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# I

JULIET BARKER

## The Haworth context

Most biographies begin, as Dickens in *David Copperfield* famously said they should, at the beginning: that is, with the birth of their subject. Elizabeth Gaskell, however, took a different view, dedicating the first two chapters of her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* not to Charlotte, nor even to her ancestry, but to the place where she grew up and spent most of her adult life. In this way, Gaskell set Haworth at the forefront of the Brontë story, deliberately linking place and subject in an exceptionally emphatic way. She explained why she did so quite candidly.

For a right understanding of the life of my dear friend, Charlotte Brontë, it appears to me more necessary in her case than in most others, that the reader should be made acquainted with the peculiar forms of population and society amidst which her earliest years were passed, and from which both her own and her sisters' first impressions of human life must have been received.<sup>1</sup>

The reason why it was so necessary to do this is not immediately apparent to the modern reader, though it was obvious to Gaskell's contemporaries. *Jane Eyre* had taken the literary world by storm when it appeared in 1847, but it was regarded in the terminology of the day as 'a naughty book'. Polite society was shocked at the notion of Rochester's attempt at bigamous marriage, his casual discussion of his former mistresses with his daughter's teenage governess and the improper behaviour of both master and governess during their courtship. Even Gaskell, the most ardent of Charlotte's champions, would not allow her unmarried daughters to read *Jane Eyre* for fear that they might be tainted by what one reviewer called its 'total ignorance of the habits of society, a great coarseness of taste, and a heathenish doctrine of religion'.<sup>2</sup>

Speculation about the identity and, more especially, the sex of the author of *Jane Eyre* had been rife from the first. This increased to fever pitch with the publication of Emily's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), which were widely presumed to be works from the same

hand. As G. H. Lewes put it, the Brontë novels were ‘coarse even for men, coarse in language and coarse in conception’ (*CH*, 292). Once Charlotte’s identity became known, the speculation became positively prurient. How was it possible for a spinster living a life of complete obscurity and seclusion in a remote Yorkshire village to have written such shocking books? The reviewer in the *Christian Remembrancer* spoke for many when he hinted darkly that there must be sinister reasons for what seemed like a deliberate withdrawal from society (*CH*, 203).

It was therefore no accident that Gaskell placed so much emphasis on Haworth in the opening chapters of her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. What she was trying to prove was that there was nothing inherently evil, perverse or even odd about Charlotte and her sisters. Morally flawless themselves, they had attracted the world’s opprobrium only because they had innocently, but accurately, reproduced the harsh realities of life in Haworth in their novels, unaware that it differed significantly from society at large. Gaskell’s magnificent opening sequence, with its evocation of the journey from Keighley to Haworth, was thus invested with massive symbolism: it was a passing from the comparative civilisation of a thriving commercial town, which Gaskell’s readers would recognise as typical of the industrial West Riding of Yorkshire, to a strange moorland village, cut off from the ordinary world by the ‘monotonous and illimitable barrier’ of the surrounding hills. Every page of her description is peppered with carefully chosen adjectives such as ‘wild’, ‘bleak’, ‘oppressive’, ‘lonely’ and ‘isolated’,<sup>3</sup> which reinforce the idea that Haworth was physically remote; a place not only difficult to get to, but also, more significantly, difficult to leave.

Not unnaturally, the people who lived in this solitude were, according to Gaskell, as strange and inhospitable as the landscape: curt and harsh of speech, rude to the point of ‘positive insult’ to strangers, ‘independent, wilful, and full of grim humour’. With much colourful quotation from the life of an earlier rector of Haworth, William Grimshaw, Gaskell draws a picture of a savage, lawless population, delighting in bull-baiting, cock-fighting and drunken funeral feasts, which literally had to be horse-whipped out of the inns and into church on Sundays. The exploits of Heathcliff and Arthur Huntingdon seem tame by comparison.

Gaskell succeeded triumphantly in vindicating the Brontë sisters’ reputation. Reviewers of her biography agreed that ‘the knowledge that the authors painted life as it lay around them in their daily path is sufficient refutation of the charge, that they revelled in coarseness for coarseness’ sake, and drew pictures of vice in accordance with their own inherent depravity’.<sup>4</sup> What she failed to do, quite deliberately, was to paint an accurate picture of Haworth in the time of the Brontës. It was unrecognisable not only to its inhabitants,



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but even to the tourists who flocked to see it in the wake of her book. The reaction of two visitors to Haworth in August 1857 (only five months after the publication of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*) was typical.

Our previous conceptions of the locality had been formed entirely from Mrs Gaskell's description and the frontispiece to the 'Memoirs of Charlotte Brontë'; and we found all our expectations most gloriously disappointed. We had supposed Haworth to be a scattered and straggling hamlet, with a desolate vicarage and a dilapidated church, surrounded and shut out from the world by a wilderness of barren heath, the monotony of the prospect only broken by the tombstones in the adjacent graveyard. Our straggling hamlet we found transformed into a large and flourishing village – not a very enlightened or poetical place certainly, but quaint, compact, and progressive, wherein, by the bye, we observed three large dissenting chapels and two or three well-sized schools.<sup>5</sup>

The problem with Gaskell's description of Haworth was that it was almost a hundred years out of date. Haworth was not a small rural village but a busy industrial township. Even though the Brontës themselves pandered to the idea that they lived in rural and social isolation,<sup>6</sup> this was simply not the case.

Haworth stands 314 metres (1,031 feet) above sea level in the South Pennines, close to the Yorkshire–Lancashire border. It is surrounded by swelling hills which are riven with pastoral, wooded valleys and crowned with unenclosed moorland, stretching as far as the eye can see. The hillsides are dotted with small farmsteads and the valley bottoms with little mills which once harnessed the power of the abundant springs and streams pouring off the moors. Between one and three miles further south along the Worth valley is Oxenhope, which was in the early nineteenth century divided into two settlements, Near and Far Oxenhope; to the west, a mile away over the moors, lies Stanbury. Both villages belonged to the old Haworth township and formed part of the sprawling and ill-defined chapelry of Haworth, which the gazetteers of the day described as covering an area of precisely 10,540 acres; effectively it encompassed all the villages, hamlets, farms and cottages lying outside the parameters of the nearest towns.<sup>7</sup>

These towns, none of them more than a dozen miles away, included some of the most important manufacturing areas of northern England: Bradford to the east and Halifax to the southeast were pre-eminent in the woollen industry of the West Riding of Yorkshire; Burnley to the west, just over the border into Lancashire, was a centre of the cotton trade. The moors round Haworth were covered with a network of packhorse trails which, since medieval times, had linked these places together. The last three decades of the eighteenth century had seen an exponential growth in traffic as the cottage

industries of washing, combing, spinning and weaving locally produced wool had given way to the insatiable demand of the new water-driven and increasingly mechanised mills. Haworth's position was crucial in this development, for it straddled the main route between Yorkshire and Lancashire and much of the commercial traffic between the two counties passed along the turn-pike roads and through the centre of the town. The large number of public houses, including the three clustered at the top of Main Street, the White Lion, King's Arms and Black Bull, were there to serve this passing trade rather than the local population for, despite Gaskell's colourful accounts of drunken revellry, an independent survey in 1850 found that the consumption of beer and spirituous liquor in Haworth was 'very much' below the average of other places.<sup>8</sup>

Haworth was not merely a conduit for the wool trade but played an important role itself in the manufacture of worsted and woven cloth. Even when the Brontës first arrived, in 1820, the town already contained some thirteen working mills, which increased rapidly in size and number over the forty-one years of the Reverend Patrick Brontë's incumbency. By 1850 there were three worsted spinning and weaving mills in Haworth itself: Mytholmes mill was modestly sized, employing only thirty-nine hands, but Sugden's employed 134 and Butterfield's, which was newly built, was expected to employ between 900 and 1,000 men, women and children once it became fully operational.<sup>9</sup> Of all the cottage industries which had been so important in the previous century, only wool-combing and, to a lesser degree, hand-loom weaving, survived into the middle of the nineteenth. Quarrying also continued to employ a considerable number of inhabitants: the great hollows and spoil heaps at the top of Penistone Hill, behind the town, marked the quarries where flagstones and masonry blocks were cut ready for transportation by cart to all parts of the surrounding area. Only in the wider township was farming a common occupation. The land was too high and arid to sustain a wide variety of agriculture but hay and oats were grown, principally for animal feed. Though Haworth had two annual livestock fairs, sheep and pigs (which were frequently prize-winners at the Keighley agricultural show) were more in evidence than cattle. Most of the farmers simply scratched out a living from a few acres of inhospitable land, though some of the larger landowners, like the Taylors of Stanbury and the Heatons of Ponden Hall, had become wealthy by judicious investment in property, rents and smallscale manufacturing.

The fact that Haworth was principally a working-class manufacturing town was readily apparent in its appearance. The mills lay in the valley bottom, the church of St Michael and All Angels at the top of the hill. Between them snaked Main Street, famously described by Mrs Gaskell as

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having its cobbles (or setts, to use the Yorkshire word) laid endwise ‘in order to give a better hold to the horses’ feet; and even with this help, they seem to be in constant danger of slipping backwards’.<sup>10</sup> Main Street was lined with eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century terraced cottages, some displaying the long row of mullioned windows on an upper storey which indicated that hand-loom weaving was carried on inside. Like the neighbouring Pennine towns of Heptonstall and Hebden Bridge, Haworth literally was built into a hillside so steep that cottages which appeared to be only two storeys high from the front were actually five or six at the back, creating over- and under-dwellings inhabited by different families. Most of the working population lived at the top of Main Street, however, close to the brow of the hill and within the cramped confines of a triangle bounded by three roads, of which at least one, West Lane, was tarmacadised. The houses here were a rabbit warren of small, ramshackle back-to-backs, built round cobbled or earthen yards and accessible only by narrow alley-ways. Even here many of the cottages were home to several different families.

When, at Patrick Brontë’s request, an investigation was carried out by Benjamin Herschel Babbage on behalf of the General Board of Health in 1850, the report identified twenty-five cellar dwellings which had been created as separate houses out of the cellars of the cottages above. They therefore lay several feet below the level of the street outside and were inevitably damp and airless. Many of the inhabitants were wool-combers who carried out their trade from home. A skilled and therefore highly paid occupation – when work was available – wool-combing was carried out in conditions that were pernicious to health. To minimise the risk of breaking fibres, the wool was combed in rooms without ventilation, where iron stoves were kept alight day and night to maintain the right degree of heat and humidity. As many of the combers lived and slept with their families in the rooms where they also worked, it was not surprising that the incidence of infective lung diseases, especially tuberculosis, was exceptionally high amongst them.<sup>11</sup>

A typical example of this type of working-class accommodation was found by the inspectors in Gauger’s Croft: ‘consisting of two rooms, one of them a wool-comber’s shop, the other a living-room and kitchen; the family, seven in number, slept in two beds in the shop, which was very hot and close even in the day-time, and must have been very bad at night’. Conditions were often little better in the upper dwellings. In the upper portion of a cottage in Back Lane, the inspectors discovered three rooms opening into each other: in the largest room, which was less than 7 feet wide and 24 feet long, eight quarry men slept in four beds; in the second, smaller room, slept six men and boys who worked the wool-combing business which was carried on in the third room where a fire was lit constantly day and night.<sup>12</sup>

These unhealthy working and living conditions were made worse by primitive sanitary arrangements. Even in 1850 there was not a single water-closet in the town and the entire population was served by sixty-nine privies, an average, as the inspector pointed out, of one to every four-and-a-half houses. Lacking any other means of disposal, the contents of these earth closets were emptied into midden heaps adjoining the houses, where, mixed with household refuse and the offal from slaughter-houses, they festered for months on end, creating a major hazard to public health. As there were no sewers, surface drainage was carried away in open channels and gutters. Most seriously of all, the water supply which served almost everyone in the town by means of nine pumps and two public wells (five other wells were in private hands, including the one belonging to the Brontës) was polluted by these effluents; one spring even ran through the churchyard. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that ill-health was endemic.

The grim statistics of the Babbage Report of 1850 reveal that Haworth shared the same mortality rates as some of the most unhealthy districts of inner-city London: 41.6 per cent of the population died before they reached their sixth birthday. Viewed in this local context, the deaths within the Brontë family seem far less unusual and tragic than would otherwise be the case. All survived beyond their seventh year and only the two eldest daughters, Maria and Elizabeth, who died aged eleven and ten respectively, did not exceed the average age at death. However, the mortality rate in Haworth was 10.5 per cent higher than the maximum rate set by Parliament as the level at which 'special remedies' were required. Ironically, the reasons identified for these unacceptably high mortality rates were those typical of the new industrial towns: overcrowding, the tainted water supply and primitive sanitation.<sup>13</sup>

The Babbage Report makes morbidly entertaining reading but, taken in isolation, it creates a picture of Haworth which is just as misleading as that painted by Mrs Gaskell. The fact remains that, poor as sanitary conditions were in the town, they were not unique, nor even unusual in the nascent industrial society of the first half of the nineteenth century. Despite the threat to public health identified by the inspector appointed by a newly conscious and increasingly interventionist Victorian government, the population of the town increased dramatically in line with its manufacturing activity. Census returns reveal that in the half century between 1801 and 1850 it more than doubled, rising from 3,164 to 6,848; in 1821-31, the first decade of the Brontës' residence, it increased by 25 per cent. As the only clergyman covering the entire chapelry at that period, Patrick Brontë was kept immensely busy. On average he baptised 290 children and carried out 111 burials a year.<sup>14</sup> The impression that Haworth was a thriving and populous town, rather than the isolated rural village of Brontë legend, is unavoidable.

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It would also be a mistake to see the Babbage Report as confirming the popular hypothesis that the Brontës were socially and culturally isolated in Haworth. Babbage's remit necessarily confined him to the condition of the working classes, amongst whom it was indeed unlikely that the Brontës would find kindred spirits. It did not extend to their own middle class, whose existence is therefore undocumented in his report. Yet it is clear from the directories and local newspapers of the period that there was a small, but growing and influential number of professionals and people of independent means living within the area. William White's 1837 *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, for instance, lists twenty-nine people who might be placed in this category, as distinct from the tradesmen and craftsmen who otherwise merit inclusion. In addition to the mill-owners, the list includes three clergymen (including Patrick Brontë himself), three heads of local schools, two quarry owners, a surgeon, a wine and spirit merchant and five men whose occupation is given as 'gentleman'. By 1843, this last category had risen to eleven, and two members of the Greenwood family, Joseph and William, were defined for the first time simply as 'Esquire'.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of these people is significant for two reasons: firstly, they and their families were the natural social peers of the Brontës and, secondly, they had an impact on the cultural and intellectual life of the Haworth. The first point is only relevant because Mrs Gaskell and subsequent biographers have placed great emphasis on the supposed fact that the Brontë girls grew up 'bereft, in a singular manner, of all such society as would have been natural to their age, sex, and station'. Mrs Gaskell identified only one family, the Greenwoods of Bridge House, as the exception to the general rule. Despite being dissenters, they had been 'remarkably kind and attentive' to Mrs Brontë in her last illness and 'had paid the children the attention of asking them occasionally to tea . . . At this house, I believe, the little Brontës paid their only visits; and these visits ceased before long.'<sup>16</sup> Whilst it suited Mrs Gaskell's purposes to suggest that the Brontës had no normal social contacts outside their own close-knit family circle, this was clearly not the case. Their father's occupation made this impossible. Not only was he on close personal terms with many of the local clergy, including Theodore Dury of Keighley and Thomas Crowther of Cragg Vale, and also his own relation by marriage, John Fennell of Cross Stone: these friendships extended to their respective families. Charlotte's first letter was written during a family visit to Cross Stone in 1829, Caroline Dury was a friend of Charlotte's, and the Crowther daughters were at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge at the same time as the Brontë girls.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, visiting clergymen, invited to preach fund-raising sermons on behalf of the Sunday school or missionary and Bible societies, were a constantly recurring feature of life at Haworth Parsonage.

Like the church trustees and officials, the ever-increasing band of curates, the bell-ringers and Sunday-school teachers, even the occasional visiting bishop, had to be received and entertained by the parson's children, whether they wished to do so or not.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond the formal performance of their parochial duties, there is evidence that the Brontës did enjoy more voluntary social contact. Though such correspondence is of its very nature ephemeral, a few of their replies to invitations from Ann Greenwood of Spring Head and the Taylor family of Stanbury are extant, couched in language which suggests that these were not isolated instances.<sup>19</sup> Charlotte's school friend, Ellen Nussey, too, when she stayed at the parsonage, casually records paying social visits as if they were nothing out of the ordinary. Her diary of 1844, for example, includes references to 'plenty of fun & fatigue' with the Heatons of Ponden Hall and a walk 'under umbrellas' in the Greenwoods' garden at Oxenhope.<sup>20</sup> These visits were reciprocated, for there are references in the Brontë correspondence to friends and neighbours being invited to tea on a purely social basis. The family of Ebenezer Rand, master of the new National School which opened in Haworth in 1844, seems to have been on particularly friendly terms with the Brontës.<sup>21</sup>

Whilst none of this is evidence of actual intimacy between the Brontë sisters and their neighbours, it is conclusive proof that they were part of, and on familiar terms with, a social circle centred on their father's profession. In that respect, at least, they were far more normal than Mrs Gaskell or her followers have allowed. That none of these friendships – nor even, it should be stressed, Charlotte's lifelong friendship with Ellen Nussey – ever approximated the intensity of the relationship between the Brontë siblings tells us more about the Brontës than about the society in which they lived. Like all large families they had no need actively to seek companionship from other children and it is significant that the only time they did so was when they were away at school. It is unlikely that Charlotte would have made friends with Ellen Nussey or Mary Taylor had she not been separated from her siblings and alone at Roe Head. Similarly, Anne's only known friendship outside the family was formed when she was a pupil at the same school.<sup>22</sup> Sharing the same interests and enthusiasms, and bound together by the joint creation of their secret imaginary worlds, the young Brontës had no need to look outside their own home for emotional or intellectual sympathies.

What Haworth did have to offer, however, was a cultural life which, if it could not match that of the great cities, was still valuable and important. Far from being the philistine and barbarous place of Brontë legend, Haworth in the period from 1820 to 1861 was a community with cultural

aspirations and, perhaps more surprisingly, a venerable musical tradition. As one of its inhabitants, Benjamin Binns, later remembered, 'Haworth in those days was remarkable for its cultivation of music, and the goddess was wooed for herself rather than for any pecuniary gain.' The Haworth Philharmonic Society, one of the oldest in the country, had been established in or around 1780. It held regular concerts in the town, usually in the large room of the Black Bull, which was then the closest thing to an Assembly Room that Haworth possessed.<sup>23</sup> The Haworth Choral Society, which met and performed four times a year at various venues, was less ancient. Under the aegis of Thomas Parker, an 'almost matchless' local tenor who was in great demand throughout Yorkshire and Lancashire and was even invited to sing at the Crystal Palace, the society was highly ambitious and successful in the 1840s and 1850s. Its speciality was sacred music, and oratorios such as Haydn's *Creation* and Handel's *Samson* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, made regular appearances on its programme.<sup>24</sup> According to Benjamin Binns, Patrick Brontë was 'passionately fond of oratorio' and 'often attended concerts and other meetings of an elevating tendency in the village, taking with him the members of his family'. It was undoubtedly for this reason that he initiated a public subscription in the township to build an organ in his church, personally supporting the campaign with fund-raising sermons. The public performance of Handel's *Messiah* on 23 March 1834 which inaugurated the successful installation of the organ was such a milestone in the musical life of the town that it even found its way into the Brontë juvenilia, in the form of a sardonic description by Charlotte of Branwell's rapturous response to John Greenwood's playing.<sup>25</sup> The installation of the organ transformed the possibilities for public performance and Haworth Church thereafter became a popular venue for concerts.

With music of such calibre a regular feature of Haworth life, it was perhaps not surprising that these skilled amateur musical societies attracted professional musicians as soloists. John Greenwood himself, Abraham Sunderland, his replacement as organist of Keighley (who taught the Brontë children music), Mrs Sunderland, 'The Yorkshire Queen of Song', who often partnered Thomas Parker in oratorios, were only some of many, though perhaps the most remarkable performer was the German violinist, G. F. Hoffman, who in the Sunday school in December 1842 'astonished a numerous audience by his extra-ordinary abilities as a musician' and earned himself their 'unbounded applause'.<sup>26</sup> The concerts of neighbouring towns also attracted musical talent of the highest international standing. Halifax, less than a dozen miles away and well known to all the Brontës, played host in the 1830s and 1840s to such notables as Nicolo Paganini, Johann Strauss 'The Waltz

King', Franz Liszt and Felix Mendelssohn.<sup>27</sup> In the light of all this, it is not surprising that, as we shall see, at least three of the young Brontës were talented musicians in their own right.

The visual arts were not as well represented as music. But in addition to Branwell Brontë Haworth is said to have boasted its own resident artist, James Constantine, a favourite of the Ferrand family who held the lordship of the manor.<sup>28</sup> Four miles away, in Keighley, the Brontës had an inspirational figure in John Bradley, a founder member of the Keighley Mechanics Institute, who was both its first secretary and architect of its new building. Though apparently not a professional artist, Bradley exhibited regularly at events sponsored by the Royal Northern Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts and chose to have his own portrait painted with his brushes and palette in hand. William Dearden, a schoolmaster of Keighley and friend of the Brontë family, later remembered meeting Patrick and his children 'many times' in Bradley's studio, 'where they hung in close-gazing inspection and silent admiration over some fresh production of the artist's genius'. It was to Bradley that Patrick turned when he wished to appoint a drawing-master for his children and many of their earliest sketches were executed under his guidance.<sup>29</sup>

When Branwell decided to become a professional portrait painter, however, he had to look further afield for tuition. Leeds, some twenty-five miles away, had been home to the annual exhibition of the Royal Northern Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts since 1808. The exhibitions, which the Brontës visited, were a curious mixture of old masters on loan from private collections and new works by contemporary artists which were for sale. In 1834 Charlotte, who at the time harboured ambitions to be an artist herself, exhibited two of her own drawings, 'nimini-pimini' pencil copies of engravings of Bolton Abbey and Kirkstall Abbey. As neither picture found a buyer and Charlotte's eyesight was already beginning to fail under the strain of such detailed work, these were probably factors in her determining to abandon any hope of an artistic career.<sup>30</sup> One of the regular exhibitors was the Leeds-based portrait painter, William Robinson, who had been trained by Sir Thomas Lawrence and was widely regarded as one of the most distinguished artists of the day. In securing lessons with Robinson in 1834–5, Branwell could claim to be part of an eminent artistic tradition, centred on the Royal Academy, the metropolis and the court: the kind of high art which the Brontës had idolised since childhood, far removed from the limitations of the provincial art world. Nevertheless, it did not augur well for Branwell's own future as a professional artist that when Robinson died in 1838, he left his widow and children destitute.<sup>31</sup>



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Like most other industrial townships of the period, Haworth also had its philanthropic, educational and self-improvement societies. The Masons and the Foresters each had a large membership and enjoyed the patronage of Patrick Brontë. Branwell became a Master Mason and was an active member of the Three Graces Lodge, particularly in 1836 and 1837.<sup>32</sup> The Brontë sisters were excluded by reason of their sex, though this did not prevent them attending the public lectures sponsored by the Foresters, and by the various religious societies in Haworth and the Mechanics' Institute. Until the Haworth branch of this latter was established in 1848–9 (too late for Branwell, Emily and Anne), the Brontës had to walk the four miles to Keighley to attend its lectures on politics, religion, science, history and literature and to borrow books from its library. On at least one memorable occasion, in 1840, when the likeable Haworth curate, William Weightman, was invited to lecture on the classics there, all three Brontë sisters and their guest, Ellen Nussey, turned out in force to hear him, even though it meant that they did not return home till midnight. It was a measure of the importance Charlotte attached to the Mechanics' Institute as an educational facility that she not only became a life member of the Haworth branch at its commencement but, according to her obituary pronounced by its chairman, 'ever evinced a deep interest in its welfare and prosperity', presenting copies of her books to its library, presiding at the tea-tables on the annual soiré and honouring its meetings with her presence.<sup>33</sup>

Books of every kind were readily available to the Brontë children through the library of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute and, more importantly, the circulating libraries of the town, which stocked the more congenial periodicals, histories, poetry and fiction. Robert Aked, who printed two of Patrick Brontë's pamphlets, *The Signs of the Times* (1835) and *A Brief Treatise on the Best Time and Mode of Baptism* (1836), had established a circulating library at his shop as early as 1822, and the bookseller, Thomas Hudson, also kept a lending library. Surprisingly, there was even a subscription library in Haworth itself, though its existence (which may have been short-lived) is only documented because its contents were put up for sale in 1844. According to the local people, the Brontë sisters were familiar figures 'trudging down to Keighley' to change their books.<sup>34</sup> As their father could not afford to subscribe to a wide range of newspapers and periodicals, these had to be borrowed from friends. *Blackwood's Magazine*, for instance, was lent to them by the Reverend Jonas Driver, who lived in Haworth until his death in December 1831. Aunt Branwell, Patrick's sister-in-law, who came to look after the young Brontës when their mother died, was then persuaded to subscribe to *Fraser's Magazine*. Patrick's subscription to the Keighley Mechanics'

Institute eighteen months later may also have been an attempt to supply the deficiency caused by Driver's death.<sup>35</sup>

Newspapers played a hugely important role in the Brontë household, and were regarded as a necessary expense. In March 1844 Patrick Brontë informed the editors of the Whig *Leeds Mercury* that he had been a subscriber for 'more than thirty years'. He also subscribed to the rival Tory paper, the *Leeds Intelligencer*. As this suggests, he was far more liberal in his views than has generally been supposed. Indeed, he regularly lent newspapers to John Winterbottom, the Baptist Minister of Haworth, who was his vocal and active opponent on the vexed question of Church Rates.<sup>36</sup> His children, who were less tolerant, incorporated the proprietor and editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, Edward Baines, into their juvenilia, turning him and his three sons into the villains of their imaginary worlds.<sup>37</sup> A third newspaper, the *John Bull*, which even the twelve-year-old Charlotte considered 'High Tory very violent', was lent to them by the same Jonas Driver who lent them *Blackwood's Magazine*.<sup>38</sup>

The Brontës' own library was very small. It included the books their father had acquired for his own classical studies, such as his editions of the works of Horace and Homer's *Iliad*, both of which bore his proud inscription that they had been awarded to him as prizes 'for having always kept in the *first Class*, at St John's College – Cambridge'. His interest in the natural world (which must have been a personal passion, as it was not a subject included on the Cambridge syllabus) was represented by at least three valuable books bought principally for their illustrations: the famous American ornithologist John James Audubon's *Ornithological Biography, or An Account of the Habits of the Birds of the United States of America*, Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds* and *The Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society delineated*.<sup>39</sup> His liking for romantic literature was evident in his purchase of an early edition of Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Other works by Scott in the parsonage included *Tales of a Grandfather*, bought by Aunt Branwell as a new year's gift for her nephew and nieces in 1828, and *The Vision of Don Roderick* and *Rokeby*, a present to Charlotte from her headmistress, Margaret Wooler, when she left her post as teacher at Dewsbury Moor on 23 May 1838.<sup>40</sup>

Though Scott's influence on the imaginative and literary development of the young Brontës was to be profound, there was another section of the family bookshelves which was to be equally important, if for different reasons. The largest collection of books by one author had a familiar name on the title-page – that of Patrick Brontë himself. Scholarly clergymen had always published sermons, religious commentaries and didactic works, and it was not uncommon for those of the Evangelical persuasion, like Patrick,

to attempt to reach a wider audience by preaching a moral message in the more accessible form of simple tales and poems. Most of Patrick's efforts fell within these latter categories and were written in the first flush of enthusiasm after his relocation to Yorkshire: *Winter Evening Thoughts: A Miscellaneous Poem* (1810), *Cottage Poems* (1811), *The Rural Minstrel* (1813), *The Cottage in the Wood* (1815) and *The Maid of Killarney* (1818) were all firmly in the Evangelical tradition. They were, Patrick claimed, 'chiefly designed for the poorer classes of society' and intended 'to convey useful instruction, in a mode not unacceptable'.<sup>41</sup> What was unusual about Patrick's books was that he clearly wrestled with his conscience in writing them. As he disarmingly confessed in the introductory advertisement to *Cottage Poems*, he had been occupied in writing them 'from morning till noon, and from noon till night' whenever his clerical duties permitted. What is more, 'his employment was full of real, indescribable pleasure, such as he could wish to taste as long as life lasts'. That 'could wish' was significant. As a clergyman, Patrick could only justify his excursions into fiction on the grounds that they had a spiritual and moral purpose, yet the creative act had become a consuming passion for him and an end in itself, thereby threatening the proper fulfilment of his clerical duties. He acknowledged this danger in his preface to *The Cottage in the Wood* in words which are probably so harsh because they were self-applicable: 'The sensual novelist and his admirer, are beings of depraved appetites and sickly imaginations, who having learnt the art of *self-tormenting*, are diligently and zealously employed in creating an imaginary world, which they can never inhabit, only to make the real world, with which they must necessarily be conversant, gloomy and insupportable.' Having tasted the seductive delights of creating an imaginary world for himself, Patrick understood the same compulsion in his children. His advice to them, as Charlotte later told Robert Southey, was to channel their energies into the performance of their daily duties and to reserve the pleasures of the imagination for their leisure hours. In this he was simply recommending what he himself had done. But his children, lacking his will-power and motivation and spurred on by each other, were unable to break the spell.<sup>42</sup>

It will have become apparent that the Reverend Patrick Brontë was a remarkable man, whose influence on his children was of crucial importance in their development as individuals and as novelists. Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* depicts him as a misanthropic eccentric, given to violent rages in which he destroyed furniture and clothing, a man of 'strong and vehement prejudices',<sup>43</sup> who, after the death of his wife, shut himself away from his young family and declined even to eat meals with them. As with her portrayal of Haworth, Gaskell drew this caricature of Patrick in order to

explain what contemporaries saw as unfeminine in his daughters' attitudes and opinions: they had been deprived of a 'normal' upbringing and had been brought up in a loveless and repressive home. Her portrait of Patrick was as unrecognisable to his friends as her description of Haworth had been to its inhabitants and many of them publicly leapt to his defence. It says much for Patrick that he declined any public refutation of what amounted to a serious libel of his character, fearing that to do so would be to undermine the credibility of Mrs Gaskell's work. Instead, he contented himself with a mild reproof in a private letter, dismissing the wilder anecdotes with quiet humour and dignity. 'I never was subject to those explosions of passion ascribed to me', he informed her publisher, George Smith, 'and never perpetrated those eccentric and ridiculous movements, which I am ashamed to mention'.<sup>44</sup>

But, as Patrick was the first to admit, he was not an ordinary man. 'I do not deny that I am somewhat excentrick [*sic*]', he told Gaskell. 'Had I been numbered amongst the calm, sedate, *concentric* men of the world, I should not have been as I now am, and I should, in all probability, never have had such children as mine have been.'<sup>45</sup> His own career had been a personal vindication of his passionate belief in the power of education to transform lives. The eldest of ten children born to a poor Irish tenant farmer, he had taught himself to read and write, set up as a village schoolmaster at the age of sixteen, and, nine years later, won a sizar's place<sup>46</sup> at St John's College, Cambridge. There his single-minded determination to pursue his studies so that he could enter the Church of England attracted the attention of the Evangelicals and the personal patronage of one of the most influential lay members of that movement, William Wilberforce. Ordained on leaving university, he found a ready welcome in Evangelical circles and became a conscientious and committed clergyman. In 1809 he left the south of England for the West Riding of Yorkshire where the traditional, rural parish structure had been overwhelmed by the rapid growth of the new industrial towns, leaving whole populations bereft of spiritual guidance. Patrick's mission was to reclaim these lost souls for the Anglican Church and he dedicated his entire life to achieving it by every means possible: baptising, preaching, educating, but also working indefatigably for the material welfare of his parishioners. He laboured ceaselessly on behalf of individuals – one of his earliest successes was to secure the release of a young man wrongly arrested for desertion from the army<sup>47</sup> – and for the wider needs of the community. In Haworth this led him to set up not only a Sunday school but also adult literacy classes. Both his active support for those seeking to reduce the working hours of factory children and his fourteen-year campaign to improve the public water supply and sanitation brought him into conflict with the mill-owners who were the most powerful members of his congregation. Nevertheless,

he made his opinions known and did not shrink from voicing them in the many letters he wrote to the local newspapers and in the petitions he organised to Parliament. Occasionally, as in his vocal opposition to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which ended the old system of outdoor relief and made charitable assistance to the unemployed, infirm and elderly dependent on residence in workhouses, he even found himself quoted in the national newspapers.<sup>48</sup>

Patrick's rise through the ranks of the church hierarchy had been steady rather than meteoric and in 1820, aged forty-three, he accepted what was to become his final appointment as rector of Haworth. The post was technically a perpetual curacy, which gave him security of tenure for life: he could not be evicted legally from either the living or the parsonage that came with it. This was crucially important for Patrick who, unlike most clergymen of the time, had no source of income other than his clerical salary to support himself and his growing family. As all the Brontës were uncomfortably aware, however, when he died they would have nothing. His salary of around £170<sup>49</sup> was too small to enable them to acquire any savings during his lifetime and on his death their home would pass to the next incumbent. In the circumstances, Patrick's anxiety about his health and his insistence that his children should be capable of earning their own livings were entirely understandable.

The now-famous parsonage to which Patrick brought his wife, Maria, his six children, Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne, the eldest of whom was six years old, the youngest only three months, and two young maidservants in April 1820 was elegant and commodious by comparison with most houses in Haworth.<sup>50</sup> The Brontës were fortunate too in that their home stood in one of the healthiest locations on the outskirts of the town and at the very top of the hill. They had their own well, supplied by moorland springs unsullied by the twin unspeakables of farmyard or churchyard effluent, and they were one of only two dozen households in the town to have their own privy.<sup>51</sup> The parsonage, which had been built in 1779, had a small garden to the front and a paved yard to the rear. On two sides it was enclosed by churchyard, on the third by Church Lane, a quiet cobbled byway which ran at a tangent from the top of Main Street, past the church, the sexton's cottage and yard and the National School, built by Patrick in 1832. It stood at the top of Church Lane, and literally was the last house in the town. Beyond it lay only the moors, which were to become the creative inspiration for so much of the Brontës' writings.

The house itself was solid and uncompromising, the only concession to ornament being a pilastered and pedimented central doorway. Like all the houses in Haworth, it was built of local stone, hewn out of the quarries on the hillside behind, and roofed with stone flags to withstand exposure



Figure 1 Haworth Parsonage in the 1850s. From an ambrotype in the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

to the winds. Downstairs there was a dining room, which was the family living room, and, across the passageway, Patrick's study, where all the official business of the chapelry was conducted. Behind the study was the kitchen, where the children would gather round the fire to while away the long, dark winter evenings with their imaginary games and to listen to the tales of their much-loved servant, Tabby Aykroyd, who stayed with the family for thirty years. A small storeroom behind the dining room and a back wash kitchen completed the ground floor. Upstairs, there were three double bedrooms, a tiny bedroom for the servants over the storeroom, and an even smaller room, over the hall passage, which was used as a playroom and sewing room, but grandly designated the 'children's study'.

When the children were young, the house must have seemed austere and bare. Patrick had to support himself, a wife, six children and two maid-servants. There was no money for luxuries. 'There was not much carpet anywhere', one of Charlotte's schoolfriends, Ellen Nussey, remarked on her first visit in 1833,

except in the Sitting room, and on the centre of the Study floor. The hall floor and stairs were done with sand stone, always beautifully clean as everything

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about the house was, the walls were not papered but coloured in a pretty dove-coloured tint, hair-seated chairs and mahogany tables, book-shelves in the Study but not many of these elsewhere. Scant and bare indeed many will say, yet it was not a scantness that made itself felt.<sup>52</sup>

With its stone-flagged floors throughout the ground-floor rooms and its curtainless windows (having buried so many women and children who had been burnt to death in household accidents, Patrick was justifiably afraid of fire, so internal wooden shutters supplied the place of curtains until the children were grown) the parsonage must indeed have seemed bleak and poverty-stricken to the relatively wealthy Ellen. To the young Brontës, however, it was a much-loved home, where the lack of creature comforts was more than compensated for by the abundance of intellectual stimuli.

For most such stimuli, the children were indebted to their father. His profession and, more especially, his active engagement in the political and social, as well as religious, issues of the day profoundly affected his children. Not only did he take them to the local concerts and lectures, but he dedicated a considerable portion of his limited income to educate them in the liberal arts. Abraham Sunderland, the Keighley organist, was employed to give them music lessons and a five-octave cottage piano was purchased so that they could practise at home. Emily's diary paper of 24 November 1834 records that Mr Sunderland was expected and 'Anne and I have not Done our music exercise which consists of b major.' Charlotte's short-sightedness apparently prevented her learning the piano but both Emily and Anne became proficient enough to teach others. Emily, in particular, who played 'with precision and brilliancy' was considered so talented that when she went to the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels in 1842 one of the best professors in Belgium was engaged to give her lessons. Branwell, in addition, learnt to play the flute.<sup>53</sup> Drawing lessons for all the children were provided by John Bradley of Keighley, who encouraged them to develop their skills by copying Thomas Bewick's engravings. Drawing skills were a prerequisite of a genteel education at the time, and would be essential to Patrick's children if they were to earn their livings as teachers and governesses. But he was supportive of his children's artistic ambitions to the point of allowing affection for them to blind him to their limited abilities. Charlotte could not have exhibited her drawings at the age of eighteen without his approval. Although plans for Branwell to enter the Royal Academy were never realised, Patrick paid for at least two courses of expensive lessons (at the modern equivalent of more than £90 a lesson) with William Robinson of Leeds, as well as supporting his son financially in his ill-fated attempt in 1839 to set up a professional portrait painting studio in Bradford.<sup>54</sup>

During their early years the young Brontës were educated by their father. Formal instruction was supplemented by afternoon walks on the moors, which were an opportunity for practical lessons in natural sciences, and evening sessions when, according to the servant, Sarah Garrs, Patrick gathered his children around him 'for recitation and talk, giving them oral lessons in history, biography or travel'. They were expected to write out the stories he told next morning; this, it has been suggested, gave rise to a lifelong habit of thinking out their stories in bed.<sup>55</sup> Such methods of instruction, far removed from the dull parrot-learning and recitation of grammar and lists of geographical and historical facts which were the staple diet of early nineteenth-century education, were calculated to appeal to the young Brontës' imaginative faculties, even if they did not prepare them for the rigours of school life. When Charlotte entered Roe Head school in January 1831, her schoolfellows 'thought her very ignorant, for she had never learnt grammar at all, and very little geography', but 'She would confound us by knowing things that were out of our range altogether.'<sup>56</sup>

Unlike most parents of the period, Patrick made no effort to censor his children's reading and encouraged their impassioned discussion and debate on the political and religious issues of the day. The newspapers he took also provided the young Brontës with rich material for their imaginative play. Charlotte's vivid portrayal of the arrival of the special edition carrying the terms of the Roman Catholic Emancipation bill, interrupting her 1829 novelette 'Tales of the Islanders', portrays father and children equally caught up in the excitement of the moment: 'with what eagerness papa tore off the cover & how we all gathered round him & with what breathless anxiety we listen[e]d...'<sup>57</sup> Given such passionate interest in issues of this kind, and their equally emotional identification with heroes both living and dead, it is not surprising that, on occasion, when play-acting, the young Brontës were carried away by their enthusiasm and had to call in their father to act as arbiter in their quarrels.<sup>58</sup>

In her *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* Mrs Gaskell portrayed the Brontës as victims of an abnormal childhood and upbringing, suffering an involuntary exile from civilisation, society and friendships in the barbarous isolation of Haworth, and the loveless, repressive atmosphere of a home ruled with a rod of iron by a tyrannical and egocentric parent. She could not have been more wrong. The young Brontës certainly had an unconventional childhood, but this proved to be a liberation for them. Their father's passion for politics, literature and nature and his unorthodox methods of educating them were inspirational to such clever, imaginative children. A more 'normal' middle-class upbringing would probably have suffocated their budding talents. Far from being the gloomy place of Brontë legend, Haworth Parsonage was a



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vibrant powerhouse of intellectual activity. As they grew older, the Brontës were sometimes frustrated by the limitations of small-town, provincial existence, but this was because, since childhood, they had learnt to dream and to nourish ambition. It is, however, significant that forays into the world beyond rarely lived up to their expectations. Each of the Brontë sisters was unhappy away from home and always anxious to return there. Ironically, Mrs Gaskell was right to place such emphasis on the formative influence of the Brontës' childhood in Haworth. Though she did so on false premises and for all the wrong reasons, it was indeed the key to their future success as novelists.

## NOTES

1. Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* [1857], edited by Angus Easson (Oxford University Press, 1996), 15.
2. Elizabeth Rigby in the *Quarterly Review* 84, December 1848 (*CH*, 111).
3. Gaskell, *Life*, 9–11, 20–2.
4. *North American Review*, October 1857 (*CH*, 379).
5. Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994), 811. See also p. 814.
6. See, for example, Branwell Brontë to William Wordsworth, 10 January 1837 and Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, 23 January 1844 (*CBL* 1, 160–1, 341); Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams, 24 August 1849 (*CBL* 11, 240).
7. William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1837–8* (Sheffield, 1838), 11, 433. The boundaries of the chapelry were not precise and Patrick Brontë was sometimes called upon to officiate in the hinterlands which fell between his own and neighbouring parishes.
8. B. H. Babbage, *Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of the Hamlet of Haworth, in the West Riding of the County of York* (London: HMSO, 1850), 11–12.
9. *Ibid.*, 6.
10. Gaskell, *Life*, 11.
11. Babbage, *Report to the General Board of Health*, 6, 11.
12. *Ibid.*, 12, 14; William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1842–3* (Sheffield, 1843), 516.
13. Babbage, *Report to the General Board of Health*, 11–13, 16–17, 9–10, 12.
14. *Register of Baptisms, 1813–29* and *Register of Burials, 1813–1836*, Haworth Church.
15. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1838), 439; White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1843), 370–1.
16. Gaskell, *Life*, 46, 472–3.
17. *CBL* 1, 105; Barker, *The Brontës*, 167, 339, 183, 546, 802–3.
18. See Barker, *The Brontës*, *passim*. For Ellen Nussey's entertaining description of the annual visit by the Sunday-school teachers see *CBL* 1, 602.

19. For examples dating from 1836 and 1842 see *CBL* 1, 149, 305, 305–6.
20. Barker, *The Brontës*, 438.
21. *CBL* 1, 351, 393–5, 442–3; *CBL* 11, 184–5. See also Barker, *The Brontës*, 430, 437.
22. Barker, *The Brontës*, 172, 181. Anne's friend, Ann Cook, died within a year of leaving Roe Head (*CBL* 1, 209 n.1).
23. [Benjamin Binns], 'The Brontës and the Brontë Country: A chat with one who knew them', *The Bradford Observer*, 17 February 1894, 6.
24. For oratorios performed in Haworth by the Haworth Choral Society see, for example, *The Halifax Guardian*, 12 November 1842, 8, *The Bradford Observer*, 8 February 1844, 8, and 24 October 1844, 6. For Thomas Parker, see his obituary in *The Keighley News*, 14 April 1866.
25. [Benjamin Binns], 'The Brontës and the Brontë Country', 6; Barker, *The Brontës*, pp. 210–11; Charlotte Brontë, 'My Angria and the Angrians', 14 October 1834 (*EEW* 11: 2, 251–2).
26. *The Bradford Observer*, 5 January 1843, 5; *Keighley Saturday Observer*, 31 December 1842, 8; *The Leeds Intelligencer*, 10 December 1842, 7.
27. Barker, *The Brontës*, 212, 877.
28. [Benjamin Binns], 'The Brontës and the Brontë Country', 6.
29. Barker, *The Brontës*, 150; Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22–4, plate 5; William Dearden, letter to *The Bradford Observer*, 27 June 1861, 7.
30. Barker, *The Brontës*, 14; Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, 25–6, 228–9.
31. Barker, *The Brontës*, 214.
32. *Ibid.*, 230, 247, 320.
33. *Ibid.*, 636, 725, 777; Ellen Nussey, 'Reminiscences, 1871', in Juliet Barker, ed., *The Brontës: A Life in Letters* (London: Viking, 1997), 74.
34. Barker, *The Brontës*, 148–9; *The Bradford Observer*, 28 March 1844, 5.
35. Barker, *The Brontës*, 149; *CBL* 1, 112.
36. Patrick Brontë to the Editors of the *Leeds Mercury*, n.d. (*Leeds Mercury*, 16 March 1844, 6); Charlotte Brontë, 'The History of the Year', 12 March 1829, in Juliet Barker, ed., *Charlotte Brontë: Juvenilia 1829–1835* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), 2; [Benjamin Binns], 'The Brontës and the Brontë Country', 6.
37. See, for example, Charlotte's first volume of *Tales of the Islanders*, in Barker, ed., *Charlotte Brontë: Juvenilia*, 9–12.
38. Charlotte Brontë, 'The History of the Year', 12 March 1829 (Barker, ed., *Charlotte Brontë: Juvenilia*, 2).
39. Patrick's prize books are in the Brontë Parsonage Museum (HAOBP: bb207 and bb208). For examples of the Brontës' drawings copied from Bewick's *A History of British Birds* see Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, *passim*. The first volume of *The Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society delineated* (London: John Sharpe, 1830) is at the Brontë Parsonage Museum (HAOBP: bb69): it bears Patrick's inscription, in mixed Latin and English, that it was bought in May 1831 at the cost of one guinea on the advice of John Bradley and the comment 'The wooden cuts, in this Book, are excellent – Being done by the first of living engravers, on Wood – .' The Brontë copy of Audubon was

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- item 6 in Sotheby's 1907 sale catalogue of books and manuscripts belonging to Charlotte's widower, Arthur Bell Nicholls.
40. Patrick's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (London: Longman & Co., 1806) and Charlotte's presentation copy of *The Vision of Don Roderick; Rokeby* (Edinburgh: John Ballantyne & Co., 1811 and 1813) are at the Brontë Parsonage Museum (HAOBP: bb54 and bb214); the Brontës' inscribed copy of *Tales of a Grandfather* is mentioned in a footnote to the 1905 edition of Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1905), 125.
  41. J. Horsfall Turner, ed., *Brontëana: The Reverend Patrick Brontë's Collected Works* (Bingley: T. Harrison & Sons, 1898), 19, 71.
  42. *Ibid.*, 21, 102; Charlotte Brontë to Robert Southey, 16 March 1837 (CBL 1, 169).
  43. Gaskell, *Life*, 45.
  44. Barker, *The Brontës*, 803–5.
  45. Patrick Brontë to Mrs Gaskell, 30 July 1857 (*Brontë Society Transactions* 8: 44 (1932), 129–30).
  46. A sizarship was a form of scholarship for poor but able students entitling them to pay reduced fees and get free dinners, in the expectation that they would win high academic honours for their college.
  47. 'Sydney' [Patrick Brontë] to the Editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, n.d., *Leeds Mercury*, 15 December 1810, 3; Barker, *The Brontës*, 37–8.
  48. *The Times*, 27 February 1837, 6. For a summary of Patrick's career see Barker, *The Brontës*, *passim*.
  49. *Ibid.*, 105.
  50. The two maidservants were the sisters, Nancy and Sarah Garrs, whom the Brontës had taken into service when living at Thornton on the outskirts of Bradford.
  51. Babbage, *Report to the General Board of Health*, 12.
  52. Ellen Nussey, 'Reminiscences of Charlotte Brontë... reprinted by permission from "Scribner's Monthly," May 1871', *Brontë Society Transactions* 2: 10 (1899), 76–9.
  53. *Ibid.*, 79; Constantin Heger to Patrick Brontë, 5 November 1842 (CBL 1, 299); Barker, ed., *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, 29. The cottage piano, Branwell's flute and his handwritten book of music for the flute are at the Brontë Parsonage Museum.
  54. Barker, ed., *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, 31–4. Patrick Brontë paid 2 guineas for each lesson with Robinson. For Bewick see note 39 above.
  55. Barker, *The Brontës*, 855 n. 90.
  56. Mary Taylor to Mrs Gaskell, 18 January 1856, in Barker, ed., *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, 18.
  57. Gaskell, *Life*, 43, 46; Charlotte Brontë, 'Tales of the Islanders Volume II' [6 October 1829], in Barker, ed., *Charlotte Brontë: Juvenilia*, 17.
  58. Patrick Brontë to Mrs Gaskell, 24 July 1855, in Barker, ed., *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*, 10.