

cept where fitful flashes or broad waves of light break from the water under the motion of the boat or the stroke of the oars. It was on a night like this, when the phosphorescence was unusually brilliant, and the sea as black as ink, the surf breaking heavily and girdling the rocky shore with a wall of fire, that our collector was so fortunate as to find in the rich harvest he brought home the entirely new and exceedingly pretty little floating Hydroid, described under the name of *Nanomia*. It was in its very infancy, a mere bubble, not yet possessed of the various appendages which eventually make up its complex structure; but it was nevertheless very important to have seen it in this early stage of its existence, since, when a few

full-grown specimens were found in the autumn, which lived for some days in confinement and quietly allowed their portraits to be taken, it was easy to connect the adult animal with its younger phase of life, and thus make a complete history.

Marine phosphorescence is no new topic, and we have dwelt too long, perhaps, upon a phenomenon that every voyager has seen, and many have described; but its effect is very different, when seen from the deck of a vessel, from its appearance as one floats through its midst, distinguishing the very creatures that produce it; and any account of the *Medusæ* which did not include this most characteristic feature would be incomplete.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

IN the spring of the year 1853, I observed, as conductor of the weekly journal, "*Household Words*," a short poem among the proffered contributions, very different, as I thought, from the shoal of verses perpetually setting through the office of such a periodical, and possessing much more merit. Its authoress was quite unknown to me. She was one Miss Mary Berwick, whom I had never heard of; and she was to be addressed by letter, if addressed at all, at a circulating-library in the western district of London. Through this channel, Miss Berwick was informed that her poem was accepted, and was invited to send another. She complied, and became a regular and frequent contributor. Many letters passed between the journal and Miss Berwick, but Miss Berwick herself was never seen.

How we came gradually to establish at the office of "*Household Words*" that we knew all about Miss Berwick, I have never discovered. But we settled somehow, to our complete satisfac-

tion, that she was governess in a family; that she went to Italy in that capacity, and returned; and that she had long been in the same family. We really knew nothing whatever of her, except that she was remarkably business-like, punctual, self-reliant, and reliable; so I suppose we insensibly invented the rest. For myself, my mother was not a more real personage to me than Miss Berwick the governess became.

This went on until December, 1854, when the Christmas number, entitled "*The Seven Poor Travellers*," was sent to press. Happening to be going to dine that day with an old and dear friend, distinguished in literature as "*Barry Cornwall*," I took with me an early proof of that number, and remarked, as I laid it on the drawing-room table, that it contained a very pretty poem, written by a certain Miss Berwick. Next day brought me the disclosure that I had so spoken of the poem to the mother of its writer, in its writer's presence; that I had no such correspondent in

existence as Miss Berwick; and that the name had been assumed by Barry Cornwall's eldest daughter, Miss Adelaide Anne Procter.

The anecdote I have here noted down, besides serving to explain why the parents of the late Miss Procter have looked to me for these poor words of remembrance of their lamented child, strikingly illustrates the honesty, independence, and quiet dignity of the lady's character. I had known her when she was very young; I had been honored with her father's friendship when I was myself a young aspirant; and she had said at home, "If I send him, in my own name, verses that he does not honestly like, either it will be very painful to him to return them, or he will print them for papa's sake; and not for their own. So I have made up my mind to take my chance fairly with the unknown volunteers."

Perhaps it requires an editor's experience of the profoundly unreasonable grounds on which he is often urged to accept unsuitable articles—such as having been to school with the writer's husband's brother-in-law, or having lent an alpenstock in Switzerland to the writer's wife's nephew, when that interesting stranger had broken his own—fully to appreciate the delicacy and the self-respect of this resolution.

Some verses by Miss Procter had been published in the "Book of Beauty," ten years before she became Miss Berwick. With the exception of two poems in the "Cornhill Magazine," two in "Good Words," and others in a little book called "A Chaplet of Verses," (issued in 1862 for the benefit of a Night Refuge,) her published writings first appeared in "Household Words" or "All the Year Round."

Miss Procter was born in Bedford Square, London, on the 30th of October, 1825. Her love of poetry was conspicuous at so early an age, that I have before me a tiny album, made of small note-paper, into which her favorite passages were copied for her by her mother's hand before she herself could write. It looks as if she had carried it about,

as another little girl might have carried a doll. She soon displayed a remarkable memory and great quickness of apprehension. When she was quite a young child, she learned with facility several of the problems of Euclid. As she grew older, she acquired the French, Italian, and German languages, became a clever piano-forte player, and showed a true taste and sentiment in drawing. But as soon as she had completely vanquished the difficulties of any one branch of study, it was her way to lose interest in it and pass to another. While her mental resources were being trained, it was not at all suspected in her family that she had any gift of authorship, or any ambition to become a writer. Her father had no idea of her having ever attempted to turn a rhyme, until her first little poem saw the light in print.

When she attained to womanhood, she had read an extraordinary number of books, and throughout her life she was always largely adding to the number. In 1853 she went to Turin and its neighborhood, on a visit to her aunt, a Roman Catholic lady. As Miss Procter had herself professed the Roman Catholic faith two years before, she entered with the greater ardor on the study of the Piedmontese dialect, and the observation of the habits and manners of the peasantry. In the former she soon became a proficient; and on the latter head, I extract from her familiar letters, written home to England at the time, two pleasant pieces of description.

A BETROTHAL.

"WE have been to a ball, of which I must give you a description. Last Tuesday we had just done dinner at about seven, and stepped out into the balcony to look at the remains of the sunset behind the mountains, when we heard very distinctly a band of music, which rather excited my astonishment, as a solitary organ is the utmost that toils up here. I went out of the room for a few minutes, and on my returning, Emily said,—

"Oh! that band is playing at the

farmer's near here. The daughter is *fiancée* to-day, and they have a ball.'

"I said,—

"'I wish I was going!'

"'Well,' replied she, 'the farmer's wife did call to invite us.'

"'Then I shall certainly go,' I exclaimed.

"I applied to Madame B., who said she would like it very much, and we had better go, children and all. Some of the servants were already gone. We rushed away to put on some shawls, and put off any shred of black we might have about us, (as the people would have been quite annoyed, if we had appeared on such an occasion with any black,) and we started. When we reached the farmer's, which is a stone's throw above our house, we were received with great enthusiasm; the only drawback being, that no one spoke French, and we did not yet speak Piedmontese. We were placed on a bench against the wall, and the people went on dancing. The room was a large whitewashed kitchen, (I suppose,) with several large pictures in black frames, and very smoky. I distinguished the 'Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian,' and the others appeared equally lively and appropriate subjects. Whether they were Old Masters or not, and if so, by whom, I could not ascertain. The band were seated opposite us. Five men, with wind instruments, part of the band of the National Guard, to which the farmer's sons belong. They played really admirably, and I began to be afraid that some idea of our dignity would prevent my getting a partner; so, by Madame B.'s advice, I went up to the bride, and offered to dance with her. Such a handsome young woman! Like one of Uwins's pictures. Very dark, with a quantity of black hair, and on an immense scale. The children were already dancing, as well as the maids. After we came to an end of our dance, which was what they call a Polka-Mazourka, I saw the bride trying to screw up the courage of her *fiancé* to ask me to dance, which, after a little hesitation, he did. And admirably he danced, as indeed they all did,—in excellent time,

and with a little more spirit than one sees in a ball-room. In fact, they were very like one's ordinary partners, except that they wore ear-rings and were in their shirt-sleeves, and truth compels me to state that they decidedly smelt of garlic. Some of them had been smoking, but threw away their cigars when we came in. The only thing that did not look cheerful was, that the room was only lighted by two or three oil-lamps, and that there seemed to be no preparation for refreshments. Madame B., seeing this, whispered to her maid, who disengaged herself from her partner, and ran off to the house; she and the kitchen-maid presently returning with a large tray covered with all kinds of cakes, (of which we are great consumers and always have a stock,) and a large hamper full of bottles of wine, with coffee and sugar. This seemed all very acceptable. The *fiancée* was requested to distribute the eatables, and a bucket of water being produced to wash the glasses in, the wine disappeared very quickly,—as fast as they could open the bottles. But elated, I suppose, by this, the floor was sprinkled with water, and the musicians played a Monferrino, which is a Piedmontese dance. Madame B. danced with the farmer's son, and Emily with another distinguished member of the company. It was very fatiguing,—something like a Scotch reel. My partner was a little man, like Perrot, and very proud of his dancing. He cut in the air and twisted about, until I was out of breath, though my attempts to imitate him were feeble in the extreme. At last, after seven or eight dances, I was obliged to sit down. We stayed till nine, and I was so dead beat with the heat that I could hardly crawl about the house, and in an agony with the cramp, it is so long since I have danced."

A MARRIAGE.

"The wedding of the farmer's daughter has taken place. We had hoped it would have been in the little chapel of our house; but it seems some special

permission was necessary, and they applied for it too late. They all said, 'This is the Constitution. There would have been no difficulty before!' — the lower classes making the poor Constitution the scapegoat for everything they don't like. So, as it was impossible for us to climb up to the church where the wedding was to be, we contented ourselves with seeing the procession pass. It was not a very large one; for, it requiring some activity to go up, all the old people remained at home. It is not the etiquette for the bride's mother to go, and no unmarried woman can go to a wedding, — I suppose for fear of its making her discontented with her own position. The procession stopped at our door, for the bride to receive our congratulations. She was dressed in a shot silk, with a yellow handkerchief, and rows of a large gold chain. In the afternoon they sent to request us to go there. On our arrival, we found them dancing out-of-doors, and a most melancholy affair it was. All the bride's sisters were not to be recognized, they had cried so. The mother sat in the house, and could not appear; and the bride was sobbing so, she could hardly stand. The most melancholy spectacle of all, to my mind, was, that the bridegroom was decidedly tipsy. He seemed rather affronted at all the distress. We danced a Monferrino, — I with the bridegroom, and the bride crying the whole time. The company did their utmost to enliven her, by firing pistols, but without success; and at last they began a series of yells, which reminded me of a set of savages. But even this delicate method of consolation failed, and the wishing good-bye began. It was altogether so melancholy an affair, that Madame B. dropped a few tears, and I was very near it, — particularly when the poor mother came out to see the last of her daughter, who was finally dragged off between her brother and uncle, with the last explosion of pistols. As she lives quite near, makes an excellent match, and is one of nine children, it really was a most desirable marriage, in spite of all the show of dis-

tress. Albert was so discomfited by it that he forgot to kiss the bride, as he had intended to, and therefore went to call upon her yesterday, and found her very smiling in her new house, and supplied the omission. The cook came home from the wedding declaring she was cured of any wish to marry; but I would not recommend any man to act upon that threat, and make her an offer. In a couple of days we had some rolls of the bride's first baking, which they call Madonna's. The musicians, it seems, were in the same state as the bridegroom; for, in escorting her home, they all fell down in the mud. My wrath against the bridegroom is somewhat calmed by finding that it is considered bad luck, if he does not get tipsy at his wedding."

Those readers of Miss Procter's poems who should suppose from their tone that her mind was of a gloomy or despondent cast would be curiously mistaken. She was exceedingly humorous, and had a great delight in humor. Cheerfulness was habitual with her; she was very ready at a sally or a reply; and in her laugh (as I remember well) there was an unusual vivacity, enjoyment, and sense of drollery. She was perfectly unconstrained and unaffected; as modestly silent about her productions as she was generous with their pecuniary results. She was a friend who inspired the strongest attachments; she was a finely sympathetic woman, with a great accordant heart and a sterling noble nature. No claim can be set up for her, thank God, to the possession of any of the conventional poetical qualities. She never, by any means, held the opinion that she was among the greatest of human beings; she never suspected the existence of a conspiracy on the part of mankind against her; she never recognized in her best friends her worst enemies; she never cultivated the luxury of being misunderstood and unappreciated; she would far rather have died without seeing a line of her composition in print than that I should have maundered

about her here as "the Poet" or "the Poetess."

With the recollection of Miss Procter, as a mere child and as a woman, fresh upon me, it is natural that I should linger on my way to the close of this brief record, avoiding its end. But even as the close came upon her, so must it come here, and cannot be staved off.

Always impelled by an intense conviction that her life must not be dreamed away, and that her indulgence in her favorite pursuits must be balanced by action in the real world around her, she was indefatigable in her endeavors to do some good. Naturally enthusiastic, and conscientiously impressed with a deep sense of her Christian duty to her neighbor, she devoted herself to a variety of benevolent objects. Now it was the visitation of the sick that had possession of her; now it was the sheltering of the houseless; now it was the elementary teaching of the densely ignorant; now it was the raising up of those who had wandered and got trodden under foot; now it was the wider employment of her own sex in the general business of life; now it was all these things at once. Perfectly unselfish, swift to sympathize, and eager to relieve, she wrought at such designs with a flushed earnestness that disregarded season, weather, time of day or night, food, rest. Under such a hurry of the spirits, and such incessant occupation, the strongest constitution will commonly go down; hers, neither of the strongest nor the weakest, yielded to the burden, and began to sink.

To have saved her life then, by taking action on the warning that shone in her eyes and sounded in her voice,

would have been impossible, without changing her nature. As long as the power of moving about in the old way was left to her, she must exercise it, or be killed by the restraint. And so the time came when she could move about no longer, and took to her bed.

All the restlessness gone then, and all the sweet patience of her natural disposition purified by the resignation of her soul, she lay upon her bed through the whole round of changes of the seasons. She lay upon her bed through fifteen months. In all that time her old cheerfulness never quitted her. In all that time not an impatient or a querulous minute can be remembered.

At length, at midnight on the 2d of February, 1864, she turned down a leaf of a little book she was reading, and shut it up.

The ministering hand that had copied the verses into the tiny album was soon around her neck; and she quietly asked, as the clock was on the stroke of one, —

"Do you think I am dying, mamma?"

"I think you are very, very ill to-night, my dear."

"Send for my sister. My feet are so cold! Lift me up."

Her sister entering as they raised her, she said, "It has come at last!" and, with a bright and happy smile, looked upward, and departed.

Well had she written, —

"Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death,
Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?"

Oh, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee."