

was published in London on October 26 and later in New York on November 22.⁹ The proofs that Harper & Brothers received, however, did not reflect all of Brontë's final corrections for the first London edition.¹⁰ Harper & Brothers would silently correct their own text—either from updated corrected proofs or from a copy of the London edition.

Today, the manuscript of *Shirley* is housed at the British Library (BL), where it is shelved alongside the fair-copy manuscripts of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, as well as with manuscripts written by Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and William Makepeace Thackeray—volumes donated to the library as part of the George Smith Memorial Bequest, which was initially made in 1914 upon the death of Elizabeth Smith, George Smith's widow. In 1933, the Smith children

9. For the London publication date, see *Letters*, 2:270. The earliest American advertisement for *Shirley* appears in the November 20, 1849, issue of the *Evening Post* (NY), which announced the novel's publication next Thursday morning. The *Newark Daily Advertiser* (NJ) reported receiving a copy of the book on November 22, 1849. Thanks to Vincent Golden for his assistance in locating these early ads.

10. When I began comparing copies of the first American edition with the manuscript and first London edition in the autumn of 2020, I discovered a series of variants in the earliest state of the last chapter of the first American edition that are reflected in the fair-copy MS, but not in the first London edition, as printed by Smith, Elder. My curiosity had been spurred by an observation made by Walter E. Smith, who noted in *The Brontë Sisters: A Bibliographical Catalogue* (Los Angeles: Heritage Book Shop, 1991) the presence of additional text on p. 206 of "some copies" of the first American edition in wrappers, published by Harper & Brothers (HB) in 1849, that was not present in any of the other editions he had seen: "You may meet these two again, reader, one day, or you may not; none but the presumptuous promise for the future: we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth" (Smith, 125). Smith did not trace this variant to the MS; but when I did, I found numerous other instances that clearly show that the English proofs initially used to compose the first American edition did not reflect Brontë's final text for the first London edition, but rather an earlier set of proofs that retained language from the MS and that were later altered or removed as part of subsequent proof-stage revisions. For example, on p. 203 in the second column of the first HB edition, the text reads: "a rose-tree, transplanted from the Hollow, which bloomed"—language appearing in the MS (BM f. 311); the Smith, Elder (SE) edition reads: "a rose-tree, which bloomed" (p. 306). Page 206 of the HB edition reads "stone or brick and ashes," as with the MS (BM f. 322), while the SE edition reads "stone and brick and ashes" (p. 316). Some instances include early text entirely removed from Smith Elder's edition of the novel. For example, the following text appears on BM f. 306 of the MS and in column two on p. 202 of the HB edition, but not in the SE edition: "I don't know whether I have duly disposed of all minor characters; I fear not; but if any friend wishes to know more, a note addressed to Mr. Currer Bell, Hay-lane Cottage, Hay, near Millcote, may be expected to meet with prompt attention. I confess this promise seems given in rather equivocal terms—no matter: the experiment, if approved, might be tried." A full list of variants from the first state of the N gathering of the HB edition will appear in a forthcoming critical edition of *Shirley* that I am co-editing with Tim Dolin for Cambridge University Press. These variants provide valuable additional insight into the texts of the proofs, which are no longer extant. I also located variants at the end of the first printing of the HB edition of *Villette* that correlate with the surviving proofs for *Villette* located in Sterling Library, University of London.