift with some diffidence, lest in the sincere expression of the sentiments which it naturally excites I may be betrayed into a warmth and earnestness of language displeasing to the giver, and which in his presence, good taste and delicacy forbid. I shall, therefore, content myself with little more than a simple narrative of the manner in which this important benefaction was tendered and carried out by