

British America, and its lectures may unquestionably vie with those of Great Britain, while I believe them superior to those of most, if not all, of the Colleges of the United States. I speak this with no sentiment of egotism. I but repeat what is now a trite remark. But now to our task.

In the year 1813, died one of the merchant princes of this city, the Hon. Jas. McGill, bequeathing for the endowment of a University or College, to retain perpetually his name, the property known as Burnside, consisting of a dwelling and appurtenances thereon erected, with adjacent land to the extent of about forty-six acres. This property was valued at the time at £5000; but over and above this bequest he also left the sum of £10,000 in money, intended apparently for the endowment of Professorships. There were two stipulations in the will: the one that the residuary legatee, Francis Desrivieres, should enjoy the whole for a limited time; and, secondly, that unless the University was put in operation within ten years, the whole bequest should revert to the residuary legatee. It is now necessary to remark that in the year 1801 a Provincial statute organized "The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning," but the Institution was not constituted until the year 1819. The trustees under the will now demanded the bequest from the legatee for the purpose of handing it over to the Royal Institution, an application which was refused by him—the refusal ending in a protracted law suit, which was not terminated until after the lapse of some sixteen or seventeen years. In the meanwhile, the Royal Institution applied to His Majesty George the Fourth for a Royal Charter, which was granted in the second year of his reign, 1821, and thus established the University with full powers. In this connection, I should observe that it was the intention of His Majesty George the Third to have established two Universities in this Province—one at Quebec, and the other in this city; and that Mr. McGill merely contemplated in his noble bequest the endowment of a college in the latter. This intention appears never to have been carried out in Lower Canada, although by the persevering energy of the venerable Bishop of Toronto, the University of Toronto became established in the Upper Province, and most richly endowed with Crown lands. Such was the intention of His Majesty, however; and the intention was also to have endowed these in a similar manner; but, as already observed, from what cause soever, it was never realized, thus furnishing another example of the truthfulness of the Scottish poet's observation, that—

"The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft a-glee."