

## The Martyrs in the Catacombs.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THEY lie all around me, countless in their number,

Each martyr with his palm.  
No torture now can rack them: safe they slumber,  
Hushed in eternal calm!

I read the rude inscriptions, written weeping,  
At night, with hurried tears.  
Yet what a tale they tell! their secret keeping  
Through all these thousand years.

"*In Pace.*" Yes, at peace. By sword, or fire,  
Or cross, or licitor's rod—  
Virgin, or matron; youth, or gray-haired sire;  
For all, the peace of God.

"*In Christo.*" Died in Christ. Oh, tragic story!  
Yet, over shouts and cries,  
And lion's roar, they heard the saluts in glory  
Singing from Paradise.

"*Ad Deum.*" Went to God. Wide swung the portal;  
Dim sunk the sands away;  
And, chanting "*Alleluia,*" the immortal  
Passed to Eternal Day.

Agnes, Cecilia! Names undying ever.  
What's Caesar's gain to this?  
He lived for self; they for their high endeavour.  
His, fame; theirs, endless bliss.

And Pagan Rome herself? Her wisest teacher  
Could but teach how to die!  
Sad, hopeless emp'ror, echoing the Preacher,  
"All, all is vanity."

He slew the martyrs. Yet, through ages crying,  
This nobler truth they give:  
"Life is but birth-throes. Death itself, not dying.  
We pass to God—to live."

O blessed hope! O faith that conquers sorrow!  
Pain, heart-break, all shall cease.  
They are but gateways to a glad to-morrow.  
"*In Pace.*" God is peace.

## Susanna Wesley.

BY MRS. MAY TWEEDIE.

THE eminent lady who forms the subject of this sketch, was no authoress of world-wide fame; no singer, whose voice carolled its owner into popularity; no modern controversialist, clamouring for woman's rights. But, greater than all these celebrities, Susanna Wesley comes before us as one of the most honoured of mothers.

Dr. Samuel Annesly, father of Mrs. Wesley, was the descendant of a family who could boast of respectable and, possibly, patrician ancestry. After a college course at Oxford, which was marked by industry rather than distinguished success, Dr. Annesly was ordained for the ministry. He occupied a prominent position in the church of his espousal; and, in 1652, married the daughter of Lawyer John White, a woman of intelligence and piety. They were blessed with a numerous offspring—some say twenty-four children—many of whom died in infancy.

Susanna, the youngest, was pos-

essed of mental qualities of a high order. Well educated for her time, she was not only skilled in French, but had a thorough knowledge and command of the English language. Her writings—though not prepared for the public—are said to "compare favourably with the most classic English of her times."

The efficiency which characterized her subsequent career in the management of her own household, proved her early familiarity with domestic affairs. Her strong and penetrating mind led her to plunge fearlessly into the theological controversy of the times. She was rescued from the heretical principles in doctrine, which were gaining the mastery over her, by Samuel Wesley—probably at that time her affianced husband.

Mrs. Wesley was considered beautiful in her youth. Her features were classical in their regularity; her figure slender and graceful; her dress and *coiffure* charming for their simplicity. But it is probable that the virtues of benevolence and goodness rivalled her personal charms.

The acquaintance of Wesley and Susanna Annesly, formed when both were young, gradually ripened into the mutual passion of love. It was probably sometime in 1689 that they were married, with the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. We need make no reference to the history of Samuel Wesley, as many writers have familiarized the public with the details of his ancestry and descendants. He was then a curate, on only thirty pounds a year. Insufficient means, a rapidly increasing family, and the almost uninhabitable condition of the Ormsby Rectory, were some of the many difficulties which reduced the family to poverty, and caused the rector to labour energetically with his pen. His "*Life of Christ*" was published here.

The next move of the Wesley family was to Epworth, in 1697. The rectorship of this parish was conferred on him in accordance with the wish of Queen Mary, to whom he dedicated a book. Their surroundings at Epworth were very uncongenial. Some severe losses increased the unpleasantness of the situation. The barn—a very unsubstantial building—fell down; and the house took fire, nearly one-third of it being burnt to the ground, which event left the family homeless, though not repining, when they remembered, as a cause of thankfulness, the miraculous rescue of John Wesley—afterward the founder of Methodism—from the flames. The rector, referring to the calamitous event, said, "We have very little more than Adam and Eve when they commenced housekeeping."

The Wesley family had received several intimations from the Epworth people that they were not popular—particularly Mr. Wesley, who was too rigid a disciplinarian to merit the regard of parishioners who cared so

little for law and order. The burning of the parsonage was supposed to be the work of an incendiary. The concluding act of a long series of assaults was the seizure of Mr. Wesley for debt. Unable to meet the demands of his creditors for a large sum of money, he was placed in a debtor's cell. Archbishop Sharpe, and some other clergy, liquidated the debt and released him, to the great satisfaction of Mrs. Wesley, who felt the situation keenly.

After a few more outbreaks, a truce ensued; a new parsonage was built, and a better state of things prevailed. A supernatural visitation was an event of importance which occurred in the new house. The maid was the first to hear a series of dismal groans, which announced the presence of a ghostly visitant. A repetition of the same, and several additional noises, was the unceremonious way in which a person, whom the children called "Old Jeff," introduced himself to the Wesley household. Rumbings were heard in the garret, rapid footsteps on the stairs, clattering of pans, rattling of casements, banging of doors, and other inexplicable noises, which kept the family in a constant uproar. When they discovered that the noises portended no harm, they were treated as a matter of jest, particularly by the children. Various theories have been advanced to account for this great sensation; but none have offered a satisfactory solution of the mystery. Probably, if they had employed some of our modern means of detectives, some vicious Parisian might have proved to be the ghost.

The family of Mrs. Wesley forms one of the most remarkable groups in the history of English households. Even the infant life of her children was regulated by method; and to this important factor in her domestic training may be attributed much of the success which crowned her undeviating punctuality in enforcing every established rule of the household. The simple festivities of the fifth birthday of her children was no sooner over, than their education began in earnest. Six hours sufficed for each one to gain a perfect mastery of the alphabet, when the pupil at once proceeded to the sublime announcement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," which he practiced until he could read it without hesitancy.

In order that their religious education should not be neglected, Mrs. Wesley prepared a simple manual of doctrine. This, however, was only an introduction to the great truths of the Bible. In order to develop and maintain in each child a personal interest in spiritual matters, she arranged a private conference with each once every week.

When we consider that Mrs. Wesley was the mother of nineteen children, ten of whom survived to occupy her time and strength at once, we can

easily understand the reputation which she had won through her excellent system of home training.

Various unmistakable indications of failing health warned Mr. Wesley that he was nearing his end. During eight weary months the cords of life gradually loosened, and in the spring of 1735 he peacefully passed away. Mrs. Wesley was left wholly dependent on her children, as the rector, no doubt, died intestate.

The sad memories in connection with her long residence at Epworth, and the vacancy caused by the death of the rector, induced her to leave the dear old parsonage and go to Gainsborough, with her daughter Enalida, who had charge of a school there. In 1739, she returned to London, the city of her nativity, to spend the remainder of her life.

In 1740, John Wesley fitted up the old foundry, in Moorfields, as a place of worship. In connection with it there was a dwelling-house, and in a room at the very top of this building Mrs. Wesley spent the remaining months of her life. Her extreme care in the education of her children; her untiring attention to the management of the affairs of her house; her extensive reading and frequent writing, suggest a woman of robust constitution. The reverse, however, was the case. Her frame was weak, and her health precarious. General debility and repeated sickness, her daughter declares, were "often occasioned by want of clothes or convenient meat."

Mrs. Wesley lived to a good old age. In 1742, tidings of her approaching end reached her son John; and on his arrival in London, he wrote the touching sentence, "I found my mother on the borders of eternity." On the 24th of July, after severe suffering, as her family stood around the bedside, her soul winged its way to the realms of eternal bliss.

Just before she lost her speech, she said, "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God," an utterance which Charles Wesley afterwards enshrined in a noble funeral hymn:

"Lo, the prisoner is released,  
Lightened of her fleshly load;  
Where the weary are at rest,  
She is gathered into God."

Mrs. Wesley's remains were laid to rest in the City Road Chapel, London. An impressive and eloquent address was delivered at the grave by her son, John Wesley. Constant prayerfulness, impartial self-examination, and religious meditation, as some of the characteristics of Mrs. Wesley's religious life, are worthy of imitation, which endear her memory to thousands of Christian women, whose privilege it is to emulate her example, and rank among those who "wear the white flower of a blameless life."

WALLACE, N.S.

"HAVE a cigar," generally suggests "have a drink."