

TORONTO: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

The plan of the future capital was drawn in that rectangular form which the military engineers of the Romans impressed on the conquered provinces of Europe, and of which the city of Chester is an interesting survival. However suitable for the camp of a Roman legion, or for the compact walled cities which grew out of such camps, this rectangular mode of laying out streets has proved far from practical for the widely extended cities on the American continent, where land is plenty and wars are rare. Professor Shaler had a theory that the Roman empire fell because of the economic waste due to the vast cost of the Roman roads. It is highly probable that the yearly loss due to the Roman system of laying out cities would build any road in the Roman empire. Few cities show this fault in so marked a degree as Toronto. In its growth from the tiny rectangle enclosed by George, Duke, Berkeley and Palace (now Front) Streets, about an eighth of a square mile in extent, to its present area of over thirty-two square miles, there has been hardly any variation in the rigid angularity of its outlines. Neither hill nor dale, creek nor river, bluff nor ravine has been allowed to deflect the monotonous straight lines of its streets. This is the more surprising since the few exceptions which help to prove the rule are so striking. The fine vista effects of the City Hall at the head of Bay Street, Osgoode Hall at the head of York, and the Parliament Buildings facing the Queen's Avenue were as barren of influence on the