

LIFE  
OF  
WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE.

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CHAPTER I.

The Crisis approaching—Report of the Royal Commissioners, in Lower Canada  
—The Effect on Upper Canada—Lord John Russell's Coercion Resolutions  
for seizing the Public Chest of Lower Canada—They create a Hurricane of  
Indignation in the Province—The Principle at Stake—Anti-coercion Meet-  
ings—Mackenzie's Reasons for thinking the Lower Canadians would succeed  
in an Appeal to Arms—The Declaration of the Upper Canada Reformers—  
Its private History—A Central Vigilance Committee formed in Toronto, of  
which Mr. Mackenzie was Agent and Secretary—An Organization through-  
out the Country set on foot, in such a way that it could be used for Mili-  
tary purposes—It afterwards became the Instrument of Revolt—Mackenzie  
attends a Series of Public Meetings as Agent of the Toronto Vigilance  
Committee—The chief Actors in many of these Meetings become involved  
in the Insurrection—Independence declared to be necessary, and Calls to  
Arms are made—Disturbances at the Public Meetings—"Pikes and Rifles"  
—Two Hundred Meetings held, and One Hundred and Fifty Vigilance  
Committees formed—Some of the Leaders joined no Association.

THE crisis was now rapidly approaching. It was to come first in Lower Canada, with which the fortunes of the Western Province were to become involved. The Royal Commissioners, appointed to inquire into the grievances complained of in Lower Canada, had reported; and about the middle of April, their reports—five in number—were made public. The surrender of the casual and territorial revenue to the Assembly, whose claim to control it had led to repeated and angry disputes, was recommended, on condition that the arrearages of salaries amounting to