



PARISH CHURCH, EPWORTH.

derived from their father rather than from their mother, who has left no special proof of talent in this direction. With the Rev. Samuel Wesley, on the contrary, "beating rhymes," as he called it, was almost a mania. He was a man of extraordinary literary industry, and poem after poem came in rapid succession from his pen.

Pope knew the elder Wesley well, and commends him to Swift as "a learned man whose prose is better than his poetry."

In the little rectory of Epworth was reproduced one of the noblest phases of what Coleridge has called the one sweet idyl of English society—life in a country parsonage. Here in a quiet round of domestic joys and religious duties, was trained, for usefulness and for God, a numerous family, numbering in all nineteen children. Mr. Samuel Wesley was zealous in pulpit and pastoral labours and bold in rebuking sin, whether in lofty or lowly. Evil livers, to whom the truth was obnoxious, soon resented his plainness. They wounded his cattle, twice set fire to his house, and fired guns and shouted beneath his windows. For a small debt he was arrested while leaving his church and thrown into prison, where he

remained three months. "Now I am at rest," he wrote from his cell to the Archbishop of York, "for I have come to the haven where I have long expected to be."

The Epworth rectory was a humble, thatch-roofed building of wood and plaster, and venerable with moss and lichen, the growth of a hundred years. The rectory family was a model Christian household. Godly gravity was tempered by innocent gaiety, and the whole suffused with the tenderest domestic affection. "They had the common reputation," says Dr. Clarke, "of being the most loving family in Lincolnshire."

The centre and presiding genius of this fair domain was Susannah Wesley. Like the Roman matron, Cornelia, she cherished her children, of whom she had thirteen around



SUSANNAH WESLEY.

John Wesley's mother.