

don't repent, something bad might be permitted to come down the chimney and fetch you away.' (p 45). And again, 'All said I was wicked and perhaps I might be so . . . was I fit to die?' (p 48). No wonder that Jane faints when she imagines a ghost returned from some 'church vault' or grave to revisit the Red Room. 'Little girl,' says Mr Brocklehurst, 'here is a book entitled the *Child's Guide*; read it with prayer, especially that part containing an account of the awfully sudden death of Martha G——, a naughty child addicted to falsehood and deceit' (p 67).

The struggle between good and evil, the pressure of conscience, and the possibility of devilish possession which are imaged in these two vignettes of Bewick's are remembered throughout the novel. Moreover, there is, in fact, 'one real fiend' in the book; in the 'narrow stone hell' which is Thornfield Hall, lives Bertha the mad wife, 'worse than a legion of such as we imagine . . . a hideous demon:' (pp 328, 342). And both Rochester and Jane have moments of infernal temptation.

It is obvious, then, why these two Bewick vignettes should be given such emphasis as 'objects of terror'. Jane is to become a woman very sensitive to strange 'presentiments . . . sympathies . . . signs', to that 'mystery to which humanity had not yet found the key . . . whose workings baffle human comprehension,' (p 249). That there are good spirits abroad however, as well as bad, is the lesson which Helen Burns tries to impart to Jane at school. 'Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us' (p 101). Prepared in this way for the intervention of the unseen, we can accept as psychologically possible those non-rational elements of Jane's experience, those strange manifestations of abnormal powers, which occur at key points in the story.²⁴

This world of 'strange' concepts – 'strange' is a constant adjective in G 'the fiend pinning down the thief's pack' H 'the black, horned thing'

