

THE BACKWOODS' LIFE.

(FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1869.)

THE STORY OF PIONEER DAYS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF MELANCTHON.

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CHAPTER I.

"FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS AGO."

Forty or fifty years ago few settlers had pierced the forest of what may be called the Peninsula of Western Canada, now part of the new Province of Ontario, to any considerable depth north of the two lowest of the Great Lakes, whilst along the shores of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay, scarcely an opening had been made; the great interior still slumbered in the gloom of its ancient solitude, a wilderness of pine, and maple—primeval haunt of the deer, the Red Indian, the wolf, and the bear.

What is now the thriving settlement of Corning's Mills, far to the north and west of Toronto, was at this early period, known only from its beaver-dams to a few adventurous trappers, "native burghers of the wood," who, in pursuit of the mink and beaver along the creeks and rivers, were in reality the first white pioneers of the Canadian woods, although, as in the case of the aboriginal wanderers—the mysterious tribes of the forest, with whom they often frequented, and whose mode of life they partly adopted, nearly all of them have passed away and been forgotten.