

“PRIEST BROWN.”

It is not of a tonsured, cassocked, celibate Romish ecclesiastic, gentle reader, that we now propose to write, as you might suppose from our caption; no, but of a plain, paternal, practical Methodist Minister of the olden times in this Province, who gained the *sobriquet* of “PRIEST” among his neighbors, because of his gravity, and his being almost the only clergyman of any denomination, for many miles around, to baptize the living and to bury the dead—and after the passage of the famous “MARRIAGE ACT,” to join the rustic nymphs and swains with Hymen’s silken band. Aye, and this rite, we are most certain, was often performed by him as a *magistrate* long before the law allowed him to do it as a *minister*—such were the anomalies of the ancient regime. The above mentioned cognomen gave place, in the course of time, with many at least, to that of “ELDER BROWN,”—a title which senior ministers in this Province largely rejoiced in, thirty and forty years ago. And this again gave place to “FATHER BROWN;” and lastly, to that of “OLD FATHER BROWN,” by which phrase his neighbors usually distinguished him during his latter years. The more tasteful and reverent, spoke of him as “the VENERABLE WILLIAM BROWN.”

He was born the 21st of August, 1769, in Duchess County, in what our American neighbors now call the “Empire State,” then very much of a wilderness. Along with many other hardy pioneers, he came to Canada in the year 1795, an active young man of *twenty sic*, and settled not far from the St. Lawrence, and near the town line between Augusta and Edwardsburgh. Serious religion being understood and practised by very few, rude hilarity marked the social gatherings of the settlers. A knowledge of music and the use of the violin, rendered the services of young Brown much desiderated. But the fervent and tireless itinerant Methodist preachers were in the country, sounding the alarm in every listening sinner’s conscience; many took the warning, and among the rest, one year after his arrival, WILLIAM BROWN, the particulars of whose conversion, it is cause of regret, that we are unable to give. He immediately joined the Church, and it is surmised, belonged to the same class with SAMUEL EMBURY, JOHN LAWRENCE, and PAUL and BARBARA HECK, (the planters of Methodism in New York) rejoined beyond the Big-Creek.

About this time, an isolated settlement was forming across the woods (a modern *Transylvania*) on either bank of the rapid Rideau, then undisfigured and undisguised by the dams and locks of the canal which now coincides with it and bears its name. How the people got there, we of this generation are left to conjecture. If through the woods, it must have been