

were strangers, invited us to come and see the house in which he was living, which long ago had been occupied by a former eccentric clergyman of Haworth—a Mr. Grimshaw—of whom Mrs. Gaskell gives a curious account in her book. He took us to it accordingly—a quaint and very charming old house—and talked to us by the way as we went; but he was more disposed to talk of Mr. Grimshaw than of the Brontës, and though he was a sensible man, we did not get much out of him that was especially interesting. After we had seen his house we parted from him, and, returning to the village, proceeded once more to church, to the afternoon service, which begins at two o'clock.

"This, it soon appeared, was the fashionable hour in Haworth. The church, which in the morning had been two-thirds empty, filled well now; and though, as before, the service began with only Mr. Nichols being present, it had not proceeded far when the vestry-door opened and Mr. Brontë, dressed in his gown, came slowly into the church and took his place in his pew—the old Brontë pew, which had stood sadly and touchingly empty until now.

"He preached an extempore sermon, on the text: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,'—a poor sermon enough, yet more interesting to us than many a better one might have been. We were in a pew in the gallery looking down upon him, so close that we could see him very well. He is a tall, large man, and was dressed with the utmost scrupulousness. The face struck us as handsome, but possibly it may be handsomer now than it was in his youth, for the features are large and strongly marked. I thought I saw some likeness in him to his daughter's picture, but it might have been merely fancy. He has a very self-possessed manner. He walked into the church and up the pulpit stairs with great deliberation, and even with a kind of stateliness, converting the slowness of movement that is

probably forced upon him by his feebleness and his half blindness into something that rather adds dignity to his appearance than suggests the idea of weakness. More than once, both before he began his sermon, and in the course of it, he turned his head round and looked full at us. The old fire, of which, I suppose, there was plenty once, seems all to have burnt out of him now. He looked quiet, grave, emotionless; neither stern nor gentle; only calm.

"The sermon was ended, and we had taken our last look of the church and of the preacher by half-past three; and half an hour later our last look of Haworth itself. We left it at four o'clock, and walked in the bright afternoon sunshine the four miles back to Keighley, often turning to look once more at the square church tower standing so long in sight against the sky, and once for a long time sitting down to rest by the roadside, with the beautiful valley at our feet, and the wild wide moors rising up, wave on wave beyond."

Eighteen years have passed away since that little visit was paid, and the last of the Brontës—the old man whom we saw that day, left then so sorrowfully wifeless and childless—has long ago now gone to join wife and children,—one name more added to the long list of names on those two stones within the communion rails. Not many persons connected by blood with the Brontës are probably ever likely to visit Haworth and the church in which the old man preached so long; yet, possibly, for years still to come, some strangers now and then may care to go out of their way a little to make a pilgrimage as we did, to that curious village on the Yorkshire hill, and, thinking of the strange and touching story of those three sisters' lives, may linger, as we lingered, about the moors they loved so dearly, and the melancholy little house in which their childhood and their youth were spent, and the church where two of them lie buried.