

WORLD'S  CLASSICS



**CHARLOTTE BRONTË**

**SHIRLEY**

THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

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*Shirley*

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*Edited by*

HERBERT ROSENGARTEN

*and* MARGARET SMITH

*with an Introduction by*

MARGARET SMITH

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## INTRODUCTION

*Shirley* was begun in 1848 and published in 1849, at the end of a decade of profound social unrest. Revolutionary conflicts had shaken the thrones of Europe. In England, the widening rift between the 'two nations', the rich and the poor, which had oppressed the imagination of Heine in the 1820s, aroused the compassionate indignation of Carlyle in *Past and Present* and Disraeli in *Sybil*. Legislators made slow progress against social evils exacerbated by ignorance, prejudice and self-interest and by the unavoidable distresses arising from recurrent trade depressions and from the Irish famine. Chartists turned to mob violence, incendiarism and riot after the failure of the Petition of 1839. The Church, split by sectarian controversies, seemed to lack the strength needed to convert the idealism of the few into the salvation of the many.

All these themes—dissatisfaction with the government, the 'two nations', mob violence, and an inadequate church—are touched on in *Shirley*, yet all are translated into an earlier period. Why, in such deeply disturbing times, did Charlotte Brontë choose to set a novel concerned with social problems in the England of 1811-12?

In the first place, why did she write a 'social' novel at all? It was the drama of individual life which had made *Jane Eyre* such a tremendous popular success in 1847, and it was still being rapidly reprinted when she began *Shirley*. It had, however, been criticized by G. H. Lewes and others for its melodrama, and Charlotte determined on a 'salutary' change; the original manuscript version of *Shirley* makes clear the connection with *Jane Eyre*: 'Do you expect passion and stimulus and melo-drama? . . . Twice in succession they are not good for you – you must have a change: something—what you would call—*slow* is more wholesome—something real and severe and unromantic as Monday

Morning . . .’ But Charlotte had already attempted a ‘Monday morning’ novel of private life in *The Professor*, rejected by six publishers before she wrote *Jane Eyre*. With the ‘real, cool and solid’ in mind, she tried at first to recast *The Professor*. One of several attempts at recasting is probably *John Henry* or *The Moores*, the manuscript now in the collection of Mr. Robert H. Taylor at Princeton.<sup>1</sup> In this story Edward Crimsworth, the mill-owner of *The Professor*, becomes John Henry Moore, who tells his wife jeeringly that she is much less important to him than his black mill, his credit and connections, and his ‘dirty, greasy, ugly’ book-keeper, Tim Steele; John Henry is a kind of unregenerate Robert Moore. William, Edward Crimsworth’s younger brother, becomes William Calvert Moore—fastidious, self-controlled, detesting patronage and longing for a profession—a sketch for Louis Moore in *Shirley*, and perhaps more promisingly energetic in mind and speech than he. The ‘realism’ of *John Henry* seems to consist of harsh, over-emphatic, colloquial dialogue, including broad Yorkshire dialect, and an uncompromisingly soot-laden industrial setting; the heart of ‘Everintoye’ is ‘indefatigable iron and unwearied steam and insatiable grubbing for gain and endless strife for existence’. It touches on themes which were developed further in *Shirley*, especially on the suitability of marriage partners.

Charlotte Brontë was dissatisfied with *John Henry* and wrote little more than two chapters; but it is clear that she was toying with the idea of a mill-owning character as part of a suitable real theme, and needed an appropriate context for him: an historical setting which would provide the breadth and social relevance lacking in *The Professor*, and would also allow a two-volume story to be expanded into the usual three-volume form. The Chartist agitations were certainly a possible, and very topical context; they were also of strong local interest. William Busfield-Ferrand, a magistrate who tried several Chartist agitators, was the manor lord of Haworth; and the *Leeds Mercury*, like other local papers, carried reports of Chartist movements. Ivy Holgate’s contention that Charlotte was dissuaded from writing about

Chartism by a Mr. Francis Butterfield is contradicted by Charlotte's own assertion that she had 'held no consultation' about *Shirley*, 'but fabricated it darkly in the silent workshop of [her] own brain'.<sup>2</sup>

What then were the reasons for Charlotte Brontë's choice of the Luddite period instead of the 1840s? They were, I think, her awareness of the scope and limitations of her own art; her realization that other novelists had already treated contemporary problems; her long-standing attraction to the Napoleonic period; and her personal interest, through her father's recollections and her own knowledge of the area, in the Luddite risings in the Yorkshire woollen district.

Charlotte was diffident about her own ability to deal with the contemporary world. Writing to her publishers' reader on 4 October 1847, just before *Jane Eyre* came out, she acknowledged 'deficiencies of capacity and disadvantages of circumstance'; other eminent writers, 'Mr Thackeray, Mr Dickens, Mrs Marsh, etc., doubtless . . . possess a knowledge of the world, whether intuitive or acquired, such as I can lay no claim to . . .'<sup>3</sup> Even more emphatically she wrote to George Smith, in connection with *Villette*, 'I cannot write books handling the topics of the day; it is of no use trying.'<sup>4</sup> In *Jane Eyre* Charlotte had depicted with all the 'truth of passion' a heroine who reacted strongly against the religious and social conventions of her world; but it was a world safely, and vaguely, in the past, as Kathleen Tillotson points out in *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*. We do not have to judge *Jane Eyre* by its historical accuracy. In writing *Shirley*, Charlotte wished, I think, to retain some of the freedom of imagination she had used in *Jane Eyre*; contemporary events must have seemed both too limiting and too fluid, too difficult to define and too intractably present to be transformed into fiction.

Charlotte was aware of the pitfalls of social realism. She had no wish to write either a 'Morrison's pill' novel, in which a distasteful social tract was thinly disguised under a sugar-coating of romance, or a horror story in which villainous employers mal-

treated innocent workmen and children. 'Child-torturers, slave masters and drivers, I consign to the hands of jailers', she wrote in the fifth chapter of *Shirley*; 'the novelist may be excused from sullyng his page with the record of their deeds'. She had evidently read Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, published in 1840, in which the heiress Mary Brotherton, whose father's mills 'daily sent millions of groans to be registered in heaven from joyless young hearts and aching infant limbs' sees for herself the half-starved children, supervised by an overseer with a horse-whip, their 'sour and musty' food so scanty that they steal food from the pig-trough. Mrs. Trollope wrote with the best intentions, but spoilt her work by exaggeration and melodrama. She herself made the point that most 'nice young ladies' never went into factories and had no idea what went on in them; and Charlotte Brontë confessed her own ignorance: 'Details, situations which I do not understand and cannot personally inspect, I would not for the world meddle with, lest I should make even a more ridiculous mess of the matter than Mrs. Trollope did in her "Factory Boy"'.<sup>5</sup> There had, in any case, been an abundance of 'condition of England' novels on contemporary themes. Mrs. Trollope had gone on to deal with the iniquities of the Poor Law in *Jessie Phillips* in 1842-3. 'Charlotte Elizabeth' (Mrs. Tonna) had described the 'pale, yellow' sickly workers in the flue-impregnated, vile-smelling, over-heated rooms of a supposedly well-regulated cotton-mill in *Helen Fleetwood* (1841), while Mrs. Stone, among others, had aimed to redress the balance by acknowledging the 'earnest measures' of 'some of the most eminent mill-holders to give some degree of cultivation to the minds and habits of the children they employ' (in *William Langshawe, the Cotton Lord*, 1842). Disraeli, in a trilogy of social novels and most notably in *Sybil* (1845), had ranged widely over many of the burning issues of the day, including Chartism. He had supplemented his own researches with, for example, near-verbatim extracts from Thomas Tancred's introduction to the Report of the Midland Mining Commission of 1843, and had given ample evidence of 'slave-drivers' and

'child-torturers' at work among the locksmiths of 'Hell-house Yard'. It was hardly surprising that Charlotte Brontë, with her limited experience, should not wish to add to the list of contemporary social novels, and she was surely wise to choose an earlier period.

Even though Charlotte had taken the precaution of distancing her subject, she was concerned when, about half-way through the writing of *Shirley*, she read the highly topical *Mary Barton*, Mrs. Gaskell's 'Tale of Manchester Life', which came out in October 1848. 'I will tell you what I want to do,' she wrote to Smith Williams on 1 February 1849; 'it is to show you the first volume of my MS., which I have copied. In reading "Mary Barton" (a clever though painful tale) I was a little dismayed to find myself in some measure anticipated both in subject and incident. I should like to have your opinion on this point . . .'<sup>6</sup> By this time the greater part of the second volume of *Shirley* had been drafted, but there is some internal evidence of re-writing as well as external evidence provided by MS pagination at the fair copy stage. It is interesting to speculate on the possible effect on *Shirley* of Charlotte's reading of *Mary Barton*. She does not develop in great detail the distress of the workers, nor does she do more than mention William Farren, her most sympathetically studied, intelligent and honest working man, after his impressive 'declaration of independence' half way through the second volume.<sup>7</sup> A possible plot development is rejected: 'I've had overtures made to me lately that I saw were treacherous, and I flung 'em back i' the faces o' them that offered 'em.' Mrs. Gaskell had dealt fully with similar themes; indeed the heart of her novel is her portrayal of John Barton, the workman who had seen his own son 'clemmed to death' and who was driven to desperation by his sense of injustice and the apparent lack of all sympathy from the 'masters'. In *Shirley* the attempted murder of Robert Moore is a crucial point in both the personal and public plots; and yet his subsequent dangerous illness is treated at first in a curiously buoyant, almost flippant style; and Charlotte Brontë deliberately avoids following up Moore's attackers—as she writes in the last

chapter, 'here was a fine opening to lead my willing readers a dance, at once decorous and exciting: a dance of law and gospel, of the dungeon, the dock, and the "dead-thraw". You might have liked it, reader, but *I* should not . . .' It is possible that, as well as avoiding an uncongenial topic, Charlotte was again deliberately moving away from *Mary Barton*: there the assassin's shot was the turning-point of the murderer's life, and Mrs. Gaskell had dwelt on its consequences in grim and harrowing detail; she had, too, introduced an exciting pursuit, a last-minute rescue from the 'dance of law', and an exceedingly melodramatic 'dead-thraw' scene in which the murderer died in the forgiving embrace of his victim's father.

Avoidance of topics which Charlotte Brontë felt incapable of treating, and which others had dealt with, was a negative reason for choosing the Luddite period; a more positive reason was that she had from childhood taken a lively interest in the events and personalities of that time. Charlotte and her brother Branwell had read with enthusiasm the accounts of Napoleon's campaigns, and especially of the Peninsular war, in the *Blackwood's Magazines* of the 1820s; she and Branwell drew up lists of Napoleon's marshals and relatives. Charlotte's hero was the Duke of Wellington, and her juvenile stories were the imaginary adventures of his sons, born in 1807 and 1808. In preparing for *Shirley*, Charlotte sent for a file of the *Leeds Mercury* for 1811-14 so that she could use the Luddite material; but she had no need of the *Mercury* when she made her hero Robert Moore argue with Helstone over Napoleon and Wellington: "'Do you still believe that this wooden-faced and pebble-hearted idol of England has power to send fire down from heaven to consume the French holocaust you want to offer up?'" asks Moore. "'I believe Wellington will flog Bonaparte's marshals into the sea, the day it pleases him to lift his arm,'" <sup>8</sup> answers Helstone. Charlotte's own early partisanship helps to give vitality and an illusion of contemporaneity to the argument, sets the characters firmly in their historical period, and helps to define their conflicting personalities. One of the curiosities of *Shirley* is that its main hero, the manufacturer, is

necessarily of the anti-war party, whereas to his creator Wellington was a demi-god.

Like most of Charlotte Brontë's characters, the men in *Shirley* are complex creations. She wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey: 'You are not to suppose any of the characters in "Shirley" intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art, nor my own feelings, to write in that style. We only suffer reality to *suggest*, never to *dictate*. The heroines are abstractions, and the heroes also. Qualities I have seen, loved and admired, are here and there put in as decorative gems, to be preserved in that setting. Since you say you could recognize the originals of all except the heroines, pray whom did you suppose the two Moores to represent?'<sup>9</sup> Whoever they 'represent', many of their traits derive from a past reaching back to the historical period of the novel. Robert has some of the qualities 'suggested' by his real-life prototype, William Cartwright, whose mill at Rawfolds near Huddersfield was the object of a Luddite attack in April 1812. He has Cartwright's determination and some of his harshness, his foreign blood, and his ability to speak French well—even his dark complexion; but he also inherits from a long line of Angrian heroes, that is from Charlotte's own imaginative past, his tall figure, handsome 'chiselled' face, and thick curls, the 'vivacity' and 'dancing' spark which kindle in his eyes when he welcomes a perilous expedition, and his dual personality (recalling that of Zamorna in Charlotte's juvenile tales)—proud and unyielding in public affairs, but capable of tenderness towards his sister and Caroline. As a hard, cool, calculating mill-owner his Angrian ancestor is Edward Percy: in 'The History of Angria' Edward's brother William declares, 'the only poetical propensity I have is to prefer the smell of the earth to that of a cotton-mill, wherein I diametrically differ from that grubbing ear-wig at Edwardston'.<sup>10</sup> Traces of the 'grubbing ear-wig' remain in the Robert Moore who, at the end of *Shirley*, exults in his hoped-for transformation of the green Hollow into a sooty road leading to a smoky mill; but in this realist novel, such a transformation accompanies, and enables, a humanitarian concern for the well-being of the workers

– Robert's 'extravagant day-dreams' are of providing employment for 'the houseless, the starving, the unemployed'.

The reality of such distress must have been well known to Charlotte. As Mrs. Gaskell explains in her *Life*, every place surrounding Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head, near Huddersfield, where Charlotte had lived for several years first as a pupil and then as a teacher, 'was connected with the Luddite riots . . . Miss Wooler herself, and the elder relations of most of her schoolfellows, must have known the actors in those grim disturbances'.<sup>11</sup> Charlotte's father, too, had been curate at Hartshead, less than three miles from Rawfolds, from 1811–15; he was a friend of the Reverend Hammond Roberson, the 'original' of Mr. Helstone, who had seen the state of Rawfolds Mill on the morning after the Luddite attack, and had congratulated Cartwright on his defence.

Once she had decided on her topic, Charlotte studied the detailed and vivid reports, some of them by eye-witnesses, in the files of the *Leeds Mercury* – mainly those of 1811 and 1812. Her interpretation of this material has been assessed from an historical point of view by Asa Briggs in 'Private and Social Themes in *Shirley*' in the *Brontë Society Transactions* for 1958. He points out that she was sensitive to the ambivalent attitude of the mill-owners towards the government; that she was wise to distinguish between the courage of Moore's type and the supineness of manufacturers as a class; and that she stated the social issues clearly – recognizing the manufacturers' arguments that protection of machinery is for the public good but also sympathizing with the distress of the workers. Andrew and Judith Hook, in their perceptive introduction to the Penguin edition of *Shirley* (1974), consider that the Luddite theme is central to the meaning of the novel: 'the denial of the world of feeling is shown to be not just the cause of pain and suffering for the isolated individual . . . but the source of that bitterness and hatred which is on the point of tearing the whole fabric of English society violently apart'. They rightly regard this centrality as a major contribution to unity. It is also true that Charlotte's selection of Luddite material con-

tributes to a comparative unity of place, a feature lacking in her two previous novels. The action occurs within a limited area of a few miles, with four contrasting buildings providing its physical (and spiritual) nuclei. Hollow's Mill and the three principal houses are vividly distinct in appearance and atmosphere: the mill, with its 'soot-thick column of smoke rushing sable from the gaunt mill-chimney', yet with spring flowers growing under its hot wall; the rambling, antique, manorial Fieldhead, with its gardens and farmland; Briarmains, many-windowed, glowing with fire-light and full of active life; and Briarfield rectory which reminds Rose Yorke of a 'windowed grave'. All except the rectory are based on buildings, well known to Charlotte, in the Huddersfield area where the Luddite attacks took place: Rawfolds and Hunsworth mills, Oakwell Hall (Fieldhead), and the Red House at Gomersal. The rough fields and lanes between them, and the great moor with the 'lurid shimmer' of Stilboro' iron-works on the horizon, are distinctively West Yorkshire. Each of the buildings is first seen at night; for though *Shirley* has sunlit scenes, it is characteristically a novel of darkness and moonlight. This is not only appropriate to the 'valley of the shadow' through which the author went as she wrote, but is absolutely right for its Luddite theme: most of the local attacks took place under cover of darkness, and were the more sinister and terrifying for that reason. It is in keeping that Charlotte makes the attempted murder of Robert Moore happen not in 'open day', like the attack on Cartwright described in the *Leeds Mercury* for 25 April 1812, but at dusk, under the 'strange red glower' of the moon.

Charlotte Brontë's use of the mill setting shows how skilfully she manipulated facts derived from the *Mercury*. The first major event in the novel is the frame-breaking. This is dramatically conceived: in the opening chapters Charlotte deftly inserts reports of Moore's over-confidence, of the shooting of other mill-owners, and of a crazed weaver's vision of war, and she follows her introduction of Moore himself with a striking summary of the causes of the national crisis and the misery which 'generates

hate'. Most of these details have been selected from the *Leeds Mercury* and placed before, instead of after, the attacks on Moore, and in ironic juxtaposition to the idle and irrelevant quarrels of the curates. Thus the tension increases as Moore waits in the mill for the return of his 'frame-laden waggons'; and it is from the mill-gates, in the 'stagnant' darkness, that we hear the heavy wheels 'crunching a stony road' and the sudden cry 'Ay, ay, divil, all's raight! We've smashed 'em'. Thus, although Charlotte has established that she well understands the acuteness of the 'affliction' which has goaded the workers into violence, she chooses that we shall first see them in action through the eyes of the equally frustrated and desperate mill-owner. She does not conceal Robert's harshness and culpable indifference to his workmen; but she enlists the reader on his side, for he has the initial advantage of being the victim—just as she gains immediate sympathy for Jane Eyre by showing her as the victim of injustice. Such an opening demonstrates too that Robert's primary concern is with his mill; it touches his pride and rouses his emotion—'Mr. Moore loved his machinery'; and this must be established if his treatment of Caroline is to be understood.

The influence of the mill permeates the rest of volume i. Because of it Moore antagonizes even decent workers such as Farren, and drives Caroline into lonely depression. It is a submerged but still significant factor in the first part of volume ii: Shirley's financial help for the mill involves her in business dealings with Robert which lead to misunderstanding of their relationship – by Robert himself as well as by Caroline. Hence the climax of volume ii, the night attack on the mill, is crucial in both the personal and the public plots. In the latter, as Herbert Rosengarten points out, Charlotte has altered the order of historical events and made the frame-breaking precede the mill-attack 'in order to shape the action towards a climax; and the assault on the mill thus becomes the culmination of the struggle between Moore and the Luddites.'<sup>12</sup> In order to make the assault also a climax of emotional tension in private life, Charlotte makes a significant choice of viewpoint: Caroline and Shirley are

perforce onlookers and listeners. All our senses are involved, with theirs, in the tense movement from the silence of the rectory to the crash and yell of the rioters in the Hollow; and the tension is complex—we are aware of the girls' personal anxiety for Robert, but we have also seen their practical help for the starving workmen. Through their experiences we are now aware of the discipline of the rioters, of their desperation as well as their callousness. The inability of the girls to do more than watch helplessly adds to the tension of the scene as a drama, but it also conveys the reality of a much greater national crisis with no easy or immediate solution: the mill-yard has become a battle-ground in which the 'indignant, wronged spirit of the Middle Rank bears down in zeal and scorn on the famished and furious mass of the Operative Class. It is difficult to be tolerant – difficult to be just – in such moments.'<sup>13</sup>

Charlotte Brontë modifies later events in order to present Robert as more humane than Cartwright. In making her hero learn to think more deeply and humbly about the effects of privation and ignorance on human bodies and minds, she is supporting the view, shared by Mrs. Gaskell, that the only way forward is through understanding, confidence, and communication between masters and men. Both novelists believed that violence was self-defeating. Charlotte might have brought out this moral quite straightforwardly by using the *Leeds Mercury* information on the murder of the mill-owner Horsfall and the attempted murder of Cartwright: both were hard men, and Horsfall had shown 'unremitting activity in detecting and bringing to justice the persons engaged in the attack at Rawfolds', as the newspaper account of 2 May 1812 puts it. But by a fine irony, Moore's life is endangered by the assassin's shot *after* he has 'looked a little into reality' and realized that unless he is more forbearing and considerate he will be 'grossly unjust'. In making him, quite unhistorically, the victim of a madman, she adds her final comment on the pointlessness of violence.

*Shirley*, of course, is much more than a 'Luddite' novel: public events impinge on private lives. In the story of Caroline

and Shirley, Charlotte again seeks to demonstrate reality: Caroline must 'vanquish' her love for Robert because he refuses to make an imprudent marriage. He in turn suppresses his affection for Caroline and proposes to Shirley because he would be 'rich with her, and ruined without her'. 'You would immolate me to that mill—your Moloch!' Shirley says indignantly—for he has also implied that her frank kindness to him has been a 'manoeuvre to ensnare a husband'. Thus the industrial theme is closely interwoven with the private themes of love and marriage, and of the fate of the woman who can obtain fulfilment neither in marriage nor in satisfying work. Until quite recently, *Shirley* has been criticized for its lack of unity: it has seemed to be not an interwoven design, but a loose collection of characters and plots. Charlotte Brontë had cried over the *Times* review of 7 December 1849, which dismissed *Shirley* as 'a novel made up of third volumes'; G. H. Lewes, in the *Edinburgh Review* for January 1850, affirmed that 'all unity, in consequence of defective art, is wanting'. It has, however, become something of a pastime with modern critics to tease out a unifying pattern in the novel. Jacob Korg<sup>14</sup> finds a design 'whose central point is the romantic doctrine' round which 'three groups of characters' form concentric circles. The marriages of the two heroines, the economic triumph of Robert Moore, and the victory of Louis Moore over social prejudice are all vindications of romantic standards. This theory is ingeniously worked out, but involves some distortion of detail: the 'economic triumph' of Robert has really very little to do with romantic standards, and much to do with the historical reality of the repeal of the Orders in Council. Andrew and Judith Hook<sup>15</sup> consider that Charlotte Brontë aims to extend her central theme of the 'dialectic between imaginative feeling and a hostile reality' from the area of individual experience into that of society as a whole. They find that a crucial 'denial of feeling' links together the different elements which have seemed 'damagingly unrelated'. This is ingenious and in many ways genuinely illuminating. Its chief drawback is that a 'denial' is a negative method of binding together disparate elements, and that the

characters who embody the opposing positive values have to be convincing, and not mere puppets of the plot. Shirley, Caroline, and Robert *are* convincing; but the Hooks also say that 'Mrs. Pryor—like Louis Moore—is the victim of a society that denies her the right to feel'—and so they fit into the theory, and enhance the unity of the novel. But if we are honest we must admit that we care very little whether these two characters are allowed to feel or not: *Shirley* succeeds in spite of them and not because of them.

Theoretically both characters contribute also to the unifying theme of marriage, with its dependent exploration of the limitations of the single life, and to the related theme of the rights of individuals irrespective of class or sex. But in these aspects Mrs. Pryor and Louis are diminished echoes of Caroline. It is worth asking why Caroline is so much more successfully presented than they are. Robert and Caroline share volume i between them; in volume ii and the first two chapters of volume iii Caroline is almost continuously present: we see Shirley and the rest mainly through her eyes, and share the fluctuations of her feelings. Mrs. Pryor and Louis, in contrast, enter the novel at a later stage—Louis not until the end of the second volume; and yet the characters of both, and even more, their parts in the plot, demand full-length treatment if they are not to appear absurd. Possibly Charlotte was inhibited in the case of Mrs. Pryor because Anne Brontë, in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (June, 1848), had dealt fully with a woman who left her degenerate husband and began a new life under an assumed name: Charlotte would not have wished to duplicate the portrait of Helen Huntingdon. Louis Moore had a predecessor in William Crimsworth in *The Professor*, again more successfully drawn at full length, though not to be completely realized until the 'tutor' character was fused with that of M. Heger in *Villette*.

In Caroline the author's emotional engagement with the theme of the unfulfilled and lonely woman found appropriate form. The manuscript of *Shirley* shows that Charlotte twice began to write the name 'Elizabeth' instead of 'Caroline'. Elizabeth Hastings,

the lonely girl of 'quiet aspect and plain demure dress', with 'features capable of much varied expression and a quick wandering eye of singular and by no means common-place significance' is the companion and protégée of the 'exquisitely sweet-tempered', graceful and beautiful Jane Moore in Charlotte's story of 1839, 'Captain Henry Hastings'<sup>16</sup>; after many trials involving her 'desperado' brother she becomes a successful teacher. Elizabeth is a combination of self-portrait and wish-fulfilment; unlike some of the other Angrians she is capable of development into a more complex and mature character because she is already based on reality. The preliminary sketch can become the complete portrait of Caroline without distortion, and can absorb too some qualities of the sister with whom Charlotte had perhaps the closest affinity—Anne, whose illness and death give such poignancy to the description of Caroline's descent into the 'valley of the shadow'. But the long-lost mother who rescued Caroline from death had no counterpart in the reality of Haworth. We know from the manuscript that Charlotte had a 'Mrs. Warner' in mind as she wrote of Mrs. Pryor; but the Angrian Mrs. Warner is a gentle, insipid, rather simple-minded lady. The possible grafts of reality on to this character — traits deriving from Charlotte's school-teacher Miss Wooler, and perhaps from the Branwell relative, Eliza Jane Kingston, who left her unpleasant husband and four of her children in America—merely form an incongruous mixture incapable of sustaining the unlikely demands of the plot.

The 'Caroline' sections of the novel are marked by a painful intensity of imagery, especially metaphors of torture. These begin in volume i, and increase in frequency and intensity as volume ii goes on: the rack torments, brands burn, knives, sharp spurs and scalpels lacerate or flay alive; instead of receiving food one is poisoned, or one breaks one's teeth on a stone and is starved to death; feelings are crippled, paralysed, or deeply corroded with a 'canker'; the sting of pain 'tortures through time into its deepest night'; repeatedly hard metal pierces into soft flesh. Death and deprivation preoccupy Caroline in the