

英国作家生平丛书

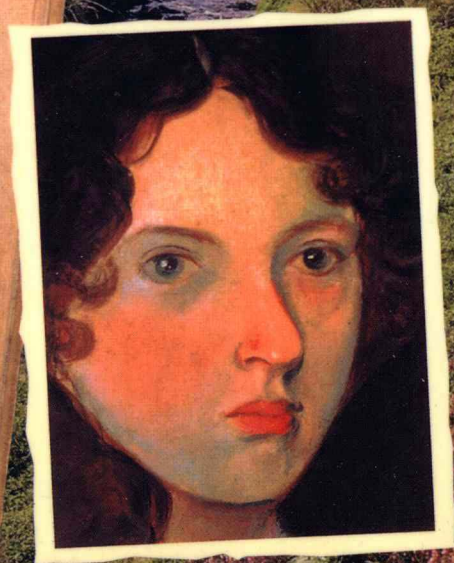
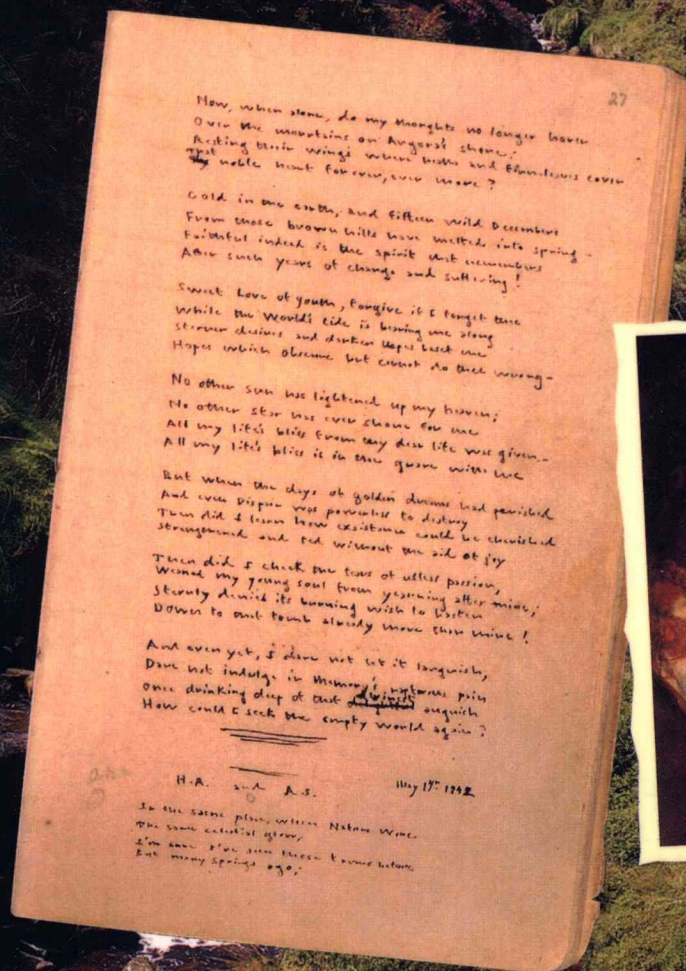
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writers' lives

Emily Brontë

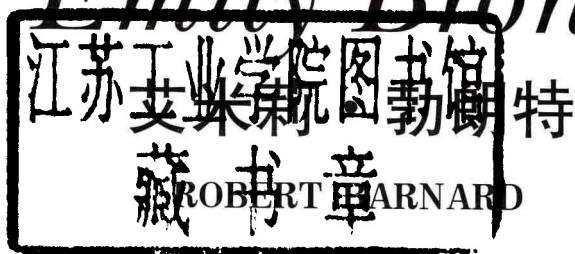
艾米莉·勃朗特

ROBERT BARNARD



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总序

普通中国读者，包括英语专业的学生，对于英国文学的了解一般只限于个别经典作品，而对作家其人其事及其整个文学创作情况所知甚少。其中部分的原因是文学史家们编写的英国文学史往往注重介绍作品的情节内容，对作家的生活经历、作品的具体创作过程着墨不多。上海外语教育出版社从英国大英图书馆出版社(The British Library)引进出版“英国作家生平丛书”，弥补了这方面的缺憾。该丛书以图文并茂的形式讲述莎士比亚等14位英国著名作家的生平故事，同时穿插介绍他们的作品，有助于充实读者对英国文学的认识。

英国文学源远流长，经历了长期复杂的发展演变过程。在这个过程中，文学本体以外的各种现实的、历史的、政治的、文化的力量对文学发生着影响，而作家个体的独特生活遭遇也是造就文学杰作的一个重要因素。“英国作家生平丛书”对14位名家的传记式介绍，充分展示了这一点。戏剧方面，莎士比亚是英国文艺复兴时期最杰出的剧作家，他当过演员，其作品思想内容深刻、艺术表现手法精湛，历经几个世纪长演不衰。诗歌方面，浪漫主义诗人华兹华斯、柯勒律治、拜伦、济慈的不同身世对他们的诗歌创作及艺术风格产生深刻影响；维多利亚时代诗人伊丽莎白·巴雷特和罗伯特·布朗宁的爱情故事是英国文坛的一段佳话。小说方面，狄更斯是19世纪英国最伟大的小说家，他的许多小说以孤儿为主人公，这与作家童年时代的一段不幸经历有关；康拉德来自波兰，将自己奇特的身世背景和航海经历交融在字里行间；女作家奥斯丁、玛丽·雪莱、勃朗特姐妹、伍尔夫以女性特有的视角和敏锐的观察描摹人性与社会，思考妇女的生存状况，她们的小说无论在思想主题、题材表现方面，还是在叙述手法上，都有创新，对推动英国文学的发展作出了突出贡献。

“英国作家生平丛书”原版由大英图书馆出版社出版，体现出图书馆出版物的特点。书中配有大量的插图，有些是珍贵的手稿，有些是罕见的照片，有些是博物馆或美术馆珍藏的油画和素描，让读者有幸一睹作家的风采，产生直观的感觉。这些插图带有不同时代的印记，营造出浓厚的历史感。丛书的作者均为专业领域里有着较深造诣的学者，对史料的掌握系统全面，他们用生动的语言娓娓讲述作家生平事迹，点评具体文学作品，书末还附有供读者进一步阅读的书单，推荐了有代表性的文献，对英语专业学生撰写课程论文或毕业论文很有帮助。

“英国作家生平丛书”内容有趣，插图精美，文字简洁，兼顾普及性和专业性，是学习和了解英国文学的良师益友。

王守仁
南京大学

导 读



艾米莉·勃朗特 (Emily Brontë, 1818-1854) 是 19 世纪英国最杰出的女作家之一。艾米莉同夏洛蒂和安妮三姐妹在英国文学史上具有特殊的地位。她们像狄更斯和萨克雷等现实主义大师一样, 深刻地反映了 19 世纪英国的社会现实。然而, 勃朗特姐妹的不同之处在于, 她们以女性的视角和话语来刻画英国妇女的形象。作为一名诗人, 艾米莉是勃朗特姐妹中最出色的一位; 作为一名小说家, 她同样具有非凡的艺术才华。《呼啸山庄》是艾米莉一生中创作的唯一一部小说, 其情节离奇复杂, 故事引人入胜, 艺术手法别出心裁, 人物描写入木三分。艾米莉的智慧、灵感、才华和勤奋几乎全部融汇在《呼啸山庄》之中。这部小说引起了无数学者和读者的兴趣。英国小说家毛姆认为, 它是“十部最伟大的英语小说之一”, 因为它是那样的富有诗意、那样的神秘、那样的引人入胜。今天, 几乎所有了解英国文学的人都熟悉艾米莉的名字, 喜爱她的小说。

《艾米莉·勃朗特》是大英图书馆出版社近年来隆重推出的“英国作家生平丛书”之一。这套丛书以全新的视角考察了对英国文学的发展作出杰出贡献的优秀作家的人生经历和创作历程。丛书出版后受到广大读者的青睐。

本书生动介绍了出生在英国约克郡相对封闭环境中的艾米莉·勃朗特的艺术人生。作者以优雅的笔触描写了艾米莉家乡的风土人情、她的童年生活、异国经历和创作道路, 同时还揭示了她的性格特征和情感生活。本书详细介绍了勃朗特三姐妹在从事文学事业过程中的思想变化和手足之情。此外, 本书还深入发掘了艾米莉的经典力作《呼啸山庄》的原始素材

及其创作过程和出版经历，对读者进一步了解这部传世佳作具有一定的帮助。值得一提的是，作者在介绍艾米莉的生平事迹的同时，不仅生动反映了她追求文学事业时的努力与艰辛，而且还介绍了她的亲朋好友对她的理解和热情帮助。引人注目的是，作者向读者提供了许多有关艾米莉及其家庭的鲜为人知的轶事，有助于读者全面了解这位英国文学史上卓尔不群的女作家。本书内容丰富，资料翔实，图文并茂，文体优美，趣味盎然，对我国大学生、研究生和文学爱好者提高英语水平和文学素养大有裨益。

李维屏

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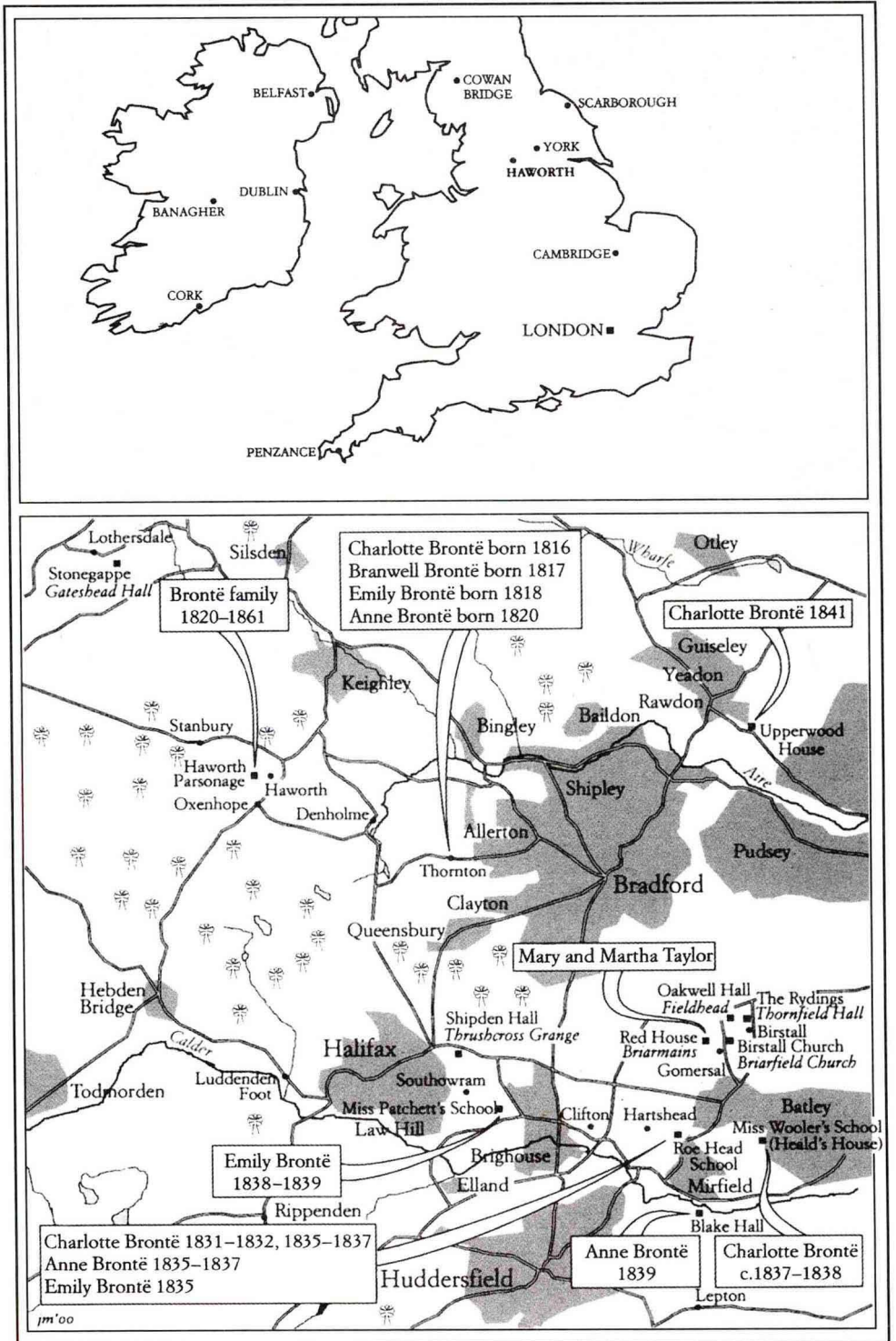
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Since I began telling people I was writing, and looking for illustrations for, this book, I have been very fortunate in the number who have volunteered helpful suggestions or responded to my requests for information. My principal debt is to my wife, whose computer seems to contain everything ever known, thought or imagined about the Brontës, and who has pointed me down enticing side streets. The staff at the Brontë Parsonage Museum have been as ever helpful and friendly, and The Leeds Library notably resourceful. My other debts I list in cold alphabetical order for reasons of space, but I feel particularly warm gratitude for the suggestions of: Kent Bicknell; Ann Dinsdale; Sarah Fermi; Robin Greenwood; Nigel Herring; Charles Lemon; Eric Ruijssenaars; Margaret Smith and Rachel Terry.

Robert Barnard
January 2000

Emily Brontë

Map of selected places in Great Britain and Ireland associated with the Brontë family.





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First Impressions

The small town of Haworth in Yorkshire and the bleak, moody moorlands that stretch for miles to the west of it draw tens of thousands of tourists every year. Their goal is to see Haworth Parsonage, the home of the Brontë family, and to experience the setting of one of the Brontë novels, *Wuthering Heights*.

But none of the Brontë children were born in Haworth. Emily Brontë, author of *Wuthering Heights*, was born, like all the four Brontës who survived into adulthood, five miles away in Thornton, a village near Bradford. The date was 30 July 1818. Her father Patrick Brontë was forty-one; her mother Maria, née Branwell, was thirty-five, and had already borne Patrick four children since their marriage in 1812. Emily was christened quite quickly, and no godparents' names are given in the baptismal register. Her mother's aunt and uncle John and Jane Fennell and their daughter Jane Morgan are said to have been her godparents. If they were, they played little part in her life. Very few people did.

Patrick Brontë, born Brunty, had transformed himself from Irish lad of near-peasant stock to respectable cleric within the Church of England. His education had included a strong element of self-teaching, and his acceptance at the age of twenty-six by St John's College, Cambridge was a major triumph. He was a sizar, that is a student subsidized by his college, augmenting his meagre income with scholarships and teaching. His remarkable story made him some influential friends at the University, and there are indications that these connections aroused hopes and expectations in him that were never fulfilled. He was a determined, independent and effective figure, but was sometimes unsure in his relationships with others, in particular women. His modest career as a writer of poems and stories meant that his books were around the house and familiar objects to his children – powerful incentives for regarding authorship as a natural way of earning a living.

Patrick and Maria had come to Thornton in 1815 with their two eldest children, Maria and Elizabeth. Since then two more, Charlotte and Branwell, had been born. The family had a pleasant social life in the village, centering on the well-off family the Firths and their friends the Outhwaites. We know of the round of calls

Emily Brontë

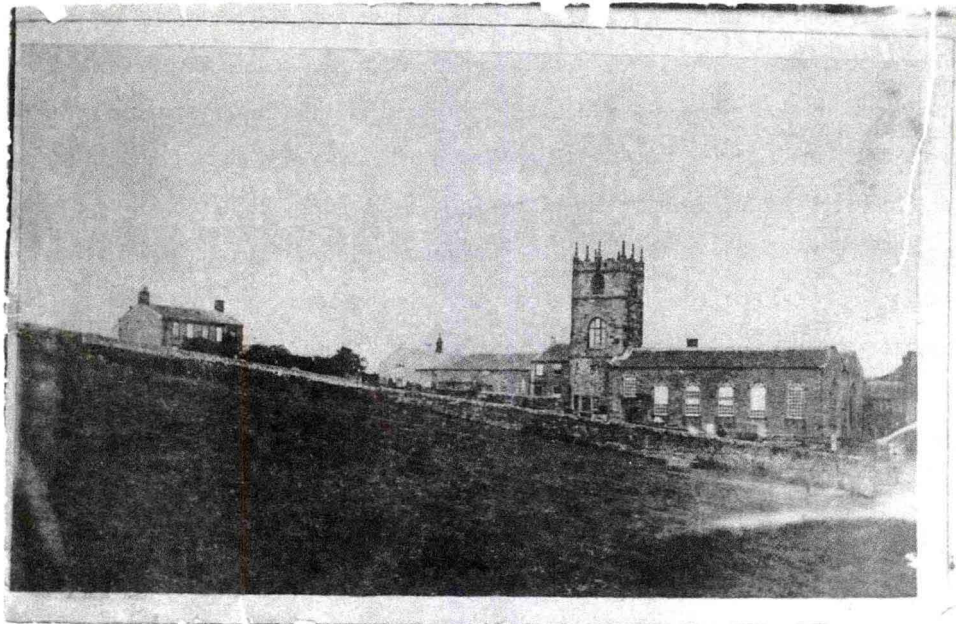
The Brontë children's bedroom in their birthplace at Thornton. After many years as a butcher's shop and a restaurant, it is now in private ownership once more, and many nineteenth-century features are being uncovered.

The Brontë Society



and tea-drinkings from Elizabeth Firth's diary, and it is clear she felt affection for the family much warmer than mere social duty towards the local clergyman. Things were to change when, after a series of ecclesiastical rows and recriminations, Patrick secured the nomination to the living of Haworth, near Keighley. After the birth of one more daughter, Anne, the family moved to Haworth in April 1820. Emily was to remain there for all but about two years of her short life.

Haworth was then a small, industrialized town. It was an unhealthy place, riddled with preventable disease, and with poor communications with the outside world. Patrick was later to regret that it provided him with no congenial social circle, as Thornton had done. Perhaps if his wife had lived a circle of friends would have been built up. As it was, the young Brontës grew up with acquaintances, none of them close. The Haworth inhabitant who praised Patrick as minister because 'he minds his own business, and ne'er troubles himself with ours' may have been celebrating the victory of Haworth unsociability over the Irish clergyman's natural inclinations.



A photograph of Haworth Church and Parsonage c.1860, a grim, bleak scene compared with the same area today, which is now softened by trees.

The Brontë Society

In any case, Maria did not live long enough to forge any cosy circle. Early in 1821 she was diagnosed as having cancer, and for the next few months she and her loved ones awaited death. She is recorded by Mrs Gaskell, Charlotte's first biographer, as finding the sight of her soon-to-be motherless children painful. A family servant described the six children as 'spiritless' – no doubt kept very quiet because even their voices reminded their mother of their approaching fate. Her death after months of terrible pain was doubtless a relief to her, and perhaps a more guilty one to the six children.

We have our first picture of Emily from around this time. The Brontës brought their two servants, Sarah and Nancy Garrs, with them from Thornton. In old age, but probably not influenced by popular perceptions of them, Nancy gave her impressions of the children. Emily had 'the eyes of a half-tamed creature', she said, and cared for nobody's opinion, being happier with her animal pets. Already her character was taking shape.

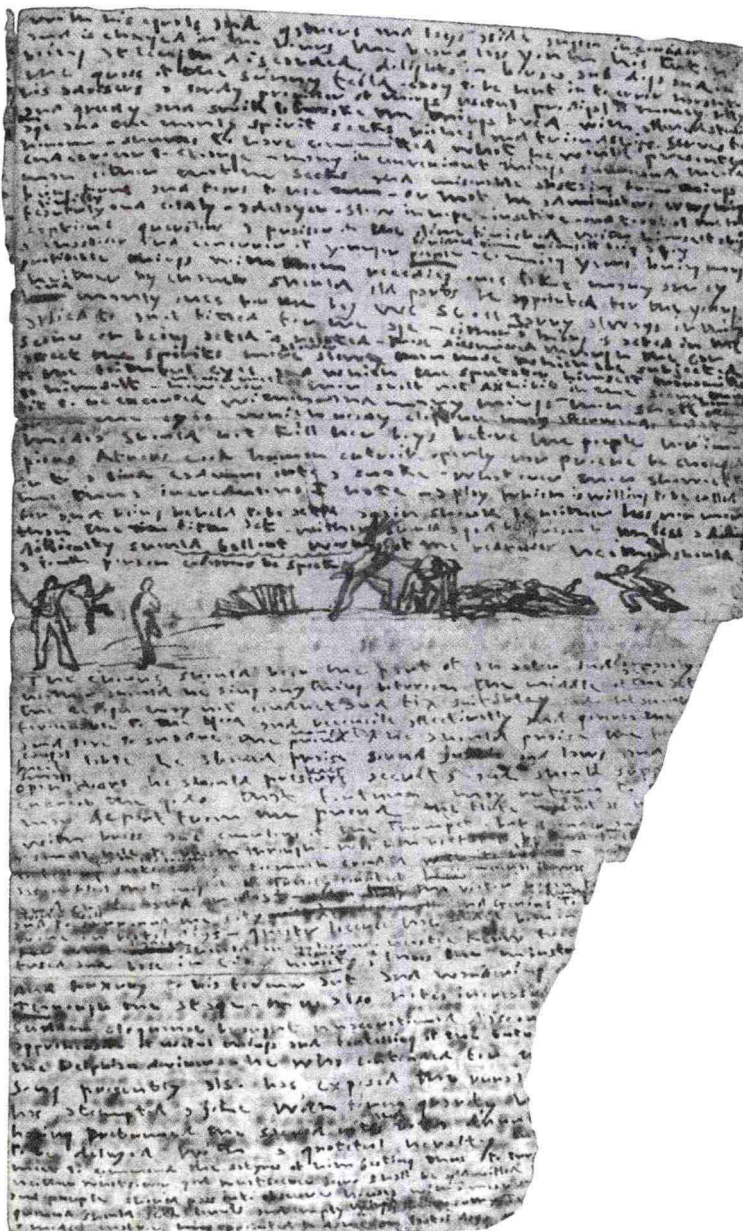
We have an altogether less attractive picture of Emily from a little later in the 'mask' episode, which Patrick recounted in a letter to Mrs Gaskell. To gain a better knowledge of his children's inner thoughts, he encouraged them to answer questions from behind a mask. It was an odd fancy on his part, and there is no

evidence that the episode impressed itself on their memories as it did on his, nor indeed that their answers were any different to what they would have been had they not been masked. The questions seemed aimed at the known characters of the children: Maria (Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre*) is asked the best way of spending time, and answers 'by laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity'. No mask was needed to give such an answer to a clergyman father. Branwell, asked about the difference between the intellects of men and women, claims they are best appreciated by 'considering the difference between them as to their bodies' – a silly answer, but one that could have come from him at any time in his life. He may however have been provoked by Emily, who had just been asked, oddly, not about herself or her views, but about what her father should do with Branwell when he was naughty. She answered 'reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him'. There is a chilling overtone about that 'when': it seems to mean not 'if' but 'when inevitably'. Also she uses the strongest, most painful word: not 'cane' or 'beat', but 'whip'. Brutality, shading off into sadism, is a feature of later Brontë writings: there is the Christmas beating meted out to Heathcliff, and the head-pummeling he later gives to the young Catherine: then there is the quite gratuitous beating of Mr Lawrence by Gilbert Markham in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and – unquestionably sadistic – the horrible whipping of a young boy in Charlotte's late fragment *Willie Ellin*. The question and answer, put to Branwell's younger sibling, strikes an uneasy chord that makes one question Patrick's pride in the episode. It is possible that he has conflated in his mind two such sessions: one at which the two elder could have participated, at the latest the summer of 1824, when Emily was nearly six and when Maria and Elizabeth were about to enter Cowan Bridge school; and a later one, when the surviving children had been brought home and the iron might more realistically be seen to have entered Emily's soul, along with a taste for giving voice to awkward or unpalatable opinions.

Patrick the widower had not meekly acquiesced in the lorn state of himself and his children. Indeed, he made his first attempt to end it within two months of his wife's death, when he proposed to his Thornton friend Elizabeth Firth. Later he made advances to an old Essex flame, Mary Burder, and to the daughter of the vicar of Keighley. Mention of his 'small but sweet little family' cut no ice with them.

These crude sketches of scenes of flagellation interrupt but strangely do not relate to this translation by Emily of Horace's Ars Poetica.

The King's School
Canterbury



They could count. All repelled his advances with indignation.

The domestic situation in Haworth Parsonage was that the household was under the care of Maria Brontë's eldest sister, Elizabeth Branwell, usually known as Aunt Branwell. She had paid a long visit to the family when they first moved to Thornton, and she had come back to help nurse her sister in her last illness. She was



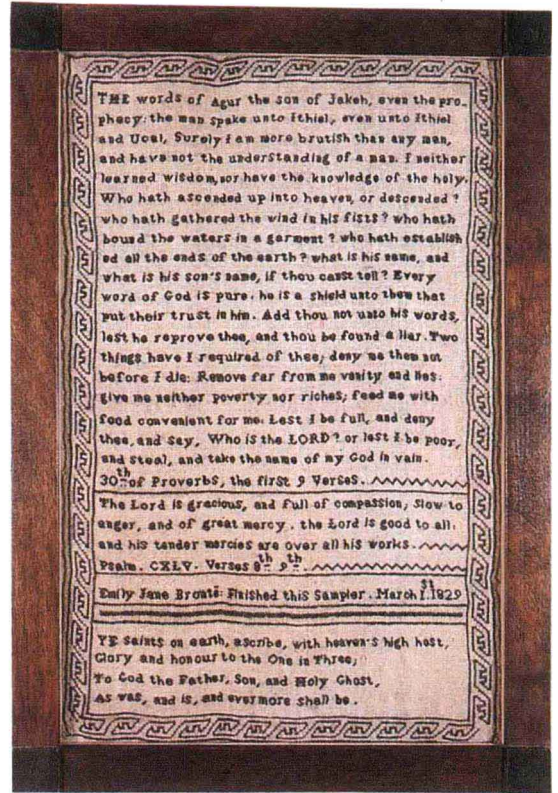
This profile miniature is probably the only authentic picture of Aunt Branwell to have survived. It is by an early nineteenth-century unknown artist.

The Brontë Society

Above right:

Emily's sampler, one of several in the Brontë Parsonage Museum stitched by the Brontë girls under the supervision of their aunt.

The Brontë Society



capable, but no longer young, and she found Yorkshire no substitute for the rainy tropicity of her native Penzance, in Cornwall. Since she was anxious to return, and since no one was willing to take on his sweet little family, Patrick decided his only course was to find a school for his daughters. As ill luck would have it, a school had just opened for girls and young women in precisely their situation: clergymen's daughters who had lost one or both parents. Therefore to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge went Maria and Elizabeth in July 1824, with Charlotte following in August. Emily had a few months' grace, during which she and her siblings were nearly caught in the Crow Hill bog burst, a startling and spectacular natural eruption which provided Patrick with material for a poem, a sermon and several letters to the newspapers. Then in late November he took his fifth child, then six years and four months old, to join her sisters. If we find it shocking that she was sent away so young, we should remember that the prep school, where boys of seven and upwards board, is still a feature of the British educational system.

The story of Cowan Bridge School is primarily the story of Charlotte and her elder sisters who died. The account of it as Lowood School in *Jane Eyre* stresses its sin and damnation ideology, its harsh punishments, its terrible food and insanitary living conditions. Its picture of the school's founder, the Rev. William Carus Wilson, as 'Mr Brocklehurst', and of several of the teachers there, was recognized with delight by many of the book's first readers. The accuracy of the book's account of the school was a matter of controversy when the book was published and again after Charlotte's death, when the essential truthfulness of her version was sturdily defended by her widower. Later commentators have agreed with him: it was a passionate but truthful account – astonishingly so, considering Charlotte's age, eight, when she gained her impressions of the place. It was a school ill-run, on lines that instilled subservience and fear into the girls, and with a grim tone of evangelical retribution in its religious teaching. Dorothea Beale, the pioneer of education for women, teaching at the school long after the Brontës' time, could hardly bear to speak in later life of the year she spent there. At the time she was quite as damning as Charlotte: it was a school, she said, where 'the government is entirely by punishments', and her biographer adds that the 'dark horror of Calvinism' meant that hearts 'were turned to stone or depressed into hopeless terror'.

All this bore much less harshly on Emily. She was, according to the superintendent Miss Evans (Miss Temple in *Jane Eyre*), the 'pet nursling of the school', being among the youngest. She was recorded as reading 'very prettily', and generally she seems to have had at that time the qualities to make a child a general favourite. Nevertheless, if the regime was at its mildest for her, she probably could not escape the obsession of Carus Wilson with the deaths of young children, and whether or not they were in a state of grace. Nor, as the winter of 1824-5 wore on, could she escape the signs of decline in her eldest sisters Maria and Elizabeth, nor the fact that typhoid was raging in the school. Maria was withdrawn in February, and died of consumption at home in May; Elizabeth was withdrawn at the end of May, and died in June. By then Charlotte and Emily had been fetched home by their father, so the death of two sisters was added to that of a mother in their childish experience. Watching once again the approach and arrival of death may have sown the seeds in Emily's mind of an attitude to death, and indeed to doctors, very



This portrait by J. Dickson, of William Carus Wilson, the model for Mr Brocklehurst in Jane Eyre, suggests the arrogance and self-satisfaction of the man.

The Brontë Society

different from that of most of her contemporaries. Miss Evans, writing in September when it was clear the Brontës' connection with the school was over, and sounding more like Pollyanna than Miss Temple, claimed that, 'though cast down we have not been in despair but enabled to look beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death to that glorious life and immortality which are brought to light by the Gospel' and sent her love to 'little petted Em'.

The failure of the school experiment was also the death of Aunt Branwell's hopes of returning to Cornwall. Patrick made no more proposals, and since he could not by law marry his deceased wife's sister even if he wanted to, he and she enjoyed a presumably celibate but companionable relationship in charge of the children. When the Garrs sisters left that same year Tabitha Aykroyd, a widow in her fifties, was hired as servant, and she supplied some of the warmth and earthiness the children's father and aunt could not give them.

Father and aunt reached fifty in 1827 and 1826 respectively, so the pattern of their later childhood was set: four lively and imaginative minds in the care of three elderly adults. It was a situation which threw them productively on their own resources.

