

## ADELAIDE PROCTOR.

A Sketch of the Life of a Singularly Gifted Woman.

(A paper read before the Rochester Catholic Reading Circle by Mrs. D. B. Murphy.) Adelaide Anne Proctor was born in Bedford square, London, October 20, 1825. She was the daughter of Bryan Waller Proctor, better known to the literary world as Barry Cornwall, a writer possessed of more than ordinary poetic genius. By some critics he has been compared with such writers as Johnson, Fletcher, and even the immortal Shakespeare. These critics may have over-estimated his works from their admiration of certain of his poems; yet it is true that his lyrics, from their melodious rhythm, delicacy and purity of tone, have placed him amongst the best writers of that period. Early in life he married Miss Skepner, a daughter of Mrs. Basil Montagu. Their family consisted of six children—four girls and two boys—but the eldest of the boys died at the age of ten years.

Like most of our great writers, Adelaide seems to have been unusually precocious. As a child her love of knowledge and keen perceptive faculties seemed far in advance of her years. Born a poet's daughter, inheriting much of his poetic genius and temperament, she manifested her love of poetry at so early an age that we are told one of her first poems was a tiny album made of note paper, into which her favorite passages were copied by her father's hand, before she herself could write. She was universally pronounced a beautiful child, slender and graceful, with deep, tender, blue eyes and golden tinted hair. She was first introduced to the world as the golden-tressed Adelaide of one of her father's poems, which was set to music by Chevalier Neukom and sung by many who, doubtless, in after years sang her own lyrics. N. P. Willis, who visited the family in 1838, thus describes her: "A delicate girl, gentle and pensive as if she were born on the lips of Castaly and knew she was a poet's child." While still but a child she readily mastered problems in Euclid, studied French, German and Italian, and music and drawing, in the last of which she displayed considerable talent. While her early education was in progress it was never suspected, even by the members of her own family, that she aspired to the gift of authorship. She applied herself with all earnestness to each daily task, believing as she so beautifully expressed in those words which were an echo of the ruling sentiment of her own life:

Every hour that flees so slowly,  
Has its task to do or bear;  
Luminous the crown and holy,  
When each gem is set with care.

At the age of eighteen she became an occasional contributor to the "Book of Beauty," but it was not until ten years later that her writings attracted the attention of the public. At that time she became a frequent contributor, over the *nom de plume* of Miss Berwick, to *Household Words*, a weekly journal edited by Charles Dickens. Her first volume of poems was published in May, 1856, under the title of "Legends and Lyrics." So popular did this book become that in 1865 it had reached its ninth edition in London, and two editions had been issued in New York and several in Boston. It was greater than even her dearest friends in their loving longings had imagined. She aimed not at the unattainable, nor sought for harrowing scenes of descriptions to excite the imagination; but she drew her lessons from reality, from nature, from those simple little incidents by which we are surrounded and which often awaken the best emotions of the heart. In language chaste, delicate and refined she gives expression to those beautiful thoughts which seemed to have ever filled her mind. We are told that her disposition was cheerful, even vivacious, with a keen sense of humor and drollery; but we imagine that her poems were mostly written in her most serious moods. They seem imbued with a faint tinge of melancholy or rather a thoughtful seriousness, which, while it calms and soothes our senses, leads our thoughts involuntarily upward to the Infinite God. Each little poem (and we like her short poems best) points a moral, and it is one that we can all understand, if not apply. So free from vanity does she seem to have been and so silent about her productions, that Dickens, who was a familiar friend and constant visitor at her father's house, tells us that he had been publishing her poems for more than a year and a half, before he had the slightest intimation that "Miss Berwick" had any connection with Adelaide Proctor. In 1861 she was for a time editor and also contributor to *Victoria Regina*, a magazine published by women. She was a strong advocate of the idea of opening a wide field for the employment of her own sex; and had perfect confidence in woman's ability to fill creditably many positions which hitherto had been considered beyond her range. She was constantly encouraging, both by word and example, such as showed signs of faltering in their new duties, and from her inspiring influence they went forth strengthened to begin the work of life anew. To these her advice was always:

Sow, while the seeds are lying  
In the warm earth's bosom deep,  
And your warm hands fall upon it,  
They will stir in their quiet sleep;  
And the green blades rise the quicker,  
Perchance for the tears you weep.

In 1851 she became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church and this event exerted considerable influence on her subsequent writings. Her conversion occurred at a time when all England was bitterly anti-Catholic, yet with that

steadfast, undaunted spirit which marked her life, she walked fearlessly forward in that path which she felt led to life eternal.

Faith with her was existence—not an article of adornment to be worn upon special occasions, but a spirit which took possession of the heart and laid its best gift at the feet of its maker. One of the best illustrations of the depths of her feeling on this subject is found in her poem entitled "Give Me thy Heart," where the maiden hears the words:

Vain are thy offerings, vain thy sighs  
Without one gift divine;  
Give it, my child, thy heart to Me,  
And I shall rest in Mine.

She never sought to write any great poem by which her name might become immortalized; she never felt that she had any great mission to perform in this vast world of ours; she merely felt that she was one of God's small creatures placed here to do His work, and right nobly did she do it. To soothe the pain of those who suffered either physically or mentally, to bring food and clothing into the homes of the poor, to instruct the ignorant, this was her mission; and when inspiration came upon her she wrote as she did all else—with her whole heart, with her whole soul.

To show how favorably her book was received by the literary world we quote criticisms from some of the popular reviews of the day. "A book of poems," said the *London Athenaeum*, "which will recommend itself to every one with the touch of the artist in his composition. The manner is not borrowed; without any startling originality, it is Miss Proctor's own, not her father's, not Wordsworth's, not the laureate's, not referable to the Brownings." The *London Saturday Review* says: "There is but one living poetess with whom she ought to fear competition." Such words of commendation must have been very sweet and gratifying to a young authoress, but more gratifying still was the thought of the extra good work she might accomplish with the enlarged income derived from the sale of her book. Her predominant virtue was charity—charity in its deepest, broadest sense. What a beautiful though simple lesson she gives us on this subject in her "Cradle Song of the Poor," commencing with the lines:

Hush, I cannot bear to see thee  
Lift thy hands in prayer;  
Dear, I have no bread to give thee,  
Nothing, child, to ease thy pain.

Every heart as God's bright angel  
Can find one such sorrow case;  
God has glory when His children  
Bring His dear ones joy and peace.

Another profitable little lesson might be learned in her poem, "Judge Not." Many of the poems of this first book have been published so frequently that all have become familiar with them, notably, "The Doubting Heart," "One by One," "Incompleteness," "A little gem," and many others. The most lengthy poem of this volume, "A Tomb in Ghent," contains many beautiful passages. Her description of the grand old Cathedral, St. Bavo, is thus:

Dim with dark shadows of the ages past,  
Stands solemn and rich and vast,  
Involuntarily reminds us of Goldsmith.

In 1860, in order to supply a long-felt want, steps were taken toward the establishment of a Catholic Night Refuge for homeless women and children; and in a short space of time a suitable house was procured and opened under the charge of the Sisters of Mercy. This was a work which enlisted Miss Proctor's fullest sympathies, and so earnestly did she plead the cause that she was the recipient of many valuable contributions from Catholics and Protestants alike. Not content with doing this, she issued a volume entitled "A Chapter of Verses," which was dedicated to the institution, and the revenue from which was to be applied solely to this work of charity. In this volume we find many poems that breathe such a spirit of piety and devotion that they are rightly named "Hymns of Devotional Worship." Here we find also her pathetic appeal for Ireland, when the policy was prevalent of establishing church missions for converting Irish Catholics. This English girl, born of English parents, reared on English soil and loving her home and country with all the enthusiasm of an ardent patriot, lifted her voice to plead for those oppressed beings whose only claim upon her was the tie that to her was dearer than all else—that of her religion.

Spare her, O cruel England,  
Thy sister lieth low;  
Chained and oppressed, she lieth,  
Spare her that cruel blow;  
We ask not for the freedom Heaven has vouchsafed to thee,  
Nor bid thee share with Ireland, the empire of the sea;  
Her children ask no shelter, leave them the stormy sky;  
They ask not for thy harvest, for they know how to die;  
Deny them if it please thee, a grave beneath the soil,  
But we do cry, O England, leave them their faith in God.

Is there one amongst us, a descendant of Ireland, however remote, with one drop of Irish blood flowing in his veins, who does not feel a thrill of love and gratitude for one who could plead a stranger's cause with such power and earnestness? Perhaps the highest tribute one can pay her book is to say that it is one that must have an elevating, refining influence, even on the mind of a child. Edmund Clarence Sedman expresses this when he says: "It is like telling one's beads or reading a prayer book to turn over her pages; so beautiful, so pure and unselfish a spirit of faith, hope and charity pervades and hallows them."

There is a fascination about Miss Proctor which bids us linger with her longer; but we rest here, allowing our Circle to discover those beauties in her

pages which our pen is unable to portray. Always tolling for others with no thought for herself, there was never a day too inclement for her to go forth on a mission of charity, never a pleasure so alluring that it could keep her from the bedside of a poor suffering friend. She had never possessed a robust constitution, and when the hectic flush came upon the cheek, and the brightness of fever shone in the eye—when she found her strength growing weaker day by day—instead of diminishing her work, she seemed to redouble it, so anxious was she to accomplish all that she could in the short space of time which she felt was allotted her. Her friends never interfered, feeling that to induce her to forsake the work she loved, would but hasten the end. At length the day came when she could go forth no longer; when the burden of life was practically relinquished and she lay upon her couch, "still sweeter than before, when nearer death, and brighter every day the smile she wore." For fifteen long weary months she lay patiently awaiting the coming of the "Angel of Death," and then on the night of February 2, 1864, the messenger arrived—with smiling lips and eyes raised heavenward, her spirit passed into the presence of that God she had so often gloried.

Dear Adelaide Proctor! We reverence her not only as a poetess, but, better still, a perfect type of the true womanhood. May her gentle influence remain ever with us, teaching us that—

Life is only bright, when it proceedeth  
Towards a truer, deeper life above;  
Human love is sweetest when it leadeth  
To a more divine and perfect love.

## FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Fifth Sunday of Lent.

CHRIST'S PASSION.

Which of you shall convince me of sin?—(John viii. 46.)

To-day, dear friends, is Passion Sunday, and our long Lenten pilgrimage is nearing its end. Heretofore our thoughts have been on ourselves, our own shortcomings, our own sins. Now we stand, as it were, on the hill overlooking the Holy City, and see before us, as a map unrolled, the scene of our Redeemer's agony: Bethany, the olive-garden of Gethsemani, and further on, the barren mount of Calvary, with its three crosses standing forth, black and cruel, against the fair blue sky.

Now our thoughts turn from ourselves to our Lord. We have seen what the effect of sin has been on us. Now we look and see, and our shame should deepen as we see what sorrow and tears and agony it has brought on the eternal Son of God.

To-day the cross is veiled, the pictures are shrouded in mourning, the "Gloria" ceases to be sung. So our sins covered our dying Lord as with a garment, and sorrow chokes the voice of Holy Church, fills her heart to overflowing, and stills all her songs of praise.

What is this veil which obscures the cross of Jesus Christ and makes His Passion of no effect? O dear brethren, is it not our sins! What platted these nails through His hands and feet, fixing them to the tree of shame? Our wicked deeds and our wanderings from the path of duty. What parched His tongue with such burning thirst? Our shameless indulgence in drink. What pointed the spear of the impious Roman soldier, and hurled it deep into the Sacred Heart, whence issued the red torrent of the Precious Blood? Our inordinate appetites and sinful lusts. As often as we sin we crucify our dearest Lord afresh.

Which of you shall convince me of sin? What more could I have done for my vineyard which I have done? I came down from heaven; I took upon myself the form of a servant, the likeness of sinful flesh; I set you a perfect example how you should walk; I was led as a lamb to the slaughter; I was scorned, spit upon, mangled, crucified; what could I have done more? Which of you shall convince me of sin? Which of you, my brethren? How many graces and blessings do you not owe to that crucified Lord? In how many bitter sorrows have you not been comforted? From how many shameful falls have you not been raised up? O Christian soul! for whom Christ died, look upon that bleeding, suffering, dying Saviour, and, if nothing else will move you, let those ghastly wounds, which your sins have made, plead with you. Acknowledge your transgressions; abase your soul in the very dust. Let that sacred Passion plead with you, that infinite love plead with you, that Precious Blood plead with you, those last tender words plead with you, and teach you, for their sake and your soul's sake, to love the Lord more dearly, to dread sin more effectually, and never as long as you live, to add to that heavy burden by any wicked deed of yours.

So shall, a few days hence, the veil be lifted from the cross, and our sorrow be turned to joy, for when the Lord of Glory shall arise we too shall arise with Him, and reign with Him in glory forevermore.

Of Course You Read The testimonials frequently published in this paper relating to Hood's Sarsaparilla. They are from reliable people, state simple facts, and show beyond a doubt that Hood's Cures. Why don't you try this medicine? Be sure to get Hood's.

Constipation, and all troubles with the digestive organs and the liver, are cured by Hood's Pills. Unequaled as a dinner pill. BURDOCK PILLS give satisfaction wherever tried. They cure Constipation, Sick Headache and Biliousness.

Minaid's Liniment cures Diphtheria.

## What Mothers Should Do.

As the boys grow up, make companions of them; then they will not seek companionship elsewhere.

Let the children make a noise sometimes, their happiness is as important as your nerves.

Respect their little secrets; if they have concealments, worrying them will never make them tell, and patience will probably do its work.

Allow them, as they grow older, to have opinions of their own; make them individuals and not mere echoes. Remember that without physical health mental attainment is worthless; let them lead free, happy lives, which will strengthen both mind and body.

Bear in mind that you are largely responsible for your child's inherited character, and have patience with faults and failings.

Talk hopefully to your children of life and its possibilities; you have no right to depress them because you have suffered.

Teach boys and girls the actual facts of life as soon as they are old enough to understand them, and give them a sense of responsibility without saddening them.

Find out what their special tastes are, and develop them, instead of spending time, money and patience in forcing them into studies that are repugnant to them.

As your daughters grow up teach them at least the true merits of house-keeping and cookery; they will thank you for it in later life a great deal more than for accomplishments.

Try and sympathize with girlish flights of fancy, even if they seem absurd to you, by so doing you will retain your influence over your daughters, and not teach them to seek sympathy elsewhere.

"I have used Ayer's Hair Vigor for a number of years, and it has always given me satisfaction. It is an excellent dressing, prevents the hair from turning gray, insures its vigorous growth, and keeps the scalp white and clean."—Mary A. Jackson, Salem, Mass.

1892, "The Creation of the Havana Crop."

"La Cadena" and "La Flora" brands of cigars are undoubtedly superior in quality and considerably lower in price than any brand imported. Prejudiced smokers will not admit this to be the case. The consumer knows it. S. DAVIS & SONS, Montreal.

How to Get a "Sunlight" Picture. Send your "Sunlight" wrappers (wrappers bearing the words "Why Does a Woman Look Old Sooner Than a Man?" to LEVER BROS., Ltd., at Scott St., Toronto, and you will receive by post a pretty picture, free from advertising, and well worth framing. This is an easy way to decorate your home. The soap is the best in the market, and it will only cost postage to send in the wrappers, if you leave the ends open. Write your address carefully.

Dyspepsia or Indigestion is occasioned by the want of action in the bilious ducts, loss of vitality in the stomach to secrete the gastric juice, without which digestion cannot go on; also, being the principal cause of Headache, Paralysis, Vegetables, Pills taken before going to bed, for awhile, never fail to give relief and effect a cure. Mr. F. W. Ashdown, Ashdown, Ont., writes: "Paralysis of the bowels, I have taken your medicine, and it has cured me. I have in stock."

The Power of Nature. For every ill nature has a cure. In the healing virtues of the Norway Pine lies the cure for coughs, colds, croup, asthma, bronchitis, hoarseness, etc. Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup represents the virtues of Norway Pine and other pectoral remedies. Price 25c.

The great demand for a pleasant, safe and reliable antidote for all affections of the throat and lungs is fully met in Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup. It is a purely Vegetable Compound acts promptly and magically in subduing all coughs, colds, bronchitis, inflammation of the lungs, etc. It is so PALATABLE that a child will not refuse it, and is put at a price that will not exclude the poor from its benefits.

Gives Strength and Appetite. DEAR SIR, Last year I was very thin and reducing very fast, owing to the bad state of my blood and appetite. A friend of mine induced me to get a bottle of R. B. B. which I did. I obtained immediate perceptible relief from it, have gained strength and appetite, and now weigh 165 pounds.

M. J. Murphy, Dorchester Bridge, Quebec, Que.

Minaid's Liniment cures Garget in Cows.

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN SOAP MAKERS

Why, If you wish your Linen to be White as Snow, Sunlight Soap will do it.

Because SUNLIGHT SOAP is perfectly pure, and contains no injurious chemicals to injure either your clothes or your hands. Greatest care is exercised in its manufacture, and its quality is so appreciated by the public that it has the Largest Sale of any Soap in the World.

Can you test this? If you have never tried SUNLIGHT SOAP, ask those who use it what they think of it, then try it for yourself. The result will please you, and your clothes will be washed in far less time, with less labour, greater comfort, and will be whiter than they have ever been before, if you use the ordinary soap.

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## For Scrofula

"After suffering for about twenty-five years from scrofulous sores on the legs and arms, trying various medical courses without benefit, I began to use Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and a wonderful cure was the result. Five bottles sufficed to restore me to health."—Benjamin Lopez, 327 E. Commerce St., San Antonio, Texas.

## Catarrh

"My daughter was afflicted for nearly a year with catarrh. The physicians being unable to help her, my pastor recommended Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I followed his advice. Three months of regular treatment with Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and Ayer's Pills completely restored my daughter's health."—Mrs. Louise Kelle, Little Canada, Ware, Mass.

## Rheumatism

"For several years, I was troubled with inflammatory rheumatism, being so bad at times as to be entirely helpless. For the last two years, whenever I felt the effects of the disease, I began to take Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and have not had a spell for a long time."—E. T. Hanksbury, Elk Run, Va.

For all blood diseases, the best remedy is

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will be found to be exceptionally fine, and we respectfully suggest that smokers give this brand a trial, when our statement will be fully verified as to quality.

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Can you test this? If you have never tried SUNLIGHT SOAP, ask those who use it what they think of it, then try it for yourself. The result will please you, and your clothes will be washed in far less time, with less labour, greater comfort, and will be whiter than they have ever been before, if you use the ordinary soap.

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Why, If you wish your Linen to be White as Snow, Sunlight Soap will do it.