

WORTHIES OF EARLY METHODISM.

SUSANNA WESLEY.

BY W. H. WITHROW, M.A.

THE record of woman's work and woman's influence in the Christian Church forms one of the noblest and most inspiring chapters in its history. From none did our Lord receive more hallowed ministration or kinder sympathy than from the sisters of Bethany and those loving women who, lingering longest at the cross and visiting earliest the sepulchre, first communicated the tidings of His resurrection to His incredulous disciples. Among the earliest converts and most devoted adherents of St. Paul were those faithful women who ministered unto him in the Gospel — Phœbe and Lydia, and Priscilla, and Persis, and Tryphena, and Tryphosa, and, doubtless, many another, whose name, unrecorded on earth, is written in the Book of Life. The names, too, of Helena, of Monica, of Eusebia, of Paula, of Marcella, with others of lesser note, though not of inferior piety and zeal, in early ecclesiastical history, will remain forever an inspiration and a spell of power in the Christian Church.

And no branch of the Church has been richer in holy and devoted women than has Methodism. To mention only a few of the illustrious names of its early years, we have Susanna Wesley; Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; Lady Maxwell; Mary Fletcher; Grace Murray; Dinah Evans, the heroine of "Adam Bede;" * Elizabeth Walbridge, immortalised by Legh Richmond in that Christian classic, "The Dairyman's Daughter;" and Barbara Heck, the real foundress of Methodism on this continent, whose ashes slumber in a quiet graveyard of our Canadian Methodist Church.

Of these, one of the most notable and most influential on the destiny of Methodism, of which she was indeed the virtual

* Miss Evans, now Mrs. G. H. Lewes, is herself a relative of Seth Evans, commemorated in "Adam Bede."