genially rugged little face; fine head; something curiously dreamy in the eyes of him,— had something of real fun, and was always good and kind."

After his marriage in 1824 with Anne Skepper, the only child of Mrs Basil Montagu by her first husband, the young couple returned to her stepfather's house in Bedford Square, and there in the following year the little Adelaide was born.

Fanny Kemble mentions, that in 1832, at one of the delightful receptions that formed part of the daily life in the Montagu *menage,* she had enjoyed a chat with Mrs Procter, "one of the kindest-hearted people possible." She talked a great deal about Adelaide, who, says Miss Kemble, "must be a most wonderful creature." So it is clear that the beautiful little girl, who looked "as if she knew that she was a poet's child," must have displayed her unusual gifts at a very early age. In this year Barry Cornwall made his farewell to poetry, in a volume of songs, and was made Commissioner in Lunacy,— an office which he held with extraordinary success until 1861, when the witchery of Writing seems once more to have asserted its sway, and betaking himself to the study of Shakespeare, Lamb, and others, he published several prose works with more or less success.

Few have enjoyed the friendship of so many men whose names are still of world-wide notoriety.

Scarcely a man could be mentioned among those who distinguished themselves in the early literature of the nineteenth century who had not the entree of his hospitable home.

Byron and Peel were Harrovian schoolfellows, while Lamb and Coleridge, Lytton, Campbell, De Quincey, Macaulay, Macready, Scott, Landor, Edward Irving, Hood, Hunt, Rossetti, Arnold, Browning, and Tennyson are only a few of the many eminent men whom Barry Cornwall could number among his friends.

Though the father and mother of Adelaide Anne Procter were Protestants, it is somewhat remarkable that three of their four daughters became Roman Catholics, and it is no less remarkable that the happiness of the family does not seem to have been impaired thereby. It is probable that to the gentle dignity of the mother, whose love never wavered, was largely due the harmony of the household,— for it is certain that sympathy must be difficult between those who are, respectively, staunch adherents to sects opposed to each other in so many doctrines which each considers fundamental.

Where the chiefest interest of Time and of Eternity is not one in which members of a family are at union, there must of necessity be a certain restraint; and it speaks well for the loving tactfulness of all, that nothing was allowed to disturb the

. . . family loyalty or to mar the daily comfort of its home life.

No doubt religious questions must have been often discussed in a circle where men and women of such various views met in friendly intercourse, and it is probable that the young people felt many unspoken difficulties in realising the elastic nature of Anglicanism, and in reconciling points of doctrine which have always been stumbling-blocks, and upon which even theologians have agreed to differ.

Not a few have been induced by the unfortunate dissensions within the English Church to settle the matter, as they think, by joining the only Church which claims infallibility. The "ever generous, loving, and noble" Edward Irving would think it his duty to declaim upon "the gift of tongues"; such strict "one Goddites" as Coleridge and Lamb, Hazlitt and Hunt, would fain have won recruits for their "reasonable" unorthodoxy; and the various religious opinions of the many interesting visitors must surely have been a fruitful source of conversation, while the musical and artistic temperaments of the sisters would no doubt insensibly incline them towards a Church in which the Poetry of religion is conspicuously apparent.

"Of all priesthoods, there is no class comparable for its importance to the priesthood of the writers of books," says Carlyle, and of this class of priests Adelaide Anne Procter and her sisters must have

seen many of the best specimens; but the delights of literature were not sufficing enough for hearts that longed restlessly for "more light," and one by one they flung their weakness into the strength of the Roman Church, where, like Mary Howitt, whose Quaker upbringing renders her secession the more remarkable, they found all that they had longed for in their youthful dreams. We are told, however, that the one thing never mentioned by Miss Procter was her own change of views; and with a nature like hers, it did indeed matter but little to what creed her intellect subscribed, for her heart was right with God, and her life-work speaks for itself.

Before she was able to write, Charles Dickens tells us, in his touching sketch of her life, prefacing the second volume of 'Legends and Lyrics' that she had her favourite poems copied into a tiny album by her mother, and was accustomed to carry them about with the devotion which at that age is generally given to dolls only.

And this devotion to poetry never decreased, though for many years her own compositions seem to have been a delight to herself only and to some of her most intimate friends. In the early 'Fifties typewriters and duplicating machines were unknown, and her sweet verses were copied from hand to hand — a laborious but loving testimony to their charm and adaptability. In 1843 she contributed some verses to 'The Book of Beauty,' but

not until 1853 did she think of appealing to the suffrages of a larger audience, and it was as an anonymous contributor that she then offered a "short poem" to the editor of 'Household Words.' Although the name of Dickens is connected in the minds of most people with such creations as Pickwick, Pecksniff, and Sarah Gamp, there was in the great novelist that intense capacity for pathos which invariably accompanies a strong sense of humour, and without which, indeed, humour at its best is wellnigh impossible.

Editing in those days was not so onerous a business as it is now, when every one who can, or cannot, turn a sentence or be happy enough to fix up a rhyme, would fain rush into print, and when every post brings with it shoals of manuscripts to the offices of even the least important papers.

"Miss Berwick's" poem at once appealed to Dickens, and he recognised that here at last was something "very different," and possessing much more merit than the average contributions of would-be poets. A continuous correspondence passed between them, but "Miss Berwick" was as much of a personal mystery to the editor of 'Household Words' as "Currer Bell" had been to her publishers in 1847.

For eighteen months this went on, until in the winter of 1854 the truth came out.

Charles Dickens was an old friend of W.P. Procter,

and, when dining with him just before Christmas, the two naturally began talking about 'Household Words,' which was then at the zenith of its popularity. Incidentally Dickens mentioned that the current number contained some very pretty verses by a Miss Berwick.

Nothing further was said at the time, but on the following day he received a letter containing a statement which caused him no little surprise, to the effect that the name had been adopted by Barry Cornwall's eldest daughter, in order that she might obtain an honest opinion as to the merit of her writings. Wire-pulling was an impossibility to her, and "a friend at court" almost a treachery to the public, from her high-minded point of view; so she had determined to conceal her identity, and to stand or fall as an "unknown volunteer." This is by no means a solitary instance of literary independence; but in these days there is too often a tendency to apportion praise or blame according to the status of the man rather than according to the value of the matter, and much that would be better left unpublished is palmed off upon the public by virtue of a previous success, or the weight of some unseen but powerful influence.

It was against such a possibility that Miss Procter so effectively guarded herself, and we cannot but admire the self-reliance and honesty of purpose which actuated her little scheme.

When in 1858 her collected poems were published under the title of 'Legends and Lyrics' there was an immediate rush for the book, and so great was its popularity that she was soon the best-read poet in England, with the exception of Alfred Tennyson. No less than twelve editions followed one another, and her success was complete. Miss Procter had joined the Roman communion in 1851, but there is no tinge of what has been called a "persecuting and privileged orthodoxy" in her poems. They have penetrated into many schools and families without raising any alarm in the most ultra-Protestant parent or guardian, for doctrine is never dragged into them; and though here and there in the Legends we can trace the influence of Romish teachings and traditions, they are so beautifully told, and the lesson of them all is so definitely to "do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly," that they appeal to the most puritanical. We are told by Dickens and by Madame Belloc (both intimate friends) that Adelaide Anne Proctor "bubbled over" with wit and irony, but there are no signs of either characteristic in her writings. They are full of sympathy and tenderness, and there is no morbid or maudlin sentiment about them, but equally they are destitute of all mirthfulness, and her muse is at its best when singing of Home and Heaven and Love. The tide of her poetry "sets ever towards Eternity."

Clifford Harrison incorporated several of her longer poems into his *repertoire,* and no one who heard him recite "The Story of a Faithful Soul" will forget the chilling effect with which he rendered the dramatic verses which precede the triumphant finale.

The Legends have a special charm of their own, but it is upon her Lyrics that her popularity will abidingly rest. The works of many greater writers will stand upon the bookshelves, almost unread save for selfish motives—

> "Calculating profits; so much help
> By so much reading"—

but a goodly company will for many years plunge "soul-forward" into her volumes, and find therein a spell for relieving heartache, and a reflection of their moods as in a looking-glass.

Her keen knowledge of human nature is not the result of morbid self-dissection, but inspired by a wide sympathy and an innately loving fellowship that has gauged sorrow, and knows that in "some far bright to-morrow" our treasures are living yet — saved from sin's pollution— held in faithful keeping until the day break.

> "Nothing is our own: we hold our pleasures
> Just a little while ere they are fled;
> One by one life robs us of our treasures;
> Nothing is our own except our dead.