

The Martineau Society

Newsletter No. 36

January 2015

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| President: | Prof. Ruth Watts |
| Chairperson: | Prof. John Vint |
| Secretary: | Dr. Sharon Connor |
| Minutes Secretary: | Mr. David Hamilton |
| Treasurer: | Mrs. Dee Fowles |
| Society. Administrator: | Prof. Gaby Weiner |
| Newsletter Editor: | Mr. Bruce Chilton |
| Newsletter Administrator: | Prof: Valerie Sanders |

Contents

| | Page |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <i>Editor's Note</i> | 2 |
| <i>"Harriet Martineau, Margaret Oliphant, and That Review"</i> by Valerie Sanders | 3 |
| <i>"Harriet Martineau on Proper Dress for Victorian Females"</i> by Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle | 10 |
| <i>"Harriet Martineau's Illustrations of Political Economy: Her style of writing on political economy"</i> by Keiko Funaki | 19 |
| <i>"Harriet Martineau and Erasmus Darwin: Just Good Friends"</i> by Stuart Hobday | 28 |
| <i>List of Recent New Members</i> | 34 |
| <i>Martineau Society Contact Information</i> | 34 |
| <i>Postscript</i> | 35 |

Martineau Society Subscription Information:

Yearly subscriptions are due on January 1st.

* UK: Individual members £20 // Concessionary rate £10 // Institutional membership £45. Life membership rate is £200.

* Overseas: Individual members \$37.50 // Concessionary rate \$25. This may be paid in dollars to Prof. Elisabeth Arbuckle, Condo. Montebello M526 Trujillo Alto PR00976 USA

Editor's Note

It is surprising how often one falls on references to Harriet and James Martineau in present-day newspapers and publications. That Harriet is becoming more widely known is clear. No doubt this is with the help of Ali Smith and Kate Mosse, both prominent modern writers and the first celebrities to give the annual Martineau Lectures organised by the Writers' Centre Norwich.

Harriet has popped up in *The Independent* in an article "How the provinces rebelled when a Westminster elite blocked reform of Parliament". The quote from Harriet was "... from forge and furnace, from mine and factory, from loom and plough, from the cities of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, they marched with banners" (to Birmingham in 1831 in support of the public demand for the Great Reform Act). With writing like this, it seems hardly surprising Harriet became so widely read.

James also had a recent reference in *The Guardian* last September but only as "the brother of that early social scientist, Harriet Martineau."

This edition of *The Martineau Society Newsletter* has contributions exclusively about Harriet (although your editor could not resist another postscript from one of James' works). Valerie Sanders gives us a further and fuller look at the attacks by Margaret Oliphant on Harriet and her *Autobiography* while Elisabeth Sanders introduces us to Harriet's taste in fashionable dress. Keiko Funaki's article comments on Harriet's writings on political economy and Stuart Hobday on Harriet's heydays in London of the 1830s and that relationship with Erasmus Alvey Darwin.

And some good news. The Society's new website has opened and is well worth exploring. The website address remains as www.martineausociety.co.uk. Our thanks to Gaby Weiner.

All members should by now have received an invitation to the Society's 2015

Conference at Norwich, the birthplace of the Martineaus and of the Society. The dates are Thursday 23 July to Sunday 26 July 2015 and you will find full details on the new Society website, including how to register and how to book your place at The George Hotel, Arlington Lane, Norwich, NR2 2DA.

Thanks to all contributors. The errors you will undoubtedly find are entirely those of your editor. Do enjoy the *Newsletter*.



Margaret Oliphant 1828 – 1897 Public Domain

Harriet Martineau, Margaret Oliphant, and That Review

Valerie Sanders

Some explanations first of all. Which review was *That* review? Well, it was Margaret Oliphant's scathing and angry review of *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography* in *Blackwood's Magazine* in April 1877, in which she declared:

We scarcely remember any one who has taken so much trouble to set himself right with the world - by what she described as 'a postscriptal harangue from the tomb' (Sanders 2011, p. 38).

And who was Margaret Oliphant? A prolific novelist and reviewer (1828-97), best remembered now for the Carlingford novels set in provincial dissenting communities, such as *Salem Chapel* (1863) and *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866); some critical reviews of sensation writing and an *Autobiography*, which, like Martineau's, was published posthumously (1899).

This paper will first compare the two authors as a prelude to revisiting the review so that we can reassess what it was that so much angered Oliphant, and in the process consider their autobiographies. Was it likely that Oliphant learned anything from the experience of reviewing Martineau's? Were there any connections between the ways in which both women skirted the pitfalls of going public about their private lives at a time when women's autobiography – though by then a familiar, even popular genre - still made uneasy demands on both practitioners and readers? Given too that they were a generation apart, did their experiences of being Victorian women writers – both born before Victoria became Queen – have anything in common?

Oliphant's life experiences were the complete opposite of Martineau's in many ways. She was brought up in Scotland and Liverpool. Little is known about her education, except that she was probably taught at home by her mother, and she had no surviving sisters. Unlike Martineau she enjoyed a close relationship with her mother; she was married at 24 to her cousin Frank, a stained glass window artist, with whom she had six children. Only three lived beyond babyhood, and all eventually predeceased her, as did Frank, by many years, in 1859. He died in Italy, leaving her a young pregnant widow to make her way home with two small children and a new baby. The rest of her life was spent trying to provide for her two surviving sons by constantly writing: mostly novels, but also biographies, and reviews for a number of periodicals, but especially *Blackwood's*. She was a frequent visitor to Europe, but never went to America, and she never engaged in the earnest writing on behalf of social causes which was such an important element of Martineau's career. Religiously speaking, she had been raised as a kind of Scottish Evangelical Calvinist before drifting into the Church of England, but she remained emotionally attached to the Free Church wing of the Presbyterians. Many of her best-known novels of the 1860s concern the social trials of Dissenters, but she usually characterizes them as vulgar tradesmen with uncouth manners. In her Martineau review she declares (in relation to her childhood):

Miss Martineau had the great fundamental misfortune of being brought up a Unitarian (p. 44).¹

What she means by this is that Martineau as a child had no sense of 'any mystic sanction or inherent sacredness in what she was trained to believe,' which left her prey to subsequent scepticism. In later life Oliphant's own faith was sorely tried by the deaths of her two sons, Cyril and Cecco, in their thirties, and her daughter Maggie at the age of ten. The complete unrevised text of her *Autobiography* contains several passages where she tries to make sense of their loss and speculates about where they have gone. Oliphant never lost her religious belief the way Martineau did, but she certainly questioned it, and became curious about the afterlife and the supernatural. She personalised the deaths of her sons in feeling that God had taken them away. Towards the end of her life she wrote the *Land of Darkness* (1888) and 'Little Pilgrim' stories about departed spirits going to heaven and hell.

If Oliphant so far sounds nothing like Martineau we need to consider what they did have in common. Their family configurations were perhaps not quite so different after all, as they both had rather shadowy father figures, and early broken engagements; but were devoted to brothers. Oliphant has no trouble empathising with Martineau's account of her eldest brother Thomas's death in Madeira: 'there is a touching page about his departure' (p. 45). In both cases the brotherly relationship was by no means straightforward: Oliphant's two surviving brothers Frank and Willie were unreliable and weak (not unlike Henry Martineau, perhaps, the brother we know least about). They drank and got into debt; they depended on their sister for support, and she eventually took on responsibility for educating Frank's children and launching them into careers. Like Martineau's old age, Oliphant's was supported by nieces: Frank's daughters, Madge and Denny (Janet), who were on hand to replace the two sons who predeceased her, and perhaps the death of Maria Martineau, another adult in her thirties, was the equivalent for Martineau of Cyril and Cecco's loss. Close female friendships were also important to both women, both needing to find alternatives to the traditional nuclear family for emotional support and companionship as they grew older.

There were other similarities in terms of profession. Both wrote not only because it came to them naturally, but also because they depended on it for a living. Neither, however, found her career entirely smooth-running and both changed direction, genre, publisher or journal outlet more than once as times changed. Both were young when they started writing: Oliphant's first novel, *Passages in the Life of Margaret Maitland* (1849) was published when she was only twenty-one; but like Martineau she also recognised that a more reliable income was likely to accrue from journalism. From 1854 she was writing regularly for *Blackwood's Magazine*, though she diversified frequently into other journals, and eventually - also like Martineau - into biographical writing, culminating in an autobiography of her own, published posthumously in 1899. Her reasons for writing were very different from Martineau's, however. She had no desire to tell the world of a singular life or educate her readers about the upbringing of children or the loss of religious belief. Oliphant gives no more than a brief sketch of her childhood, and begins writing in an apparently perfunctory way, as if thinking aloud, rather than embarking on a formal project. The deaths of her three children who survived babyhood prompted her to write, and those who were left were meant to be her readers. When the last child died, she wrote for the general reader:

How strange it is to me to write all this, with the effort of making light reading

of it, and putting in anecdotes that will do to quote in the papers and make the book sell!

she observes, regretting:

when I wrote it for my Cecco to read it was all very different, but now that I am doing it consciously for the public, with the aim (no evil aim) of leaving a little more money for Denny, I feel all this to be so vulgar, so common, so unnecessary, as if I were making pennyworths of myself. Well, but if it does make poor Denny more comfortable and independent, what does it matter? ²

Oliphant's five biographies were of men, now largely forgotten, including her distant relative Laurence Oliphant, eccentric and traveller, and the Carlyles' friend, charismatic preacher Edward Irving. She was never exactly a travel writer, but put foreign trips to good use by incorporating her observations in short books and articles. Though her visit to Palestine and Egypt for two months in 1890 was nothing like as extensive as Martineau's, it produced the inevitable book: *Jerusalem: Its History and Hope* (1891). Both authors in fact dedicated their lives to a continuous written response to their experiences. No experience seems to have been wasted on either of them.

So what did they think of one another? Neither Elisabeth Arbuckle's nor Deborah Logan's collections of Martineau letters makes any mention of Oliphant, but Oliphant was by no means so reticent as Martineau, as we see from her correspondence relating to the Martineau *Autobiography* article of 1877. This correspondence was with her publisher, John Blackwood, to whom she proposed an article for *Blackwood's Magazine*. Oliphant set out with a negative view of the *Autobiography* and indeed of Martineau's overall achievement as a celebrated author: 'How such a common-place mind could have attained the literary position she did fills me with amazement,' she told Blackwood in March 1877. 'Why – how – did Miss Martineau get such a reputation?' she continued in another letter.³ 'There is nothing so puzzling.'

John Blackwood's unpublished correspondence with Oliphant is even more outspoken about Martineau:

Do not review her for me unless you are prepared to be very distinct on her defects,

he urged in March 1877, adding that

There is something very horrid in this writing of ill natured autobiographies for posterity...She has hardly a good word to say for any body except her own abject worshippers. ⁴

Among these was Maria Weston Chapman, editor of the much-maligned third volume of the *Autobiography*, whom Blackwood dismissed as

an awful woman. It will generally be considered a misfortune that poor Miss Martineau's remains should have fallen into such hands but on the other hand the clumsy vulgar yankee serves as a foil to her heroine.⁵

Blackwood was a close friend of Oliphant's as well as her publisher, so his strongly-held opinions are likely to have influenced her own in the writing of this review. The state of total disbelief about Martineau's success is clearly another key factor driving

Oliphant's withering dismissal of the *Autobiography* as she exposes both the apparent egotism of her subject, and the dullness of the *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-4) which propelled her into the kind of blazing limelight Oliphant never enjoyed in her own equally lengthy and hardworking career. There are many carping allusions in this piece to vanished heights of celebrity unattainable by today's writers, exposing Oliphant's underlying jealousy and envy of a bygone culture which somehow provided the conditions for such unlikely success stories. What she says in her letters is echoed in what she says in the review: she can neither understand how such dull stories as the *Illustrations* caused such a sensation, nor how someone like Martineau could have become such a celebrity:

All these great things are as completely over and gone as if they had happened in the ninth instead of the nineteenth century. We receive the narrative, both of the glory and the opposition, with a certain respectful awe, yet with a sigh of envy (p. 51).

Although Oliphant was a prolific and in many ways a successful author, she never achieved the momentous breakthrough of the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, which even Martineau herself found hard to credit. Oliphant's was more a steady kind of unremarkable success, and though some of her novels and reviews have won a lasting reputation and are still cited today (for instance her comments on the 'sensation' novel, and John Cross's biography of George Eliot), there was no one moment of exceptional acclaim. Her disbelief in Martineau's worthiness prefigures the envy she felt of Eliot eight years later, when she struggled to reconcile the author's reputation for intellectual and philosophical insights with the provincial blandness of her letters, her shocking personal life and her loss of religious belief. One of Oliphant's best characteristics as a reviewer is her command of pithy dismissals of great works and their authors. She declares in her 1885 review for the *Edinburgh Review* (for which Martineau also wrote occasionally):

The biography of George Eliot as here given is a gigantic silhouette, showing how her figure rose against a dull background. Background and figure are alike dull.⁶

Oliphant's next target in the Martineau *Autobiography* is her representation of the family. '[T]hese good Martineaus seem very kindly sort of people,' Oliphant decides as she reads through Harriet's stormy childhood:

caressing their sulky little Harriet out of her troubles, and taking her complaints of their partiality with much greater patience than many parents would have done (p. 41).

So far as Oliphant is concerned, the Martineau parents did their best for their children, and she is especially pained by the portrayal of her mother. This is not just because of Oliphant's attachment to her own mother, whom she remembers in her own *Autobiography* as her 'all in all' (Jay 1990, p. 20), while she herself was 'a kind of idol to her from my birth'. Oliphant feels Martineau's treatment of her mother goes against 'good taste, as well as against all family loyalty' (p. 42). As for Maria Weston Chapman, her interventions as editor make the case even worse, adding 'her own rude daub of the domineering mother' (p. 42). Oliphant sees denigration of close family members as a characteristic of the times, but nonetheless inexcusable:

We can forgive Miss Martineau many chapters in her life which evoked public criticism, sooner than we can forgive her this unfavourable representation and

exposure of her home (p. 43).

It is not only Martineau's family who are represented unfavourably, however. Oliphant's next grudge against the book is her response to the famous people of the day, from the Queen downwards. There is scarcely anybody, she notes, 'who does not get a stab' (p. 55): 'Wordsworth is represented as a pottering and shabby old man; and so on' (p. 55). What Oliphant found hard to accept here was Martineau's preservation of spiteful opinions for so many years, locked away in a drawer. It was hardly compatible with her notion of Martineau as 'a really sensible and not rancorous woman' (p. 55). The final twist of her odd life, in Oliphant's view, was her servile devotion to Henry Atkinson: 'Never was a more unlovely spectacle' (p. 57). Ultimately, however, Oliphant decides, as she closes her article, that Martineau was:

more affectionate to those who depended upon and were subject to her, than to those who were independent and liked their own way (p. 59).

Whatever else we may think of this article, it certainly engaged Oliphant emotionally as well as critically. Martineau was one of those authors, like George Eliot, who forced her to think about what it meant to be a successful woman writer in the nineteenth century, and the extent to which she herself conformed to this notion. Writing about Martineau helped Oliphant to define her own values, and if we read the article differently – inside out as it were – it reveals a very different Harriet Martineau: one Oliphant was happy to admire. One of the words she most often uses about her or her writing is 'sensible'. Thus the *History of the Peace* is 'sober and sensible' (p. 58), and in her closing paragraph she declares: 'She was a very sensible woman' (p. 59).

Oliphant also admired the *Biographical Sketches* and Martineau's own obituary for the *Daily News*, and she enjoys the 'pretty' family scenes of the *Autobiography*, as when Harriet's eldest brother Thomas gave her writing his blessing, or when she dragged baby James from his cot to see the sunrise. The story of her efforts to find a publisher for the *Illustrations* is also, for her reviewer, much more moving than anything in the political economy tales themselves: (p. 50). The Martineau who liked sewing and babies and wrote *Feats on the Fjord* ('the only one of her productions which specially deserves to live', p. 54) is the Martineau Oliphant prefers, and creates for herself as a reverse image cut from the *Autobiography* she critically reviewed. The result is a character not unlike one of Oliphant's own 'stout-hearted,' ironically-drawn heroines, such as Lucilla Marjoribanks or Phoebe Junior, who fight for what they want, at whatever cost to their popularity.

Oliphant was by no means alone in disliking the tone of Martineau's *Autobiography*. George Eliot, who had looked forward to reading the 'younger and less renowned' period of Martineau's life, thought the rest unseemly and inappropriate. 'But assuredly,' she told John Blackwood, 'I shall not write such things down to be published after my death.'⁷ On the other hand, though most of the other reviews which came out around the same time as Oliphant's were more or less critical, they tended to be less virulent. G.A. Simcox, writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, for example, allowed that the *Autobiography* 'contains a most unsparing revelation of a most unattractive nature,' but also acknowledged its picture of 'diligent, unflinching heroism';⁸ while John Morley, in *Macmillan's Magazine* balances her 'hardness, arbitrariness, and insularity' against her lasting value as 'a singular and worthy figure' of her generation.⁹ It may be no coincidence that most of Martineau's reviewers

were men, who sounded less personally offended by her harshness than Oliphant was. There is something uniquely subjective about this review which suggests that it struck a raw nerve, most probably about the position of women writers in the Victorian marketplace, combined with Oliphant's own struggles for recognition.

Perhaps what rankled most with Oliphant is that Martineau appears to take herself too seriously as someone whose writing and opinions made a difference in the world. There is an incredulous or ironic tone to much of this review which tries repeatedly to puncture Martineau's overblown self-esteem, as it seems to her. Whether or not it had any direct influence on Oliphant's own life-writing is difficult to prove. She read and reviewed numerous autobiographies in the course of her career, and had been - like Martineau - toying with an autobiography of her own for many years, starting as early as 1849 when she was only twenty-one. This argues that she too must have thought her life worth recording and recounting to others, despite (or because of) the disclaimer in 1885: 'I am in very little danger of having my life written' (Jay 1990, p. 17). She wonders:

[W]hat could be said of me? I acknowledge frankly that there is nothing in me – a fat, little, commonplace woman, rather tongue-tied – to impress any one; and yet there is a sort of whimsical injury in it which makes me sorry for myself.

Perhaps that phrase 'whimsical injury' helps us to understand the tone of her Martineau review. The Martineau who appeals to her is the heroic struggler, not the complacent celebrity; and if Oliphant chose to tell her own story as the disjointed narrative of a woman whose private life was full of tragedies and disappointments, it was perhaps because she had recoiled from a woman's life which too openly flaunted its public achievements.

¹ M. Oliphant], 'Harriet Martineau,' *Blackwood's Magazine* 121 (April 1877), pp. 472-96. Reprinted in *The Selected Works of Margaret Oliphant* Vol. 3 (ed) Valerie Sanders (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011). Page references are to this edition.

² *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*. Ed. Elisabeth Jay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 95.

³ These letters are found in Mrs Harry Coghill's edition of Oliphant's *Autobiography* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1899), p. 263.

⁴ Blackwood's 'Letter Book' for May 1874-March 1877, National Library of Scotland, p. 561.

⁵ 'Letter Book' for March 1877-January 1879, p. 5.

⁶ Sanders (ed.) Oliphant *Selected Works* (2011), p. 430.

⁷ George Eliot *Letters* ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), VI, 311; 251.

⁸ G.A. Simcox, 'Miss Martineau,' *Fortnightly Review* 21 (April 1877) p.516.

⁹ John Morley, ' Harriet Martineau,' *Macmillan's Magazine* 36 (May 1877),pp. 47-60.

Harriet Martineau on Proper Dress for Victorian Females

Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle

Feminist Alison Lurie has noted that early nineteenth-century Romantic simplicity in stylish women's clothing morphed into more decorative styles at the same time as the changing *poetic* modes altered from Wordsworth and Coleridge to Byron, Shelley and Keats. During the latter period, "skirts and sleeves grew fuller; ruffles, trimmings and bows appeared; and young women began to look like walking boudoir lamps." For Harriet Martineau at eighteen the ideal was an "elaborately trimmed childish female, immature in both mind and body."¹

Fashion expert C. W. Cunnington in his book *The Perfect Lady* connects changes in nineteenth-century women's fashions beginning with Waterloo to a more definite socio-economic pattern. He describes an "ascent," "summit," and "decline" related to the rise of middleclass power, especially after the Reform Bill of 1832. No longer were aristocratic ladies the only slaves of fashion, but "womenfolk of the prosperous *bourgeoisie*" now claimed that honor and henceforth "the art of costume had to cater for less exclusive tastes." In place of eccentric extravagance "a sedate respectability [became] the note of the new gentility."²

Cunnington maintains that the first stage of the perfect lady's rise ended in 1851, "the year of...The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in London, otherwise known as the Crystal Palace." The structure itself, a daring break with *architectural* tradition, was accompanied by the "summit" of "the perfect lady's" reign, which lasted until about 1880 and was followed by the "decline," which lasted until World War I. For Harriet Martineau's sake we'll consider only the first two periods as reflected in women's fashions. What were their characteristics?

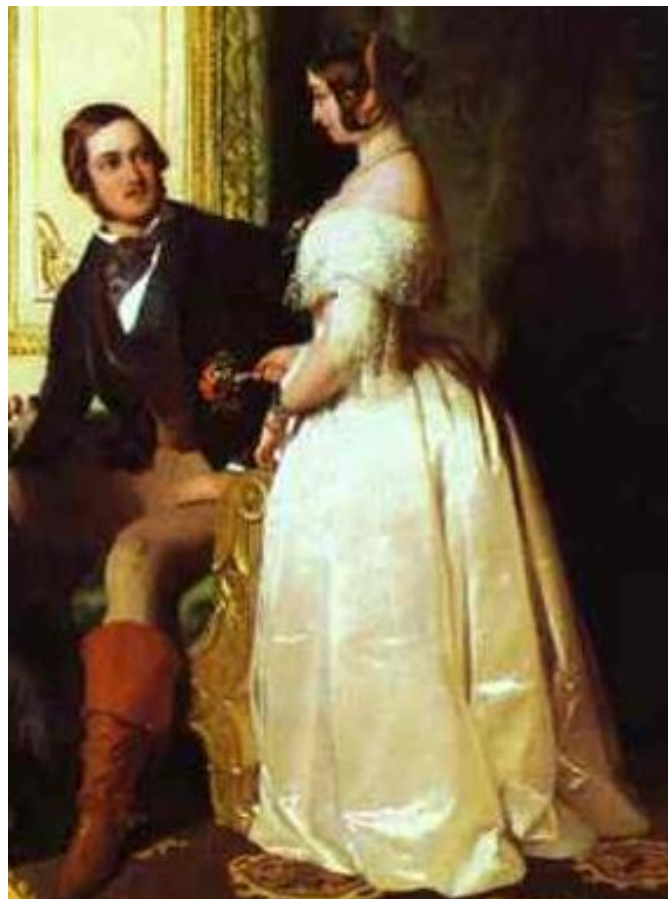
Cunnington calls the nineteenth "the great feminine century" in English history when the Englishwoman developed more profoundly in her outlook and in her influence on her world than she had in the preceding thousand years [and] the Perfect Lady . . . dominated that epoch, humanizing it and leaving a permanent mark on the social structure.

To accomplish the task of setting a standard, the lady must "act" by adopting a series of poses until by training she ceased to be aware that they were unnatural. Her fashion of clothing was as artificial as art could make it: utility, comfort and convenience... did not count in her estimation. The mental poise, the physical pose ... were what mattered.

Although a lady might select her clothes to be noticed by the opposite sex, "mere

sexual attraction was not enough.” The “perfect lady” had to win a husband and *then* to impress her importance on those around her. How did Harriet Martineau respond to this pattern?

In the Regency years of Martineau’s late adolescence, women’s magazines published monthly articles on fashion that allowed young ladies of modest means to produce muslin copies of the latest Paris and London gowns. Guides to etiquette and genteel behavior also began to appear - crucial for upwardly mobile daughters of tradesmen and artisans. Fashions took an alarming turn for moralists, however, as dresses with deeply plunging necklines were worn over scantier underclothes. “Some wear no more than a single garment over their chemise,” a contemporary critic noted, “if they wear one! - but that is often dubious.” Commentators predicted that if young women so insufficiently dressed ventured into the evening air, *disease* and *early death* were sure to follow.



Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort 1842
Windsor Modern Times Licensed

Her dress shows the fashionable silhouette, with its pointed waist, sloping shoulder, and bell-shaped skirt.

When the Victorian period started in earnest in the 1830s, skirts expanded, necks became more covered and sleeves grew enormous. The waist, with a considerable bustle at the back to set off the shape, was as small as hard pulling could strain the stays embracing it. How widespread this fashion had become by the end of the 1820s may be gathered from the letter of a tradesman whose daughter had put on ladylike clothes for the first time. When she ventured to stoop, the tradesman reported:

Her stays gave way with a tremendous explosion and she fell to the ground. I thought she had snapped in two.

From the 1850s onwards, an endless variety of flounces, flowing sleeves, jackets and such additions became stylish. Most distinctive of women's advancing social status, however, were their ever-widening skirts. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837 she was girlish and slender, with sloping shoulders and a demurely drooping head. Her maturing figure, helped along by the birth of eight children, steadily affected changes of fashion to heavier skirts, longer corsets, bulky shawls and mounds of hair piled on either side of a middle part to balance huge blousy sleeves. In spite of its obvious ill effect on breathing, tight lacing was said to be a protection for weak female back muscles. Then in 1856 the "crinoline" arrived in England from the stylish court of the Empress Eugénie of France. Originally simply a stiff horsehair petticoat, the crinoline quickly developed into a cage-like contraption with whalebone strips and sometimes steel hoops sewn into it. Within three years, cheap copies of crinolines were selling in Britain at the rate of half a million a week. At the same time shorter and tighter gloves were worn, and hats with feathers, instead of bonnets--also copied from France.

As English national prosperity built largely on middleclass enterprise inspired complacency, women began to call for female emancipation. This new trend confused the image of the wife and mother flouncing her skirts defensively about her. Meanwhile Martineau (now a professional woman whose editors usually trusted her judgment) spoke out in favor of clothing reforms of all kinds. Common sense and practicality were her by-words. Having shared a cabin with eight women for her six-weeks' sailing voyage to America in the early 1830s, she recorded:

My things were packed so as to occasion the least possible trouble to myself and the people on board. . . . A carpet-bag and bandbox [contained everything] necessary for a month's voyage.

Martineau's basic shipboard costume was a black silk dress, too old to matter if spoiled.

Warm clothing was also essential, and no amount of cloaks, furs, and woolen over-shoes can be [too much] for the first and last days of a voyage.³

Furthermore, everything on shipboard was bound to be damp and clammy, so ladies should "wear gloves constantly."

For her head Martineau was furnished with

a black silk cap, well-wadded, which no lady should go to sea without.

She began each day at sea with a sponge bath in sea water, then a brisk rub-down with a horsehair glove brought for the purpose. After breakfast she went on deck to

read or watch birds and sea creatures, her feet wrapped in an extra cloak. As the ship approached New York after six weeks at sea, passengers had their steerage trunks brought to their cabins. “You should see how faded and even rotten our dresses look,” Martineau noted in her shipboard journal.

Yet it would have been a piece of extravagance, which none but silly people are guilty of, to dress well at sea, where the incessant damp and salt ruin all fabrics and colors. Silks fade; and cottons cannot be washed; stuffs shrink and curl. Dark prints perhaps look neat the longest.

As she opened her steerage trunk, Martineau commented, “O, with what pleasure I took out gown, shawl, bonnet and gloves.” For two years’ travel, a second dark silk dress presumably served as her main costume, its deep pockets sometimes holding additional collars, scarves, comb and even satin shoes for evening wear.⁴



Princess Eugenie of France 1826 – 1920 Wikipedia

In Washington, D. C., Martineau was invited to an evening party by society

Hostess Margaret Bayard Smith. To Smith's surprise, Martineau and her companion Louisa Jeffrey arrived early and asked to be shown upstairs. Soon they appeared with decorative items added to their walking dresses like the satin slippers they had carried in their pockets.⁵

A decade later when Martineau was invited to tour Egypt and the Holy Lands she again packed with foresight. In addition to a special bug-proof sleeping sack she took white linen and cotton underclothing, *several pairs* of stout boots, a large floppy hat (rather than a bonnet) and wire mesh sun goggles. To prevent chills while traveling on the Nile, flat irons had been recommended to iron linens dry. The process puzzled the boatmen, who had never seen flat irons but decided the English ladies were burning evil spirits out of their clothes and nodded approval. When the party planned to ride on camel back across the desert to the Holy Lands, Martineau procured "the biggest saddle bags she could find" but was careful to record that she packed no "finery [or] delicate articles of dress or use."⁶

In her letters and later journalism, Martineau offered various kinds of practical advice on women's clothing. Three articles that appeared after she had become an invalid for the second time in 1855 illustrate this feminist interest. In that year she reported the efforts of founder of the Salvation Army William Booth to help ignorant working women. First she surveyed the "improved" state of society in England since Regency days, when

a low condition of literature and art co-existed with a licentious drama and tipsy Parliament. Hoops and hair-powder were contemporary with gaming . . . highway robbery, and barbarism.

Dr. Booth was not only teaching cooking and sewing, Martineau reported, but good health habits. With anatomical plates as visual aids he showed women the dangers of stays and tight lacing.⁷

As Martineau's movements became more restricted from the effects of her tumor, she seemed to grow more strident about extremes in women's clothing. The titles of three of her articles suggest her tone: "Dress and Its Victims," "A Real Social Evil" (inspired by the accidental death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's young wife when her starched dress caught fire) and "A New Kind of Wilful Murder" describing the danger of crinolines being caught in factory machinery or catching fire.⁸

As we shall note, Martineau's tirades against crinolines fed into her warnings against the evil intentions of Napoleon III, Emperor of France.

In the same year that crinolines came to England from France (1856), Martineau penned a scathing editorial on upper-class women's clothing in which she assailed the women's thoughtlessness towards working-class seamstresses who made the clothes.

Never was there a time within the memory of the present generation when the human form was so overlaid, obscured, and deformed by dress as at present,

she began. Moreover, the cost of the new styles -- not only in the quality of the silks

from which they were made but in the quantity of “flouncings and furbelows” -- could prove ruinous to unsuspecting husbands and fathers. Furthermore, the current fashion dictating tiny hats or caps that sat on top of hair piled on the back of the head were a menace to health. In comparison to the most illiberal costumes Martineau could think of, those of veiled Orientals, she railed that:

instead of covering their faces with Oriental consistency, the English and French ladies actually present to view, not only their faces, but their heads up to the crown [incurring] a heavy retribution of future suffering.

Every fashion in dress had its martyrs, she went on:

The abominable powder and paint of a century ago killed more persons by the common effect of dirt than the state of science at the time [admitted]. The disease and death which have been caused by tight lacing nobody now disputes. When the ladies passed suddenly from tight sleeves to very large ones, not a few died or were disfigured by burns from the balloons on their arms catching fire. At present, the form of retribution is rheumatism, tic-douloureux, and every form of cold.

But who was to blame for these outrageous fashions?

We take this mischievous - almost fatal - extravagance in female dress to be one of continental despotism. All forms of fantastic luxury everywhere... In Russia, in Austria, in Naples, and in Rome, and we must now add in Paris, it is precisely so.

The Empress Eugénie was the foremost culprit. She and her hated husband like other tyrants loved subjects “deeply immersed in amusement, and . . . bent on fashionable extravagance.” Moreover, the vast expenditure of the court at Paris contrasted starkly with “the underfed condition of millions of the people in the provinces.” Triumphantly Martineau draws the moral.

Should free England where all interests of life lie open to all men and all women... condescend to mimic this barbarism of less happy countries?

Combining a hatred of tyranny with humanitarian zeal, Martineau capped her anger at Continental fashions with social concern. English ladies might know, if they would inquire and consider,

that extravagance, and consequent prodigious changes in fashions are ruinous to the dressmaking class [who can not] vary their charges in any fair proportion to the changes in fashion.⁹

A slightly humorous incident in 1863 reveals Martineau personally confronting the phenomenon of a crinoline. No doubt through a neighbor she invited a “Miss Dobson” to tea, which proved “rather an event to me, - it is so long since I had seen a specimen of the young lady class.” The girl had “evidently been made much of,--is considered something superlative by her parents, - in which conclusion she dutifully acquiesces.” She came, Martineau went on, “in a skirt which really frightened me,” and before Maria (her faithful niece companion) could introduce her, “she had to fly to the fender to snatch the girl’s dress from the bars!” When the girl got up to look at something, Martineau noticed that her dress “extended very nearly half the width of the room.” The girl was “rather pretty, very confident and ready, and - ignorant beyond all I had supposed possible.” After being lectured, the girl surprised

Martineau by agreeing to come again, which, Martineau concluded philosophically, “speaks well for her temper.”¹⁰

Less frequently, Martineau commented on clothes for working women. Yet during the “cotton famine” suffered by English factories in Lancashire and Yorkshire at the time of the American Civil War, she enthusiastically deployed her pen and her purse in support of free sewing as well as cooking schools for female operatives thrown out of work. In addition to soliciting donations for the schools, she sent Maria to buy cloth which was cut into garment lengths with the help of the maids. Martineau’s young neighbor Fan Arnold (Matthew Arnold’s sister) then bundled and ticketed the lengths and they were sent to schools where they would be sewn and worn or sold by the “workies.”

Surprisingly, Martineau’s letters to friends about clothes could reveal a slightly different side of her authoritarian, philanthropic self. In an early letter to the seven-year-old daughter of a Scottish friend, she thanked Spring for a “nicely hummed” cambric handkerchief which she would use to cover her fancy work. As years passed, Spring Brown (the young girl) repeatedly sent Martineau gifts of clothing like double-knit gloves, black worsted stockings, a knitted (wool?) chemise and a jacket that “fits like a skin.”¹¹ Such gifts were warm and body hugging, and Martineau responded to them as tokens of physical affection.

I began by suggesting that fashionable women’s clothing carried non-verbal messages, as in the early Romantic reaction against sophisticated eighteenth-century artificiality. This childlike pose lasted until the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Yet once national virtue was vindicated, English men and women seemed to feel free to indulge in ornamentation. The expansion in size of a woman’s costume as the century progressed has been linked to her growing sense of social importance. Middle-class propriety (along with a demand for equality of dress with the aristocracy) may have encouraged strangely bulging parts of the costume that covered up (and yet dramatized) sexuality. The rage for huge bustles, hips emphasized by corsets and breasts by fussy collars - all created with lavish use of cloth and paddings - demonstrated that by the 1850s the middle class had succumbed to the lure of European extravagance. Of such fashions Martineau took a dim view. She relished, for instance, Florence Nightingale’s 1859 *Notes on Nursing* that censured nurses for wearing scratchy-sounding crinolines. Martineau’s voice in her journalism thus seemed always to demonstrate good sense about women’s clothing. Yet as Martineau aged she appeared increasingly *anxious* about female self-display.

We might ask whether clothes and the attitudes towards clothes can help us to read the inner lives of the people who wore them or, like Martineau, often censured the latest fashions. A late photograph of Harriet Martineau reveals an overdressed elderly lady doing fancywork, leaving no doubt that she had succumbed to a wealth of the fashionable details she so derided. Until two weeks before her death, while suffering the effects of her tumor and frequent “head attacks” and barely able to respond to members of her household, she dressed and came downstairs (backwards!) every day. Clothes surely signified respectability and competence as head of her household. Martineau - despite all of her passionate objections - seems to have *accepted* what fashion decreed a Victorian lady should wear.

- ¹ Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Random House, 1981) 62.
- ² Cecil Willett Cunnington, *The Perfect Lady* (New York (Chanticleer Press, 1948) 2-10 (unless otherwise noted, quotations that follow are from Cunnington).
- ³ "A Month At Sea" [Appendix B], *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography. With Memorials by Maria Weston Chapman* (London: Smith, Elder, 1877) 2: [466-98] 467.
- ⁴ *Retrospect of Western Travel* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838) 1: 8.
- ⁵ Margaret Bayard Smith, *Forty Years of Washington Society*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), 359-69.
- ⁶ Harriet Martineau, "Leaving Cairo," *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (London: Moxon, 1847) 2: 190.
- ⁷ *Daily News*, 26 November 1855 (see *Harriet Martineau in the London "Daily News": Selected Contributions, 1852-1866*, ed. Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (New York: Garland, 1994) henceforth HM/DN).
- ⁸ "Dress and Its Victims," *Once A Week* 1 (5 November 1859): 387-91; "A REAL SOCIAL EVIL," *Daily News*, 15 October 1861 (see HM/DN); "A New Kind of Wilful Murder" [signed From the Mountain], *Once A Week* 8 (3 January 1863): 36-39.
- ⁹ *Daily News*, 17 June 1856 (see HM/DN).
- ¹⁰ Harriet Martineau to Fanny Wedgwood, 8 November 1863, *Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood*, ed. Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP) 239-43.
- ¹¹ Harriet Martineau to Isabella Spring Brown, 22 October 1857, 24 December 1871, 19 November 1873 and Christmas Day 1874, *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, ed. Deborah Anna Logan (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007) 4: 43-44 and 5: 308, 324-25 and 338.



Harriet Martineau by Richard Evans Wikipedia

Harriet Martineau's Illustrations of Political Economy: Her style of writing on political economy

Keiko Funaki

1. The purpose of this paper

This paper discusses issues related to the meaning of Harriet Martineau's political economy. I am concerned here with the different attitudes of Harriet Martineau and James Mill regarding political economy. There is a striking contrast in their attitudes. This paper focuses on the early stages of Harriet Martineau's economic thought.

I compare James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy* with No. 25 of Martineau's series of *Illustrations of Political Economy*, titled "The Moral of Many Fables." I describe how the ways in which she promoted her ideas about political economy which differed from those of James Mill. Also, I examine John Stuart Mill's attitude toward political economy. He was James Mill's eldest son and reviewed Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*. Even if Mill was influenced by his father's special approach to education, his attitude toward political economy was very different from his father's. The first thing we notice is that J. S. Mill's Martineau review criticizes earlier economists, including his father James Mill.

2. Harriet Martineau's political economy in the early 19th century

Orazem (1999) says that there is little research on economic thought during the period around 1830, the time of Martineau's work. She quotes Martineau biographer Austin Robinson, who states the question that has so far remained unanswered (Orazem, 1999, p.21). "How did the "little deaf girl from Norwich," as Lord Brougham called her, become famous overnight?" That is the real problem of Harriet Martineau and that is a mystery which none of her biographers, least of all the present, has succeeded in answering.

Orazem considers research on Martineau's early economic thought to be insufficient. I have the same view. Also, we need to compare Martineau's approach to political economy with that of James Mill. Previously, researchers working in various fields have analyzed Martineau's approach. This includes not only political economy, but also literature, history, philosophy, and theology. Orazem as well has compared Martineau with Robert Southey and Thomas Carlyle, who also wrote during the early period of industrialization. However, these critiques of Martineau's political economy are based on literary and medieval ideas. The question is how to grasp these writers' theories of political economy. What is important is to draw comparisons with textbooks on political economy. As a result, a good place to start is with a comparison of Martineau's *The Moral of Many Fables* and James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*.

Harriet Martineau was a widely known writer and journalist in the 19th century. She was especially famous for her pioneering travel journalism. From her *Illustrations*, we get a glimpse of this. The first fable, *Life in the Wilds*, is an admirable story. In 1830, the colonization of South Africa cannot have attracted a great deal of attention. Also, readers were probably surprised by the fable, in which British people remake their community after an attack by Bushmen. The British society is

civilized by Bushmen society. Readers were surprised at Martineau's unusual way of thinking, and became interested in the story. She uses the story to illustrate the accumulation of social capital. This type of illustration is likely unique to Martineau and not employed by other economists.

Martineau's most commercially successful work was *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34). It is well known that this was a pioneering series of economic stories. This series is a general interest text about political economy, to which is attached a summary of economic theory. The series became a best seller. This indicates that the series attracted the attention of a lot of people, and that political economy was popularized by Martineau's work, so in a sense her work pioneered the study of economics.

I will now focus on the issue at hand. Mark Blaug (1958) places Martineau in the Ricardian School. He criticizes a chapter of her tales in his book "Ricardian Economics". However, I think his critique is inadequate because he claims that Harriet Martineau is a member of the Ricardian school but does not offer clear reasons to support his claim. His discussion is short and rather negative. He claims that Martineau did not read David Ricardo but does not provide any evidence.¹ Martineau expressed typical classical economic theory, so we can surmise that she was of the Ricardian school. However, in order to identify the sources Martineau used for her stories, we have to investigate her economic thought in more detail.

Firstly I describe the features of Martineau's summary and how her economic thought is represented in the final fable, No. 25, *The Moral of Many Fables*. Actually, No. 25, which is the last of the series, is not a fable. Instead, it presents her theory of political economy and thus is the only essay in the series. This essay clearly explains the economic principles that Martineau has illustrated in the preceding 24 fables, as well as her theory of economics. When John Stuart Mill wrote his review of the *Illustrations*, he did not touch on the content of the fables, but dealt only with this final essay. Perhaps J. S. Mill and Mark Blaug, because they were economists, were able to deal with only this final essay. It may be difficult to read her literary work directly for its implications for political economy. However, I would like to clarify this through a comparison of the *Illustrations* with the economic theory of James Mill.²

3. The style of Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*

The first story in the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, *Life in the Wilds*, was published in February of 1832. Each volume consists of two or three fables, followed by a summary. However, in the first volume, in order to clarify the purpose of the summaries, Martineau placed the summary before the fable. The summary of *Life in the Wilds* begins with an analysis of wealth. This style of composition is the same as T. R. Malthus's *Principles of Political Economy* (1820), which also begins with a statement on wealth. Martineau explains that wealth actually consists of commodities. Next, she explains that wealth is created through nature and labor. However, since nature is inexhaustible, she claims that labor is the most important element of wealth. Martineau also argues that the quality of labor promotes the formation of wealth. She assumes that nature is inexhaustible, and that there is a limited supply of labor. In this first fable, she asserts that human knowledge will

conquer the limits of human labor. Also, she assumes that there is no limit to human knowledge. Although human knowledge is an unproductive form of labor, she claims that it is useful to the productive power of labor as a social force.

Martineau says that there are lots of different kinds of occupations. The examples she gives are various, and she states that lots of unproductive workers are useful for the progress of society. She emphasizes that all labor, including unproductive labor, is equally important. Martineau gives examples of different kinds of work: hand work, head work, and heart work. She describes three laws that increase the efficiency of labor, which are from Adam Smith's theory of the division of labor. This theory contains laws of labor like the following:

1. Man does best what he is used to doing every day.
2. Man does most quickly what he can do with sufficient perseverance.
3. The division of labor saves working time.

After explaining the division of labor, Martineau adds the following theory of machines:

1. Machines make labor easier.
2. Machines shorten working hours and free people from hard work.

She asserts that using machines gives workers leisure time, and describes the division of labor as: "Many hands make quick work."

The theme of the second fable, *Hill and Valley*, is capital. In the first fable, which emphasizes the division of labor, Martineau states clearly that the source of capital is labor. In the second fable, she emphasizes savings. This is an important factor in the accumulation of capital. She argues that the system of society supports productive labor, which brings about the growth of capital.

The third fable, *Brook and Brook Farm*, also deals with capital. As we read, we understand Martineau's illustration of the accumulation of capital and her portrayals of labor. Martineau says a large amount of capital is better than a small amount, but also there are no views that capital cannot be found. If we have a particular view of capital, we will find it easily. Martineau illustrates the resulting circumstances in her first fable, *Life in the Wilds*.

Martineau attaches great importance to society. As a result, in her theory, some concept of society, however simple, is always included. This is a feature of her writing. Thus, there is a community in the premise of the division of labor theory. People in society cooperate with each other, but through simple labor. The fields are tilled, and there can be little combination of tillage on a small scale where different kinds of work have to succeed each other.

We can surely recognize that this story is based on political economy. Martineau included several stories on social issues in the *Illustrations*. Martineau said that she had been inspired by reading a textbook for girls, Mrs. Marcett's *Conversations on*

Political Economy (1816) (Autobiography, Vol. 1, p. 138).

In the autumn of 1827, Martineau took up the book by Marcett that her younger sister had borrowed from a neighbor, and became fascinated with it. She realized that her stories had already illustrated the scientific principles that she found in the book, and that working class issues and stories dealing with the struggle for wages, like *The Rioters*, which were based on incidents she had written about, were based on these principles.³ She decided that she wanted to express her ideas not through didactic educational stories like those that had been written up to that time, but scientific ones. She had not yet encountered the new science of political economy. When she got the chance to publish her ideas, her publishers revealed her project to James Mill, who was a famous economist at the time. The publishers received an answer from him that her project was unacceptable. The publishers considered the plan was not based on business, and wanted to turn the project into an educational and didactic series for profit. Martineau refused. Her intention was to use economic facts in her stories.

It was because of this demand of her publishers that Martineau refers to most of the stories in *the Illustrations* as “fables.” However, they are also lengthy literary works, and the series became a best seller. Her thought encompasses the principles of the whole field of political economy. In Martineau’s work, social life is treated as a field of natural science. Students of all kinds of physical science who read this series wanted to illustrate various aspects of social life as a result. Before *Illustrations*, Martineau had been writing didactic works for a long time, as well as a number of books on morality. However, *Illustrations* does not consist of didactic fables because it has more scientific and theoretical content. If it had consisted of didactic fables, the series would not have become a best seller. Martineau had continued to write didactic fables for a long time for a living and while doing this realized that she had affirmed the principles of political economy.

Martineau believed that one should use theory to improve society, specifically, the rules of political economy. Political economy at that time belonged to only a few intellectuals. Martineau was certain that she could make people in general understand political economy which previously only a small number of intellectuals like James Mill, David Ricardo, and T. H. Malthus had understood.

4. *The Moral of Many Fables and Mill’s Elements of Political Economy*

In Harriet Martineau’s *Illustrations of Political Economy*, the final essay, No. 25, is not a fable. She had described economic theory over the course of a lot of the fables. The series focuses not only on the political economy of those days, but the stories also explain how to connect society with economic theory through a short summary in each volume. In this way, readers can understand the outlines of economic theory. The series is a popularization of political economy for the people.

In this section, I analyze the final essay which describes Martineau’s theory of political economy. The essay is about 100 pages long and seems to intermingle economic theory with Martineau’s moral observations. Also, the essay is perhaps insufficient as a text on economics. Nonetheless, the new science described there foresees the present age. Martineau takes a sweeping view of production and

emphasizes a future in which political economy reigns as the new science.

The theme of each volume of the series is as follows. The first volume begins with an analysis of wealth which follows Malthus's principle. The second volume is on Ricardo's land rent theory. Martineau, who was not unaware of political economy at the time, turns the story of the mob into a tale that considers the laws of political economy. She makes the people in the story speak about these laws. This was because she had been unable to do this when she wrote *The Rioters* (1827) because she did not know that political economy would account for the content of the story, as in this series.

Caroline Franklin ⁴ writes, "Martineau's stories exemplified the utopian belief that the laws of capitalism bring long-term benefit and progress to all classes, and that social inequality may be ameliorated by individual action and hard work." Influenced by James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy* (1821), Martineau included several stories on social issues in *Illustrations*. Martineau said that she had been inspired by reading a textbook for girls, Mrs. Marcett's *Conversations on Political Economy* (1816), and said, "It struck me at once that the principles of the whole science might be advantageously conveyed in the same way" (Autobiography, Vol. 1, p. 138). Martineau then aimed at introducing a new way of portraying society to the public at large, which was political economy. For example, in the first tale, *Life in the Wilds*, the people who have emigrated to South Africa and have been attacked by Bushmen have returned to a primitive life. However, during the story, the community accumulates capital by using their knowledge. Martineau makes readers think about how to accumulate capital rationally and uses Adam Smith's theory of the division of labor. In *Demerara*, her fourth story, the people of West India discuss the emancipation of slaves. As they argue in favor of emancipation, Martineau draws on economic theory, and her opinion is presented rationally. According to the principles of political economy, slavery is not a rational economic system

Martineau writes that labor based on workers' self-interest is more rational for those who do hard labor. Since both the slave and the owner can provide labor at a low price, they do not have any incentives, and neither can make a profit. Here, Adam Smith's theory is used. Caroline Franklin writes that Martineau was influenced by James Mill. However, if we examine the content of the last story, we notice that her version of political economy is more positive than Mill's. For example, Part 1, on production theory, consists of three sections: "Production," "Large Farms," and "Slavery." These are not summaries. Part 2 presents her theory of distribution. However, the theory is concretely described in terms of wages in the paragraph on the aggregation of workers. Martineau discusses wages in terms of wage fund theory.

This is Martineau's purpose and the fable shows her skill. The first thing we notice is that if we compare it with James Mill's Distribution theory, her theory has more items than James Mill's *Elements*. Martineau assumes various distribution methods. She analyzes not only Rent, Wages, and Profits, but describes the balance of working population and capital of wages in "Combinations of workman", "Pauperism", "Emigration" and "Ireland".

In James Mill's Distribution theory, by comparison, Section one is "Rent", Section two is "Wages" and Section three is "Profits". James Mill's Distribution theory is covered by these three items. However, it is interesting that John Stuart Mill's *The Principles of Political Economy* (1848) is in agreement with Martineau's item, "Of Co-operation, or the Combination of Labour". Both hold similar ideas, although there is a difference of a classification of theory of production and distribution particularly in 'Combinations of workman' where Martineau emphasizes wages fund theory.⁵ Moreover, she added to collaboration of working class and capitalists and, of course, illustrated these ideas in *The Manchester Strike*.

On the other hand, John Stuart Mill treated 'Of Co-operation, or the Combination of Labour' in his *Principles* where he analyzed Combination of Labour as a principal cause of superior productiveness.⁶ John Stuart Mill treats wages fund theory in Distribution in a second volume.

Moreover, If we compare both concepts of economic education from Martineau and James Mill, their educational philosophies are completely different. Martineau emphasizes:

"We trust we shall not be supposed to countenance the practice of making use of narrative as a trap to catch idle readers, and make them learn something they are afraid of... A student who should open Euclid in the middle, could no more proceed from want of knowing what came before, than a sawyer who should insert his saw in a hole in the middle of a plank could go on sawing while the wood was closed both behind and before. In like manner, any novice who wishes to learn in a hurry the philosophy of Wages, and dips into a treatise for the purpose, can make nothing of it for want of understanding the previous chapters on Labour and Capital."

Martineau thus demands unconventional education. However, James Mill demands a strict approach as in his son's education:

"They who are commencing the study ought to proceed slowly, and to familiarize themselves with the new combinations of ideas, as they are successively presented to them. If they proceed to a subsequent proposition before they are sufficiently imbued with the first, they will of course experience a difficulty, only because they have not present to their memory the truth which is calculated to remove it. If they who begin the study of mathematics were to content themselves with merely reading and assenting to the demonstrations, they would soon arrive at doctrines, which they would be unable to comprehend, solely because they had not, by frequent repetition, established in their minds those previous propositions, on which the evidence of the subsequent ones depends."

Even if for common people such studies were difficult, Martineau considered economic education to be essential for those who want to learn and understand.

Moreover, James Mill wrote in his preface to *Elements of Political Economy*:

"I cannot fear an imputation of plagiarism, because I profess to have made no discovery; and those men who have contributed to the progress of the science need no testimony of mine to establish their fame."

Martineau wrote:

”By dwelling, as I have been led to do, on their discoveries, I have become too much awakened to the glory to dream of sharing the honour. Great men must have their hewers of wood and drawers of water; and scientific discoverers must be followed by those who will popularize their discoveries.”

It is clear that the object of both James Mill and Harriet Martineau is not discovery of science but the description and education of political economy so adding to social progress. Their common point is to move emphasis from "discovery" of political economy to "education". From this view point, we understand that they considered social development would follow from individual education about political economy. Though they have different philosophies, it is possible to see that this view is not irrelevant to either of their philosophies. They both believed that society progress could be achieved by raising the quality of education for common people. Their conviction is that human beings can change with education about political economy. We realize that the individualism of both James Mill and Harriet Martineau is based on their shared naturalistic ideas. Here we can see a feature of their shared philosophy, the British empiricism. Their morals are science of positivism as reflected in Martineau's title *The Moral of Many Fables*.

5. Conclusion

The text mining-analysis of Shimodaira & Fukuda⁷ provides an interesting explanation for the popularization of political economy. They write:

“The outcome of these considerations is seen in the process by which the specialized arguments in Ricardo's *Principles* were progressively simplified in Mill's *Elements* and decisively popularized in Martineau's *Illustrations*”.

There is no doubt about the process of popularization of Ricardo's political economy. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that the popularization of political economy was not only due to Harriet Martineau. It was also driven by people who believed that economic development and social reform increased people's happiness. This idea in economic thought is peculiar to the Victoria era and John Stuart Mill naturally succeeded them.

Let us now return to Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*. Both Martineau and James Mill have the view that social science accompanies natural science⁸. However, James Mill tried to educate a limited group of intellectual people, whereas Martineau wanted to educate common people in very different conditions, including sex, class, and race. Intellectual people should have understood the theory easily. However, common people did not and needed illustrations of economic theory. A typical example is the wages fund theory which Martineau illustrated through *The Rioters* and *The Manchester Strike*. The number of people of all sorts studying political economy increased in the Victorian era and lots of illustrations that were not strictly theory began to spread. Harriet Martineau's aim succeeded to a considerable extent.

References

Blaug, M. (1958) Ricardian Economics: A Historical Study (Yale University Press,

New Haven).

Franklin, C. (2001) *Introduction to Illustration of Political Economy, Taxation, Poor and pipers*, (Thoemmes press, Bristol). (Kyokuto Shoten, Japan)

Malthus, T.R. (1820) *Principle of Political Economy considered with a view to their Practical Application*. 1st ed., (John Murray, London).

Mill, J.S. (1967) *Principles of Political Economy*. Vols II and III of *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by J.M. Robson, (Toronto University). Reprinted in 1996, 2000.

Mill, J.S. (1967) *Essay on Economics and Society*. Vols IV and V of *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by J.M. Robson, (Toronto University) Reprinted in 1975.

Mill, J.S. (1974) *A System of Logic*. Vols VII and VIII of *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by J.M. Robson, (Toronto University) Reprinted in 1978.

Marcet, J. (1816) *Conversation on Political Economy, in which the Elements of that Science are Familiarly Explained*, (Longman. Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown: London).

Martineau, H. (1832a) 'Life is the Wilds' *Illustrations of Political Economy*, No.1, (Charles Fox, London).

Martineau, H. (1832b) 'The Hill and the Valley', *Illustrations of Political Economy*, No.2, (Charles Fox, London).

Martineau, H. (1832c) 'Brook and Brooks Farm', *Illustrations of Political Economy*, No.3, (Charles Fox, London).

Martineau, H. (1832d) 'The Moral of Many Fables' *Illustrations of Political Economy*, No.25, (Charles Fox, London).

Martineau, H. (1877) *Autobiography*, (Chapman, Smith and Elder, London).

Mill, J. (1821) *Elements of Political Economy*, (London). 3rd edition in 1844.

Ricardo, D. (1817) *Principles of Political Economy, and Taxation* (London, John Murray). 2nd edition in 1819.

Smith, A. (1776) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, edited with an introduction, notes, marginal summary and an enlarged index by Edwin Cannan. M.A.L.L.D, professor and political economy in the University of London. 6th edition, (London, 1950. 2 vols).

Vint, John. (1994) *Capital and Wedges*, Edward Elger, Aldershot. Webb, R.K. (1960) *Harriet Martineau: a Radical Victorian* (Columbia University Press).

[Paper]

Shimodaira & Fukuda (2014) 'Popularization of Classical Economics:

The text-mining Analysis of David Ricardo, James Mill, and Harriet Martineau' (Hirosaki University Repository, No.31).

Acknowledgement – This work is supported by JSPS Grant-Aid for Scientific Research(B), Grant Number 22330064

¹ Orazem also notes this point. She writes, "it remains a puzzle how he arrived at this conclusion." She also adds that "the works of historians of economic thought tend to neglect the literal aspect of Martineau's tales, particularly her relationship to the tradition of the didactic tale and her influence on later writings about social problems and economics."

² R.K. Webb's biography was a turning point in Martineau scholarship. Drawing on a wide variety of sources and substantial research into 19th century politics and ideology it offered a new and important evaluation of Martineau's work (Orazem, p.12).

³ "*The Rioters*" (1827), on the destruction of machinery in Manchester, and "*The Turn Out*" (1828), on wages, published by Houlston of Wellington, Shropshire.

⁴ Introduction by Caroline Franklin, *Illustrations of Political Economy, Taxation, Poor Laws and Paupers* Thoemmes Press and Kyokuto shoten LTD.2001.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp54-61.

⁶ *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume II - The Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy (Books I-II)* [1848] Toronto University. pp.116-131.

⁷ Shimodaira & Fukuda (2014) they are examining the diffusion process of classical economics using text-mining analysis.

⁸ J.S. Mill treated this philosophical problem in his book, *A System of Logic* (1843).



James Mill 1773 – 1836 Wikipedia



Erasmus Alvey Darwin 1804 – 1881 Public Domain

Harriet Martineau and Erasmus Darwin: Just Good Friends

Stuart Hobday

Erasmus Alvey Darwin was Charles Darwin's elder brother, 5 years his senior. The two boys grew up together and had a close relationship throughout their lives. Charles followed Erasmus to Shrewsbury School, Edinburgh Medical School and Christ's College Cambridge. On his return from 5 years of journeying on the Beagle Charles stayed with Eras in central London and eventually moved into lodgings three doors down from his brother and mentor. In recent years, through the major biographies of Darwin produced by Janet Browne, James Moore and Adrian Desmond, Erasmus has emerged from the shadows and been given credit for his role in encouraging his brothers freethinking and radical theorising. He is an intriguing character, not least because most of what is known about him comes from others.

Harriet Martineau moved from Norwich to London in 1832 to pursue her calling as a writer on economic and political matters. She moved into a house on Conduit Street – very close to Great Marlborough Street where Erasmus lived. It says much for his inquisitive nature that he must have sought her out as an acquaintance. In 1834 Charles Darwin received a letter from his sister whilst on the Beagle recommending Harriet's political economy tales saying "Erasmus knows her & is a very great admirer & everybody reads her little books." It is very likely that there was a Unitarian connection which brought Erasmus and Harriet together but it also seems as if they hit it off quickly. She perhaps attracted by his non-romantic approach, his freethinking philosophical musings as well as his offers of transportation. By this time Erasmus, two years younger than Harriet, was already 'retired' and given a pension by his father. Deemed too ill and vulnerable to work Erasmus set himself up with a cab with a distinctive grey horse and became a reliable taxi service for independent-minded progressive women. Particularly Harriet but also Fanny Wedgwood, Jane Carlyle and the Darwin sisters when they came to town.

The Darwin and Wedgwood families formed a tight circle including much intermarrying of cousins. The six Darwin children grew up with their Wedgwood cousins. There was always gossip in letters about potential romantic developments between this circle. Indeed Erasmus Alvey was for a time linked with Emma Wedgwood who was to become Charles Darwin's wife. This circle extended to the Mackintosh family and indeed the family of Thomas Malthus who was close friends with Robert Mackintosh. It has often been stated as an open secret that Erasmus's true love was Fanny Mckintosh but she married Hensleigh Wedgwood. Thomas Malthus' daughter was a bridesmaid. Erasmus and Fanny however remained close throughout their lives and much speculation has occurred as to whether the relationship was more than friends including paternity speculation.

Once Fanny was married off and Erasmus spent more time with Harriet there is much gossip in the letters of the circle that marriage might be on the cards. Dr Robert Darwin, their dominating father, was not a fan of the freethinking Martineau and was teased by his daughters that she would be joining the family soon. However it is very possible that Erasmus and Harriet found in each other a buffer to all the romantic talk. Neither wanted to be tied down to a domestic life. Gossip and rumours were a small price to pay for protecting each other from any serious

commitments which enabled Harriet to pursue her writing and Erasmus to remain an independent and convivial host.

When Charles returned from voyaging in 1836 he stayed with Erasmus in Great Marlborough Street and wrote to his sisters that Eras was like a slave to Harriet, driving her out morning, noon and night. In the spring of 1837 Charles moved in three doors down from Erasmus. This is now recognised as a crucial period in the development of his ideas in disseminating what he had learnt from his travels and collected specimens. He visited the nearby zoo and various scientific institutions and locked himself away struggling to write. Erasmus' house was where he often went for dinner and company. Harriet had recently returned from America and was the famous one in the circle. Biographers James Moore and Adrian Desmond have made much of the freethinking environment created by Harriet and Erasmus which greatly encouraged the younger Charles towards his radical ideas:

“Charles was in and out of his brother's house this spring. He never strayed far from Eras. Eras's was a hive of intellectual activity. After five lonely years at sea Charles embraced his brother's ready made circle of friend, revelling in the intimate dinners with Eras and Harriet Martineau. Here the buzz was radical and dissenting and 'Heterodoxy was the norm.' He gained reassurance from this home circle.”

“Radical Unitarians saw reform and evolution as going hand in hand. A self developing nature held no terrors for them. Eras's group with Martineau at its centre, gave Charles the license to work out his own deterministic theories.”¹

The rumoured love affair between Erasmus and Fanny Wedgwood took a strange turn later in 1838 when the married couple Hensleigh and Fanny moved in with Erasmus in the Gt Marlborough St. house. One can only speculate what the sleeping arrangements were but there was no doubt it was even more a hive of activity which Charles described as 'The Darwin and Wedgwood Arms'. Erasmus' character has often been described as leisurely gadabout with an opium habit, developed in response to various ailments, when in fact there are several occasions in the 1830s and 1840s when he provides a much needed haven and support for his brother, for Fanny and Hensleigh and for Harriet. When Harriet became ill in 1841-42 it was Erasmus who rallied round their circle and organised financial support which she reluctantly accepted. Emma Darwin wrote to her aunt and about this and provides a good portrait of their friendship:

Emma Darwin to her aunt Madame Sismondi.

“12, UPPER GOWER STREET, May 9, 1841.

I must tell you a nice thing of Erasmus as you used not to like him, but it is a profound secret so you must not tell anybody. The other day he wrote to Miss Martineau, thinking that owing to her long illness she might be in want of money, to ask if he could help her. He carried about his letter in his pocket for some days without having courage to send it; but he did at last and poor Miss M. was very much gratified by it, though she would not let him help her. She refused very nicely by openly entering on her affairs with him and telling him exactly what she had, to show him that she was not in want. She has nothing but what she has earned. I am afraid she has little chance of recovery, which

I am very sorry for. Life was of great value to her, though she seems resigned to quit it. She told him she would let him know if she was in any distress.”²

Charles Darwin married Emma Wedgwood in 1840 and moved into a house on Gower Street. This has often been marked as a moment when he distanced himself from the ‘circle’. In fact there is a note in his diary that there was a day in 1840 when he was visited by Martineau as well as social reformer Charles Babbage on the same day. He writes to Emma when they are setting up the house that he will get advice from Martineau on finding a reliable housekeeper. Martineau herself had recorded how she and Erasmus had been out house-hunting for the new couple.

There is also evidence that Charles continued to read Martineau’s books and Moore and Desmond have speculated that his delay in publishing his evolutionary ideas may have been influenced by the reaction to Martineau’s atheistic writing in ‘Eastern Life’ and ‘Letters on Man’s Nature’. It is worth remembering that Charles Darwin himself did not really become famous until the Origin of Species was finally presented to the world in 1859, 25 years after he had first met famed author Harriet Martineau.

It was however Erasmus who remained loyal and committed to a friendship with Harriet for the rest of their lives. This friendship was stretched in the 1840s after Harriet was taken ill in Italy and decamped to her ‘sickroom’ in Tynemouth. They did not see each other and Harriet was convinced she was not long for the world. She requested of the Wedgwood/Darwin circle that they destroy letters from her. Erasmus organised a fund for her at a crucial time but she irritated the circle by making demands on the money, that some of it come in the form of a set of china. There is also evidence that Erasmus Darwin had very little time for mesmerism. It became something of a popular fad in 1844 when Harriet proclaimed the mesmerism had saved her.

Charles wrote to Charles Fox in December 1844:

“Shd your zeal still continue, I wd write to Miss Martineau & propose your visiting her (my Brother wishes to avoid all communication with her on this subject) - When in London, I saw a letter from her (not to my Brother), in which she says **crowds** of people are coming to her from all parts of England...”³

The scientific commitment of the Darwin brothers and their dismissal of the mesmerism was perhaps representative of the scientific community who were later to take her atheistic musings with a pinch of salt. However Erasmus wrote regularly to Harriet and she to him. Once she was set up in the Knoll in Ambleside Erasmus would regularly send luxuries particularly champagne and oysters. He also sent her books including those produced by his brother. In 1860 she wrote to him that:

“What i write is to thank you again for sending me your brother’s book. As for thanking him for the book itself one might say “thank you” all one’s life without giving any idea of one’s sense of obligation. I believed and have often described the quality and conduct of your brother’s mind; but it is an unspeakable satisfaction to see here the full manifestation of its earnestness and simplicity, its sagacity, its industry, and the patient power by which it has collected such a mass of facts, to transmute them by such sagacious treatment into such portentous knowledge.”⁴

It is probable that they visited each other in the 1850s but by the 1860s both were very limited by illness and infirmity. Erasmus still saw Fanny Wedgwood regularly and in these years there was a profound connection between the three of them which came to light in the publication of letters in Elisabeth Arbuckle's book of 1983.

Many of Harriet's letters to Fanny end with a message of regards to Eras. There are 11 letters to Erasmus from Harriet in this volume, very personal and honest. And with occasional reminiscences of the London days. They both had great fond memories of the youthful freedom they shared riding around London in the 1830s, a time before illness and some sadness had come to affect their lives. One of the most moving letters from Harriet comes in February 1864 when her devoted niece Maria, who had become a reliable companion and personal assistant to her, but who was now gravely ill with Typhoid Fever. Harriet wrote to Eras:

"I shall be glad to give you (who understand) particulars. But I cannot. I am very ill myself, and can hardly get through anyhow. – Till you hear again, I think you must suppose that, while she may live, the chances are infinitely against it. – Tell Fanny what I say – with my best love and thanks."⁵

Maria died the following day and as Arbuckle notes "this sad loss marked a downward turn in HM's battle against her own illness".

Her last published letter to Erasmus comes in February 1868 and includes a section on negative reviews which Charles Darwin was having to deal with perhaps reflecting on her own experiences:

"I have always hoped and felt confident that the hostility of the ignorant and prejudiced did not trouble him.....Really, what nonsense it is to stop, scream and struggle, and have a faction – fight at every mile on the road to knowledge!"⁶

Harriet Martineau died in 1876. Erasmus Alvey Darwin died in 1880 though Charles said he had been dead for several years, his mind and body racked by opium and sadness. Charles Darwin was however rocked by his brother's death and died the following year. In many ways the three of them had led parallel lives. Erasmus and Harriet were actually more freethinking and playful than Charles but he was diligent and persistent. In the crucial London years they created a stimulating environment for him and encouraged the writing he so struggled with. The three of them shared a courage to challenge the religious orthodoxy which so dominated British society and moral life and between them they laid much foundation for the more scientific secular ages coming.

Eras and Harriet had been instinctively attracted to each other as nonconformists who did not want the settled life of marriage and nursed each other through romantic speculations. Both were grateful for the buffer to society that each afforded. They remained good friends through correspondence in the latter part of their lives and both had very fond memories of the excitement, sociality and intellectual stimulation they shared in 1830s London.

¹ Adrian Desmond and James Moore 'Darwin' 1991 – p216 / 217

² From Darwin Correspondence Project (Emma Darwin's Letters) See www.darwinproject.ac.uk

³ Ibid – Charles Darwin's letters

⁴ Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood (edited by Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle) 1983 p.185/186

⁵ Ibid p.248

⁶ Ibid p295



Erasmus Alvey Darwin by Julia Margaret Cameron 1868 Emma Darwin

Recent New Members (UK unless stated)

Dr. Sue Brown

The Martineau Society

The Martineau Society was founded in the early 1990s by members of the Octagon Chapel, Colegate, Norwich, to foster interest in the descendants of Gaston Martineau, surgeon and Huguenot refugee who settled in Norwich in 1695.

Their skills developed in many fields: medicine, art, writing, engineering, education, religion and industry and the Society publishes papers on their lives and correspondence with others in these fields and with their other contemporaries.

The Society is a registered charity (no. 1064092) and holds an annual conference which includes an AGM, papers and visits to places connected with the Martineau family. The Society issues *The Martineau Society Newsletter* twice each year, containing scholarly articles and news of events and publications.

Contact Information

www.martineausociety.co.uk

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elisabeth Arbuckle | elisabeth.sanders.arbuckle@gmail.com |
| Jane Bancroft | jane.bancroft@btinternet.com |
| Bruce Chilton | bruce_chilton@hotmail.com |
| Sharon Connor | sharonconnor@live.co.uk |
| Dee Fowles | fowlesdee@gmail.com |
| Sophia Hankinson | sophia.hankinson@btinternet.com |
| David Hamilton | david.hamilton80@btinternet.com |
| Valerie Sanders | v.r.sanders@hull.ac.uk |
| John Vint | j.vint@mmu.ac.uk |
| Ruth Watts | watts372@btinternet.com |
| Gaby Weiner | gaby.weiner@btinternet.com |

The Martineau Society Newsletter submissions of 2,500 – 3000 words or less may be sent to Bruce Chilton, Newsletter Editor:

*by email and as an attachment, preferably in Microsoft Word, to:

bruce_chilton@hotmail.com

Suitable images, preferably in jpeg, with free copyright or out of copyright and with stated provenance may be included and will be reproduced whenever possible.

*by post to:

22 Marston Lane, Norwich NR4 6LZ, UK

phone: 0044 (0)1603 506014

Please note: Submissions must be made on the understanding that copyright will be shared to the extent that **The Martineau Society** may publish them in the Society newsletter and elsewhere, wholly or in part, including through the Society's websites. Otherwise, copyright remains with the authors of the individual contributions.

But whoever can so look into my heart as to tell *whether there is anything which I revere*: and, if there be, *what thing* it is; he may read me through and through, and there is no darkness wherein I may hide myself. This is the master-key to the whole moral nature: what does a man secretly admire and worship? What haunts him with the deepest wonder? What fills him with the most earnest aspiration? What should we overhear in the soliloquies of his unguarded mind? This it is which, in the truth of things, constitutes his *religion*... Every man's *highest*, nameless though it be, is his "*living God*": (but) the being on whom he seems to call, whose history he learned in the catechism, of whom he hears at Church – with open ear perhaps, but with thick, deaf soul – is his *dead God*.
James Martineau *Endeavours*, 2, i



James Martineau 1805 – 1900 in 1860s by Elliot & Fry Wikipedia