

## INTRODUCTION.

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VERY many years before the great war, the forest counties of Northern Pennsylvania which border on New York and are watered by the Alleghany, Sinnemahoning, and Clarion were vast forest-lands, little disturbed as yet by the axe or the plough. Roads were few and bad. Railways were unknown. Here and there a primitive mill, driven by water-power, sawed out the planks needed for a scant and widely-scattered population. In the winter lumbering-parties were busy near the greater streams, and in the spring a few rafts found their way down to the Ohio or on the other side of the "divide" to the Susquehanna.

Along the rivers, at rare intervals, a log cabin, and, still farther apart, a group of houses known as a town, made up, with the lumber-camps, all that there was of human habitation. The lands had been taken up years before the date of my tale, by a few settlers, chiefly from New England or Eastern Pennsylvania, in the hope that the wealth of coal beneath the soil would one day enrich them, when the iron roads should give access to the lake. Among these pioneers were some