

MEMOIRS

...OF...

RALPH VANSITTART, M. P.

CHAPTER I.

MY ANTECEDENTS.

It was the month of May, 1861. Spring in all her beauty was upon us. And where is spring more charming than in Canada? A week of rain had been followed by a week of southerly winds and cloudless skies, and now the trees and fields were decked in their richest livery of green. The vulgar dandelion dotted the meadows, as if some fairy over-night had passed along with bounteous hand, and sewn the fields with golden guineas. The maple woods back of the farm were all aglow with red and white trilliums, with the delicate and graceful claytonia, and the heptica and violet, earliest of all the woodland flowers, while here and there, in some low-lying and secret recess, the careful seeker after nature's jewels, might find a clump of orchids—the lady's slipper, and all her family.

Our story opens on a farm of some 500 good acres of arable land and woodland, sloping on its front down to the broad valley of the River Thames, some ten miles or thereabouts from the city of London, in the then Province of Upper Canada. The old homestead had