

ROSE-BELFORD'S

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ONTARIO FIFTY YEARS AGO AND NOW:

A CONTRAST.

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THE settlement of Ontario, known as the Province of Upper Canada, or Canada West, up to the time of Confederation, began in 1784, so that at the date I propose to make a brief survey of the condition and progress of the country, it had been settled forty-six years. During those years—no insignificant period in a single life, but very small indeed in the history of a country—the advance in national prosperity, and the various items that go to make life pleasant and happy, had been wonderful. The muscular arm of the sturdy pioneer had hewn its way into the primeval forest, and turned the gloomy wilderness into fruitful fields.

It is well known that the first settlers located along the shores of the River St. Lawrence, the Bay of Quinté, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie, and that, at the time of which I speak, this coastline of a few hundred miles, extending

back but a very short distance, a long narrow strip cut from the serried edge of the boundless woods, comprised the settlement of Canada West as it then existed. Persistent hard-work had placed the majority in circumstances of more than ordinary comfort. Good houses had taken the place of log cabins, and substantial frame barns that of rude hovels. Hard fare and scanty raiment had given place to an abundance of the necessities of life, and no people, perhaps, ever appreciated these blessings with more sincere thankfulness and hearty contentment. The farmer was a strong hardy man, the wife a ruddy, cheerful body, careful of the comforts of her household. One table sufficed for themselves and their servants or hired help. Meat was provided twice and often thrice a day; it being more a matter of taste than economy as to the number of times it was served. Fruit was abundant and