

The Martineau Society

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Editor's Note

This edition of the *Newsletter* is some weeks late. There was not enough material to publish an edition in July and so, by waiting for the Society Conference's papers, there is, or should be, a bank of interesting articles for this and future editions.

The annual Society Conference at Norwich at the end of July was a success. New members attended it and, because the Conference had returned to Norwich where several members have their homes, it was open to "day" delegates. The afternoon "trails" were much enjoyed and included visits to places like the Forum, the busiest public library in the country where there was a display of Martineau publications put on solely for the visit of the Martineau Society members. See more in Gaby Weiner's Blog in this *Newsletter*.

The third of what is now an annual series of Harriet Martineau Lectures organised by the Writers' Centre Norwich was given on 16 May as part of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. This annual Festival of music and arts of every sort has a close link to the Martineaus. The Festival was started in 1772 by Phillip Meadows Martineau and his group of friends as annual music concerts to raise money for the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Having moved to a triennial event for most of the nineteenth century, it returned to be an annual event and was led by Sir Henry Woods for many years – perhaps his day-job from organising the "Proms".

The speaker at the 2015 Harriet Martineau Lecture given at Norwich Anglican Cathedral was Masha Geesen, the Russian-American author, journalist and political activist. Her lecture opened with a compliment to Harriet on her "*How to Observe Morals and Manners*" (1838) – the lecture could be on "almost any subject", such as Martineau's innovatory skill in research in sociology as set in her book. The lecture moved quickly to its main subject – an attack on Vladimir Putin, president of Russia. Much of what was in the lecture was an up-dated extract of Geesen's book *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* (ISBN 1594488428).

Geesen described how Putin was plucked from KGB obscurity by President Yeltsin, how Putin moved in 2010 to be Prime Minister and, with “sham” elections in 2012, retook the presidency. But the elections caused a storm of protests. In response, Putin targeted the protesters as “homosexuals” describing western news as “shameful and to be rejected by all good Russians”. What Putin wants, she said, is war as in Ukraine enabling him to put Russia into mobilisation and empowering his totalitarian regime.

One of our Society members afterwards complained that Masha Geesen’s chilling lecture was so little about Harriet Martineau. It was pointed out that the lectures were intended to be “in the spirit of Harriet Martineau”. As Masha Geesen described, “she regularly stepped out of convention but was usually right”.

How Harriet Martineau stepped out of convention is examined by our first two articles. Valerie Sanders looks at her prose style and techniques and Elisabeth Arbuckle shows how Martineau used her techniques to examine convincingly the most extraordinary subjects, in this case, the fees for ships using Liverpool’s harbour in the 1850s. What Harriet Martineau found was institutionalised corruption.

Our opening speaker at the Society Conference, Ann Farrant, has contributed her paper on Amelia Opie and the Martineau family. However did all these people keep in touch with each other only with letters and without the machinery we have now?

Our thanks to all our contributors to this *Newsletter*. Any errors you may find belong wholly to your editor.

Masha Geesen’s accusations of corruption in modern Russia and Harriet’s findings about Liverpool harbour one hundred and sixty years ago link directly to our *Postscript*. James Martineau writes of ‘Honour in Commerce’ which may be germane at the time when the current UK Government has announced its abandonment of long-promised controls of international banks and global companies responsible for rigging financial indexes, tax evasion, insurance mis-selling and deceptions to avoid pollution controls. Do enjoy the *Newsletter*.

‘Things Pressing to be Said’: Harriet Martineau’s Prose Style

Valerie Sanders

‘She says nothing that is not obvious,’ claimed Alice Meynell of Harriet Martineau in 1895, ‘and nothing that is not peevishly and intentionally misunderstood.’¹ This paradoxical statement may seem particularly inappropriate to Martineau, whose prose style was one of the plainest and most direct of its period. Some of this, however, as Meynell indicates, was deliberately perverse on the part of critics, especially via crude innuendo in response to her early publications, while *How to Observe* (1838) was mercilessly mocked for its solemn didacticism. In this article John Wilson Croker ironically exhibited ‘the precision of her style and the closeness

of her reasoning,' by quoting snippets of the book out of context to heighten their banality: for example, 'There are two parties to the work of observation – the observer and the observed. This *is an important fact*', to which Croker's riposte is a simple 'Very!'² He also made fun of her requirement that 'An observer, to be perfectly accurate, should be himself *perfect*' (p. 67).



Alice Meynell (1847 – 1922) Poet, writer, editor and suffragette. Wikipedia

If critics such as Croker took pleasure in making fun of Martineau in the 1830s, her reputation as a serious commentator on her times was firmly established by the

1850s when she discovered her true vocation as a journalist. Like many Victorian authors, she wrote variously for a range of periodicals, beginning with the Unitarian *Monthly Repository*, and from 1852, the *Daily News*, which she called 'the greatest literary engagement of my life.'³ What drove Martineau above all else was what she called in her self-written obituary for the *Daily News*, her 'need of utterance'.⁴ As she put it in the main body of her *Autobiography*, 'Things were pressing to be said; and there was more or less evidence that I was the person to say them.'⁵ This paper therefore considers whether Martineau had a distinctive prose style, and if so, how it functioned in two contrasting examples of her periodical writing: 'Life in the Criminal Class' (*Edinburgh Review*, 1865) and 'Female Dress' (*Westminster Review*, 1857).

What Martineau needed to say at various points of her life changed in accordance with external events, whether political crises or more homely concerns about foolish fashions and risks to health, but the sense of urgency never left her. She felt a personal responsibility to advise the nation for its own good in all fields where there was any risk to its moral or economic health. In terms of style, this confidently held imperative gave Martineau enormous self-belief and confidence. As her career developed, her air of omniscience grew with it, alongside her range of citations, whether from literature or real life, and her calls for action. A typical Martineau periodical article climaxes with a cry of 'What are we to do?' directed at the responsible middle-class reader who forms her staple audience.

As a moral writer, Martineau was highly conscious of the connection between what she wanted to say and the style that would most forcefully convey meaning to her readers. There are several places in her *Autobiography* where she pauses to talk about her methods of researching and writing a topic, and as Linda Peterson and others have indicated, she was also proud of the way she had been taught at Mr Perry's Norwich day school for both girls and boys.⁶ 'There was the Proposition, to begin with,' Martineau recalled, 'then the Reason, and the Rule; then the Example, ancient and modern; then the Confirmation; and finally, the Conclusion.'⁷ When the class asked to be allowed to write on 'Music' for their theme, Mr Perry's warning that 'this was not definite enough to be called a subject' proved all too accurate, and after hearing their individual productions dismissed for their general flimsiness and incoherence the children returned 'prodigiously crest-fallen' to their places.⁸ This experience made such an impression on Martineau that she also recounted it in her *Household Education* (1849): 'We were taught the parts of a theme, as our master and many others approved and practised them in, in sermons and essays.'⁹

The principles she learnt at Mr Perry's school stayed with Martineau for the rest of her life. Whenever she discusses her writing technique, her guiding principles were structure and order. When she came to translate and condense Auguste Comte's *Philosophie Positive* (1853), she admired his classification and genealogy of the disciplines, even as she deplored his style as 'singular,' 'rich and diffuse. Every sentence is full fraught with meaning; yet it is overloaded with words.'¹⁰ In reducing his six volumes to two, and eradicating what she regarded as the 'redundancy' of his repetitions and wordy epithets, she hoped his ideas would gain a much wider readership. So far as her own compositions went, Martineau explains, she wrote quickly, with few or no revisions, and without copies: 'I did it as I write letters, and as I am writing this Memoir, - never altering the expression as it came fresh from my

brain.¹¹

One further debate which affects our understanding of Martineau's style concerns her designation as either a female 'sage', or a so-called 'wisdom writer,' which can be traced back to George P. Landow's important study, *Elegant Jeremiahs: The Sage from Carlyle to Mailer* (1986). Although Landow does not discuss Martineau, he differentiates between 'wisdom literature' and sage writing in ways which are helpful towards pinpointing exactly what it is that Martineau is trying to achieve. For Landow, 'wisdom literature' embodies 'the accepted, received wisdom of an entire society,' while sage writing comes from the periphery, 'an eccentric voice, one off center.'¹² For Linda Peterson, however, the impact of gender also needs to be considered: in her view sage writing is inherently a masculine form of discourse, and Martineau may seem closer to the model of 'wisdom writer.' Although she concludes that Martineau is best seen as 'a "masculine" female sage,' because of the 'genderless' nature of her 'rhetorical material'¹³, she remains a problem in this way because she appears to speak 'from the centre,' uttering 'the obvious' (as Croker and Meynell alleged), while also (in Peterson's words), having 'no recognized place'.¹⁴ Peterson's solution to this conundrum is to align her with the traditions of classical rhetoric, as borne out by Martineau's own account and to argue that in *Household Education* (at least), 'style reinforces theory.'¹⁵ This phrase is especially helpful in that it stresses the notion that style may be, in Martineau's case, the enabler of her whole mode of thinking.

Style Reinforces Theory

Harriet Martineau's career as a periodical writer and journalist flourished in the 1850s and 60s, when, as her letters indicate, she was considered a valuable asset to a journal, and often invited to tackle the more 'heavyweight' topics, such as American politics, the slave trade, the 1851 census, and trade unions. One such example is her article 'Life in the Criminal Class,' written for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1865, based on Mary Carpenter's *Our Convicts* (1864) and *Memoirs of Jane Cameron – Female Convict* (1864).¹⁶ This is a substantial piece which sets out to expose the inappropriate management of convicted prisoners, especially those condemned to penal servitude. Pitched at an assumed middle-class readership with the potential to influence change, the article first sets out the problem, which she does with vivid realism, and then engages her readers in agreeing a solution. This structure is typical of Martineau's approach to much of her article production, which from the start requires the use of contrasting vocabularies: the first to illustrate a set of shocking conditions and stir her readers into a state of concern; the second to suggest practical solutions and actions which her readers could help promote. Her approach is systematic, authoritarian, and at times aphoristic; she not only divides the criminals she is discussing into different classes, based on the type of crime committed; she also subdivides her readers, depending on their varying responses to ways of dealing with them:

Some of us may assume the reformation of criminals for their own sakes to be the first object; some may propose above everything else to render it impossible for criminals to repeat their offence; some would deter by the pain of punishment those who are corrupt and lawless from violating the order of society; some insist on the security of society as the object to be

pursued...while others hold that all these aims may be best accomplished by arresting crime at its source... But the first requisite to action under any of these views is to understand the peculiar character of criminal life, in its origin and progress. (p.337)

The rhetorical 'Some...some...some' structure allows Martineau succinctly to survey a full range of responses to the institutional management of criminals, before firmly signalling the need for a more systematic approach and homing in on 'the ordinary criminal population, of which most of us know so little' (p. 341).

Martineau's technique in many of her articles is to remind the reader of how little society really understands of the problem she is discussing, deploying a number of strategies to awaken consciences and rally a call to action. These strategies include the clear division of her subject into stages or sections (the three types of criminal discussed in this article), and the series of solutions proposed for each problem, which works through a list of options, refining out the ones that will work, as with the issue of what to do about habitual young thieves and vagabonds. Another favourite technique is to pass from generalities to individual cases. In this article Martineau is intent on explaining to her middle-class readership the surprising views held by criminals, specifically 'that a short sentence of imprisonment is more dreaded than a longer one of penal servitude' (p. 358). This unlikely position stems from her discovery that men condemned to penal servitude are treated more leniently and in effect trained for release, compared with those given a jail sentence.

The point about criminals preferring penal servitude is the linchpin or turning-point of this article which allows Martineau to broach the final part of her review: the practical solution to managing the criminal class: 'What should we do with them, in order to approach as nearly as may be to the fulfilment of the great objects of convict punishment?'(p. 362). By asking an open question of this kind, she invites her readers to anticipate, and perhaps mentally participate, in supplying a practical answer, especially in relation to her main concern, the plight of female convicts. Though she draws on statistics, Martineau is tempted into an extraordinary outburst of passionate language when she thinks of the ways in which the judicial system manages female criminals:

Neither judge nor jury, neither chaplain nor matron, neither doctor nor warder, enters at all into the mind and feelings of a being who seems to be made up of the idiot and the intriguer, the infant and the devil, the ferocious animal and the fanatical idolator, the Bedlam empress and the victim under the wheels of the Juggernaut car. What is to be done? (p. 364)

Given Martineau's usual insistence on rationality and reason in her approach to all the more extreme human experiences, this emotional tirade is at the very least startling, and hastily followed by a two-page extract from Carpenter, as if to hurry back to formal testimonies. The article ultimately wraps up with a summary of the practical improvements taking place: 'We are obtaining a more distinct notion...We are arriving at something like an agreement...We are agreed that the essential principle of treatment is' (p. 368); 'we have established beyond recall... we have amended some of the mistakes...we are making it more and more of a reality' (p. 369), culminating in her belief that for what she calls 'incorrigibles,' there 'must be a real and steady infliction of imprisonment for life' (p. 370). Her outburst about women, however, seems to release the latent indignation which often lies just below

the surface of a Martineau text, and kindles into anger, sarcasm or an appeal to common sense, depending on the context.

'Female Dress in 1857'

Martineau's article 'Female Dress in 1857' was given prime position as leading article in *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*. The topic of dress was one she frequently revisited, usually via tirades against the crinoline and its dangers: she was pleased that her 'anti-hoop paper' for *Once a Week* (1863) had enjoyed 'an enormous run, & is being again reprinted.'¹⁷ While the *Once a Week* articles shamelessly exploit a melodramatic vocabulary of 'murder,' 'tyranny,' 'sin and death', her *Westminster* article better demonstrates her comic rhetorical skills in ridiculing the extravagances of modern female dress and exhorting women with influence (from the Queen downwards) to set a good example in recalling their countrywomen to standards of good taste and rationality.

Unlike the 'Criminal Class' article, the argument of this one is relatively simple: women's fashions are ridiculous and dangerous, and align us with savages rather than rational and advanced human beings. The clarity of the message allows Martineau to deploy all her favourite classical devices of logical structure and emphatic repetition in combination with what might appear a conflicting style of satirical exaggeration. Beginning formally with an historical retrospective – 'Five years ago, we were all saying...', 'Seven years ago, in the same way, we were confident that the barbaric ages of dress were over for ever,' she uses the pronoun 'we' to sweep her readers into assumed agreement with her own commonsensical outlook.¹⁸ Beginning with references to preaching she nevertheless quickly rejects this approach - 'We do not desire to preach...'; 'It is a case in which preaching does no good' (p. 316) – before moving on to bombard her reader with the vocabulary of 'reason' set against a counter-current of references to 'caprice': 'But the truth is', she argues, 'dress is not a matter in which reason has ever had much concern' (p. 317), and Martineau allows herself free rein to ridicule its 'fringes, and bugles, and braids, and gimps, and laces, and buttons, - its frillings, and quillings, and puffings, and edgings, and slashings' (p. 319) – the relentless 'ands' of this sentence, and the rhymes, half-rhymes, and technical language exploiting to the full the available onomatopoeia. Everything about the language of dress appears to lend itself to mockery, just by the very sounds of its technical terms: hence her fondness for lists bordering on 'nonsense' writing: 'the days of high heels, pomatum, toupees and turbans, hoops and patches' (p. 324). Another variant on this type of list concerns the impact on a family's finances: 'The costliness, the clumsiness, the ugliness, the affectation, the stiffness, the noisiness' (p. 319). These lists set up a pounding rhythm of mockery which (like Kingsley in parts of *The Water-Babies*) allows Martineau to escape the logic of structured argument for a headlong satirical catalogue.

From the start, in fact, she cites a previous *Westminster* article of 1854 stating that 'Ridicule has always been a revolutionary agent,'¹⁹ and uses it mercilessly. 'A girl at a party now looks like a romp half hid in a haycock,' she mocks in a series of comic similes which form a long tirade against the absurdity of the crinoline; or else she 'seems like a person up to the armpits in feather-bed' (p. 322). Martineau's

vocabulary here is cruder than in the more measured discursive style of her other articles in its creation of caricatured snapshots worthy of *Punch*. Her scorn is such in this article, however, that she soon builds to longer sentences and fuller scenarios, whether of crinolines sweeping children into rivers or cutting the legs of male companions, while at a dance, a woman 'steers about like a great steamer on the river' (p. 322). Her relentless onslaught on dress in this article wittily enforces her lesson to readers that 'dress was made for woman, and not woman for dress' (p. 324); likewise that the Queen's drawing rooms would be better 'attended by ladies in gowns, and not by dresses with women in them' (p. 323). She finally reminds her readers that 'dress has a purpose and a use which must determine the style of its beauty' (p. 329).

Her style overall is distinctive without being unduly mannered. If anything, it contains several styles, ranging from classical rhetoric to homely example. At one extreme, her vocabulary encompasses armpits, romps and haycocks, while at the other it references ornamentation, cultivation and caprice. Her sentences can be short and plain, drawing on familiar examples, or elaborately constructed, piling clause upon clause to build a towering case. What remains consistent in her style of writing is her consciousness of an audience, a readership that had to be persuaded out of its complacency to take some action. While her career started with the urge to teach people the economic foundations of their society's wealth and poverty, and then the wrongness of owning other human beings in slavery, she retained this urgency of style and compulsion to rouse her readers into a response, however apparently trivial her subject. Returning to the subject of the crinoline in 1863, she ends her article 'The Wilful Murder Case' with a bombardment of questions: 'What is all this perturbation about? Why are coroners' inquests multiplied...? Why are we living under a perpetual sense of danger....? Why all these proposals of return to a system of caste...? Why all this arguing and disputing... what is all this for? To enable a few of the women of England to wear, and to compel others to wear, skirts too heavy and large for use or beauty.'²⁰ In the final decade of her career Martineau had discovered the freedom of writing rhetorically in a way which allowed her to risk all in a final break with the deadpan solemnity that her early critics had ridiculed.

¹ [Alice Meynell], 'The Wares of Autolycus: A Woman of Masculine Understanding,' *Pall Mall Gazette* (11 October 1895), p. 4.

² [J.W. Croker], 'How to Observe – Morals and Manners. By Harriet Martineau. Charles Knight. London. 1838,' *The Quarterly Review* (January 1839), pp. 61-72; p. 63.

³ Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography* (1877), ed. Linda H. Peterson (Peterborough: Ontario: Broadview Press 2007), p. 599. All further references to the text are to this edition.

⁴ Peterson (ed), *Autobiography*, p. 662.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁶ Linda H. Peterson, 'Harriet Martineau: Masculine Discourse, Female Sage,' in Thais E. Morgan (ed), *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 171-186).

⁷ *Autobiography*, p. 75. These terms are also referenced in Chapter 7 of her children's tale, *The Crofton Boys* (1841), whose hero, Hugh Proctor is keen to compose his first 'theme,' and have it approved by his master.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76. The children had come up one by one to Mr Perry's desk to show him their 'themes'.

⁹ Harriet Martineau, *Household Education* (London: Edward Moxon, 1849), p. 238.

¹⁰ *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau*, 2 vols (London: John Chapman, 1853), 'Preface,' Vol I, p. vi.

¹¹ *Autobiography*, p. 160. See also 'Method of Composition' in her *Autobiography*, p. 113.

¹² George P. Landow, *Elegant Jeremiahs: The Sage from Carlyle to Mailer* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986) rpt. Routledge Revivals (2015), p. 23.

¹³ Peterson in Morgan, p. 178.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁶ [Harriet Martineau], 'Life in the Criminal Class,' *The Edinburgh Review* 122 (October 1865), pp. 337-371. Page references will be provided in the text.

¹⁷ HM to Henry Reeve, 11 February 1863, *Collected Letters*, ed. Logan, Vol 5, p. 4. She refers to 'A New Kind of Wilful Murder' (in *Once a Week*, 23 January 1863, pp. 36-39), followed up by 'The Wilful Murder Case' (*Once a Week*, 7 March, 1863, pp. 287-91),

¹⁸ [Harriet Martineau], 'Female Dress in 1857,' *The Westminster and Quarterly Review* 68 ((October 1857), pp. 315-40; p. 316. Page numbers from this article are cited in the text.

¹⁹ 'Manners and Fashion,' a *Westminster* article of April 1854 (pp. 357-92) by Herbert Spencer.

²⁰ 'The Wilful Murder Case,' p. 291.



Pierhead, Liverpool (1959) Wiki Commons

Harriet Martineau's Liverpool Harbor and Shipping Pamphlet: A Professional Journalist at Her Apogee?

Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle

Ken Pye, our keynote speaker at the Martineau Society meeting in Liverpool last year, painted a colorful picture of the historical development of the city and its spectacular harbor. In his book *Liverpool: The Rise, Fall and Renaissance of a World-Class City*,¹ Pye traces the city's growth from pre-historic times to its place as a major embarkation port for transport and travel (including emigration) to all parts of the world. In later centuries control of the harbor and its facilities became a national issue. Pye describes the building and maintenance of additional docks in mid-nineteenth century but skips over the political wrangles that sometimes accompanied the city's vast expansion of public works. Such disputes involved MPs and other politicians from Liverpool as well as inland cities dependent on Liverpool's harbor. In his chapter "The New Rome," Pye notes that the 19th-century port was at the very core of Liverpool's prosperity [with] great ocean-going liners and ferryboats using the waterfront to transport local passengers and international travelers [while] the amount of shipping using the commercial docks continued to increase. Both the numbers and the size of the vessels using the port grew steadily.

We know of the Martineaus' various connections with Liverpool: James, Ellen, Rachel and their mother all lived in the city at times, while Harriet's departure for America from Liverpool harbor set the tone for her ecstatic tour of America. Martineau had dealt with cases of unjust taxation in her early tales for the SDUK, but her Liverpool pamphlet came from her later professional connections.

Despite the fragile state of her health in 1856, for Harriet Martineau (journalist *par excellence*) any question of national interest involving free trade was a red flag to spur her to action. She had returned to The Knoll in early 1855 convinced that she was mortally ill and was resigned to spend the rest of her life as an invalid. Attended by devoted nieces, loyal servants, and a rota of friends she completed her autobiography. Then finding that she was still alive and in need of the income, she quickly resumed her role as leader writer for the London *Daily News*. Her range of expertise for the newspaper comprised American and European politics as well as domestic topics like the royal family, holidays and farming. At the end of August, for example, she told Fanny Wedgwood she would

probably do three leaders a week [having written] one on the Vegetarians yesterday; & one on Florence Nightingale's fund today.²

Meanwhile, money matters worried her. Though the success of the building society, her scheme to provide respectable homes for worthy working-class neighbors seemed assured, Elisabeth Reid -- who had loaned the money to buy property at Ellerrigg in Ambleside above the Market Cross -- now wanted to be repaid for her loan. Martineau's substitute plan was to buy Reid's two cottages "for the purpose of leaving them to [her nieces] Susan and Jane," her own two being intended for her niece Maria. Because Robert and Jane, the girls' parents, were so pleased with the idea, she determined not to wait. At the moment, she could "muster all the money but £55," for which she gave her "note of hand," the rest being paid in cash. Reid's delight was "extreme," Martineau congratulated herself, for Reid could "add two

rooms [to the Ladies College in Bedford Square, which she had founded] and paint and paper it throughout.”³

Martineau’s earlier pamphlet on factory accidents⁴ had “carried the bill” she boasted (not quite truthfully) and she had now been asked by Henry Whitworth, Secretary of the National Association of Factory Occupiers, to write another pamphlet on the “Shipping Dues Bill” to expose unjust practices of the Liverpool Corporation which taxed traffic on the River Mersey passing along its docks but failed to maintain the harbor. Thinking it “a practicable, useful, and exceedingly entertaining piece of work, [Martineau] promised to try” if the evidence satisfied her. Though able to “talk and listen very little now,” she had seen Whitworth to settle the details. For her convenience, the local printer Garnett was engaged to print the pamphlet, which would “set [him] up finely,—the number required being from 6,000 to 10,000.” Whitworth would come back in a week to discuss the concluding suggestions. Though she’d hoped to “have done before X^{mas},” she now worked *slowly* and had to “occupy the American department of ‘Daily News.’” For “a proper acknowledgment of my services” for the new pamphlet, Maria thought they would give £200; and now she found what serious work it was, she thought they might.⁵

Martineau’s pamphlet, *Corporate Traditions and National Rights. Local Dues on Shipping*, was to be an historical survey pointing out the difference between “inviolable” private property and public corporations under the jurisdiction of Parliament. Her argument was aimed at the Liverpool Corporation, which she accused of failing to use its revenue to maintain the harbor. Yet as well as the pamphlet illustrates Martineau’s versatility and professionalism, the “committee” at first failed to be satisfied.⁶

By December relations between Martineau and Whitworth’s committee had reached a crisis, and she wrote to him

A night’s consideration of this melancholy business leaves my mind perfectly clear as state of the case really is, & what I have to say to it.

She had been asked to present “a clear & full account of “‘the Local Dues on Shipping’ in England” from materials supplied by him. Now Robert Lowe, MP for Manchester, had “changed his mind as to certain points of future policy.” His committee had “called in another adviser, whose dishonesty you have distrusted from the beginning” and members of the committee contradicted each other in praise for her, apologizing to Lowe and causing her pamphlet to “aid the Great Western scheme [one of the fiercely competitive railway companies currently active in Britain],” making her the “government hack” by which it was to be done.

Your case is plainly this. You have to choose between still occupying the firm ground of actual fact in regard to Local Dues on Shipping, as it was at the end of last session, & therefore is still to the public whom we address: &, on the other hand, quitting this safe ground for the shaking bog of official schemes.

In place of informing the public “on the history & facts of the case,” the committee now wished to suppress facts and to advocate “untried schemes.” They thereby became the tools of schemers, “&, I need not add, you lose my services, & leave me an injured & insulted ally.”

Martineau’s angry letter went on. If Whitworth agreed to choose “the wiser part,” she

would go on

receiving and obeying all corrections of fact, & altering the last chapter (provided only that I am not made the advocate of a doubtful scheme).

With further stipulations, she ended "Here you have my decision; & you will find it a steady one."⁷

In his contemporary *History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914* Brian D. White outlines the history and abuses of the Liverpool Corporation. Members of the corporation controlled the docks but were exempt from town dues. Funds collected from the harbor were spent on widening *main* city streets while the corporation failed to provide adequate lighting and policing of the docks area. Manchester (a city run by manufacturers rather than by merchants like Liverpool) strongly objected to Liverpool's high dock dues. At one point a (private) scheme to build new docks "with direct railway facilities" failed and responsibility was transferred to the Liverpool Corporation. White cites Martineau's comment that "the Liverpool Corporation were a crew of robber barons without any appearance of incongruity."⁸

In February and March of 1857 Martineau followed up her pamphlet with leaders on the subject in the *Daily News*, first charging the Liverpool Corporation of taxing ships far beyond the legal zone while not taking care of the river works -- for which a Manchester association had been formed (ships from Manchester reached Liverpool by means of a ship canal into the River Mersey). In May Martineau warned of secret knowledge that the dues were to be abolished. She exonerated ordinary citizens of Liverpool who sympathized with manufacturing cities of Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham on shipping dues and attacked the monopolists of Liverpool who paid no town dues. For the sake of free trade, Parliament could delegate but supervise dues being paid for *conservation* of the harbor and the docks.⁹

Later, in July, Martineau expressed "utter astonishment" at Whitworth's statement that her "pamphlet & the articles in 'Daily News'" protesting corporate dues on shipping had furthered "the success of the movement of this session." She would "consult with the Sub-committee as to the appropriation of the hundred guineas," she said -- Maria having apparently overestimated their generosity.¹⁰ No further references to Martineau's pamphlet have been found.

What, exactly, did Martineau's pamphlet contain?

With her usual mix of colorful narrative, human interest and dramatic metaphor Martineau managed to stretch the information she had been given to 161 pages plus a long foldout graph showing the amount of surplus income and extraordinary receipts over the last twenty-six years. Beginning with a "Survey and Analysis" of the tradition of English shipping dues, she traces the history of the Liverpool Corporation from the time when the surrounding coasts were "unpeopled," featuring only "shifting sands" and "dashing tides." When shores melted down old settlements at the mouths of rivers, the middle class settled there and thrived while nobles feuded "over their heads."

After the civil wars, a burgher class gained command of old and new ports. Now Shipping Dues were sometimes amalgamated with Town Dues and applied to objects not directly related to the harbor like new streets and buildings. In the

section titled "Magnitude of the Liverpool case,"¹¹ Martineau outlines the failures of the Liverpool Corporation -- Liverpool not even being an ancient port for which old laws could be used to excuse illegal modern practices.

Moving back and forth in time in "Liverpool under the Crown, its Lessees and Customers," in Section II, Martineau opens with the soldiers of the "Conqueror" looking with terror on the "unrelieved forest and swamp" of Lancashire, then the growing of wool and raising of cattle and swine while the woods were saved for king's hunting and tenants were required to drive in game. Other early occupations comprised fishing, the harvesting of peat and burning of charcoal. King John, who granted Liverpool its original charter, features in several episodes in Martineau's survey of the history of the city. John raised the settlement "to an equality of privilege with London, Bristol, Hull, Lynn, Southampton, Newcastle, and other considerable ports," she goes on (34). Disasters in London like the plague under Charles II proved profitable for Liverpool. Earlier, the noble Molyneuxes of Croxteth had been lessees of town dues under the crown but re-let them to the town Corporation.

Striving to arouse readers' curiosity, Martineau next posits that to gain a clear understanding of the modern claims of the Corporation, it will be well to review its course of action with regard to the port and its revenues, from the time when Lord Molyneux parted with his interest in the dues. It is a remarkable story, worth telling from end to end, however concisely. (45)

Keeping a sharp eye on property ownership, Martineau tells that at one point (in the 18th century?) "a certain Dock Committee built sea-walls into the Mersey, and reclaimed a portion of the strand." A great deal of money was spent, and the Corporation "reserved to themselves these margins and this strand." Oddly, the excavated land was seemingly not accounted for, the dock trustees and the corporation being "the same persons, while representing rival interests." This was the way dock dues were expended "in the very face of the enactment that the rates and dues" should be applied to the payment of the debt arising from the excavation until all obligations were "paid off, satisfied, discharged and redeemed" (55-56). Meanwhile, the Corporation was getting rich from selling of land, but if shipping tolls were not reduced, trade would go elsewhere.

Martineau defends the practice of manufacturers from other cities' paying of dues for use of the harbor. Dues should support industrial interests, not obstruct enterprise, she declares, evidence showing that nothing was being done for the docks out of town dues. In 1851 the dock estate paid 16,000 pounds sterling for "watching and lighting, besides repairing the streets along the quay." Indeed, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and other cities using the harbor were paying for the "law, order, health, comfort, and luxury of Liverpool" (97).

A paper read at British Association on the danger of the estuary being closed by deposits from the sea noted that "disastrous alterations in the channel were occasioned by the carrying out of river walls, [on the Liverpool side of the Mersey] so as to effect an extensive destruction of the Cheshire shore" (107). Nor was there any advantage to Rochdale from payment of Liverpool town dues as the river was not repaired. At the same time the Liverpool Corporation was trying to keep large steamers from landing elsewhere (114-15).



Harriet Martineau [Wiki Commons](#)

Summarizing her argument so far, Martineau quotes Adam Smith, the *Liverpool Mail* and finally Hallam's *Constitutional History* that money could only to be levied from citizens by the authority of Parliament. "My readers" (Martineau's voice seems to rise)

would be astonished that a power early wrested from despotic sovereigns and kept out of their hands by incessant vigilance and at heavy cost . . . should be claimed, with arrogant assurance, by a borough corporation [which declares] there are not any obligations imposed on [themselves] in respect of their receipt of [shipping dues] which were their "absolute and unconditional property. (129-30)

The Liverpool practice was "to levy a tax on the merchants and consumers of all

England who trade through their port” without obligations for improvements (143). And Martineau summarizes the abuse:

For a long course of years, the citizens of Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield and other places have paid the Liverpool borough-rate, in effect, in addition to their own. (145)

Old precedents of private property no longer applied, she concludes, and the “Mersey must be treated, not like a fishpond of King John’s, but a national highway of commerce” (147).

Finally Martineau pleads that *she* is not expected to propose a scheme of reform, her duty having been to present a case of local dues on shipping. Still, supporters of the abuse will be sure to find fault with any method of reform proposed:

Glad to ride off from the principle of the case on any hobby of detail, the vindicators of corruption are exceedingly difficult to catch when once that advantage has been given them (151).

Martineau’s pamphlet ends with various suggestions for reform, no doubt vetted by Whitworth and his committee.

My paper has tried to touch the highpoints of one of Martineau’s mature writings by prescription. Aiming to present a picture of wrong acts by the Liverpool Corporation, in fact her pamphlet seems unnecessarily diffuse. Even the materials she was given seemed to conflict with each other. Yet relying partly on stylistic devices, as in her *Daily News* contributions, she makes a strong case for reform. In the event, she soon turned back resolutely to other topics of interest in her journalistic efforts for the London *Daily News*.

¹ Ken Pye, *Liverpool: The Rise, Fall and Renaissance of a World-Class City* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2014).

² Harriet Martineau to Fanny Wedgwood, 29 August 1855, *Harriet Martineau’s Letters to Fanny Wedgwood* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1983 [henceforth HM, FW and HM/FW], 131-33).

³ For Reid’s woes over the newly opened Ladies’ College in Bedford Square, see “An Opulent Unitarian Lady, Elisabeth Jesser Reid (1789-1866),” *Martineau Society Newsletter* 35 (Summer 2014), 3-10.

⁴ *The Factory Controversy: A Warning Against Meddling Legislation* (Manchester, 1855); see HM/FW 136, note 3; Martineau’s boast about a Parliamentary bill was premature; a bill requiring “mill-gearing” to be subject to arbitration was introduced in the Commons in February and became law on 30 May 1856; see note 9.

⁵ HM to FW, 21 November 1855 (HM/FW 133-37); the “Association” was affiliated with the Association to obtain the Right Appropriation of the Liverpool Town Dues.

⁶ *Corporate Traditions and National Rights: Local Dues on Shipping. (Issued by the Association to obtain the Right Appropriation of the Liverpool Town Dues)* (London: Routledge, n. d. [1856]) surveyed the history and aspects of shipping dues, the special case of private property and public corporations which were under the jurisdiction of Parliament (on 10 March 1856, Parliament agreed upon a committee to inquire into the remarkable matter, but tolls were not abolished until 1861).

⁷ HM to Whitworth, 27 December 1856, *Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau* [henceforth CL] (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007) 4: 23-25.

⁸ Brian D. White, *A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1951) 72-73.

⁹ DN, 20 February, 17 March and 11 May 1857: see Appendix, *Harriet Martineau in the London “Daily News.” Selected Contributions* (New York: Garland, 1994).

¹⁰ See [n. 5]

¹¹ *Local Dues on Shipping* 27-28.



Amelia Opie by John Opie 1798 Wikipedia

Amelia Opie and the Martineaus

Ann Farrant

I was invited to talk about 'Amelia Opie and the Martineaus' at the 2015 Martineau Society Conference because it was held in Norwich and the society always tries to obtain 'a local speaker' for the opening address. The suggestion came from Sophia Hankinson who had read my biography *Amelia Opie: The Quaker Celebrity*. And, of course, both Amelia and Harriet were writers and were born in Norwich.

I felt privileged to be asked, but also somewhat daunted at the prospect of being with people who knew far more about the Martineaus – and, in particular, Harriet – than I did. However, during research for my book I had created a file on the Martineaus, some of which seemed worth pursuing for the talk. For reasons of copyright – and lack of space – only one or two of the images I used to illustrate the talk can be included in this résumé for the Newsletter.

When I began my study of Amelia, Harriet Martineau's obituary in Biographical Sketches was a useful starting point. She wrote the first of these 'sketches' for the London Daily News in November 1852 on the death of Mary Berry. Amelia's death on 2 December 1853 was reported in national and local newspapers across Britain. Harriet's obituary appeared in her newspaper on 12 December. Reproduced in the book, its first three pages are about Norwich and its pedantries, as Harriet also described them in her autobiography.

Writing on Amelia's marriage to the artist and Royal Academician John Opie, who was born in Cornwall, Harriet is dismissive of his talent. She claims he was introduced to London as 'one of the greatest painters the world ever saw', adding that the general public couldn't imagine what it took to be a great painter 'before the continental world of Art was opened to us; and before that happened Opie was dead.'¹

Harriet was born in Gurney Court in Magdalen Street, Norwich, in June 1802. It has a central block with two side wings and it takes its name from John Gurney, a wool merchant, who bought the property in 1754. It had been the town house for many distinguished people prior to that. I have a personal interest in Gurney Court, as my maternal grandfather lived there with his family before he was married in the Octagon Chapel in 1905.

I knew it was Harriet's birthplace and was delighted to discover that Amelia's father Dr. James Alderson was family doctor to the Gurneys who lived there. When I commissioned my friend Geoffrey Kelly to research the history of the building² he found that my great-grandfather occupied the north side from 1896-1906. The Land Tax Assessments also indicated that Thomas Martineau, Harriet's father, was the occupant of the north side in 1801 and 1802, before moving his family to another house in Magdalen Street.



The garden of 2 Gurney Court showing the first floor bedroom, the birthplace of Harriet Martineau in 1802 Photo B. Chilton

Amelia was born in Norwich on 12 November 1769. She was baptised at the Octagon on 6 December 1769 by Samuel Bourn. He had also baptised Harriet's father Thomas, her aunt Margaret Martineau and her uncle Peter Finch Martineau. Peter was one of the family with whom Amelia kept in touch after he left Norwich; he also helped Harriet financially. ³

Amelia's father James was the son of a dissenting minister in Lowestoft; her mother Amelia was the granddaughter of Henry Briggs, rector of Holt in Norfolk. James's brother Robert Alderson followed their father's profession. He was appointed to serve at the Octagon in December 1776; ten years later he left the ministry to train as a lawyer. Eventually he became Recorder of Norwich, Ipswich and Great Yarmouth. One of the last baptisms he performed at the Octagon was of Peter Finch Martineau's son Peter in January 1786.

Anna Letitia Barbauld, the essayist and poet, was an important figure to both Amelia and Harriet. Her father, the Rev. John Aikin taught at Warrington Academy, Lancashire, where Robert Alderson studied. Anna married another student, Rochemont Barbauld, who was descended from French Huguenot refugees. They settled at Palgrave in Suffolk where they ran a school for boys; while in East Anglia they made many friends in Norwich. Anna was one of the first people to encourage Amelia with her writing.

Anna's particular friend was Susannah Taylor. She was the wife of John Taylor, whose grandfather Dr. John Taylor laid the foundation stone of the Octagon and was its first minister. Through his mother Margaret (née Meadows), John was a cousin to the Martineaus, his aunt Sarah (née Meadows) having married David Martineau, Harriet's grandfather. Susannah and Amelia had a close friendship, which became even stronger after Mrs. Alderson died when Amelia was 15. Some of the letters which Amelia wrote to Susannah are held at the Huntington Library.

Mrs. Barbauld's Norwich friends included Harriet's mother. As a girl, Harriet enjoyed visits to the house by this 'comely elderly lady' as she described her. As an adult, she thought highly of her writing, which she mentioned in her obituary of Amelia Opie. Noting that the motto on the title page of Amelia's novel *The Father & Daughter* (1801) was taken from Mrs Barbauld, Harriet believed the older woman's fame at that time would have been considered inferior to her young friend Amelia. 'Time has long rectified the judgement,' declared Harriet. ⁴

Another of Anna Barbauld's friends was Sarah Martineau, Harriet's grandmother. John Opie painted two portraits of her – one for her eldest son Philip Meadows, the other for her second son David. I believe both portraits are still in the family. When the old lady died in November 1800, Amelia wrote to Susannah Taylor. She believed Susannah had attended the deathbed and she felt 'a great curiosity to know the particulars of the last moments'. ⁵

Harriet's uncle Philip Meadows Martineau was a surgeon like his father David and worked for many years at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital. He was active in civic life; with his cousin John Taylor he established the city's first public library and he was a founder of the annual concerts in aid of hospital funds, which later became Norwich & Norfolk Festival. He had a splendid house at Bracondale, where Martineau Lane is named after him. The building was demolished in the 1960s to make way for County Hall.

Dr. Alderson was appointed one of the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital's three assistant surgeons when it was opened for 'the deserving poor' in 1771. He was made a surgeon in 1777 and Philip Meadows Martineau succeeded him. In 1793 he was promoted to physician and Martineau succeeded him again. From its early days the

hospital specialised in lithotomy – the surgical removal of stones, especially from the bladder, all done without anaesthetic until the 1850s. Philip Meadows Martineau became an expert and wrote many papers on the subject.

Another important medical man was Dr. Edward Rigby. He was not a Martineau himself, but was related to the family through his mother Sarah (née Taylor), sister of John Taylor and a cousin of the Martineaus. Born in Lancashire, Edward came to Norwich to be apprenticed to David Martineau. He was a colleague of Amelia's father at the hospital and a frequent visitor to the Alderson household; he campaigned for better conditions in the city workhouses and for vaccination against smallpox.

Rigby's daughter Elizabeth – by his second wife – was a journalist, art critic and historian. In middle age, she married Charles Eastlake, who was later knighted and made president of the Royal Academy. Amelia admired Elizabeth's book about her sojourn on the shores of the Baltic, recommending it in letters to friends in which she told them that Rigby and Martineau were cousins and 'I am proud to say were born and lived in *Norwich*.'⁶ She also appreciated Elizabeth's kindness when – in 1851 – although busy with plans for the Great Exhibition for which Eastlake was one of the Commissioners, she and her husband offered special arrangements for the elderly and lame Amelia to attend the private view of the academy's summer exhibition..

But Harriet and Elizabeth were critical of each other. Here is just one example of Harriet's opinion: 'Nature seems to make odd blunders sometimes. Bulwer [the novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton, another Norfolk man] is a woman of genius got by mistake into a man's form and E. Rigby is a Quarterly reviewer wrongly incarnated in like manner.'⁷

In the 1790s, when still single, Amelia made frequent trips to London, often staying with Dr. Robert Batty and his family in Marlborough Street. William Godwin was also a friend of the Battys. When Amelia first stayed there, Batty's daughter Elizabeth was four years old. A talented amateur artist, she married Philip Martineau, a solicitor, who was a son of Harriet's uncle John. Philip and Elizabeth were the parents of Robert Braithwaite Martineau who became a distinguished artist. Amelia would certainly have followed his early career with interest – he was a student at the Royal Academy in 1848 and became a pupil of William Holman Hunt. His most celebrated work *The Last Day in the Old Home* is owned by the Tate Gallery.

Another acquaintance from Amelia's youth was Samuel Parr, master of the Norwich grammar school from 1778 until 1785. Although ordained into the Church of England – he was curate at St. George's in Colegate – Parr also made friendships with the dissenters. Amelia kept in touch with Parr and his family; so, too, did Peter Finch Martineau. In a letter to Peter in 1837, she reminisced about the three of them being together at Leamington 24 years earlier: '...that never to be forgotten dinner at Dr. Parr's when you all used me ill in laughing while he and I sung the duet of *Alley Croker* he in full *canonicals* and turning up his eyes! It was *funny* I own.'⁸



The Last Day in the Old Home by Robert Braithwaite Martineau (1862)

[Wiki Commons](#)

In the same letter Amelia wrote that Harriet's book (presumably her *Society in America*) was a long time coming out. 'But when it does come, it will, no doubt, amply repay our impatience.' Later she wrote to other friends of her delight in reading the work.

I presume that most members of the Martineau Society will know of Harriet's meeting with the author of *Jane Eyre*, Currer Bell, who turned out to be Charlotte Brontë. Amelia received two letters from Harriet on the subject, which she read to Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, who became her first biographer. Brightwell also kept a journal in which she pasted an account of calling on Mrs. Opie in March, 1850, and having the Martineau letters read to her: '...about Currer Bell which *she* says is a name assumed for the purpose of anonymous authorship. Her real name is Brontë... She was desirous to preserve her incognito as long as possible, on which account, says Miss Martineau, I kept the secret until it was known too widely to be longer concealed. Thackeray has told everybody.'⁹ Brightwell made no mention of the letters in her biography. And who knows what happened to the letters?

Elizabeth Fry (née Gurney), the famous prison reformer, was born at Gurney Court

in 1780, before her parents John and Catherine Gurney moved to Earlham Hall. She was a lifelong friend of Amelia, who she encouraged to do prison visiting in Norwich; she was also a leading influence in Amelia's decision to become a Quaker. Elizabeth approached Harriet in 1833 and they met at Newgate to talk about reform of the Poor Law system.

The most famous portrait of Elizabeth – the one reproduced on the £5 note – was painted by George Richmond. Amelia met Richmond when he was at Earlham Hall to do a portrait of her dear friend Joseph John Gurney and other members of the family. Richmond also painted Harriet Martineau. When she moved into the Knoll, he gave her a copy of his portrait of Mrs. Fry. Richmond's Martineau portrait was bequeathed to the National Portrait Gallery by her niece Emily Higginson.

Both Amelia and Harriet were ardent anti-slavery campaigners, but, due to the 32 years difference in their ages, they operated in different contexts. Amelia and her father were subscribers to the 1794 Norwich edition of *The Interesting Narrative of Ouladah Equiano*, the story of a former slave, as were Harriet's father and her uncle David. Amelia had already started writing anti-slavery poems and continued to do so, as did many other women poets.

The Government's Bill abolishing the slave trade took effect in 1807; the act abolishing slavery itself in the British colonies was passed in 1833. But slavery was still a going concern in America and this was the field in which Harriet took her stance. She appreciated Amelia's continued interest in the slave question and was glad of her royal contacts. Writing to W.J. Fox in May 1832, she mentioned *Demerara*, her short story set on a West Indies plantation: 'I have sent *Demerara* to the Duke of Gloucester through Mrs. Opie who knows him well and has taken me up vehemently.'¹⁰

This was Prince William Frederick, the Duke of Gloucester, a staunch advocate of the abolition of slavery. Amelia had first met him in the 1790s, when he was a guest of the Gurneys of Earlham on several occasions. Louisa and Richenda Gurney wrote glowing accounts of him in their journals, describing him as sociable and agreeable. John Opie's last portrait was of the Duke; it was completed just before his death. The Duke wrote a letter of sympathy to Amelia and said he was glad Royal etiquette allowed him to follow the Opie funeral procession in his carriage to St. Paul's Cathedral.

In Wheatley's Martineau biography I came across a brief reference to Colonel Perronet Thompson being in the chair at a meeting in London at which the members 'resolved unanimously that they fully appreciated the moral and political honesty which had inspired Miss Martineau to refuse the pension offered her by a Whig administration.'¹¹ The name rang a bell because of my Opie research. Thomas Perronet Thompson, an army officer and politician, was from a Hull banking family who were friends and supporters of William Wilberforce. His older brother John Vincent married Amelia's cousin Margaret Alderson. He was an anti-slavery campaigner and, like Harriet, a staunch supporter of the Anti-Corn-Law League. His surviving papers include a letter from him to Harriet and her reply.¹²

When Amelia wrote her *Memoir* of John Opie to accompany the publication of his lectures on painting,¹³ the subscribers included Harriet's uncles David, Peter and

John and a Philip Meadows Taylor of Liverpool (possibly the son of Richard and Margaret Taylor and therefore cousin to these uncles). Prince William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester, headed the list of 206 subscribers.

When she died, Amelia had been a member of the Society of Friends for nearly 30 years. Her conversion to Quakerism caused a mixed reaction. Harriet was waspish: '... [Amelia] suddenly discovered that all is vanity; she took to grey silks and muslin, and the "thee" and "thou", quoted Habakkuk and Micah with gusto and set her heart upon preaching.' ¹⁴ As Harriet was only 22 at the time of Amelia's conversion, much of what she wrote was 'hearsay'. Anyone who has made a study of memoirs and biographies will know how diverse are people's recollections and opinions of the same event. Amelia herself wrote a version of John's deathbed which was significantly different to the account given by a fellow artist.

Nevertheless Harriet did acknowledge some of Amelia's accomplishments and personal charms. She opened her notice stating that Amelia's death was the loss of 'another of that curious class of English people – the provincial literary lion'. ¹⁵ One might say that the piece makes a good starting point for a study of both women.

¹ Harriet Martineau, *Biographical Sketches 1852-1875* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1888), p.332.

² Geoffrey I. Kelly, *Gurney Court Norwich: A History* (2005). Norwich Heritage Centre holds a copy.

³ Norwich Heritage Centre: Microfilm collection of Harriet Martineau Papers (Birmingham University Library): Ref: 1250, August 1843.

⁴ Martineau, *Biographical Sketches*, p.333

⁵ Huntington Library, Opie MSS, OP60, December 1800

⁶ British Library, Stanhope (Harrington) Papers, 82734, Vol.iv, December 1841.

⁷ Deborah Logan, ed., *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), Vol.2, pp.242-3.

⁸ Haverford College Library, Call No.861, Opie MSS, April 1837.

⁹ Norfolk Record Office, MS 69, *Diary of Cecilia L. Brightwell 1842-66*, March 1850.

¹⁰ Logan, *Collected Letters*, Vol.1, p.136

¹¹ Vera Wheatley, *The Life and Work of Harriet Martineau* (New Jersey: Essential Books Inc., 1957), p.223.

¹² Hull University Archives, *Papers of Thomas Perronet Thompson*, DTH/3/16, November, 1842.

¹³ Amelia Opie, *A Memoir*, prefixed to John Opie's *Lectures on Painting* (London: Longman, Hurst, Reese & Orme, 1809)

¹⁴ Martineau, *Biographical Sketches*, p.334.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.329.

Martineau Society 2015 Conference – Gaby's Blog

Gaby Weiner

I have just returned from the annual meeting of the Martineau Society at Norwich which took place last week. It was a fantastic meeting – about 35 people gathered together at the George Hotel in Norwich to listen to papers on the Martineaus in the Lake District, Norwich, 'Down Under' and on topics like the Opie family, journalism,

travel writing, economy, and psychology.

There were trails and visits to places and spaces in Norwich that meant a great deal to the Martineaus, such as the remarkable Unitarian Octagon Chapel where the Martineaus worshipped and the house in Magdalen Street where Harriet Martineau, and also some decades earlier the reformer, Elizabeth Fry, were born. We also went to Norwich library – in the middle of Norwich's Pride celebrations (also amazing) – to see the range of papers and books kept there on the Martineau family.

But the meeting was not all serious. There was an evening of what is now called stand-up comedy, humorous sketches and songs, and a hilarious auction where items associated – often in the loosest possible way – with the Martineaus were sold off to raise money for the Society.

Luckily for those that weren't there, many of the presentations will appear in the next Martineau Society Newsletter, out later this year. Next year's meeting is in Birmingham about this time of year – details about registration will be posted up before the end of the year

In Memoriam: Professor Linda H. Peterson (1948-2015)

Valerie Sanders

The Martineau Society notes with great sadness the death of an inspirational Victorian scholar, Linda Peterson, whose books on Victorian women's autobiography and Harriet Martineau have helped shape the work of many literary critics and historians.

Linda was a Yale Professor whose death on 25 June this year took place on her university campus. As the online obituaries point out, she was so determined not to be defined by the cancer that afflicted her for many years that she continued writing to the very end of her life. Her last book (to be published later this year) is an edited collection of essays, *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing* - with a cover illustration of Harriet Martineau. Martineau was also the 'cover girl' for her *Becoming a Woman of Letters* (Princeton UP, 2009), and featured in her *Victorian Autobiography: The Tradition of Self-Interpretation* (Yale UP, 1986). Her discussion of Martineau as a 'sage writer' (or not) appeared in Thais Morgan's *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse* (Rutgers UP, 1991), and of course she is well known to us as editor of the excellent Broadview edition of Martineau's *Autobiography* (2007).

I was lucky enough to have met her more than once at conferences in the US and elsewhere and always found her both warm and generous in her encouragement of other scholars. Back in 2013 Gaby Weiner and I invited her to contribute an essay to our forthcoming collection of essays on *Harriet Martineau and the Disciplines*. She responded with her customary kindness – 'This approach to Martineau's work looks intriguing, and I like the (pre)disciplinary focus' - but had concerns even then about

committing to our deadline. Apart from the pressures of work from other projects, she must also have been anxious about whether her health would hold out, but few people (including us) knew of her illness until her death was announced.

Linda Peterson was never exclusively a Martineau scholar, but she made a major contribution both to the quantity and quality of Martineau scholarship, often making Martineau the focus of her study of women writers and autobiography. Her writing was always fresh, original, scholarly, stimulating, and a pleasure to read. We owe her a huge debt, and send our condolences to her husband Fred, her mother Martha, and her three younger sisters.

Recent New Members (UK unless stated)

John Drysdale, Mary Edwards, Mary Howard, Clare Marsh and Jane Vogler

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.

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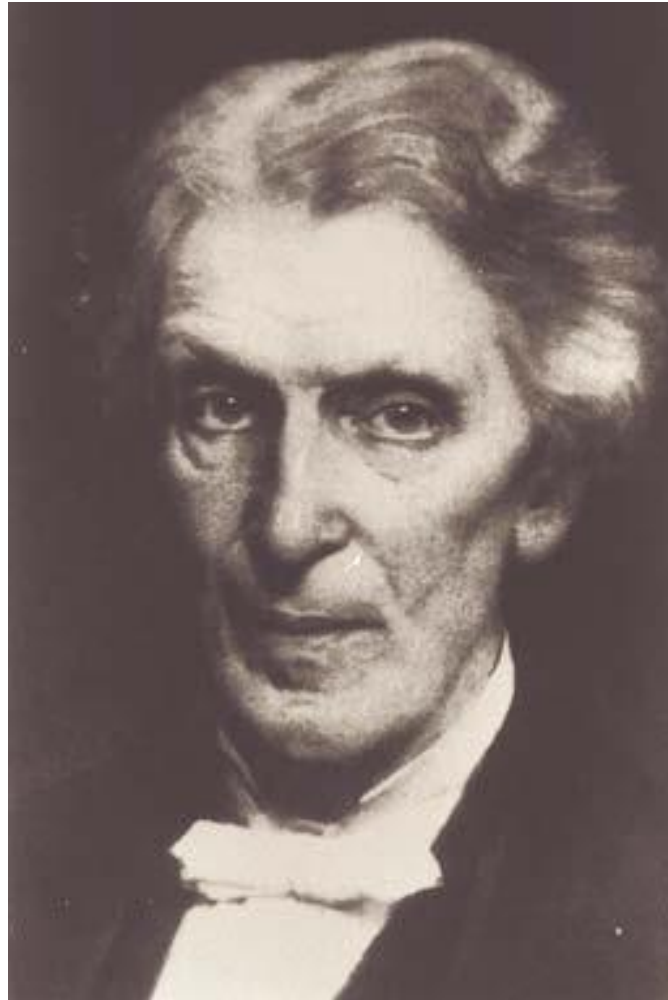
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There are secrets which we may unworthily hold *against* our fellow-men: by the keeping of which we may secure to ourselves an advantage at their expense... Whenever, in such affairs, you allow your neighbour to enter into agreements which he would refuse, did he know what you could tell, assuredly you make a tricky and degrading use of the information you possess. If, for example, a shareholder privately learns that some act of intended legislation or some project of directors will double, in a few days, the price of some particular stock; and he buys up on all hands from those who are not in the secret. I believe persons are to be found on every exchange who will defend such transactions as these, and even regard them as representing the very spirit of all bargaining, in which, it is said, each member must take care of himself. If so, let them not wonder that among men uncorrupted by such a school, the very name of "competition" is becoming hateful, and socialistic dreams are taking place of the old reverence for property.

The whole fabric of our system of engagements with one another rests on the basis of mutual benefit: every instance in which one man's profit is, even unwittingly, another man's loss, convicts it of partial failure: every doctrine which justifies the deliberate acceptance of such a gain brings upon it total dishonour.

James Martineau *Hours, II, xvii*



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