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## CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY METHODISM.

BY THE REV. JAMES GRAY.

THE system of doctrine and discipline known as Methodism is a little over a century and a quarter old. As to the number of its adherents, and its influence on the religious history and interests of the world, it has outstripped older sections of the Church. It has taken its full share in the work of Christian evangelization, and has stimulated other Churches by its zeal and activity to more vigorous and successful effort in spreading scriptural holiness throughout the world. It bears no marks of decrepitude or decay, but is still strong and willing to labour, and still confident, with divine aid, of success. The efforts of the past have not produced languor or weariness, nor have its triumphs led to supineness or over-confidence. They have rather tended to nerve for fresh conflict, inspire with more ardent hopes, and to gild the future with brighter anticipations. Its actual members are now estimated at between three and four millions, and its adherents at between twelve and fifteen millions. It has lived to see the contempt and violence with which it was treated in its earlier history pass away, and many of its general features—its modes of action, its spirit of aggression, and even some of its peculiar views of gospel