

**THE RISE OF
METHODISM
BRIEFLY SKETCHED**

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The Rise of Methodism Briefly Sketched by Robert Tate Gaskin

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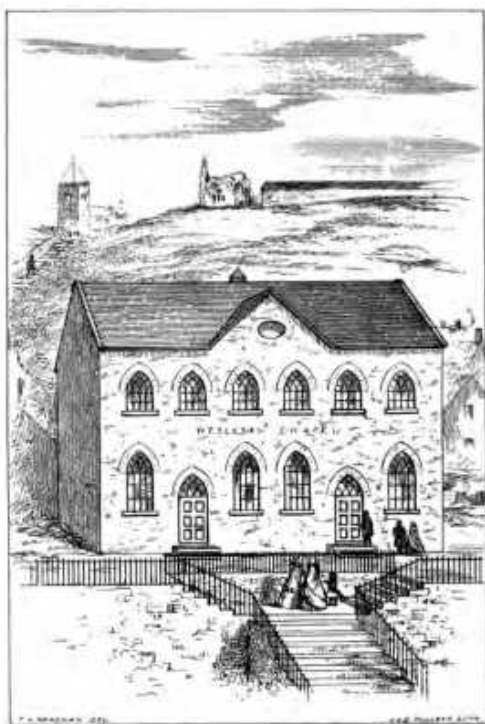
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ROBERT TATE GASKIN

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WHITBY OLD WESLEY CHAPEL,

OPENED BY J. WESLEY 1788.

THE
RISE OF METHODISM

BRIEFLY SKETCHED.

BY

ROBERT TATE GASKIN.

"If you ask me on what principle I acted, it was this—a desire to be a Christian, and a conviction that whatever I judge conducive thereto that I am bound to do; wherever I can best answer this end, there it is my duty to go."

John Wesley.

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1868.

110 of 6.

The substance of the following little work was given as a lecture before the Whitby Wesleyan Young Men's Association; a society which, under the presidency of the Rev. W. H. Bambridge, was of great service to its members. The favour with which the paper was then; and on a subsequent occasion; received, and the apparent want of a small book on the subject, have induced its revision, enlargement, and publication.

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The Rise of Methodism.

To rightly estimate the life of an individual who has been famous, it is necessary to consider the state of the times in which he lived, and to have regard to the powers which were armed against him; for the qualities of a man may in some measure be known by the opposition he overcomes. We cannot be altogether independent of what takes place around us. It was the boast of one illustrious character that he made circumstances. And so do we all; but still to begin with we must take things as we find them. In the case referred to—that of Napoleon—as far as we know, war made his fortune; and the cause of his glory must be sought far back in the previous ages, when tyranny was producing the French Revolution. Martin Luther found the plot of his life's drama in the corruptions of the Romish Church. John Wesley might have lived and died an earnest, yet unnoticed clergyman, but for the vices of English society.

The history of England during the reigns of the first and second Georges is not a pleasant one to a religious or a patriotic Englishman. For, while there were noble deeds by flood and field, and the

might of England was felt here and there as it had been before and as it has often been since, and while science and literature had a few of their "bright, particular stars," the annals of that period record for the most part the story of unnecessary wars unskillfully conducted; of the weaknesses of monarchs whose "predominant and habitual passions were for mistresses, punch, and money;" of parliamentary corruption and ministerial intrigues; of almost universal licentiousness in the aristocracy and of spiritual wickedness in high places; of immoral writings and popular infidelity; of ignorance, brutality, and crime amongst the people. The resolutions of Government seemed to be that so long as the people were not Papist they might be Infidel—so long as they were not Jacobin they might be wicked.

In those days no gentleman need show his face in public who durst not fight for his position; and it was a glory to have had an "affair of honour." So deeply was this mixed with the spirit of the times that you may read of a religiously-disposed man making his will before fighting a duel, recommending his soul to God and asking forgiveness for the meditated crime from which he had neither grace nor nerve to refrain.

Gambling and card-playing prevailed to an enormous extent, and were not confined to the male sex. They were the rage amongst fashionable women. So perseveringly did they give themselves *up to them* that it was said that children were then

born with the five of clubs impressed upon them. Such a custom could not fail to induce domestic misery and looseness of morals.

The state of the army and navy was deplorable. Mr. Wesley was at Newcastle during the rebellion of 1745, and was struck with the drinking and cursing of the soldiery, and reflected that it was scarcely possible that God should bless the arms of such men. Ten years after, we find in a letter addressed to Pitt, it is hoped some method may be taken, by discouraging national sins, to gain the favour of the Lord of Hosts. It is said they could not hope that God would bless the counsels of those who are avowedly despisers of his laws and live in open contempt of religion, and who spend that time in gaming which should be devoted to the worship of God. Nor could they expect that God would go forth with our fleets and armies while the regiments were filled with profaneness in men and officers, and every man-of-war was a little hell of impiety. And he is earnestly intreated to abolish the custom of selling chaplaincies of regiments to wealthy clergymen, who entirely neglect their duties.

Now and then, under some extraordinary event, the people became alarmed. There was a striking instance of this in the year 1750. In February, several violent tremblings of the earth took place in London and the surrounding neighbourhood. Chimnies were overturned, the brasses and pewter fell from the shelves, and the people were greatly terrified. But when, just a month after, other and