

out onto the recto of each leaf. (Only two leaves contain any content from the novel on their versos.) The upper right-hand corner of each leaf bears numbering in brown ink. At the beginning of the manuscript, the sequence appears to be regular enough. But starting in the second volume, the brown-ink numbers have been crossed out and replaced by a new series written in red ink that continues to the end of the third volume.

The manuscript's widely spaced lines provide ample room for alterations to its text. Although some leaves bear no revisions at all, most reflect at least some kind of change, whether the crossing-out of a sentence, the re-wording of a phrase, or the insertion of new writing in the author's clear hand. More remarkable though are other, more structural changes: a number of the manuscript's leaves exhibit large excisions—conspicuous gaps where portions of paper have been cut out with a blade. Some leaves are two-thirds of their original size, while others are less than half the height of other full leaves in the manuscript. One leaf has been sliced down to a small fragment containing just a few lines.

These gaping excisions appear to have been made with a pen knife. The edges where the unwanted parts have been excised are jagged—not the smooth continuous cuts made by scissors. It is likely that some, but not all, of the leaves bearing excisions were still conjugate, over the fold, with their companion leaves, when Brontë gave the manuscript to Taylor on September 8. In addition, some of the manuscript's quires, or groupings of nested bifolia, would likely have appeared to have been opened or sliced along their conjugate folds and then rearranged.² And some singleton leaves would have been inserted in various places.³

Upon Taylor's return to London, the fair-copy manuscript was probably reviewed by Brontë's publisher, George Smith, before being delivered to the printing house of Stewart and Murray, where it served as the printer's copy. There, the remaining folds of the manuscript's gatherings would have been opened with a knife or paper cutter, dismantling the manuscript's nested bifolia into individual leaves, and enabling their circulation in small batches among the

2. I discuss the manuscript's quire structure, as well as the sale of stationery in quires, in more detail below. There are instances where entire leaves were fully excised from the manuscript volumes, which would have necessitated splitting the manuscript's bifolia. For example, a leaf occurring in volume 2, which would have been numbered in pencil and brown ink as 374, is missing from Brontë's brown-ink numbering sequence in volume 2. It was removed as part of a revision to "Mr. Donne's Exodus" that entailed partial excisions to neighboring leaves 373 and 375 (BM ff. 94 and 95). The excisions and removal of the leaf, in this instance, pertain to a conversation in which the novel's heroines, Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar, are discussing Robert Moore's guarded interest in Caroline. The extracted leaf, which almost certainly contained Shirley's outspoken thoughts on the matter ("In what way does it pique you?"), was removed by Brontë as part of the third state of the manuscript's composition—before the "C" stage of red ink numbering, a process also described in more detail below.

3. This aspect of the manuscript's composition, described in more detail below, is evident in the occasional insertion of odd numbers of leaves, given that the manuscript was in large part composed on bifolia.