



WILL the young people try to visualise Earlsdon as it was sixty years ago ? There was no Albany Road and no direct thoroughfare, but one must needs come by Hearsall Common or the Warwick Road and cross Stivichall Common by a very rough and dirty road ; or approach it by the Six Fields, which ended at the entrance of Stivichall Common into quite a lovely and rural lane, bounded by hedge-rows and tall and stately elms. This lane was cut off from the common by a gate at which an old man stood, and earned odd pennies by opening and shutting. It is now called Earlsdon Avenue South.

Another way from Coventry was up a dreary Jetty near the present Albany Road. In winter this jetty was quite dangerous, as part of the way an open brook ran on one side, and further on was a high hedge intersected with old hollow oak trees, where boys and men concealed themselves and frightened pedestrians - especially the weaker sex.

The streets of the village were Arden Street, Clarendon Street, Moor Street, Earlsdon Street, Warwick Street, Providence Street and Cromwell Street. That which is now the Terrace was a lovely open lane ; the gardens which now front the houses in the Terrace have been annexed from the lane, and here the boys and young men and sometimes the young women, played games of a mild or rough character.

Earlsdon then was outside the City boundary, but the citizens of Coventry thought it a lovely walk on a summer's evening to Earlsdon. And so it was, and the young people thought so too, and often got lost.

There was no gas or electric light and no street lamps. Candles and small oil lamps only were used.

Well that is an outline of lovely Earlsdon as it was 60 years ago, but I must hasten on to tell how Methodism came to Earlsdon.

Well, during the Superintendency of the Rev. J. B. James, in 1873, he and his colleagues (Revs. Daniel Eyre, W. H. Weatherill and S. J. Burrell), with several earnest, godly men, thought it would be a good opening for the extension of the Methodist Church. I may not be able to recall all the names of these men, but God has their names in His record and they will not die. They were Mr. Flemons, Mr. G. Hodkinson and Mr. Hockey (superintendent of the Sunday School at Warwick Lane), to whom I owe a lasting debt of gratitude. A meeting was held and it was decided to begin but how ?

I

Well we took an old and derelict ribbon factory in Cromwell Street at the back of the three-storey houses on the right-hand side (now demolished). We put it in as neat a condition as we could and invited the neighbours and inhabitants of Earlsdon to a Sunday opening, having secured the services of the Minister of St. Michael's Baptist Chapel (Rev. T. Roseveare) to preach. He took for his text Matthew 9 and part of the 36th verse : "And were scattered abroad as sheep, having no shepherd."

#### POSTSCRIPT.

The foregoing lecture was delivered to the Earlsdon Wesley Guild on September 17th, 1930, and, at the instigation of the Rev. J. Parry Brooks, is published as a booklet. Thus the history of our Church by a contemporary of its early days is permanently preserved.

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