

ONE OF THE FATHERS IN METHODISM.

A MEMOIR OF BYGONE DAYS.

SHREWSBURY (or Salop, as more anciently called), an English County City, with its air of antique respectability, lays claim to no notoriety for its pushing enterprise or its rapid growth. Scarcely a greater contrast could be made than that between the Queen City of the West, Chicago, and this almost fossilized city of our native land. But it has a history which reaches back to the remote period of Roman settlement in Britain, and many names it has given to the roll of England's famous ones. These we stop not to examine, but select one to worldly fame unknown, but whom John Wesley called "The Father of Methodism in Shrewsbury."

In 1761, a way-worn traveller, sick and weary after a journey of twenty-five miles on a wretched horse, whose joltings were almost unbearable, with aching head and pain in his side, arrived for the first time in the City. His salutation was not flattering, yet not unprecedented. A mob gathered together apparently only to stare. Small in stature, but great in soul, he passed through them, entered an humble room, and preached as only John Wesley could preach, to the citizens of the place. A morning service at five the next day and he was gone; but in his brief stay he had planted the tree of the Methodist revival, and commenced a work which only Eternity shall terminate. Nearly each year, as it brought him to Madeley for a forenoon service in the Church of the Saintly Fletcher, brought him to Shrewsbury for an evening service, often accompanied by Fletcher himself. Jointly they laboured here; yet for very many years he saw but little fruit. Suddenly a change had taken place. In 1781, he went a little out of his way to open the new preaching house in Shrewsbury. "I did not," writes he, "so much wonder at the largeness as at the seriousness of the congregation; so still and deeply attentive a congregation I did not expect to see here. How apt are we to forget that important truth, that all things are possible with God." It was about this time that he said to a Mr. Thomas Brocus, an humble devoted class-leader and Local preacher, who for many years had lived in or around