

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF TORONTO.

CHAPTER I.

Rise and Growth of Towns and Cities—Toronto One Hundred Years Ago—Governor Simcoe—The First Parliament of Upper Canada—Selection of the Site for the New Capital of Upper Canada—Governor Simcoe's Removal to York—Building of the Town Roads—Appearance of York in 1794-95—President Russell—First Newspaper in York—Governor Hunter—First Market—Erection of St. James' Church—Dr. O. Stewart—York in 1806—The First Mail.

THE most striking effect of the rapid increase of population in Canada is the rise and growth of cities and towns. At the head of a lake, or where a stream empties into one of those inland seas and forms a natural harbour; or upon the bank of a navigable river, which flows through a fertile country, a pioneer of the forest, or an adventurous speculator sets himself down, and says, "here shall be a city." If his judgment be good, and the country around his imaginary Thebes or Athens be inviting, the waves of population which perpetually flow westward, stop for a time at his "location" and actually verify his dream. This is literally the history of the foundation of such cities as Toronto, Hamilton, and London. To convey an idea of the wealth that is created by population being thus suddenly centralized in a comparative wilderness, we have but to name the fact that in this very city of Toronto, within the memory of men now living, numerous instances are recorded of property, now worth thousands, even hundreds of thousands of dollars, being bought for a cow, or a horse, or a small quantity of goods out of a shop, or a few weeks' or months' labor of a mechanic. These things form the topics of fireside history in all large towns and cities in Canada. The poor man, the newly arrived emigrant, refer to them as foundations for hopes in the