

The Martineau Society



Fifth Newsletter
February 1996

EDITORIAL NOTE

As indicated in the previous Newsletter, the winter issue now appears in February, to give everyone more of a breather after Christmas. You will also notice a difference in the typeface: evidence that the Editor has (more or less) become computer-literate (probably the last adult in the country to do so).

If you would like to write something for the next Newsletter, in September, please send your contributions to the Editor: Dr Valerie Sanders, University of Buckingham, Buckingham MK18 1EG. Articles, notes, queries, book reviews and comments on any aspects of the Martineau family and their circle are welcome.

If you are interested in joining the Society, please contact the Secretary, Alan Middleton, 49 Mayfield Avenue, Grove, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7ND.

NOTICEBOARD

Forthcoming events of the Martineau Society:

SPRING TRAIL: 1-3 April 1996 at Ambleside in the Lake District

It was decided that a Spring Trail might be more appealing than a Winter visit to a place of significance to the Martineaus, and that we could extend last year's one-day visit to a three-day break. Accommodation will be provided by the Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside, and members will have a chance to see the Knoll, Harriet Martineau's home after 1846, besides all the other houses of literary interest in the area: Wordsworth's Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount, Ruskin's Brantwood, and the Armit Collection of literary manuscripts and materials. About

ten people have signed up for this visit: a report will appear in the next Newsletter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The next Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday 27 July 1996 at Manchester College, Oxford. If you would like to give a paper at the AGM, on any aspect of the Martineau family and their circle, please contact the Chairman. Similarly, if you have any ideas for future trails or projects we should be delighted to hear from you.

Query: Malcolm Martineau: did anyone else hear the name of Malcolm Martineau who was one of the performers in a concert relayed on Radio 3 over the weekend of 27-8 January? He was the pianist at a Harewood House concert of songs and arias. Does anyone know how he fits into the Martineau family tree?

HARRIET AND THE HUTTONS

Sophia Hankinson has sent in some fascinating material about the Hutton family, friends of James Martineau's in Dublin. In Health, Husbandry and Handicraft, Ch. XV, Harriet describes their coach-making business and the various problems as well as successes it experienced, illustrating the humanity of the Huttons as employers. The business survived even a disastrous fire in 1842, and was described graphically by Harriet when she toured the factory. She was particularly interested in the 'skeletons' and 'separate parts' of the coaches: 'So we rushed gladly into the upper rooms, which look like a hospital for carriages. Bodies lay on the ground, bare of covering and of lining, without door or window...to have caught a family of carriages thus en dishabille was quite an event. Then we saw them dressed. There was lining upon lining before the last silk and lace were put in.' It is an oddly Dickensian piece of writing - to say that Dickens's Hard Times was partly an attack on the literal-mindedness of utilitarian economists and writers, Harriet Martineau among them!

HARRIET MARTINEAU IN TYNEMOUTH

Alan Middleton has sent in the adjoining photograph of the house in Tynemouth (57 Front Street) where Harriet Martineau stayed in the early 1840s to recover her health - which she believed finally occurred as a result of mesmerism. The inscription reads as follows:

HARRIET MARTINEAU
NOVELIST, POLITICAL ECONOMIST,
AND
ENGLAND'S FIRST WOMAN JOURNALIST
REGAINED HER HEALTH HERE
1840-1845

The house is now an antique shop, and the plaque is to the left of the main shop window, over an archway.



Below is reprinted the last of the papers read at the Annual General Meeting in Manchester College, Oxford in July of last year. Revd Dr Ralph Waller, the Principal of Manchester College, has written on James Martineau's impressions of the College:

SCENES OF MANCHESTER COLLEGE FROM THE EYES OF JAMES MARTINEAU

I have recently been editing James Martineau's Biographical Memoranda for publication. It is a little cameo of Victorian intellectual life, a few pages of which I first came across in 1972. With the persistent help of Barbara Smith I was able to find and piece together the remaining pages, transcribe it from his original handwriting and have it typed out. Although several passages from the Memoranda are reproduced in two of the biographies of Martineau, it has never been printed in its entirety. The portrayal of Martineau which emerges is fascinating. It tells of his early childhood, his schooling in Norwich and Bristol, his ministry in Dublin and his struggles against anti-Catholic sentiment, his ministry in Liverpool and London, his break with the necessarianism of Priestley, as well as a detailed account of his eighteen months in Germany and his rift with his sister Harriet. The one shortcoming of the Biographical Memoranda is that they were written too early, when Martineau was in his seventies. Missing are the final years at Manchester College and the later productive period of his life which produced The Seat of Authority in Religion and Types of Ethical Theory. There is also no account of the setting-up of the Metaphysical Society or its successor, the Synthetic Society. Martineau's opposition to Manchester College's move to Oxford, which was handled so well by Professor Webb in his centenary lecture, is also excluded by the date of writing.

However, the Biographical Memoranda does give four pictures of Manchester College at different periods, as seen through the eyes of Martineau, and it is my

intention just briefly to look at these.

The first of these accounts is that of his student days, 1822-1827. He is impressed by both the piety of the students and the dedication and enthusiasm of the tutors.

Within a small circle of students he found a spirit of devotion and asceticism which bound them together in a strong affection, and subordinated their academic work to higher aspirations. There was even a repugnance at the thought of winning academic prizes or honours. Martineau tells how, having completed a translation of a prescribed English text into Greek for a College prize, he felt ashamed of himself and together with John Worthington tore up their respective pieces of work and consigned them to the fire.

But student life was not all work. Martineau tells in some detail of belonging to a college Missionary Society that went to help a small society at the village of Welburn, almost at the gates of Castle Howard:

... the society to which we preached so increased that no room was large enough to hold it: and the students managed, during one of their vacations, to collect the means of building a small chapel. Fancying that my engineering experience would enable me to construct anything, they insisted on my acting as architect: and it devolved upon me to draw the plans, and ride over periodically to superintend the work. On one of these visits, I met Sydney Smith on the ground, looking at the rising walls. He was incumbent of the parish, and could not regard a new conventicle with favour. On my saying, in the endeavour to parry his good-natured grumbling, that, without the chapel, the people for whom it was meant would go nowhere, he replied, 'Well, well, it is a pity that they wont come to me: but so long as you only gather and tame my refractory parishioners, I shall look upon you as my curates, to get the people ready for me.'

He was impressed by the mathematics teaching of Turner who encouraged him to read Newton's Principia. We know from his other writings¹ of his admiration for Wellbeloved. His only complaint on leaving Manchester College was that he had learned calculus by the fluxional method rather than the differential method, and

learned calculus by the fluxional method rather than the differential method, and also that he had been taught Hebrew without points. Both of these he had had to re-learn in order to teach his students at Trinity College Dublin.

The second account of Manchester College in the Biographical Memoranda occurs in 1840 with his appointment as part-time tutor, or in Martineau's case, over-time tutor, as Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Logic. The appointment led to his finally abandoning the necessarian position propounded by Priestley. Although he began to question this theory as early as 1833, when writing a series of articles on Priestley², and although there were indications in his lectures in the Liverpool Controversy of 1839 that the tide was turning³, it was not until faced with the prospect of teaching his college courses that he was finally forced to rethink his position, and gave up the necessarian position in favour of human free will. You cannot help sympathizing with him as he tells how one by one he tore up his courses of lectures and had to sit down and re-write them:

Almost everything I had written became worthless in my eyes: courses of lectures elaborately prepared for repeated use were laid upon the shelf for ever; the familiar text-books could no longer be used in that capacity in my private classes; and every subject had to be melted down again in my own mind, and be recast in other molds. For all this however there was ample compensation, in the sense of inward deliverance which I seemed to gain from artificial system into natural speech.

The departure of Francis Newman from the College staff in 1850 is given a paragraph in the Biographical Memoranda. He felt that Newman's move to London to become Professor of Classics at University College not only extinguished from the classroom Manchester College's greatest light, but was also the occasion of the loss of a personal friend, whom he and J J Tayler held in great affection. Martineau also saw Newman's departure as a turning-point in the history of the College, whereby the College gave up its attempt to supply a complete system

ministers. Shortly after Newman's departure the College was to move to London and take on a narrower role of being principally a theological college.

This move to London in 1853 also got a mention in that Martineau became one of the first long-distance commuters. The two full-time members of staff were John James Tayler as Principal and Vance Smith as tutor. Martineau was given a half-time post as Lecturer in Philosophy:

I was not prepared to quit my post in Liverpool, my weekly journeys were simply extended from Manchester to London; my classes being all brought together on to the two days which I devoted to them. This laborious plan remained unaltered until 1857.

Martineau was only able to keep the two jobs going at different ends of the country because of the coming of the railways which had brought Liverpool within 6 hours of London.

The Biographical Memoranda gives an interesting account of Martineau's appointment as the other full-time member of staff at Manchester College in 1857 on the retirement of Vance Smith. According to Martineau, after he had been offered the position by the College Committee he resigned as minister at Hope Street Church Liverpool and sold his house, at which point he was met by a formidable protest signed by a large number of respected and influential people. Their argument was mainly theological; that Tayler and Martineau both belonged to the same modern school of thought and historical criticism, and that one of the two chairs should have been reserved for a representative of the older theology. Martineau rather skates over the controversy in his Biographical Memoranda by saying that he called for a meeting of the Trustees who upheld his position in a vote of 7 to 1.

However, if we read his correspondence at that time, a very much more worried

and concerned figure emerges. ⁴ Susanna Winkworth writes about the incident in a letter to a friend⁵, while J J Tayler considers resigning if Martineau was not appointed⁶. He argued vigorously in favour of the appointment of the best person, and against the idea that both theological schools should be represented on the College staff - if one pushed such an argument to its logical conclusion, then every shade of theological opinion would have to be represented on the teaching staff of the College.

There is one other mention of the College which is of interest to us. In 1866 Martineau candidated for the Chair of Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College London. One cannot read his account of the ensuing events without feeling a wave of sympathy for him. The story of Robertson's appointment and Augustus de Morgan's resignation are well known⁷. Martineau, as ever, was generous in his appreciation of Robertson's ability, but in his Biographical Memoranda recorded a comment which says something about his feeling for Manchester College: 'The vision of an enlarged sphere of responsibility having vanished, I returned to my "few youths in a corner".'

One could draw many conclusions from the paragraphs in the Biographical Memoranda on how Martineau saw the College, but I am only going to draw two:

1. He was saddened that the College lost its original vision to be a mini-university, training laymen and ministers side by side.
2. He felt confined by the tiny nature of the College.

It is also possible to draw conclusions about the Trustees of the College, but that is a different story, and those who wish to follow it should start by reading the letters of J J Tayler⁸.

Ralph Waller, Manchester College, October 1995.

1. James Martineau, Essays, Reviews and Addresses, 4 vols (London, 1890-91), IV, 54.
2. Monthly Repository, edited by W J Fox (London, 1833) pp. 19, 84, 231
3. James Martineau, John Hamilton Thom, and Henry Giles, Unitarianism Defended (Liverpool 1839)
4. John Drummond and C B Upton, Life and Letters of James Martineau, 2 vols (London, 1902) I, 300-325
5. Margaret Sheen, Memorials of Two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth, pp. 169-70.
6. John James Tayler, Letters, 2 vols (London 1872) pp. 69-70
7. Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (London 1890), XXIII, 290
8. John James Tayler, Letters, 2 vols (London 1872)

LOCATION LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO THE MARTINEAU FAMILY

Several contributions to this proposed list have been received and grateful thanks are extended to all those who have been so helpful. One or two contributions are awaited and it is hoped to have a preliminary list ready for the summer meeting. Perhaps at this meeting we may be able to discuss the format of completed lists so that we have some consensus about the scope of the entries.

Before the summer meeting I hope to explore access to information via the Internet, location of printed catalogues and bibliographies, etc.

When this project began I knew that a difficult aspect would be the location of references among the papers of the friends and colleagues which are in other collections (eg. Elizabeth Gaskell). Perhaps this matter too may receive attention in July. All suggestions most welcome.

Barbara Smith, Oxford

Sophia Hankinson: Review of The Brontës by Juliet Barker (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994; repr. Phoenix Giants, 1995)

That these thousand pages are now available in paperback is a boon to all Bronte students, addicts and newcomers alike, and to everyone interested in their circle and their period, of which it is a microcosm. Juliet Barker's approach has been through original sources - many previously unused - to dispel the myths, the belief that 'every one of the Brontës' fictional creations must have had its counterpart in reality'. I had intended merely to skim through and pick out Martineau references but found myself involuntarily absorbed - caught by the acerbic tone of the introduction- in the opening pages which present Bronte père as a diligent scholar and cleric, impassioned Unionist and ardent Evangelical, champion of the weak and the oppressed...brother Branwell as a sensitive and frustrated artist, musician and poet (of lines 'better than many of the outpourings of more famous authors appearing in Blackwood's'), soliciting James Martineau through a mutual friend, and subsequently Harriet, for support in his efforts to gain recognition. Both were helpful, not only because of the quality of the poems, but because Harriet had 'always been anxious to extend to young or struggling authors the sort of aid which would have been so precious to me in the winter of 1829-30'.

We are led surefoot through the intricacies of the sisters' relationships, illnesses and budding authorships to Charlotte's first venture into print and subsequent mauling at the hands of critics such as Elizabeth Rigby (later Lady Eastlake, a Taylor-Meadows descendant) and George Henry Lewes. Elizabeth Gaskell and Harriet, in whom she fancied a 'remote affinity to my sister Emily', were Charlotte's champions and comforting correspondents in her early, incognita, days. We are treated, as a supplement to Harriet's description of their meeting, to

another by Lucy Martineau (Richard's wife). This was followed by Charlotte's week-long visit to the Knoll, where she and Harriet dined with Wordsworth's son-in-law and Matthew Arnold in the very day Letters on the Law of Man's Nature arrived in proof form - and were later read to the unsuspecting Charlotte (who listened with suppressed horror, though outwardly admiring the 'tone of calm power'). A practical, abortive, experiment in hypnosis rounded off a visit 'more interesting I certainly never paid': we can believe it. There was evidently real friendship, mutual respect and understanding hardly to be hoped for between literary spirits so disparate.

Charlotte (reacting against the Letters) influenced Harriet to return to novel-writing (Oliver Weld: a 'foolish prank' she afterwards regretted). Another visit to Ambleside was planned, but abandoned owing to the delayed publication of Villette and pressure from Charlotte's father and friends now that Harriet was an avowed atheist. Charlotte was stalwart in defence of her friend's good qualities, but her suggestion that publishing Atkinson's letters lost Harriet friends was tactless: Harriet was offended; her almost venomous review (not softened by a personal letter) of Villette put an end to the friendship.

What would have transpired had the second visit taken place? There must be an inglenook in some literary Valhalla where Harriet dictates a sequel to Jane Eyre, with less sentiment and more social conscience, Charlotte gently hints how to deal with Mr Atkinson, while Mrs Gaskell sits between, a lesser genius but a more rounded person, combining many of the best qualities of the two. For although Juliet Barker makes the curious remark that Harriet 'enjoyed robust health', her approach to life was robust in spite of illness - which cannot be said of the Brontës. Perhaps Harriet's almost fulsome tributes when Charlotte died were to

ease a guilty conscience.

This book is a pleasure to read: despite the density and complexity of the subject, each thread is followed clearly and concisely and woven in securely. The copious and meticulous notes (a hundred or so to each chapter) ensure that Juliet Barker's tapestry is as neat and colourful from the back as the front.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MARTINEAU MEMORIAL HALL, NORWICH

The Hall, built in 1905-7, is now coming into its own as one of the best in the city in the late Norman Shaw style. In 1991 the first major architectural survey of the premises and a feasibility study were undertaken by Messrs Lambert, Scott & Innes, to see what repairs were needed and whether better use could be made of the parts used by the Chapel. The main hall and some offices are occupied by Colegate Carpets, but it was hoped that there was room for a residential flat or mezzanine floor between the ground and upper floors.

Unfortunately the ceilings, though high by modern standards, are a few inches too low, and the (lately invented) reinforced concrete construction too sturdy to allow this, within reasonable costs. However, the following repairs and improvements have taken place:

The roof was inspected and the timbers treated. Some repairs and alterations were made which will facilitate inserting a flat if it becomes possible at a later date, and prevent rainwater overflowing into the building from an internal downpipe. Water and electricity supplies were modernised.

The Parlour, in regular use by the playgroup 'Octaplay', as well as congregational meetings, has been refurbished; a new entrance adjacent to the front door and a fireproof barrier to the rest of the building have brought it within the latest fire

regulations.

The kitchen has been upgraded to a standard allowing catering for 20-30 people; this included removing an obsolete boiler housing which has made access to the garden much easier. Finally, the whole building was redecorated inside and out in 1994. The programme has been made possible by the co-operation of the tenant, by a local authority grant, and by generous donations from Mrs Dorothy Bright-Smith and her daughter, Mrs Betty Rathbone, who founded Octaplay and is currently Chairman of the Octagon congregation.

-Sophia Hankinson

ELLEN HIGGINSON (nee Martineau) REVISITS NORWICH, 1860

Sophia has also sent in this extract from a letter written by Harriet's younger sister Ellen, from Bracondale, Norwich, on 24 June 1860 to her husband, Alfred Higginson, in Liverpool:

This has been a curious Midsummer day in which I have lived over much of my life in the old chapel, & yet carried many helpful thoughts on to the future...J H Hutton preached this morning and as I wished to stay for the Sunday School Examination in the afternoon, I went to my old nurse's for a dinner of bread and cheese and returned to the chapel. 280 children chanting the 103rd Psalm to a bit of Mendelssohn, hosts of parents and teachers, and the Apostolic face of J W Dowson with the more Saint-like expression of J H Hutton - these, added to old memories, made up a time of refreshing and hope, especially to one who could look back to the difficulty with which the first dozen of children had been collected there.

Her daughter, Harriet Emily Higginson, commented in 1907:

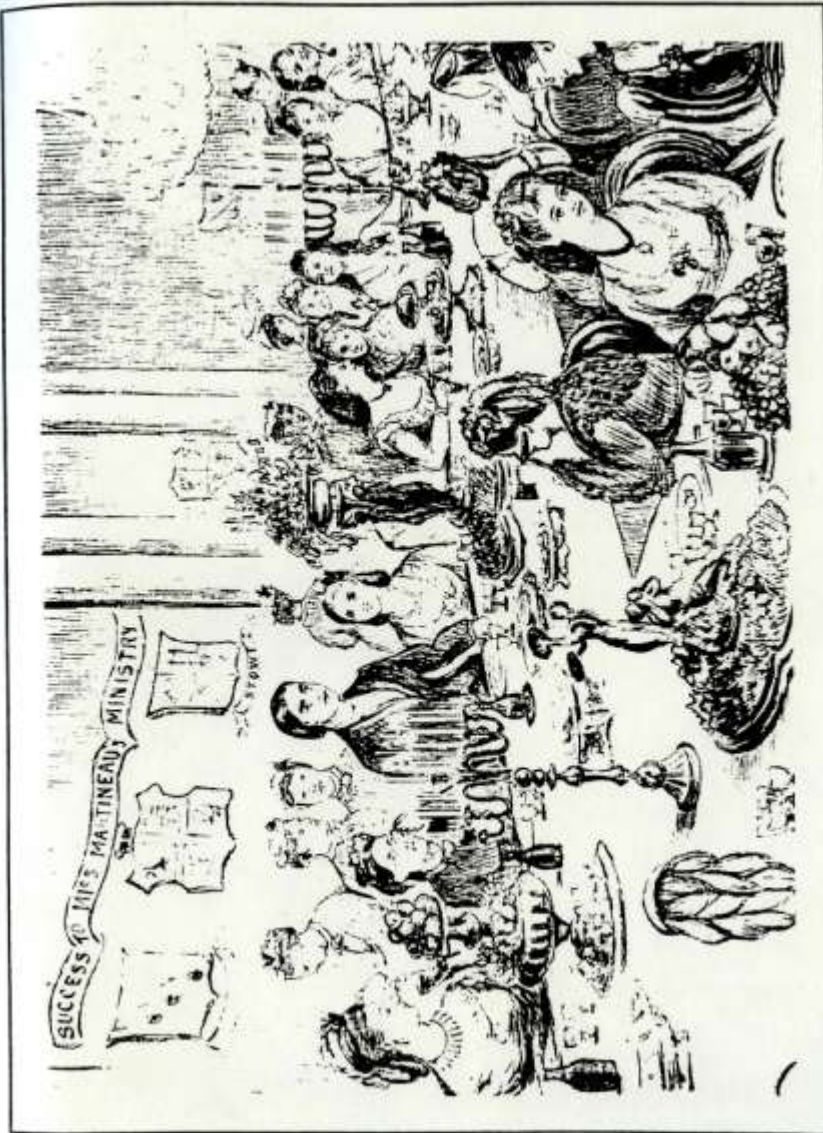
The writer of this description (1860s) used to say that she was a Sunday School teacher at the age of 11-12 (which must have been at the Octagon Chapel Sunday School in 1823). Also that she 'brought two families of her father's weavers to the chapel', - by the good practice of visiting the houses of Sunday Scholars.

From this memoir it may be deduced that James's much-advertised founding of the Sunday School was not single-handed; and indeed he was seldom in Norwich afterwards - the Centenary celebrations of the Octagon Chapel being one of the rare occasions.

HARRIET MARTINEAU ON SMALL FARMING: an extract from HOUSEHOLD WORDS Vol I (1850) p. 576 by Charles Dickens

...an agreeable account was published in a letter from Miss Martineau lately in the Morning Chronicle. It shows to what good account a knowledge of small farming may be turned. That lady having two acres of land, at Ambleside, in Westmoreland, which she wished to cultivate, sent to Mr Rackham [Master of Guiltcross Hundred Union Workhouse] to recommend her a farm servant. The man arrived, and his Guiltcross experience in cultivating small 'estates' proved of essential service. He has managed to keep two cows and a pig, besides himself and a wife, on these narrow confines; for Miss Martineau calculates that the produce in milk, butter, vegetables, &c, obtained from his skill and economy for herself and household, quite pays his wages. This is her account of him:-

' He is a man of extraordinary industry and cleverness, as well as rigid honesty. His ambition is roused; for he knows that the success of the experiment mainly depends on himself. He is living in comfort, and laying by a little money, and he looks so happy that it would truly grieve me to have to give up; though I have no doubt that he would immediately find work at good wages in the neighbourhood. His wife and he had saved enough to pay their journey hither out of Norfolk. I gave him twelve shillings a-week all the year round. His wife earns something by occasionally helping in the house, by assisting in my washing, and by taking in washing when she can get it. I built them an excellent cottage of the stone of the district, for which they pay one shilling and sixpence per week. They know that they could not get such another off the premises for five pounds a year.'



An illustration (artist unknown) from the collection of Dr Stan Speck, California
Can anyone explain what's going on - and why there are only women at this banquet?