

One Hundred Years of Methodism in Lundy's Lane.

LECKEY the historian speaks of John Wesley as "the greatest figure in religious history since the reformation." Dr. Chalmers pronounced Methodism to be "Christianity in earnest." This earnest Christianity arose as the result of John Wesley's new birth in 1738, when at the mature age of 35 years. By birth and education Wesley was a high churchman, and like his father became a clergyman of the Established church in England. In an age of extreme formalism and spiritual deadness his life and work were marked by unusual strictness and fidelity. Yet he was far from satisfied with his own spiritual state. He came out from England to the American colonies, and spent some years as a missionary in Georgia. He returned to England with a sense of failure and groping for light. The light and peace of God came to him in a little meeting conducted by a layman in a private house in Aldersgate street, London, his feelings being expressed in language now familiar to all Methodists: "I felt my heart strangely warmed." From that date Wesley was a new man. This strange warmth—the life of the Holy Spirit—was soon felt by others. He had a new message to the dead churches which they would not receive. He was thrust out from the church of his fathers, took to the streets and highways, and fields; the common people heard him gladly, with wonderful rapidity the new life spread through the three kingdoms, and Methodism had begun its remarkable career.

The first Methodist church in the world was built in Bristol, England, in 1739. The new evangel was carried to distant places chiefly by emigrants and soldiers. Thus Methodism was founded by the Irish emigrants, Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, in New York in 1766, and in Newfoundland one year earlier, by another Irishman, Lawrence Coughlan, who had been received on trial as a preacher by John Wesley.

It is worth while looking at the beginnings of Methodism in Canada, where it is now the largest Protestant church and leads the country in every moral reform.

These beginnings it is not possible in every case to trace, for the reason that private members of Methodist societies in those days moving to new homes carried their Methodism with them, began to exhort their neighbors, and to form classes, and thus in many places the foundations of flourishing churches were laid "without observation" by laborers unknown and unrecorded. In this manner United Empire Loyalists had planted Methodism on the shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario and along the banks of the St. Lawrence before the advent of the regular itinerant preachers in these localities. The stirring conflicts, the quick movements and the strict discipline of Methodism while Wesley yet lived, seemed to have had a peculiar attraction for men in military life, and soldiers became in not a few places its most ardent founders and propagators. Capt. Webb was one of the first to come to the help of the infant society in New York city. Commissary Tuffey began to preach in Quebec as early as 1780, and tracing the first beginnings of Methodism on the Niagara frontier we find that the first preacher was also a soldier,

MAJOR, GEORGE NEAL,

who preached and formed the first class-meeting, in 1788. How was this first Methodist preacher welcomed in this neighborhood at that early day? Preaching as he did, against prevailing vices and loved sins of the time and place, he excited the opposition of "the baser sort," and the rabble pelted him with stones until the blood flowed down his face. But Neal was a soldier and stood his ground. What success attended his heroic ministry? Our means of information are but scanty, but we are able to name at least one of the converts under the first Methodist evangelist—a noted man in his day and a name revered until this day—Christian Warner, who lived near where St. David's