

OIL LANDS OF ONTARIO.

Without entering into a lengthened and, to the majority of readers, uninteresting geological, and particularly lithological, description of the oil lands of Ontario, or reviewing the numerous speculations as to the origin of petroleum, we will briefly state that the Corniferous, which is the oil-producing formation, underlies in a greater or less degree the Counties of Welland, Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant, Oxford, Perth, Huron, Bruce, Essex, Kent, and Lambton, or more generally "all that part of the Province lying to the south and west of a curved line, running from the foot of Lake Erie to Stratford, to an undefined point on Lake Huron, west to the mouth of the Saugeen River. A considerable part of this area is, however, overlaid by the shales of the Hamilton formation, and the overlying Portage and Chemung groups; but by far the greater part is overlaid by drift deposits of clays, sands and gravel, and it is in or through these overlying drift deposits, and their underlying Hamilton formation, that mineral petroleum springs are found in the greatest abundance, and wells are sunk through, to, and into the underlying Corniferous formation." The oil-bearing districts of Ontario have been long known to the Indians. In places where the oil was found floating on the surface of the water, they obtained it by saturating their blankets with the surface liquid and squeezing out the retained oil, which they used medicinally; at a subsequent period the white settlers used it for such general purposes as lubricating waggon wheels and farming machinery. In many places, as at Enniskillen and Bothwell, the overflow of oil becoming dried, partly by oxidation and partly by volatilization, left solid beds of tarry bitumen, which are found, from the surface to ten feet beneath it, varying in thickness from a few inches to a couple of feet, some of the deeper of which are separable into thin layers or laminae, and retain the impressions of animal and vegetable life, which had been embedded in it while in a liquid state, thus representing *the characteristics of coal*.

The discovery of Petroleum, on the flats of Black Creek, dates as far back as 1840. In the year 1858 it was tested as a burning oil, and found to possess all the qualities of the finest Pennsylv-