

TORONTO OF TO-DAY, WITH

halls for the accommodation of the Provincial Legislature (which first met at Niagara) and the Courts of Justice, a vice-regal residence on the banks of the Don, and a fort and barracks for His Majesty's troops, erected at the mouth of the harbour. Almost concurrently with the erection of these buildings an arterial line of communication was cut by the soldiery for thirty miles through the virgin woods to the Holland River and the waterways to the North and West, while a post-road, traversing the Province, was also hewn out of the forest, giving access to the heart of the Peninsula and the old French settlements and English military posts at the Detroit and beyond.

The human interest connected with the site of Toronto, at the period we have referred to, may be said exclusively to centre in the families of two Mississauga Indians whose solitary wigwams were pitched on the wooded shores of the harbour and lake. It is not a little curious at the present day to note that from these Indians, or from the representatives of the tribe, the intruding white man acquired the area on which the city is now built for the munificent sum of ten shillings, *plus* a little "fire water," (even the preamble of the Scott Act had not yet been evolved!) sundry trinkets dear to the aboriginal heart, and an occasional issue of that conventional Indian habiliment, a gay new blanket. Nor were the pictorial and natural aspects of the scene originally less primitive. The whole region was in a state of nature, for the forests clothed the land as with a garment, and the reign of solitude was

supreme, save for the occasional cry of musquash or loon, as they disported themselves in the waters of the bay, or the soft fall of an Indian paddle. An early writer makes the remark that in a circumference of 150 miles, the Indians are the only neighbours of York.

EARLY SITE OF THE CITY.

To the eye of the shrewd first Governor, however, the fine geographical position, the capacious and well-sheltered harbour, and the ready means of reaching the north and west by "the Pass at Toronto," strongly recommended the site of Toronto as a desirable one for a future great city and the immediate, if not permanent, Provincial capital. What has since been achieved has amply justified Governor Simcoe's choice. At first, the growth of the town was slow, though it was aided by incoming bands of U.E. Loyalists, who, at the close of the American Revolution, gladly forfeited home and country to live on, even in a wilderness, under the Old Flag. But slow as was the growth, even what there was was interfered with and set back by the invading American forces in the War of 1812, which on two occasions burnt and sacked the town. Despite this, however, there was progress, for the solid qualities of the English race which had founded it triumphed over difficulties, and by the time the town was incorporated (*viz.*, in 1834) the city of Toronto had a population close upon 10,000.

GROWTH OF THE CITY.

In 1850 the population was under 30,000; the value of assessable property was