

INTRODUCTION.

A VERY general impression prevails throughout Canada that the late William Lyon Mackenzie had, for some years, been engaged in writing his autobiography; and that, at the time of his death, the work was nearly completed. An examination of his papers showed that such was not the case. He had indeed projected such a work, and arranged much of the material necessary for its construction. The foundation had been dug; but the first stone of the superstructure had not been laid. About his intention, or rather his desire, there can be no doubt. He had made known to all his friends that he had laid out this work for himself; and even his own family were under the impression that he had made considerable progress in its execution. But on examining his papers, I soon discovered that, except detached and scattered memoranda, he had written nothing. Of autobiography, not previously written when some momentary exigency seemed to demand it, or fancy spurred him to put down some striking passage in his life, there was nothing. Beyond this, every thing had to be done by his biographer, if his life was to be written; and such was the public curiosity to learn the connected story of his eventful life, that I was pressed, on all hands, to undertake the work. At great inconvenience, and under a pressure of other exacting literary engagements, I consented.