



ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, BELLEVILLE,
DIOCESE OF ONTARIO.

seats were of the old fashioned square family pew style, with a table in the centre, which was probably more comfortable than ecclesiastical. The pulpit and prayer desk of the well known three-decker style were placed in the centre of the church, behind which was the chancel.

The use of the black gown in the pulpit necessitated many a procession from the pulpit to the vestry, which was at the west end of the church, in order to change surplice for gown and then gown for surplice.

This church becoming unfit for service, and unsafe, each swing of the bell causing it to creak (there was a church bell in Belleville in those days), the building was torn down and the corner stone of a new one was laid in 1855, by Dr. Ridley (father of Dr. Ridley, of Hamilton), who was one of the prominent churchmen at the time.

This building was destroyed by fire on February 26, 1876, and, owing to some disagreements among the congregation, was not again erected until three years had expired. The new church was opened for service December, 1879.

The seating capacity of this St. Thomas' Church is about 600. The seats are nearly all rented. The average congregation being about 200.

The building is of stone, and gothic in style.

The tower is not yet completed, and some day, we believe, is to be surmounted by a spire.

The first rector was the Rev. Thomas Campbell, who, after fifteen years' ministry in Belleville died on September 17, 1835, at the early age of forty-seven. The Rev. Mr. Cochrane, who had been taking the duty during Mr. Campbell's illness, succeeded to the rectory. Mrs. Cochrane is still living in Belleville, and is a member of St. Thomas' congregation.

The Rev. John Grier was appointed to the rectory after Mr. Cochrane, in the year 1838. After many years of labor, during which time he was the only clergyman in the county and had, therefore, to take long and wearisome drives into the back country,

Mr. Grier felt the necessity of having assistance in his work, so, in September, 1861, he called to his aid the Rev. Septimus Jones, who proved a most earnest and zealous worker. He remained curate for two years and then left to take charge of another congregation in another part of the town. The Rev. Arthur Baldwin took Mr. Jones' position.

The decease of the Rev. John Grier in 1870, called up many reminiscences in connection with Church work in Belleville, as he had been rector of the parish for over thirty-three years, during which time he was prominently associated with the social, religious and educational interests of the town. His kind and affable manner secured for him a friend in everyone and his presence on all occasions was sure to give life and cheer to those assembled. The handsome St. Thomas' Church was erected entirely under his supervision, he watching the laying of nearly every stone from basement to finish. For over thirty years he had been chairman of the Grammar and Joint School Trustees of the town, and only declined when old age warned him that his time was nearly over,—a result which took place, strange to say, almost immediately afterwards. When he took charge of Belleville it was but a small village, and he lived to see it an incorporated city.