

INTRODUCTION.

If we look retrospectively at the City of Ottawa, as it was twenty-five years since, and compare our then "*local habitation*," with its ungainly name, (Bytown,) and its thirty or forty houses, a tithe only of these, too, being of stone, with what "THE CITY OF THE WOODS" now is, well, indeed, may the metamorphosis call forth expressions of surprise and astonishment. Let us only go back to 1834, the ever memorable year of the second cholera, and when, what with the devastation effected by the all-conquering arm of "*the King of Terrors*" and the abscondings and removals consequent upon stagnation of business, we were reduced both literally and virtually to the piteous condition of a *By Town*, or out of the way place, —when a solitary steamer, in a state of hapless inactivity, might be seen moored at the wharf for three days in the week. for want of occupation,—when, in like manner, the royal mail was only delivered and dismissed every alternate day,—when a plain two story wooden house was pronounced by one of our military governors to be a splendid hotel for so small a place,—when we had neither a printing press, a foundry, a tannery, or even a butcher's stall, in the whole town—wanting entirely in a fire-engine, to quench our not unfrequent conflagrations, and scarcely possessing a patent pail to carry water with, even though we had one ;—and then look forward to what we have arrived at in less than a quarter of a century, with our five printing-presses, those mighty engines for the diffusion both of facts and falsehoods, our large, substantial and commodious hotels, our various foundries, tanneries, and markets, together with our half dozen fire-engines, and all other concomitants. Well, indeed, I repeat, may the primitive denizens of our quondam hamlet not only evince sentiments of wonder at our astonishing advancement, but feel pride as well in the circumstance of similar expressions having been spontaneously elicited both from the tourist and the topographer. In illustration thereof, perhaps, we cannot do better than copy the description of our infant city, as it is given in the last edition of the Canada Directory :—

"OTTAWA, C. W.—Formerly called *Bytown*.—One of the chief cities of Central Canada, situated on the Ottawa River, 87 miles from its confluence with the St. Lawrence, and at the mouth of the Rideau River. The city obtained its original name from its founder, Colonel By, an officer of the