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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

OF THE

CITY AND HARBOUR OF TORONTO.

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TORONTO, the metropolis of Canada, and chief town of Canada West, is situated on the north shore of lake Ontario, towards its western extremity, in lat. 43° 39' 25" north, long 79° 21' 30" west of Greenwich. It was founded by Governor Simcoe in 1794, and partly burned by the Americans in the war of 1813. In 1817, Toronto (then Little York) contained a population of 1,200 inhabitants; in 1826 it had increased to 1,677; in 1830 to 2,860. Its subsequent progress has been more rapid than any other town in Canada. In 1842, it contained 15,336 inhabitants; in 1845, 19,706; and its population at this time is upwards of 25,000.

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Toronto was incorporated in the year 1834, and is divided into six wards. Each ward returns annually two aldermen and two common councilmen, to represent them in the City Council; and the Council choose the mayor from among the aldermen. In this body is vested the legislative power of the city. Toronto also returns two members to represent her in the Parliament of Canada.

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The improvements made in the city within the last few years have been astonishing. Many of its buildings are of cut stone. The public edifices are well adapted for their purposes, and some of them have a very striking appearance. They comprise the Government, Parliament and Court Houses; the University, Upper Canada College, the City Hall, St. Lawrence Hall, Osgoode Hall, and Temperance Hall; several handsome Churches; the Toronto General Hospital, three Lying-in Hospitals, a General Dispensary, Lunatic Asylum, Custom House, the Royal Magnetic Observatory, House of Industry, several Banks, a Mechanics' Institute, a Theatre, two Firemen's Halls, and a Fort and Barracks.

Among the buildings enumerated, those more particularly deserving of notice are the Bank, Osgoode and St. Lawrence Halls, the Lunatic Asylum, and University. Of these the Asylum is, and the University is designed to be, on the most magnificent scale.

Toronto harbour or bay, in which a considerable fleet might ride in perfect security, has an extent of about three miles, and is formed by a long and narrow peninsula, stretching out to the south-west for about seven miles, and terminating in Gibraltar Point, on which a light-house is erected. The bay is about one and a half miles across, and from its depth of water affords extensive and safe anchorage ground.

The following graphic description of Toronto appears in *The Maple Leaf or Canadian Annual* for 1848:—

"A noble bay, clasped in the wide-spread arms of a natural breakwater, on the north-western shore of Ontario, attracted the keen eye of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe; and soon a few lowly roofs rising at the bottom of the marshes at the mouth of the slow-paced Don, and a low fort commanding the entrance of the bay, with the red-cross floating over its humble battlement, broke the monotony of the wild forest landscape.