

A MARRIAGE

In "A Marriage" from "Legends and Lyrics--First Series," the narrative unfolds with the wedding of a farmer's daughter, a celebration tinged with melancholy rather than joy. The wedding, intended for the family's private chapel, was relocated due to late permissions, reflecting on societal blames towards the Constitution. The procession was small, constrained by the physical demands of the journey to the church and societal norms—excluding the bride's mother and unmarried women from attendance.

The bride, adorned in shot silk and gold, visits the narrators for blessings, but the subsequent festivities reveal the event's somber nature. Tears from the bride's sisters and the mother's absence highlight familial sorrow, overshadowed further by the groom's drunken state, incongruent with the day's significance. Attempts to lighten the mood with pistol shots and raucous yells fall flat, culminating in a departure marked by distress rather than celebration. Yet, the marriage is deemed desirable, illustrating societal and familial pressures overshadowing individual happiness.

The chapter shifts to reminisce about Miss Procter, contrasting the melancholic tones of her poetry with her humor and vibrancy in life. Her disposition was cheerfully humorous, and her laughter reflected a profound enjoyment of life. Generous and modest, Procter's character and contributions to her community are celebrated, absent of any egotistical pretense often associated with poets. Her endeavors to assist those in need, whether through charity or advocacy, were tireless, though ultimately taxing on her health.

Her final months, bedridden and deteriorating, are recounted with a tone of serene acceptance. Despite prolonged suffering, her spirit remained undiminished, embodying patience and cheerfulness until her peaceful questioning of her impending death, a poignant conclusion to her life's narrative.

This account, bridging personal loss with broader societal critique, encapsulates themes of societal expectations, personal grief, and the stark contrast between public celebrations and private sorrows, all the while presenting a homage to a figure of literary and personal significance. It reveals the complexities of human emotions, societal norms, and the rich tapestry of community life, alongside a tribute to an individual whose life exemplified generosity, humor, and a deep compassionate engagement with the world.

