

THE HON. ROBERT A. HARRISON, D.C.L.

THE late Chief Justice Harrison afforded a striking exemplification of the power of work. His native intellectual powers were above the average, but he was far less brilliant than were some of his contemporaries at the Canadian Bar who have not attained to anything approaching an equal degree of professional eminence. His industry and steadiness of purpose were the qualities mainly instrumental in placing him in the proud and honourable position which he attained. His capacity for steady, continuous, hard labour has probably never been surpassed by any lawyer in this country, and in his case it has left abundant traces behind it.

He was the eldest son of the late Mr. Richard Harrison, formerly of Skegarvey, in the county of Monaghan, Ireland, by his marriage with Miss Frances Butler, of Newton Butler, in the county of Fermanagh. He was born at Montreal on the 3rd of August, 1833, but his parents removed to the township of Markham, in the county of York, within a few months after his birth. While he was still a mere child the family removed from Markham to Toronto, where he was destined to spend the greater part of his life. He received his education, first at Upper Canada College, and afterwards at the University of Trinity College, Toronto, where he took his degree of B.C.L. in 1855, and that of D.C.L. about four years later. Having fixed upon the law as his

profession, he entered the office of Messrs. Robinson & Allan as a law student when he was in his seventeenth year. When he was about eighteen, and had been less than two years a student, he commenced the compilation of a work which was destined to make his name known to every lawyer in the country. This work was "A Digest of all Cases determined in the Queen's Bench and Practice Courts of Upper Canada, from 1843 to 1851, inclusive." He was about a year in writing and compiling the work, and nearly as long in passing it through the press. Being a young law student, unknown to the profession, his "Digest" was published under the supervision of Mr. (now Sir) James Lukin Robinson, who was then the authorized reporter to the Court of Queen's Bench. The work was published in the joint names of "Robinson & Harrison," and is known to the profession as "Robinson & Harrison's Digest." It was most successful, and, as has been intimated, brought Mr. Harrison's name prominently before the legal profession. This was the only legal work he wrote during the time he was a law student, though he was a frequent contributor to the magazines and newspapers of the day. It was during his student days also that he first aspired to University honours. He entered the University of Toronto, in the Law Faculty, but subsequently migrated to Trinity College. He