

CITIES AND TOWNS OF CANADA.

LONDON.

THE tourist unacquainted with the rapid growth of our towns in the west, will almost, on leaving Ingersol, in proceeding westward, come to the conclusion that he has left civilization behind. In proportion, therefore, will be his astonishment on emerging from a long pine tract, to see at some distance before him a large, well-built, and populous town. Yet London, the capital of the County of Middlesex, may lay claim to all, if not more, than this description. The town is finely situated, where the two branches of the Thames unite; and from its elevated position, is both healthy and picturesque. Taken from Askin's Hill, just above a sweep of the river, called the "Devil's Elbow," our sketch conveys a very fair, though not flattering, idea of London. Immediately in front is the railroad, with the new bridge crossing the stream, a little to the south-west of the Jail and Court House, on the right, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church stand; the former the handsomest Gothic edifice in Canada West, was designed and erected by Mr. Thomas, architect in Toronto, the latter, also, a very fine church has been recently built, and is a commodious and handsome structure. London boasts in all of some thirteen or fourteen churches, and Baptists, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, whether of the old form, the Free Kirk or Secession, Univesalists, and Colored Baptists have built, it would almost seem in a spirit of emulation, comfortable and substantial brick or frame places of worship. The Court House and Jail, which forms a very prominent object in our plate, is a fine pile of buildings and was erected at a cost of over six thousand pounds. A new Town Hall and Market House, a Mechanic's Institute, and a very large Grammar School have also been recently erected; a common brick school-house has been built by the Corporation, at an expense (says Smith's Canada) of seventeen hundred pounds. The barracks, which are roomy and commodious, are to the north of the town, and are not visible in our plate, as they are situated just between the Court House on the left and the Roman Catholic Church on the right. There are flourishing bank agencies and building societies here,

with societies innumerable, while there is no room to complain of the want of grist and saw mills, distilleries, foundries, tanneries or asheries. Labat's Brewery is too well known to all true lovers of malt to require particular notice; treble, double, or single X, are all to be had, and of a quality that would almost shake one's belief in the exclusive excellence of Hodgson or Bass's pale East India.

London has been singularly unfortunate in respect to fires, and has four times, within the last few years, suffered from the devouring element; on one occasion, the fire of 1845, one hundred and fifty large buildings were destroyed. The result of these repeated purifications has been that it contains fewer mean and shabby looking houses than most towns of similar importance.

The town was first laid out in 1826, and increased so fast that an additional survey was found necessary in 1834, and at that time more land was added to the town plan, the limits of which now cover over 1400 acres. Of this quantity five acres were reserved for a grammar school, five for a market place, and ten for agricultural purposes, holding fairs, &c., this will eventually be of great benefit to the town.

Much, doubtless, of the prosperity, everywhere visible, and the rapid increase in the population (nearly six thousand), is to be attributed to London having been so long a military station; but still, it is in the energy of the inhabitants and the productiveness of the adjacent country, that the real cause is to be found. The well-stocked shops and the expeditious yet safe mode of doing business, have long rendered London a place worthy of note in the far west, and speculation is even now rife as to how the railroad will affect the interests of the town. There are always some croakers to be found in every community, and such individuals are at present busy with their prognostications that, as the railroad progresses and the facilities of transportation are multiplied, so will the prosperity of this new thriving town in the same ratio decrease; but the same calculations were made years ago with respect to horses in Great Britain; yet as railroads increased, so did the number of horses increase likewise; and, granting that one class of travellers will cease to stop in London, in the same manner as business in-