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The Light of Other Days

ST. PAUL'S, Halifax, has just completed one hundred and seventy years of existence. The Rector, Archdeacon Armitage, is giving a series of historical sermons outlining the place of St. Paul's in the Church life of the town.
One of the first acts of Governor Cornwallis after landing at Chebucto, as Halifax was then called, in 1749, was to send to Boston for the framework of oak and pine for a church. The building was opened in September, 1750, and is still standing—the beautiful St. Paul's of to-day. Not many of the old families of Halifax are left to worship within its walls, and yet they will never be altogether forgotten, for one has only to study the early church register, the tablets on the walls, the plain slabs in the old burying-ground, to know who were the men and women who laid the foundation of Church life in Canada.

The character of St. Paul's has changed with the changing years. One writer has said: "In the early days of Halifax St. Paul's Church was the centre of English influence and of the official life of the colony. It stands out boldly in the history of the town because of its prestige and stability which came to it from its connection with the State." In those early days there was a law, "that the wardens and constables should, once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon, in the time of Divine service, walk through the town to observe and suppress all disorders and apprehend all offenders." St. Paul's Church thus carried great weight and much authority in the whole life of the town.

In "The Life and Times of Joseph Howe" Mr. Fenerty gives a witty description of life in Halifax in the early part of the nineteenth century, and of St. Paul's connection with the social life:—

"In those days it was as great a difficulty to pass muster and find entrée into Government House and become an associate with the Halifax *beau monde* as it is at the present day to obtain admission to the Queen's drawing-room receptions. St. Paul's Church upon the Sabbath was the grand pivotal centre next to Government House, where the great people congregated. Very few persons "not to the manor born" occupied pews below the galleries. There was no garrison chapel, and the pews were situated at both ends of the Communion Table. Looking down from a front pew in the gallery, my boyish eyes magnified all those shreds of humanity as worshippers something more than human. The array of scarlet, the Governor and his suite, the Bishop and the judges, all the great heads of departments, the great merchants, all presented a *coup d'oeil* which was to me more impressive than that many years afterwards when I occupied a seat in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, when the Queen, Prince Albert and some of England's most illustrious nobility worshipped there!"
He tells of the changes sixty years later. "The doors of the old, stately pews were removed and the interior considered free to all-comers. I no longer beheld the old officials and their families, wrapped in their ex-

clusiveness, but a staid, respectable-looking body of people of all professions, trades and occupations, resembling other ordinary mortals of other persuasions."

The reason for this change has been outlined by Dr. Mockridge in his work, "The Bishops of the Church of England in Canada."

When Bishop Binney, who was consecrated in 1851, arrived in Halifax, he "continued to use St. Paul's Church for the cathedral church of the diocese, as his predecessors had done, and as was fitting and proper. St. Paul's was the old, historic church, the mother church, and in it was the proper place for the Bishop's chair. But the new Bishop had an objection to the use of the black gown in preaching, and also to the placing of the elements of the Holy Communion on the Lord's Table before the beginning of the office. His wishes were opposed at St. Paul's."

In the meantime a "Chapel of Ease," which had been struggling for existence in the southern part of the city for several years, and which had been consecrated by Bishop Binney and set apart in 1856 as a parish church under the title of St. Luke's, seemed to afford the Bishop an opportunity of worshipping where the service could be rendered in accordance with his wishes. In 1865 he constituted it the cathedral of the diocese, and set up a dean and chapter." When St. Paul's was opened it received a Royal Charter, with a Royal Founder, King George II., and is designated "A Royal Foundation, and of Exempt Jurisdiction." Evidently the Bishop was not supreme in authority at St. Paul's.

THE MINISTER WHO STOLE SERMONS.

"Some fifty years ago (1845) a young minister suddenly appeared in St. Paul's Church, Halifax, and soon became the idol of the town for his eloquent sermons, his elocution and oratorical powers generally. He held his congregation spellbound as though he possessed a magic, magnetic influence over every soul present. Long before the hour of service the church doors were besieged by many persons desirous of getting in after the pew-owners had taken their places. The appearance of this young preacher was very fine, and his graceful gestures were not surpassable. His praises were upon everyone's lips. By-and-by it leaked out that this highly popular minister was preaching other people's sermons. In other words, he was a plagiarist. A reaction set in, and the famous young divine disappeared from the arena as suddenly as he came forward."

The St. Paul's of to-day is not the cathedral church, nor a State church, but under the present Rector, who has been its minister for over twenty years, it is a veritable beehive of usefulness, lively in good works and in strong church organizations.

"Timbered in times when men built strong,
With a tower of wood grown gray,
The frame of it old, the heart still young,
It has stood for many a day."
—Eaton.

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