

LITERARY PILGRIMAGES

Being Some Little Journeys to Haworth, Grasmere, Dumfries and Stratford-on-Avon

Great Britain is so rich in historic and literary associations that unless one diligently followed a man from Cook's for many months, it would be impossible to even touch all the interesting spots in that delightful country. Nearly everyone, however, has his or her own particular preferences along literary lines, and it is these shrines that they are apt to visit first. Ever since the first time, years ago, that I discovered that fascinating story "Jane Eyre," and followed it up with the reading of "Shirley," (one of the greatest love stories ever written) and then devoured "Villette," I have been deeply interested in the Brontës, and many years ago made up my mind that if I ever set foot upon English soil again, one of the first places I would visit would be Haworth, the little Yorkshire village where Charlotte, Emily and Ann Brontë grew up and produced their wonderful books.

According to the day after I arrived in England in the spring of 1921, I hired a Daimler car and with three congenial souls started for Haworth. The drive for the first part seemed to be through one large city, so close are the towns together in Lancashire. We were no sooner out of one town than we were into another. Passing through Rochdale we stopped to view the monument erected to the memory of the Hon. John Bright, that great English statesman who represented Birmingham in the British House of Commons for so many years, and who had the unique experience, time after time, of being returned without pledge of any kind and with no expense to himself. So anxious was the constituency to mark the fact that it considered it was receiving and not conferring an obligation that it also asked him to feel exempt from any claim to contributions or political organizations. Before leaving Rochdale we journeyed out to the house where the English statesman used to live. It is a typical English home. A plain, roomy two storey, red brick house with big bay windows at each end, a terraced lawn in front and shrubbery all around. Leaving Rochdale we soon afterwards passed through Littleboro, the home of Jessie Fothergill, author of that delightful and entertaining story "The First Violin."

A portion of the drive from here was made over a piece of fine old Roman road, which has stood the wear and tear of the centuries that have passed since the days of Julius Caesar. Crossing the county line into Yorkshire in another hour or so we found ourselves travelling over the moors about which the six little Brontës children used to toddle along during the serious illness that preceded the death of their mother, and of which they never tired in girlhood or womanhood. In these days of highly organized amusement and desire for excitement the long low oblong stone parsonage with its flagged roof, its garden, treeless and bleak, and its background of moors, may perhaps seem very drab and uninteresting, but the genius of the Brontës flourished on the windswept Yorkshire moors, and produced books that will be read and re-read after many of the best sellers of today are long forgotten. We passed through Sowerby Bridge (where Branwell Brontë, the great tragedy of the little household once worked in the railway station), then on through Keighley, on to Haworth.

Haworth is still much the same as it was in 1820 when Patrick Brontë took his wife of a few years—Miss Maria Branwell, the gentle Cornish lady from Penzance and their six little children to the old stone parsonage. The village is still "a singular irregular street" bleak and stony, built on the side of a hill with the moors stretching away behind it. Its inhabitants perhaps have changed during the century that has passed. In those days they were mostly woolen weavers finding their occupation in "Hollow's Mill," and the other smaller mills in

the district. Today, the population is varied, some finding occupation at nearby farms, some at the railway stations and some in the larger mills of the neighboring towns. The old church has been added to and improved. The parsonage has likewise undergone some changes, a new wing having been added at the one end, but the older portion of the house is just as it was when the Brontës lived there. "The Black Bull," the public house near the church, still stands, and we were told is exactly the same as it was in the days when Branwell Brontë used to entertain the "Old Knave of Trumps," "Little Nosey," and the rest of the fraternity that frequented that taproom of this hostelry.

We visited the church and there found the vicar, who, on learning we were from Canada, went to great pains to show us all the points of interest including the handsome new school which had been recently built on the church property. We were also privileged to visit the interior of the parsonage, which had a great interest for us. The room on the right side of the hall where the Rev. Patrick Brontë used to spend a great deal of his time, is still occupied as a study by the present vicar. The kitchen over which "Tabby" presided so long, and about which "Aunt Branwell" used to potter in her "patterns," was still the same, as was the little room at the back where Mr. Nicholls had his study, but the latter was no longer used. It was the room on the left hand side of the hall, however, that we were more particularly interested in, for this is the room where the sisters used to sit night after night and weave their romances as they paced up and down the floor. It was in this little room that "Jane Eyre," "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Gray" were conceived and put on paper, and it was at the door of this room that old Mr. Brontë used to pause every night on his way to bed with his "Good night girls. Don't sit up late." Perhaps no single room in the whole of England is dearer to English literature, and perhaps from no other four walls has there come so rich and so varied literary entertainment. In the days when the Brontës lived at Haworth Vicarage the grounds around were treeless, but such is not now the case, some fine trees having been planted in the church and parsonage grounds.

The people of Haworth are proud of the Brontës, not so proud as thousands of other lovers of English literature. A Brontë museum has been established, there which contains some very interesting mementoes of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters. One could spend many hours in this little museum looking at the different things that were so intimately associated with the lives of that little family many years ago. Among other things that are preserved is the dress worn by Charlotte Brontë on her wedding tour and the little boots that she wore on her wedding day, with their cloth tops and tiny laces. There is also a copy of a tiny manuscript magazine containing twelve pages about two inches square produced by Charlotte in 1828. A toy smoothing iron, a sovereign scale belonging to "Patrick Brontë," a letter written by Charlotte Brontë on her wedding day to her life-long friend Ellen Nussey, were also among the many other things to be seen there. But perhaps the most interesting was the little piano or spinet, which belonged to Charlotte Brontë, when she was a girl. It is a quaint little thing with a silk top. Not far from it was a trunk purchased by Charlotte in Brussels while teaching there in the Pension of M. Heger, whom many people connect with the "Paul Emanuel" of Villette. One of the quaint things in this museum was a pew of the old church in which these were three sittings and a half, the half evidently being for a child. Everyone who is at all interested in the Brontës knows of their effort to establish a private school at Ha-

worth to help out the family income, and in the museum is a copy of the little prospectus in which the Misses Brontë announced the establishment of their school and offered to teach writing, arithmetic, history, grammar, geography and needle work and such extras as French, German, Latin, music and drawing. Here too is the testimonial presented to Wm. Cartwright of Rawfolds, by influential residents of the west riding of Yorkshire, on May 27th, 1823. Wm. Cartwright is supposed to be the Robt. Moore of Hollow's Cottage, the hero of "Shirley," and the testimonial was presented for his bravery in resisting the attempts of the weavers to prevent him from bringing in labor saving machinery.

A pleasant afternoon was concluded with tea at the Brontë Tea Rooms, just across the street from the Black Bull, in front of which still stands the old-fashioned stocks in which people used to be punished years ago. As we sat in that upstairs window looking across the churchyard to that plain, uninviting parsonage we could not help thinking how much joy and entertainment, the brave spirits that lived in the frail bodies of the Brontë sisters had brought to the world in the last sixty years. Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell as they were known at first to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., their publishers, lived a life in which there was very little sunshine and much shadow, but although their lives were darkened, first, by the death of the Mother, then by the death of the two little sisters, and for years by the reckless and dissolute living of a brother, who was once their hope and joy, their faith in God never wavered. The three sisters drank deep of the cup of bitterness during their short lives, but their spirit was never broken. Although there were days of darkness, days of fear, and days of dread in the little stone vicarage, they faced it all with the confidence which prompted the death-bed poem of Emily, beginning:

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-trodden sphere.
I see heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear,
And Anne Brontë just before she laid aside the pen forever, to write—
I hoped that with the brave and strong
My portioned task might lie—
To toil among the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high.
But God has fixed another part,
And he has fixed it well,
I said so with my bleeding heart,
When first the anguish fell.
Thus let me serve Thee from my heart,
Whatever may be my written fate—
Whether thou early to depart,
Or yet awhile to wait.
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow;
But Lord, whatever be my fate,
Oh, let me serve Thee now!

At the grave of Wordsworth.
To reach the grave of William Wordsworth from Manchester, one can journey up to Bowness, and there take a boat up Lake Windermere to Ambleside, which is not far from Bowness as we count distance in Canada, but owing to the network of railways in Lancashire, it involves something of a journey. First, we changed at Bolton, then we changed at Preston, then again at Lancaster the capital of the county. Here we had to wait an hour for a train, so had an opportunity of seeing something of this old-fashioned, yet bustling town. From Lancaster we went to Oxenholme, and changed once again for Bowness. We left Manchester about eight o'clock in the morning, but it was after noon when we got to Bowness. Bowness is a very pretty little town situated in the heart of the Lake District. In about an hour a little steamer came along and we made our journey up beautiful Lake Windermere to Ambleside. We had no very clear idea how we were going to get to Grasmere, but when we got on the dock at Ambleside, we found there a "Four-in-hand" with a typical old-time coachman on the box. His horses were hitched to a "brake" with, as usual, a seat up at the front right behind the driver. As the driver was inviting all and sundry who wanted to go to Grasmere, to get in, we climbed up to the seat behind him and were soon headed for Grasmere. It is truly a beautiful country; the road winding in and out between the mountains, and an occasional glimpse of water caught from the top of some hill. Just after leaving Ambleside we passed Harriet Martineau's cottage and soon reached the picturesque and rustic village of Rydal, with Rydal Mount, the home of Wordsworth, peeping from the trees. A few yards farther on, is the poet's favorite seat up on a little rock by the lake. On the edge of the lake is the croft where Hartley Coleridge, locally known as Nab Cottage.

We next came in sight of Grasmere. As we entered the village on the right we noticed Dove Cottage, where has been established a small Wordsworth museum. Grasmere is a pretty little English village but its great centre of interest is the Parish Church and church yard, where William Wordsworth and his wife lie buried. Eight of the Yew trees in the churchyard were planted by Wordsworth. Under the shadow of one of them, beside the river, is the grave of the poet, who was born at Cockermouth on the 7th of April 1770, and died at Rydal on April twenty-third, eighteen hundred and fifty. It is marked with a plain

headstone. In the same grave lies buried his wife, Mary Wordsworth, who was born at Penrith on August 16th, 1770, and died at Rydal Mount on January 17th, 1859. Several other Wordsworths are buried near the poet, and not far away, is the grave of Hartley Coleridge. In the same churchyard is the grave of the Greens who "perished in the snow." Their sad story is told by Wordsworth in that beautiful little poem "Lucy Gray," so well known to everyone.

The interior of Grasmere church is very impressive. The main features of its "rude and antique majesty" have been described by Wordsworth in the fifth book of "The Excursion." It has many features about it that attract a visitor, but probably the most striking is the tower built of unheaven boulders, the walls being from three to four feet thick. On one of the pillars of the church is a tablet on which is the following:

To the Memory of WILLIAM WORDSWORTH A True Philosopher and Poet. Who by a special gift and calling of Almighty God whether he discoursed on man or nature, failed not to lift up the heart to Holy things. Tired not of maintaining the cause of the pure and simple. And so in perilous times was raised up to be a chief minister, not only of the noblest poetry, but of high and sacred truth. This memorial is placed here by his Friends and Neighbors in testimony of respect and affection and gratitude.

The ride back from Grasmere was made in the same vehicle but this time we went direct to Windermere where we took a charabanc for Oxenholme where we got a late train for Carlisle.

Where Bobbie Burns is Buried. After the day on Lake Windermere we had spent the night at Carlisle. It was during the coal strike and although we tried both bribing and coaxing the chamber-maid in order to get a little fire in our room our efforts were unavailing. We went to bed cold and we got up cold, and did not sleep very much in the interval. As a consequence we were sound asleep when we crossed the border from England into Scotland, but were aroused from our slumbers by hearing the guard calling Gretens Green. So we stuck our head out of the window and looked to see what this place famed in song and story really looked like. We were not long in arriving at Dumfries whither we were bound for the purpose of visiting some relatives and also the graves of our maternal ancestors who lie buried in old St. Michael's churchyard, within a few yards of the grave of Robert Burns, the great Scotch poet. In company with a relative we spent an interesting morning. We visited the house where Robt. Burns spent his last days and where he died. There were many things there to remind one of the poet. The house in which Burns died is situated on a little side street more like an alley, than a street. The room in which he died is used as a museum in which many things are displayed connected with the life of the poet, including a walking stick, a snuff box and some original manuscripts. Not far from this house is a place called Burns Houf. This is the place where he spent a great deal of his time during his later years. The chair and the little corner table are there just the same as they were when he frequented the place. A sort of cupboard has been built around them, but our friend and guide knowing the ropes, and evidently just how many drinks it was necessary to buy, had no difficulty in having the cupboard unlocked and we had the privilege of sitting in Burns' chair at the little table and partaking of our refreshment.

The monument erected to Burns in St. Michael's churchyard is a very handsome one and a man is continually on duty there to guard it. Inside the Mausoleum is a monument of Burns at the plow depicting the little poem "To a Mouse." The inscription on the monument reads as follows:

In Memory of ROBERT BURNS Who died on the 21st of July, 1796. MAXWELL BURNS Who died the 25th of April, 1799 Aged 2 Years and 9 Months. FRANCIS WALLACE BURNS Who Died the 7th of July, 1803 Aged 14 Years. The remains of Burns were removed into the vault below on the 19th of September 1815, and two sons. Also the remains of Jean Armour, relict of the poet. Born February, 1765. Died 26th of March, 1854. ROBERT His Eldest Son, who Died on the 14th of May, 1857. Aged 70 Years. Not far from the grave of Burns we found the graves of two great uncles, both of whom had died in April 1813. In Dumfries cemetery there is also a monument erected to the 420 inhabitants who died of Asiatic cholera in that town in 1832. The cholera entered the town on the 18th of September and remained till the 27th of November. Nine hundred suffered from the disease and 420 died, as many as 44 dying in one day. The inscription on the monument reads:— That the benefit of this solemn warning might not be lost to posterity, this monument was erected from collections made from several churches in this town.

Stratford-on-Avon. There is no name in the world of literature, like the name of William Shakespeare, therefore, Stratford-on-Avon is the Mecca of every literary pilgrim who sets foot in England. The birthplace of Shakespeare is a spot that is dear, not only to the Englishman, but to the whole world. It was a beautiful April afternoon when we landed at Stratford to pay our first visit to the birthplace and last resting place of the Bard of Avon. It is a quiet little town in Warwickshire, and is pleasantly situated in the wooded valley of the "soft flowing Avon." We found our way to the Shakespeare Hotel, an Elizabethan structure, and one of the

most comfortable hotels that we discovered in the whole of our wanderings. The rooms instead of being numbered, are named, each room being called after some Shakespearean character. We slept in "Othello" and slept soundly, the dark deed which the Moor of Venice committed after Desdemona had retired, worrying us not at all. The accommodation at the Shakespeare hotel is splendid, sixteen century architecture not interfering in any way with twentieth century service.

The birthplace of Shakespeare preserved by the nation as a museum, is situated in Henley street, and at the rear of it, is a very pretty, well-kept flower garden. On the walls of Shakespeare's birth room are to be seen the signatures of such great men as Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and Thackeray. There are many things connected with the life of Shakespeare, preserved in this house, and one can spend an hour quite interestingly looking them over. From Shakespeare's birthplace, we went to the Memorial Theatre, beautifully situated on the banks of the river. The first stone of this memorial building was laid by the Right Honorable Lord Leigh with full Masonic ceremonial, on April 23rd, 1877, the three hundred and twelfth anniversary of the poet's birth. The memorial comprises a theatre, library, picture gallery and a central tower. The building is a very handsome structure both inside and out. The staircase were told was constructed of Caen stone and Purbeck marble. It is very handsome. The Memorial theatre was opened April 23rd, 1879 with a performance of "Much Ado About Nothing." It has accommodation for nearly nine hundred people and a Shakespeare celebration is held there during Shakespeare's birthday week every April. The library is situated upon the ground floor, and contains many rare volumes of Shakespeare's plays. The picture gallery is situated above the library and it is many celebrated paintings of well-known actors, and also a collection of Irving relics.

Trinity Church of Stratford-on-Avon, where Shakespeare lies buried in the chancel is thus described by Washington Irving:—"That church stands on the banks of the Avon, on an embowered point, and separated by adjoining gardens from the suburbs of the town. The situation is quiet and retired and the river runs murmuring at the foot of the churchyard, and the elms which grow upon its banks, droop their branches into its clear bosom. Small birds have built their nests among cornices and fissures of the walls, and keep up a continual flutter and chirping and rooks are sailing and cawing about its lofty gray spire."

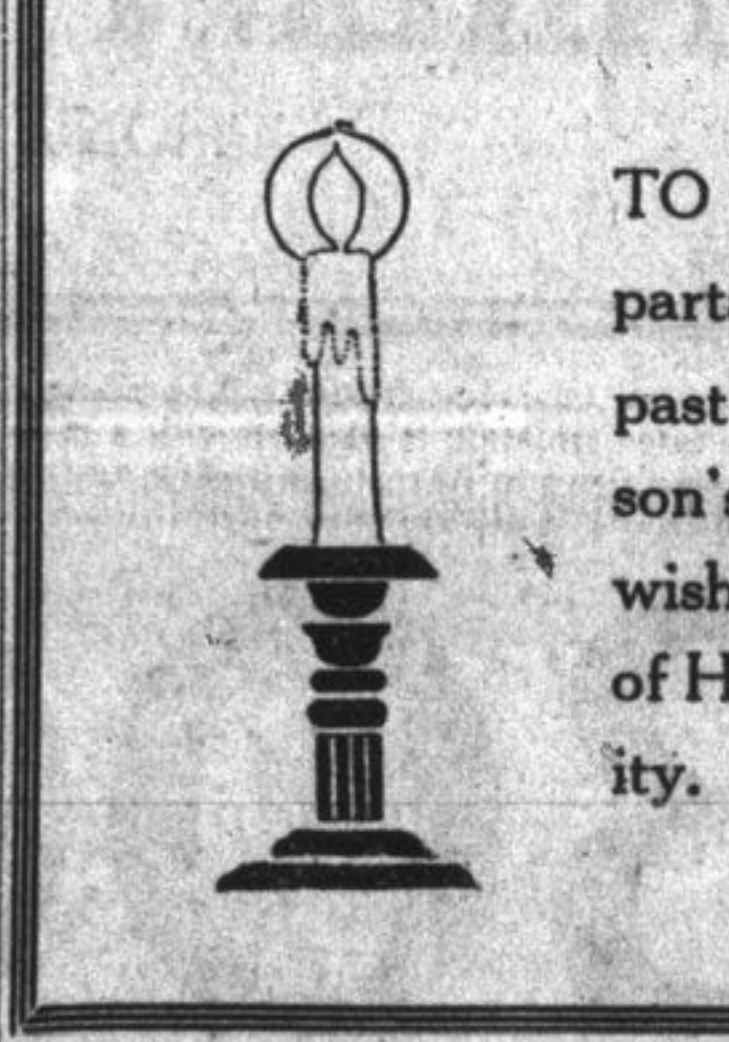
Had in her sober livery all things clad, so we wended our way back by the road to Stratford, going a roundabout way to the hotel, and passing the home of Marie Corelli, which is situated on one of the main streets. Next day we left for Birmingham again. The visit had been short, but "a crowded hour of joy," and one long to be remembered. W. R. D.

THE STAR.
In the cold heavens, before the dawn,
A star of wondrous beauty shone.
Earth still slept on; the winds were still;
No murmur from the frozen rill.
The starry throng o'erspread the sky,
An innumerable company.
But, brightest far of all the host,
This star of promise charmed me most.
It told the night was nearly done;
It heralded the coming sun.
It held my gaze; I watched it long,
As listening for the angel's song.
The song that still with sweetness fills
The memory of Judea's hills.
I thought of those wise men of old,
Whose lives are wrapped in mystery's fold;
And of the star that guided them
To the dear Child of Bethlehem;
Whose life had taught to every clime
That lowly paths may be sublime.
Again returns to glad the earth,
The day made sacred by His birth.
Again from out the ages dim
Comes echoing sweet the angel's hymn,
Joy-bringing now, with promise bright
To cheer the watches of the night;
Though marred are its seraphic tones
By clamor of discordant throngs,
Yet nearer now the time than then
Of peace and good-will unto men.
—J. E. Caldwell.

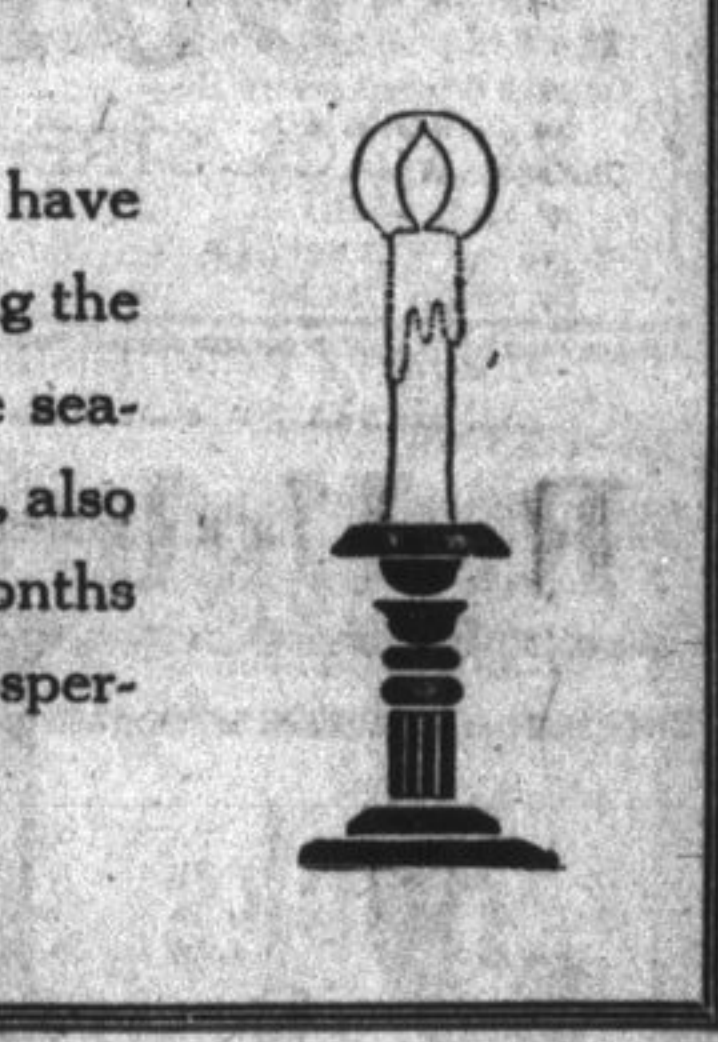
This church is well worth seeing for its own sake. It is a fine piece of Gothic architecture. It has a beautiful organ and fine stained glass windows. It is visited by thousands of strangers every year, solely because it is the last resting place of William Shakespeare. After tea, we walked across the fields to Shottery, where Anne Hathaway lived. It is a short walk of about a mile or so and in the pleasant evening was most enjoyable. One of the fields was divided up into garden plots, during the war and dozens of men, women and children were busy making a garden. Anne Hathaway's cottage with its wood and plaster construction and thatched roof is a pretty romantic little place. The garden is abloom with flowers, and it was just such a balmy April evening as centuries ago would doubtless have tempted Will Shakespeare to go courting Anne. "Now came still evening on, and twilight gray

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