



Halifax at the End of the Eighteenth Century.

When the good people of Halifax found themselves at the close of the eighteenth century, they must have felt that they had a great deal on which to be congratulated, both in regard to dangers passed, as well as present prosperity. Nearly fifty-one years had passed since Cornwallis had landed with his two thousand seven hundred and fifty-six settlers, and much hardship and many dangers lay buried in the half century. But all that was now over. The Acadians, who at first may have threatened the safety of the infant colony, had been expelled from their homes forty-five years before; and the Indians, a still more dreaded foe, had buried the hatchet with all due solemnity in 1760; the Revolutionary War, with all its possible dangers to the little city, had been concluded; England had lost her thirteen colonies, but Halifax had gained a large increase in her population, of just such a class as she most needed, through the advent of the United Empire Loyalists—those brave people who were true to their flag to be willing to live in a land where the Union Jack had ceased to wave.

True, England was again at war with France, but although all Europe trembled before the successes attending the French arms, under the directing genius of Napoleon, the English colonies in America were too far away from the scene of combat to be very much disturbed. Once or twice Wentworth had prepared his capital to resist French attack. Forts were built, local regiments were raised, and the press-gangs forcibly recruited for His Majesty's ships, but Halifax was left alone. French privateers did capture some ships bound to or from Halifax, but our local sailors, as well as Her Majesty's ships, kept our prize courts very busy in those days, and our city flourished, as indeed she has always flourished in war time.

I read a story the other day about a certain Captain Godfrey and his

ship, the Rover, and as this tale shows how true descendants our ancestors were of Drake and his class, I must wander from my subject long enough to tell it. Godfrey sailed from the little port of Liverpool, N. S., in command of the brig Rover. Her armament consisted of fourteen four-pounders, her crew of some fifty-five men and boys. She sailed south until she reached the Spanish main, and here she fell in with a Spanish schooner, the San Rilita, with an escort of three gunboats. The Spaniards must have thought they had a very easy prey for even without her escort the San Rilita was more heavily armed than the Rover, and her crew consisted of nearly five times as many men. The fight raged for three hours, and then the gunboats drew away, leaving the San Rilita, with an escort of three gunboats to her fate. They boarded her, and found fourteen men lying dead on her deck, and seventeen others disabled by their wounds. "We captured," reports Godfrey, "seventy-one prisoners including wounded." Most of the officers were killed. I suppose the Rover had not room for so many involuntary passengers, for Godfrey landed all his prisoners, except eight men, making them take their oath that they would not again bear arms against King George. As a reward for his exploit, our hero was offered the command of an English man-of-war, but he refused. Probably he found privateering as exciting and lucrative as his heart could wish.

I suppose it was partly due to the fear of French invasion that at this time, when England must have needed a great many soldiers in Europe, three regiments were still stationed in Halifax. One of these, the Royal Nova Scotia Fencible Regiment, had been raised here, but as all the commissions were given to Imperial officers, it was not as thoroughly Canadian as our present Provisional Regiment. The Duke of Kent was in command of the

Garrison, and he seems to have proved himself most affable, patronizing all the public functions of the day, and being on very friendly terms with some of the principal citizens. Halifax had other illustrious visitors in these days, for on October 20th, 1799, H. M. S. Porcupine came into port, bringing with her no less a personage than the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe), accompanied by his two brothers. Although they were considered prisoners on parole, they seem to have taken part in all the gaieties of the day, and years afterwards when Louis Philippe was King of France, he spoke of the kindness he received in Halifax.

At that time, with the large garrison stationed here, Halifax on Sundays must have presented a very gay sight. All the troops, engineers and artillery, as well as the three regiments, with bands playing and colors flying, marched off to service at St. Paul's or St. George's. But old St. Paul's was the fashionable church, for there worshipped the Governor and the General, the Admiral and His Honor the Chief Justice.

The old church, with its great square pews and three-decker pulpit, must have been gay with color then. The red coats of the soldiers, the blue and gold of the Admiral and his staff, and the gay dresses of the ladies (for need we doubt that all the youth and beauty of the town were there) must have lighted up the somewhat sombre old building.

The service of St. Paul's was dignified enough a hundred years ago. As the organ pealed out the notes of the voluntary, forth from the vestry stepped the clergyman, preceded by the beadle, clad in drab, faced with gold, and bearing a great silver-headed mace. The worthy escorted them to their place, and then marched with all due solemnity to the vestry.

The pulpit then was of the three-decker variety. The clerk occupied the lower part; above him stood the clergyman who read the service, and from the third and topmost division the preacher of the day, clad in the black gown, only disused in St. Paul's some ten or eleven years ago, probably gave his hearers a pretty big dose of sermon, for in those days there was no leaning towards mercy in the

of the discourses. After the service was over, we can imagine how everybody met everybody else, and discussed the last news from home and the newest scandals, while the troops were forming up again. Then His Royal Highness and His Excellency the Governor drove off in their respective carriages, and the upper ten bade each other au revoir, to meet again on the Commons that afternoon to see the troops go through their weekly drill before His Royal Highness Edward Duke of Kent.

MARCUS RIFE.