

her at once, as her chief jewels. They all bore pet "nicknames," which they found used, like an uttered caress, in the family circle and in copious correspondence that was kept up after they left home.

Her son John writes to her from Oxford at a time when her health was precarious, in strains of lover-like tenderness, and hopes that he may die before her, that he may not endure the anguish of her loss.

"You did well," she writes him, in unconscious prophecy, "to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do before you leave this world."

By her daughters she was beloved almost to filial idolatry. Death and sorrow many times entered that happy home, and several of the nineteen children died young. But upon the survivors was concentrated the affection of as warm a mother's love as ever throbbed in human breast. The children seem to have been worthy of that mother. They were all intelligent; some of them noted for



SUSANNAH WESLEY'S BIRTHPLACE.

their sprightliness and wit, and others for their poetic faculty, and several of the girls were remarkable for their beauty and vivacity. Fun and frolic were not unknown in this large family of healthy, happy children, and the great hall of the rectory became an arena of hilarious recreations.

The tranquil rectory of Epworth was not, however, without its visitations of sorrow. Time after time, death visited its charmed circle, till nine of the loved household were borne away. And there were sadder things even than death to mar its happiness. The beauty and native grace of several of the daughters led to marriages which proved unfortunate. In anguish of soul their sympathizing mother writes thus to her brother of this saddest sorrow which can befall a woman's life: "O brother! happy, thrice happy are you. Happy is my sister, that buried your children in infancy, secure from temptation, secure from guilt, secure from want or shame, secure from the loss of friends. Believe me, it is better to mourn ten children dead than one living, and I have buried many."

The pinchings of poverty also were only too familiar in this family, and sometimes even the experience



STAIRWAY TO HAUNTED CHAMBER,
EPWORTH RECTORY.