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IN MEMORIAM.

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ROBERT ALEXANDER FYFE, D.D.,

LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE CANADIAN LITERARY INSTITUTE.

HIS LIFE AND LABOURS.

TO collect and preserve memorials of the "excellent of the earth," whom we have known and loved, and who have entered into their rest, is one of the most cherished instincts of our nature. Hence the value we put upon the successful efforts of the sculptor, and the still greater fondness with which we regard the all but living canvass, and "bless the art which can immortalize." But if the image and portrait of the outer man are precious, how much more the disclosure of his mind, and the faithful expression of his moral and spiritual character.

This was felt by the editors of the HELPER, with regard to our lamented brother, the late Dr. Fyfe, when they announced their purpose of publishing a memorial number, and of giving "a full sketch of his life and labours." Such a sketch, could it have been written, would afford a much larger degree of pleasure to those who have often felt and acknow-

ledged his living excellence, than anything that appears in these pages—not excepting the vivid engraving of his noble face. But, unfortunately, we did not find the materials for such a sketch so readily accessible and plentiful as we supposed. Had circumstances admitted of lengthened research and extensive correspondence, we might still have hoped to perform our "labour of love" with some measure of fidelity to our promise. As it is, we are compelled to plead inability, and cast ourselves upon the generosity of our readers, in whose disappointment we fully share. It consoles us to think it probable, that at no distant day, some gifted pen will be employed to

furnish an extended memoir, in a more convenient and permanent form. By the peculiar incidents of his life, by the uncommon powers of his mind, by having exerted a commanding influence on the various interests of the Baptist Churches of two great Provinces, and by having acquired an unusual share in their affections, our deceased brother presents a most attractive subject of biography. The imperfect outline we now present is, to some extent, a revised report of what has appeared elsewhere.

By the "accident of birth," ROBERT ALEXANDER FYFE was a native Canadian, his parents having emigrated to this country from Dundee, Scotland, in 1809. He was born near Montreal, Oct. 20th, 1816, and spent his boyhood's days amidst a population principally French. With this fact before us, and from what we know of the social condition of "Lower Canada" at that time, we should naturally infer that the most favourable period for laying the foundation of a solid education was



(From a Photograph by Poole of St. Catharines.)

in his case unblest with any very great opportunities. Such, in fact, was his misfortune. The only particular concerning these earlier days, which we have seen recorded, is that the "schooling" he received was of the most rudimentary character. He was evidently quite young when he entered upon business pursuits, for in his twentieth year we find him leaving the store in which he had served as a clerk, and bidding farewell to secular avocations, after having won golden opinions from his employer as to his moral worth and capabilities. It seems probable that the greatest event of his life—the event most pregnant with importance to himself and, as was subsequently seen, to the cause of