

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENERAL WORK OF THE CHURCH. THE OXFORD MOVEMENT AND OTHER MATTERS.

"Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis" ("The times change and we change with them"). So runs the old Latin proverb, and in nothing is the truth of the proverb so apparent as in the state of the Church, her mode of work and the conduct of her services as it is now, and as it was fifty years ago.

For the first forty years of the Church's history in Canada her bishops and clergy for the most part belonged to the school of thought now known as "Evangelical," and they would have looked with horror on any one of their number who had ventured to assert that he disclaimed the title of Protestant. They were generally faithful preachers, and where it was at all possible visited their widely-scattered parishioners with more or less frequency. In very few of the churches was there more than one service on the Sunday, and that in the morning or in the afternoon, the reason being that the parishes were of such very great extent that the clergyman had often to hold his service in the morning in the parish church, near which he generally resided, and then ride, drive, or even walk several miles to hold a second service, perhaps, in the open air in summer, or, at best, in a parlour of a more than usually commodious farmhouse, or in the farmer's barn. This is no fancy picture; there are many Anglicans still living in and near Toronto, Kingston, and London who can remember when their only place of worship was the open air, or a private room, or barn, in the first and last cases the seats consisting of newly-sawn boards resting on rough trestles. The person officiating was generally a clergyman, but not always, as laymen were, not infrequently, licensed to read prayers and a sermon to the scattered congregations where the services of a clergyman could not

be obtained. The Holy Communion, where there was a church erected, was administered generally on the first Sunday in the month, and baptisms, when they took place in the church, after the reading of the second lesson at morning or afternoon prayer. Marriages were often solemnized in the church, but just as often in the house of the father or guardian of the bride, or in the clergyman's own house. These latter customs have even yet by no means fallen into desuetude.

In the days spoken of, evening services, even in the towns, were unheard of; it was not until the "forties" were well advanced that they were introduced in Toronto, though they are now all but universal in towns and country alike. Choral services, surpliced choirs, harvest festivals, Easter decorations, were undreamt of, and by the vast majority of Church people, both lay and clerical, would have been looked on with suspicion as being in a direct tendency towards Rome.

But gradually a change came in the feelings of Anglicans towards more frequent services and more elaborate ritual. In 1835 commenced in England what has been variously described as the "Oxford movement," the "Tractarian movement" and "Puseyism." This latter ill-timed appellation has now happily wholly died out. The leaders of this religious revival were Hurrell Froude, John Keble, the saintly author of *The Christian Year*, John Henry Newman (afterwards Cardinal Newman), Robert Wilberforce, and some others of lesser note. Their object was, as Newman himself has stated: "The vital question was, how were we to keep the Church from being liberalized?" Just prior to the appearance of the *Tracts for the Times*, the Home Government of the day had suppressed ten of the bishoprics in the Irish Church,