

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF REV.  
JOSEPH TARKINGTON, ONE  
OF THE PIONEER METHODIST  
PREACHERS OF INDIANA**

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Autobiography of Rev. Joseph Tarkington, one of the pioneer Methodist preachers of Indiana by Joseph Tarkington & T. A. Goodwin

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MARIE SLAUSON TARKINGTON, 1886.



REV. JOSEPH TARKINGTON, 1886.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF  
REV. JOSEPH TARKINGTON,

ONE OF THE PIONEER METHODIST  
PREACHERS OF INDIANA.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY  
REV. T. A. GOODWIN, D. D.

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"He served his generation, then fell on sleep."

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CINCINNATI:  
PRESS OF CURTIS & JENNINGS.

1893.



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## INTRODUCTION.

SOME people read only the Preface or Introduction, and then, glancing through the text, lay the book down, supposing they have mastered it all. But the reverse is likely to be the method in this case; for the chief charm of the book is in what Mr. Tarkington has to say of himself and his times. To properly appreciate that, the reader must bear in mind that what he wrote was not for the public, but that, at the urgent solicitation of his children, these personal incidents were written down for their special use, and that they appear in this form at the suggestion of personal friends and admirers, who insist that they, too, have a right to them.

Not having been written for the public, the style is simply narrative, such as he was accustomed to use when talking in the family circle or among a company of familiar friends. Those who often enjoyed these conversations will not fail to see the original Tarkington before them as they read, and almost hear the sound of his voice, and catch the peculiar twinkle of his eye and his modes of expression.

Because the style is so like him, and because this family treasure is put into this form for the

especial pleasure of those whose veneration for him entitles them to family privileges, that style is preserved, and the booklet goes to them just as it came to the more immediate members of the household, marred only by this prosy introduction, in which the writer has attempted to throw a sidelight upon some incidents that will seem obscure to the younger people who may happen to be drawn into its perusal.

Some statements are incomplete as they stand in the text, and many of them require a little explanation from contemporaneous history to bring out the supreme worth of the narrative, a photograph of early times and old fashioned Methodism in Indiana.

How far this Introduction will aid in this, the reader must judge for himself, if he turns back to read it after having read Mr. Tarkington's story.

The story will be interesting to all who wish to study the beginning of things. No general history of the struggles of the early settlers of Indiana can possibly give as accurate an idea of its hardships and its incidental delights as this graphic account of his own experiences. The fact that the experiences of the Tarkington family were not exceptional, but were duplicated over and over again in all the river counties by those who had sought a home where the blight of slavery would not reach them, and, with slight modifications later on, when the "New Purchase" offered inducements to immi-

grants from a more northern latitude, will make the story the more instructive. It narrates things as seen and felt from within by one who saw it all, and was himself a great part of it.

The senior Tarkington seems to have been a roving character, seeking rest, but finding none for many years; but rovers were common then as now. He was evidently a man of pluck, however; and when he got started in the right direction to escape the curse of slavery, he never stopped until he was confronted by the boundary between civilization and the Indians, and so near the very "jumping off place" that Indians were for several years his immediate neighbors from over the line. After all, were not such rovers a sort of social and political necessity? They could not always choose the final resting-place at the first venture. It was probably best they could not. Each successive move served as an educator or preparation for the final.

The reader of Mr. Tarkington's brief story of himself and his times will often wish for more detail than he finds in it. If, in attempting to supplement this lack of fulness by incidents coming under this writer's observations, and in his personal experience, which further illustrates early customs and old-fashioned Methodism, he seems to be tedious and sometimes irrelevant, the reader may skip the surplusage, if indeed he turns back to read this Introduction at all. The truth is, Mr. Tarkington does not do himself justice, even to his children,