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## The Mystery of Jane Eyre

Dear Friends:

**T**he literary world in 1847 was profoundly stirred by a novel issued under the title JANE EYRE and accredited on the title page to Currrier Bell. The book was an immediate success, and an English reviewer of the time said of JANE EYRE, "Almost all that we require in a novelist, the writer has-- perception of character and knowledge of delineating it, picturesqueness, passion, and knowledge of life. Reality--deep, significant reality--is the characteristic of this book." Later, E.P. Whipple wrote in the North American Review, "The popularity of 'Jane Eyre' was doubtless due in part to the freshness, raciness and vigor of mind it evinced." Naturally there was an extensive and enthusiastic search for the remarkable person who knew so much about the interesting, conflicting phases of human character peculiar to the first half of the nineteenth century. When the mystery of authorship was finally solved, the solution was scarcely less incredible than the book.

JANE EYRE was written by a young lady, Charlotte Bronte, the daughter of one, Patrick Bronte, an Irishman whose paternal name was Brunty. He changed the spelling to Bronte when he came to England. As the Reverend Patrick Bronte, he lived quietly at Thornton where Charlotte was born on April 21, 1816. In 1818, the Reverend Patrick Bronte accepted the living of Haworth, that is, he became the rector of its church and remained there the rest of his life. It further became known that Charlotte was a shy and introverted girl, brought up to the drudgery of a small house, with little opportunity to have acquired the background for her literary skill. Even now, JANE EYRE is recognized as one of the greatest novels of recent times, and an important motion picture version of it has been an outstanding dramatic success.

When attempting to understand both the authoress and her book, it should be noted that her father was an exceedingly eccentric man. He exacted the strictest obedience from his six children, and fed them all on potatoes without meat in order to 'make them more hardy.' This dietetic policy was a dismal failure, and the children were short-lived. When Reverend Bronte thought his daughters had bought some slippers that were a bit too fashionable, he burned the shoes, and for the same reason destroyed his wife's best silk gown. The Bronte children saw very little of their father and less of their neighbors, and their principal recreation was to walk alone or together upon the moorlands.

When the father finally decided to send the girls to school, he made a tragic mistake. Four of them were boarded at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. The policy of the institution was that physical discomfort and privation were spiritually edifying to the soul. The two older girls either died at the school or shortly after leaving it. Charlotte and her sister Emily returned home, and other plans were made for their futures. When Charlotte was twenty-six years old, she and her sister, Emily, went to Brussels to

study at the school of Constantine Hager. This episode was complicated by the fact that Charlotte formed a powerful secret attachment to Hager. Because it was obviously necessary to supplement the meagre income of the family, Charlotte became a governess, but returned home to nurse her sister, Emily, who was in delicate health.

About 1838, she had two offers of marriage from clergymen, but politely refused them both, perhaps due to the disposition of her father, who felt it his moral duty to make all important decisions for his children. There is very little tangible support in Charlotte's personal experiences to explain the exaggerated passions which racked the heroine of her famous novel, nor did she write only one book calculated to raise the eyebrows of gentle folk.

One school of thought suggests that the neurotic pressures which developed in the lives of the Bronte sisters and their dissipated brother provided the basic materials for their stories. Certainly, JANE EYRE shows extraordinary character delineation, but much of it is permeated with cynicism. Something of the caricature skill of Dickens and Thackeray is present in JANE EYRE, and was most attractive to the ladies of the generation who had experienced similar misfortunes. This does not explain everything, though--and Charlotte must be included among those who attained distinction because of a natural genius. There is also a profound streak of mysticism which so often ripens in those whose outer lives are devoid of personal fulfillment. She had a very vivid imagination, and at one time, she and her brother, Branwell, created a vast African empire which they called Angria, and wrote extravagant accounts of the lives and adventures of its inhabitants.

In 1845, Charlotte accidentally discovered that her sisters, Emily and Anne, had been writing poetry. Soon after, she also did some versifying, and the three girls took the pseudonyms which were to endure throughout their literary careers. Charlotte became Currier; Emily became Ellis; and Anne decided to call herself Acton Bell. They issued a small book of poems at their own expense, but only two copies were actually sold.

Emily, often considered to be the outstanding genius of the family, clearly revealed her mystical insights in several of her writings, and is best remembered for WUTHERING HEIGHTS, from which a modern motion picture has also been made. She caught cold at the funeral of her brother and died in 1848. A year later, her sister, Anne, died. Anne wrote two novels but they were not especially successful. Left alone, Charlotte assumed the care of her father, whose eyesight was failing. She continued to write and her increasing reputation resulted in personal acquaintance of literary personalities, including William Makepeace Thackeray and Matthew Arnold. In 1854, she married Arthur Bell Nichols, her father's curate, and died the following year. At least two of her writings were published posthumously.

The entire family seemed to have inherited poor health, but they faced suffering with poise and patience. In terms of modern psychology, it is now assumed that they actually studied each other in great depth. They confided fully all their moods, their rebellions and their final resignations, and gained a deeper insight of their internal motivations than would have been possible had they grown up under more normal conditions. Having virtually no one but each other, their mother having died early, they duly recorded all the changes which occurred in their transitional years from childhood to maturity. In the Bronte family tragedy was always close at hand, and depth had to compensate for lack of breadth, both relating to physical experience and the unfolding of creative imagination. Each was psychically dependent upon the other and in all of them there was strong spirit of rebellion against the fashions and policies of early Victorian England. The Bronte sisters formed a unique combination of abilities which has given them world-wide recognition for their achievements.

## THE STORY OF ASTROLOGY

The Research Library of the Philosophical Research Society has an exceptionally fine collection of early astrological material. Most of the famous horoscopes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are present in first editions. There is an autographed manuscript attributed to the first Raphael, and several pages of crude script believed to have been written by William Lilly. This section has expanded to include a fine representation of works on Hindu, Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese astrology. Among the most recent additions are two Hindu horoscopes, handwritten on cloth and embellished with many-colored representations of deities and constellational symbols.

A new edition of my book, THE STORY OF ASTROLOGY, will be available in the next few weeks. The printing and binding are finished, and all that remains to be completed is the dust jacket. The new edition of this convenient reference text is amplified and revised, and several new engravings, including a speculative horoscope of Jesus Christ, have been added. There are new chapters on Burmese, Tibetan and Chinese astrology, and the older text has been re-edited.

While interest in astrology is increasing rapidly, certain prejudices against the starry science linger in the public mind. THE STORY OF ASTROLOGY presents a summary of the place of the horoscope in the religious, philosophical, scientific and cultural life of mankind over a period of several thousands of years. No nation or culture group has risen to a high state of civilization without including the study of the psychology of the stars in its theory of education. Astrology was the mother of astronomy, and nearly all great astronomers, including Galileo, Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler and Newton calculated horoscopes. Governments have been created patterned after the solar system, and the monarchs of European and Asiatic nations depended heavily upon their astrologers for major decisions of state. THE STORY OF ASTROLOGY includes an early calculation for the horoscope of Plato, the traditional nativity chart of Ghengis Khan, and the horoscope of Romulus, founder of the City of Rome. There are numerous anecdotes from the lives of famous persons, references to Poor Richard's Almanac, and the famous contest between Benjamin Franklin and Titan Leeds as to which could predict the other's death with greater accuracy.

For those attempting to influence their friends in favor of astrology, this book will be useful, and will help to correct a number of prejudices and popular misunderstandings. You will find the publication advertised with the book list on the reverse side.

May I take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your cooperation and friendship throughout the years. Your help has made possible the maintenance of our intensive printing program by which our publications are serving a larger public.

Thank you again.



Always most sincerely,

*Marilyn P. Hall*

The following list of books is recommended reading. These books may be ordered from the Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on page one). Please add 35¢ for handling. California residents, include sales tax. Note: Prices subject to change without notice.

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
Abridgement of the Secret Doctrine	Preston & Humphreys	(p) \$ 2.25
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BOOKS BY MANLY P. HALL

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