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Cambridge University Press

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Clement Shorter

Frontmatter

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VOLUME 1

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Charlotte Brontë

*From the Crayon Portrait by George Richmond, R.A.
Now in the National Portrait Gallery of London*

Emery Walker Ph. sc.

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THE BRONTËS

LIFE AND LETTERS

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO PRESENT A FULL
AND FINAL RECORD OF THE LIVES OF
THE THREE SISTERS, CHARLOTTE, EMILY
AND ANNE BRONTË FROM THE BIOGRA-
PHIES OF MRS. GASKELL AND OTHERS,
AND FROM NUMEROUS HITHERTO UN-
PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS

BY

CLEMENT SHORTER



VOL. I

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON : MCMVIII

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P R E F A C E

THE Life of Charlotte Brontë has been written, with finality all will agree, by Mrs. Gaskell, but when an author has attained to great fame there is a public, however small, with whom the interest extends beyond a standard biography. It was so with Johnson, and we have not only the incomparable 'Boswell,' but certain volumes of letters edited by Dr. Birkbeck Hill. It was so with Scott, and we have not only the always interesting 'Lockhart,' but four volumes of letters and diaries that every lover of Sir Walter delights in. Thus it is that I have to congratulate myself upon the fact that the widespread interest in the Brontës has secured for my book, *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle*, a very large audience, both in Great Britain and the United States. The merits of that book were due in no measure to the compiler, but rather to the happy accident which placed in his hands a great deal of material not known to any previous writer on the subject.

During the eleven years that have passed since I first published *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle*, correspondents from all parts of the world have forwarded me documents and letters which I am glad to add here, thus making this book, which I call *The Brontës: Life and Letters*, very largely a new work. Everything that was in the former

work has been incorporated, and a quantity of extremely valuable new material has been added, including many hitherto unpublished letters. The placing for the first time of the whole of the correspondence in chronological order will, it is hoped, be considered in itself sufficient to justify this publication.

It had always been my ambition to present these letters in chronological order, but I found that no book of the kind could be considered satisfactory that did not include all the letters already published, even those that were familiar to the readers of Mrs. Gaskell's biography. The exhaustion of the copyright of Mrs. Gaskell's book has given me my opportunity. I have every reason to hope that there are many Brontë enthusiasts who will welcome these volumes, which, although avowedly a compilation, will make a sympathetic appeal to those who have come under the glamour of the Brontë story.

I have to offer a word of thanks to Dr. Robertson Nicoll, to Mr. C. W. Hatfield of Pershore, and to Mr. Butler Wood of Bradford, for kindly reading my proof-sheets, and for valuable suggestions. I have also to acknowledge indebtedness to Mr. Thomas J. Wise and Mr. H. Buxton Forman for the loan of correspondence.

C. S.

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