Mr Principal, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is with a deep sense of pride strongly leavened with humility that I appear before you to-day. I have pride in the fact that your University—may I be permitted to say our University—has seen fit to appoint me as the first incumbent of the Christison Chair of Therapeutics. Humility I feel because I have a keen realisation of my responsibility, and a profound appreciation of the splendid traditions and example which I must strive to perpetuate. The names of Sir Thomas Fraser and Sir Robert Christison are sufficient to hold before me the high standard to which I must attain. This honourable position which I have been called upon to fill I consider a great compliment, not only to myself, but also to that University and country from which I come. Any qualification which I may have I have attained from their teaching and ideals. The parent-tree from which these are derived we look upon with gratitude and reverence.

The New Britains across the seas drew their inspiration of Democracy, Justice, and Freedom from the traditions of the Motherland. This has been a heritage beyond compare. But a gift of almost equal splendour was that given to the young men who came from those far-flung lands to these ancient halls of learning. It was here that they acquired the inspirations and knowledge which have had such a profound influence on the medicine of the New World.

I consider that I come to you to-day a humble ambassador, to offer tribute to the University that has done so much for my Alma Mater, and in that capacity pray let me recount in what manner this great benefaction was bestowed.

In the eighteenth century facilities for medical learning were practically non-existent in Canada. Those settlers who were qualified practitioners of medicine had obtained their training in Great Britain or France. The young Canadian could only obtain medical knowledge by apprenticing himself to one of these, while hospitals did not exist except as religious institutions controlled almost entirely by a self-sacrificing priesthood. The first native Canadian of the Province of
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Quebec, or French Canada, who went abroad for medical study was François Blanchet, who was born in 1776, and went to New York to obtain his education. On his return to his native land he soon tired of his chosen profession and devoted himself to journalism and politics. But he aroused the desire for foreign education in Jacques Labrie, who journeyed to Edinburgh in the latter years of the eighteenth century. On his return home, like his preceptor, Labrie entered politics and became a member of the Chamber of Assembly; and it is to him and his medical colleagues that we are indebted for the institution of those tribunals which guard the honour of the medical profession in Canada.

The seed of medical ambition was then germinated, and the first-fruits were John Stephenson and Andrew Holmes, who likewise proceeded to Edinburgh where they obtained medical degrees, returning to Montreal about 1820. In association with William Robertson, a native of Perthshire, and William Caldwell, born in Ayrshire, both graduates in Medicine of Edinburgh University, they formed the first professional staff of a Protestant Medical Institution. About 1818 the Female Benevolent Society of Montreal procured a small building of four apartments, and called it the House of Recovery. Small as it was, and inadequate to meet the needs of the time, it became the germ of medical education in Canada. On 1st May 1819, such patients as were in the House of Recovery, together with the little property belonging to that establishment, were moved into a new institution which now assumed the title of the Montreal General Hospital. Considerable interest had been aroused in favour of this newly established charity, and it had risen to such a degree that in August 1820 sufficient funds had been raised to enable them to buy a new site on which to erect a modern building. The Medical Staff consisted of Drs Caldwell, Robertson, Holmes, and Stephenson. An institution attended by active and energetic physicians and supplied with abundant clinical material being now a fully established fact, the staff was naturally led to approach the vexed problem of medical education.

It will prove a matter of no little interest to see upon what reasons their conduct was subsequently based. At a meeting of the staff held on 27th October 1822, the subjoined resolutions were adopted:—

"The medical officers appointed by the President and
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Directors of the Montreal General Hospital, having seen the great difficulties which the student in medicine in this country has to encounter before he acquires a complete knowledge of his profession, knowing the great inconvenience resulting to many from the necessity at present existing of spending several years in a foreign country to complete a regular medical education, and being convinced of the advantages which would result from the establishment of a medical school in this country, have met to consider of the possibility of founding such an institution in this city."

After due deliberation, they decided that certain considera-
tions warranted an endeavour to promote so desirable an object. Those considerations which most interest us to-day are the following, which are taken from the Minutes of that meeting:

"There can be but one opinion concerning the utility and necessity of a School of Medicine in this Province, seeing that the condition of Medicine in many parts sufficiently attests the want of opportunities of medical instruction. Such an institution will tend very much to remove this growing evil, by the facility it will afford of acquiring medical knowledge.

"They consider that the Montreal General Hospital is an institution which much favours the establishment of a School of Medicine in this city. It affords the student a facility of acquiring a practical knowledge of physic never before enjoyed in this province, an advantage which will be greatly enhanced by the establishment of lectures on the different branches of the profession.

"They are further encouraged to attempt the formation of a medical seminary, when they reflect that the Medical School of Edinburgh, the basis of which they would adopt for the present institution, now justly considered the first in Europe, is of comparatively recent formation, it being little more than one hundred years since medical lectures were first delivered in that city. And the early history of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh is not dissimilar to that of the Montreal General Hospital.

"In the event of the establishment of a Classical and Philosophical Seminary in this city, the two institutions would be materially benefited."

As a result, in 1822 lectures were publicly announced and given by some of the members of the staff of the Montreal General Hospital, notably Dr Stephenson and Dr Holmes.
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On the 4th February 1823, it was resolved to issue an advertisement, to be published in the principal Upper and Lower Canada newspapers, announcing the organisation of the “Montreal Medical Institution,” and the intended delivery of a course of lectures during the subsequent winter.

The circumstances which rendered the success of such an institution probable, and the measures intended to be adopted for carrying the same into effect, having been submitted to His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief, he was pleased to signify his entire approbation of the plan.

It was therefore resolved to deliver lectures on the following branches of the profession, to commence on the second week of November next ensuing: — Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry and Pharmacy, Practice of Physic, Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Children, Materia Medica, Surgery, and Botany.

The earliest session of which I can trace a record, was that of the year following, viz., 1824-25; and had in attendance but twenty-five students, a number which scarcely augmented for years. The institution, however, despite of all obstacles, pursued the even tenor of its way. The tickets of the lectures were acknowledged in Edinburgh, but at the ratio of two courses for one of that university; and as in those days it was a customary practice for every young man whose parents could afford it to complete his studies in some European school, and this more particularly in Edinburgh, a high tribute was thus awarded to the labours of the lecturers.

I must now go back a few years to recount events of great importance to Canadian education. On 6th October 1744 (175 years ago this month) James M‘Gill was born in Glasgow, and received his early training and education in Scotland. When quite a young man he set out for Canada in search of fortune, and engaged successfully in mercantile pursuits, notably in the north-west fur trade, then one of the leading branches of business in Canada. Subsequently he settled in Montreal, and in partnership with his brother, Andrew M‘Gill, became one of the leading merchants in what was then a town of 9000 inhabitants. His contemporaries describe him as a man of large and liberal heart, social and public-spirited, of moderate ability but of sound practical judgment and extensive information. He died in Montreal on 19th December 1813.

Being childless, James M‘Gill had determined to devote a
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large portion of his fortune to some object of benevolence connected with his adopted country, and in his last will, made two years before his death, he set apart his estate of Burnside on the slopes of Mount Royal, together with the sum of £10,000, for the foundation of an English-speaking University, one of the colleges of which was to be called M'Gill College.

The management of the endowment was to be confided to a public Board then recently established by Act of Parliament, and named "The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning." His bequest was to take effect on condition that there should be erected within ten years, on the estate of Burnside, a university or college for the purposes of education and advancement of learning in the province of Lower Canada, with a competent number of professors and teachers to render such an establishment effectual and useful for the purposes intended.

Unfortunately considerable litigation occurred in regard to this will, and it was not until 1829 that the property was placed in the hands of trustees. According to the terms of the bequest it was necessary immediately to establish a university or college. At this time the eyes of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, and of the friends of education in Canada, were turned upon the Montreal Medical Institution, now an active teaching body of established reputation. Therefore it was decided to bridge the difficulty by making this body the Medical Faculty of the University. At a meeting held on 29th June 1829, the Montreal Medical Institution was formally engrafted upon the University of M'Gill College as the Medical Faculty. For some years the only active work done in the University was that in this Faculty, and by its simple fulfilment of the time limit of the will, it may justly be said to have saved the University. From this period the tickets of the lectures were accepted by the University of Edinburgh at par.

This, the first attempt at medical education in Canada, was undertaken by men coming from the Edinburgh School. They were filled with that high standard of medical requirement which they had received while studying under Gregory, Home, Duncan, and the other great Edinburgh teachers who made the Edinburgh Medical School the first in the world. They brought from Edinburgh her methods of medical teaching, and from the very origin of the M'Gill Medical School up to the present time we have continued on the foundation which they laid so truly.
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Edinburgh for some time had practised that method of medical teaching whereby the student came into actual personal contact with the patient. He followed the patient's condition from day to day, making careful examinations and notes of his physical condition and symptoms. He came into intimate contact with the patient, and knew it as a concrete condition, not as a theoretical or philosophical argument. To walk the hospitals there, meant much more than it did in London or any of the continental cities. At that time London was years behind Edinburgh, nay, was copying the northern capital. Sir Robert Christison describes the condition in London in 1820 as follows:—"It was a frequent wonder to me, that so little use was made of the medical wards of St Bartholomew's for the purpose of instruction, and generally, that education in medicine was almost entirely neglected. While the medical students were only three in number, and, indeed, being all graduates, were no longer 'pupils,' though called so, the surgical students, amounting to several hundreds, never entered a medical ward, and, though pupils in reality, got no more information in medical practice than the few crumbs they might pick up now and then during the medical treatment of surgical cases. Nevertheless, men with only this training were passed annually in hundreds by the London College of Surgeons into the ranks of the general practitioners of England. I could thus easily understand subsequently the superiority of the general practitioners educated at Edinburgh, where medicine proper held a prominent place in the system of hospital instruction, the preference in which they were held in England, and their success and reputation, especially in most of the large English county towns." In short, Edinburgh was years in advance of London in the most important matters of medical education.

Notwithstanding the real value of Scottish methods and learning during this period and for many years after, the ardent spirits from the United States of America and Western Canada were attracted to England or the European Continent rather than to Scotland. These men returned bringing the methods of medical education practised at those centres. One finds very few Scottish names among the earlier leaders in the United States. I can recall only Ephriam MacDowall, the first ovariotomist, and he gained his inspiration, it may be added, in Edinburgh, but he was an isolated worker and for long a prophet in the wilderness, and Scottish influence was largely wanting.
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Thus the small body of men at M'Gill University formed an isolated nucleus of medical educational traditions on a vast continent. Their early history was a protracted struggle, but they were fired with that persistence and faith which in time could not be denied. As years passed they were joined by other Edinburgh graduates—John Racey, Archibald Hall, Michael M'Cullough, Stephen Sewell, Arthur Fisher, and James Crawford, a steady succession of ardent spirits. In fact, in the last one hundred years there have been few exceptions to break a steady line of Edinburgh and M'Gill men occupying professoriate positions at the M'Gill Medical School.

During many years the other departments of this struggling seat of learning of the New World were little if at all developed; the spark of great things had not inspired them, but the time was drawing nigh when Edinburgh would in yet another direction give to this budding University the necessary sunshine to bring it to full bloom.

Up to 1855 the Principals of M'Gill University had been men of a theological training. They had striven to rear and guide this young institution, and at the same time to perform the arduous duties of a busy clergyman. Needless to say, their strenuous efforts were not a success. The Medical School in truth was flourishing, and was making a distinct impression upon American Medicine, but this was due solely to the men who formed its Faculty and its methods of teaching. At this juncture Sir Edmund Head was appointed Governor-General of Canada, and as such was ex-officio Visitor of the University. He had done a great deal for education when Governor of New Brunswick, and had taken an active part in the Royal Commission for his own University of Oxford. The Governors of M'Gill, therefore, took an early opportunity of waiting on him to solicit his aid and influence for the University. Sir Edmund Head entered cordially into their plans and suggested the name of Dr William Dawson as the new Principal.

Dr Dawson was a Canadian by birth, born in the town of Picton, N.S., in October 1820. He had received his early education in the schools of Nova Scotia, which were closely modelled on the parish schools of Scotland, and later he went to Edinburgh. In 1854 the professorship of Natural History in this University became vacant through the death of Edward Forbes. On the advice of friends, Dr Dawson offered himself as a candidate, and prepared to go to Scotland personally to
press his suit. While waiting for a steamer, a message arrived that the appointment had been made in favour of Dr Allman. “Then it was,” to use Dr Dawson’s own words, “that there occurred one of these coincidences which impresses one with the belief in a kind Providence over-ruling our affairs. Almost simultaneously with the news of the failure of the Edinburgh candidature, a letter arrived from the Hon. Judge Day, the President of the Board of Governors of M’Gill University, explaining the movements in progress for its improvement, and offering the position of Principal. I had made no application for this appointment, and knew little of M’Gill except that it had some reputation as a Medical School, whilst its academic faculty was in a comparatively unsettled condition.”

Dr Dawson accepted this position, and with his coming a new era began in Canadian education. Trained in Edinburgh University, and having her traditions strongly in mind, it was not many years before he had inspired M’Gill, and was bringing its name into prominence amongst the great seats of American learning. During the long years of his Principalship, M’Gill made steady progress, and when the time came for Sir William Dawson, as he now was, to relinquish the guiding reins, it seemed like the hand of Fate that his successor should likewise be an Edinburgh man, namely, Sir William Peterson. And now when time has brought about yet further change, the tradition that an Edinburgh graduate should hold this important position in Canadian education is being unconsciously carried on. Only within the last year Sir Auckland Geddes, whom many of you will remember as a student within these walls, has been offered and has accepted the Principalship of M’Gill. This succession of Principals appears to be more than a coincidence, apparently continuing on account of the common traditions and inspirations of the two Universities. As a child turns to its parent in time of need, so M’Gill comes to this University for her leaders. In consequence, Edinburgh continues to exert her influence on Canadian education.

Although medical teaching in Canada was steadily attaining a recognised position, yet young men still journeyed to the modern Athens to obtain that knowledge for which she was so justly famous. Lister was struggling valiantly to obtain acceptance for the antiseptic theory and practice of surgery. Amongst the students of this great man Canadians occupied a prominent place, while a number of them were his intimate
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assistants and house-surgeons. I have but to mention Stewart of Halifax, Malloch of Hamilton, Grassett of Toronto, and Blanchard of Winnipeg, to demonstrate the influence which Edinburgh was continuing to exert on Canadian Medicine. These disciples returned with full faith in the Master and a complete understanding of his methods. It was of necessity but a short time before their efforts raised the surgery of Canada to a premier place in North America.

Time has not changed the custom of sending the young Canadians to study at Edinburgh, or of taking her graduates to occupy our professoriate positions. But few years have elapsed since Chipman left your ranks to join the M‘Gill teaching staff, and the ship which bore me here passed in mid-ocean one bearing Dr Tait to occupy the Chair of Physiology at my Alma Mater. And so the steady stream continues to flow from here across the seas.

Such light as Edinburgh gave to M‘Gill could not remain hidden under a bushel. By the eighth decade of the past century M‘Gill had sent her graduates to the four corners of North America. On account of their splendid training and high efficiency they occupied an enviable place in the ranks of their profession. They held in America a position similar to that which Sir Robert Christison found his fellow graduates held in England. This was because M‘Gill was the only Medical School in America that taught its students by the Edinburgh methods, and the time had now arrived when M‘Gill would begin herself actively to influence exogenous medical education. In 1884, William Osler of M‘Gill, now Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, was called to the Chair of Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, and later to the Johns Hopkins Medical School. He took to his new work the great heritage. He is the pioneer to whom American Medicine must give thanks for bringing the Edinburgh method of clinical teaching to these leading medical schools, from whence it spread slowly but surely throughout the universities of the land.

A century has elapsed since that small body of Edinburgh graduates first banded together in a far land to perpetuate the ideals and traditions of their University. From such small beginnings one of the greatest seats of American learning has grown to maturity. Whereas, in 1823, the students in the Montreal Medical Institute were but twenty-five, at present the
undergraduates in the Faculty of Medicine number close on five hundred. The solitary faculty with one professor and three lecturers has expanded slowly but surely, until now there are over ten composite faculties with more than seventy full professors and scores of associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, and others. Such growth could not have occurred had it not been for the generosity of the citizens of Montreal. As I have recounted, this University was originated through the clear vision of a Scot whose name it bears. In the honour roll of those whose munificence has contributed to make it what it is to-day, Scottish sons occupy a proud and prominent place. One familiar with the annals of McGill University has but to recall the names of its benefactors to realise to what an extent Canadian education has to thank these pioneers of Scottish birth.

It was due to the munificence of two of these citizens that the McGill Medical Faculty acquired a great addition to her clinical facilities, and the people of Montreal an institution which at the time was considered the last word in hospital construction; for the founders stipulated that this should be so. Where were those responsible for the carrying out of these stipulations to procure the necessary help? The result was proof of their labours, as in time there arose on the slopes of Mount Royal the Royal Victoria Hospital, a replica of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. I think the dedication which appears in the entrance hall of that Montreal hospital reveals to us the motive which prompted its founders. It is in part as follows:—This Institution shall be devoted to “the advancement of the art and science of healing and to the relief of the suffering poor.” What greater ideal than this could there be?

Now a few words as to the present medical teaching at McGill University.

During its whole history McGill has demanded much of her medical students. Since its inception it has required at least a four years' course of study. This was the more remarkable as for many years the other medical schools of America demanded but two. In the course of time, McGill was a pioneer in the requirement of five years' study in Medicine to obtain the Medical degree. Now still greater demands are being made on the medical students' time, and a six years' course has been instituted. This, however, has met with great opposition by those who do not hold that this is too much but that it is too
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little. Many are striving to obtain a higher matriculation, and in addition two years' study in the Faculty of Arts devoted to the scientific subjects and languages, four years' study in the Medical School, and one year's certified hospital residency, before the medical student be considered fit to obtain his degree. Seven years—it is a long time; but, badly as Canada may need medical practitioners, she is realising that one of the greatest and most important assets a country may have is the well-trained, cultured, and broad-minded general practitioner.

The example set us by our founders we must continue. They tended with courage and love that tender seed which they brought so many years ago from this city—a high ideal of medical education. It has been passed on from generation to generation. The harvest has been increasing steadily, but still their followers struggle to reach that almost impossible ideal—a perfect medical curriculum. Their efforts nevertheless have not been in vain, as the record of Canadian Medicine during the past few bitter years have shown.

And now, Sir, I come to you, having been nourished with the bread which Edinburgh has cast so lavishly on the Canadian waters. It shall be my earnest endeavour, in so far as I have the power, to justify in some small measure the bounteous gifts which Edinburgh has bestowed upon my country and my University.

Principal References.—Adami, Edinburgh Tradition. Abbott, Historical Sketch of the Medical Faculty of M'Gill University. Hall, M'Gill Medical Faculty—Past, Present, and Future.