

# **The Martineau Society**

**Newsletter No. 40**

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#### Martineau Society Subscription Information:

Yearly subscriptions are due on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

\* 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

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#### *Editor's Note*

Have you read in the British national newspapers that Birmingham is now a major attraction for visitors to the United Kingdom? The Martineau Society's Conference in July, 2016, has no doubt contributed to enhancing the visitor figures. It was, of course, held in Birmingham (and about 500 metres from a grammar school attended many decades ago by your editor. The school has since disappeared under the major road development of Broad Street, Birmingham). It certainly impresses the visitor as a big, bustling city Birmingham is again constantly renewing itself with new buildings and highway works just as it must have done in the nineteenth century as it grew to be the largest conurbation outside of London.

This *Newsletter* opens with a report on our Birmingham Conference from Beth Torgerson. The articles from Ruth Watts, John Vint and Lyn Holt were given as papers at the Conference. Ruth looks at the extraordinary contribution to Birmingham in engineering, law and many other fields from the Martineau family as they dispersed from Norwich. John explores an alternative to Birmingham and other cities and towns for unemployed farm workers in the nineteenth century, fleeing from land enclosures and the collapse of the agricultural economy – emigration. Lyn looks at the earlier Martineau family profession, that which they brought to Norwich in 1695 – surgery without anaesthetics!

Harriet's reputation continues to prosper. Were you able to listen to the Radio 4 broadcast on 8 December about Harriet Martineau and her contribution to society in the discussion between Melvyn Bragg and our own Valerie Sanders and others? It was well worth listening to. Moreover, the broadcast must surely have brought Harriet to the attention of millions of radio listeners. Well done, Valerie!

Interesting publicity of Harriet Martineau has arisen in Norfolk in recent months. Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library has started "Heritage Hours", free lectures at the Forum on Tuesday lunchtimes. Harriet Martineau is the subject on 14<sup>th</sup> March. (See

<http://www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC172061>). And yet more. Georgette Vale, an actor, has prepared a presentation for schools and clubs in which she uses Harriet's words and writings about her to give a portrayal of Harriet dressed as Harriet might have appeared. The portrayal of Harriet adds to those Georgette gives of prominent figures such as Jane Austen and Edith Cavell. The outings of Harriet have been most successful. Georgette's interest in Harriet has led her to take up membership of our Society.

Georgette has come across the name Joseph Martineau but can find nothing about him. She asks if members or readers know anything of Joseph. Please send any information about Joseph to your editor.

The success of the Conference in Birmingham in 2016 caused the selection at the Society's AGM of another bustling city for the Conference in 2017 – Hull, the new City of Culture. Members will have received details of the Conference on 24 – 27, July, 2017 either online or by post. More details, including the applications forms and with details of Society bursaries for students, can be found on the Society's website.

Our thanks go to all our contributors including those whose articles have been received and, it is hoped, will appear in the next Newsletter. The errors you will find in this edition are those of your editor. Do point them out. We have room for letters and an 'Errata' section. Enjoy your reading of the *Newsletter* and we hope you will welcome it as blessed relief from news of contemporary politics and events across the world!

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## ***Martineau Society Conference 2016, Birmingham***

### ***Beth Torgerson***

The annual Martineau Society Conference was held at the Eaton Hotel in Birmingham from Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016. 25 delegates attended, including members of the Martineau family. Jeremy and Judy Martineau, who traveled from Australia, and James and Meg Martineau, attended the conference for the first time, joining Victorine Martineau and the other 22 members for a wonderfully organized and intellectually stimulating conference.

Monday night's opening talk, "The Martineau Family and Birmingham," was given by Jeremy Martineau and Stuart Hobday. An extensive overview of the Martineau family tree and their ongoing connection to Birmingham was given. One of the highlights from the talk was learning that five mayors and lord mayors of Birmingham were from the Martineau family. Starting with Robert Martineau, sibling to Harriet and James, this civic honor was conferred from father to son for five generations. Robert Martineau was mayor from 1846 - 1847; Thomas Martineau from 1884 - 1887; Ernest Martineau from 1912 - 1914, when he resigned to take a regiment to France; Wilfrid Martineau from 1940 - 1941; and Denis Martineau from 1986 - 1987. Because of the timing, since Birmingham became a city (rather than an incorporated borough) in 1889, the last three

- Ernest, Wilfrid, and Denis - had the title Lord Mayor of Birmingham. Jeremy Martineau shared their lord mayoral medallions. A second highlight was the insight that in Harriet Martineau's *Health, Husbandry, and Handicrafts* (1860), the handicrafts section can be seen as a tribute to Birmingham. In three discussed articles, first published in Dickens's *Household Words*, Harriet Martineau celebrates the creativity, skill, artistic detail of the local workers in Birmingham. She also focused on the economics of working women. In a tribute to the Jewellery Quarter, she notes how small specialized skills meant that owners and workers lived side by side, leading to a more democratic working and living situation than that experienced by those workers connected to either nineteenth - century mills or factories. This fact helped make Birmingham one of the more progressive cities in the country.

On Tuesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, four interesting talks made for a stimulating and full morning. First, Keiko Funaki gave her presentation entitled "First Steps on Harriet Martineau's *Illustration: From The Rioters*," in which she pointed out that, whereas classical economy focuses only on the exchange value of the market economy and does not treat the domestic labor that is exterior to the market, Harriet Martineau's economic thought recognized the use value of domestic labor. Second, Valerie Sanders explored Maria Martineau's multiple roles in her presentation entitled "'Maria grows more and more glorious': Harriet Martineau's Niece-Companion-Nurse-Secretary." Through her presentation, Sanders raised questions about Victorian women's professional work and the differences when such work was paid or unpaid and about what Maria may have thought about her own multifaceted work for her famous aunt. Sanders also used Maria's own letters, given in Deborah Logan's *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, to recreate a nice sense of who Maria was. Third, Ruth Watts' "Education, Civic Service and Social Reform in Birmingham: The Martineau Connections" returned to the Martineau - Birmingham connection of the opening talk. Watts showed how a variety of issues linked Harriet Martineau's interests with those of the city: family, work and industry, economic, social, religious, and educational. Watts showed how the Unitarians of Birmingham, including the Martineau family, influenced many of the city's institutions, often leading to progressive reforms. Fourth, Pamela Woof shared her extensive knowledge of William Wordsworth and his family in her presentation entitled "Harriet Martineau: Notes to her Neighbour." In addition, Woof used three descriptive passages about their respective visits to Holland to contrast the writing styles of Dora Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, and Harriet Martineau.

Tuesday afternoon's outing included a visit to the Key Hill Cemetery where we visited the Martineau family grave, a short guided tour at the Pen Museum, and a leisurely walk along the canals of Birmingham. After dinner, Stuart Hobday and I had a great time leading this year's Pub Quiz, which included a variety of questions about Birmingham and about the Martineau siblings in their youth. The quiz ended on a musical note by testing everyone's knowledge of popular music. As expected, the competition was fierce, which made for a fun evening!

On Wednesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, three more thought-provoking talks were given in the morning. First, John Vint presented on Martineau's tale "Homes Abroad" from her *Illustrations of Political Economy*. In his talk, entitled "Harriet Martineau and Emigration: Homes Abroad," Vint discussed Martineau's awareness of the larger emigration debates, how Martineau was in favor of the assisted emigration of paupers and the poor to Australia, and how she wrote this particular tale to promote emigration

as a potential cure for England's poverty and pauperism. Second, Elizabeth Arbuckle, in her presentation entitled "Harriet Martineau in Retirement?" worked to fill in those missing twenty-one years that followed Martineau's writing of her *Autobiography* in 1855, showing how Martineau continued to write for both daily and monthly venues, such as the *Daily News*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, and the *Anti-Slavery Standard* in America, as well as working with editors interested in reissuing some of her earlier articles in book form, such as her earlier obituaries for the *Daily News* reissued as *Biographical Sketches*. Third, Lyn Holt presented on "The Martineau Surgeons," noting that six surgeons are to be found in the Martineau family tree. Holt focused primarily on Gaston Martineau, the most famous of these surgeons, developing the historical context for his relocation in England, first in London and then in Norwich, and then developing what medicine and surgery was like in the late seventeenth - and early eighteenth - centuries when he was practicing.



Harriet Martineau in 1835 by Samuel Stilman Osgood (1808 – 85)

Wednesday's afternoon outing was the much-lauded visit to see the special collections archive at the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham. The Cadbury Library is home to the Harriet Martineau Papers, the largest collection of Martineau papers. Jennifer Childs, the head archivist for the special collections, led the tour through the library and shared manuscripts, letters, and items from the collection. One material object that received much attention was the lock of hair from an Egyptian mummy that Harriet Martineau brought back from her Eastern travels. Among the written artifacts on display, Martineau's will became of special interest when James Martineau realized that he was current heir of Martineau's silver plate given to her in 1843 as a testimonial, as set out in by the conditions in her will. After Wednesday's dinner, everyone participated in the annual auction, the Martineau Society's annual fundraiser. This year, Gaby Weiner acted as our amazing auctioneer, with Carol Chilton as her able assistant. In addition to everyone having a grand time trying to outbid each other on all of the available Martineau writing and memorabilia, the auction raised over £270.

On Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, James and Meg Martineau made the final day of the conference a memorable one by sharing two family heirlooms. First, they displayed a portrait only known within the family circle of Harriet Martineau, painted during her travels to America. According to the inscription on the back of the painting, the portrait was "painted in the Judiciary Committee room of the United States Senate at Washington by S.S. Osgood in the month of February 1835." Then, they shared the one piece of the silver plate—a large silver bowl engraved with the initials H.M. and the year 1843—that Harriet Martineau received as a testimonial, which had been included within Martineau's will. Only two presentations were scheduled in the morning before the society's Annual General Meeting. First, I presented on *The Crofton Boys*, one of the tales for children from Martineau's *Playfellow Series*. In my presentation entitled "Some Thoughts on Martineau's *The Crofton Boys*," I explored four different ways that readers and scholars could approach this tale: through an autobiographical approach, through a lens looking at Victorian gender issues, through a lens looking at how Martineau represents disability and disability issues, and lastly, through a post - colonial lens that looks at issues of Empire, taking into account how Martineau's stance toward English colonial power in India changed over time. Together Stuart Hobday and Gaby Weiner gave the last presentation of the conference entitled "Book Talks."

In 2016, two exciting new books on Harriet Martineau are being published: Stuart Hobday's *Encounters with Harriet Martineau* (available in December 2016) and Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner's *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of the Disciplines* (available in August 2016). While each book offers insightful new information about Harriet Martineau, the two books are quite different in their selected topics, audiences, and publishing venues. Hobday's book offers a more informal yet in - depth look at Martineau's connection with many of her famous contemporaries, such as Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Gaskell, August Comte, amongst others. Hobday noted that his goal was "to show the people and personal stories behind the history, provide a narrative of Martineau's outspoken influence and be a meditation on history itself and the impact of ideas." *Encounters with Harriet Martineau* will appeal to the general history reader as well as readers who are interested in the history of ideas and in the personalities of these great Victorians. And, as an added bonus, Hobday has included a chapter on the Kate Middleton and Martineau family connection that will be

of special interest to many readers. *Encounters with Harriet Martineau* is published through Unbound ([www.unbound.com](http://www.unbound.com)), a new online publishing company that offers a crowd-sourcing model, somewhat similar to the subscription model that Martineau herself used when first funding her *Illustrations of Political Economy*. Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner's *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of the Disciplines* is a more traditional book of scholarship. Their book is an edited collection of essays by scholars from many different academic fields who, together, demonstrate the scope and significance of Martineau's writings. The essays discuss Martineau's influence on such emerging fields as economics, sociology, psychology, journalism, education, and history. *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of the Disciplines* will engage scholars from a variety of backgrounds, especially those interested in the many interdisciplinary connections offered by Martineau's life and her work. *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of the Disciplines* is published by Routledge. To use the 20% discount, please enter the code FLR40 at checkout when ordering online at the Routledge website ([www.routledge.com/9781472446930](http://www.routledge.com/9781472446930)).

For a sense of what was covered during the AGM meeting, please refer to the Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM that will be available at next year's Martineau Society conference.

In conclusion, the Martineau Society Conference 2016 in Birmingham was a grand success, with great papers, lively conversations, enjoyable local outings, and entertaining evening events. A big "thank you" goes out to everyone who contributed to this conference, especially to Sharon Connor and Stuart Hobday for their work in organizing the conference.

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### ***Education, civic service and social reform in Birmingham: the Martineau connection***

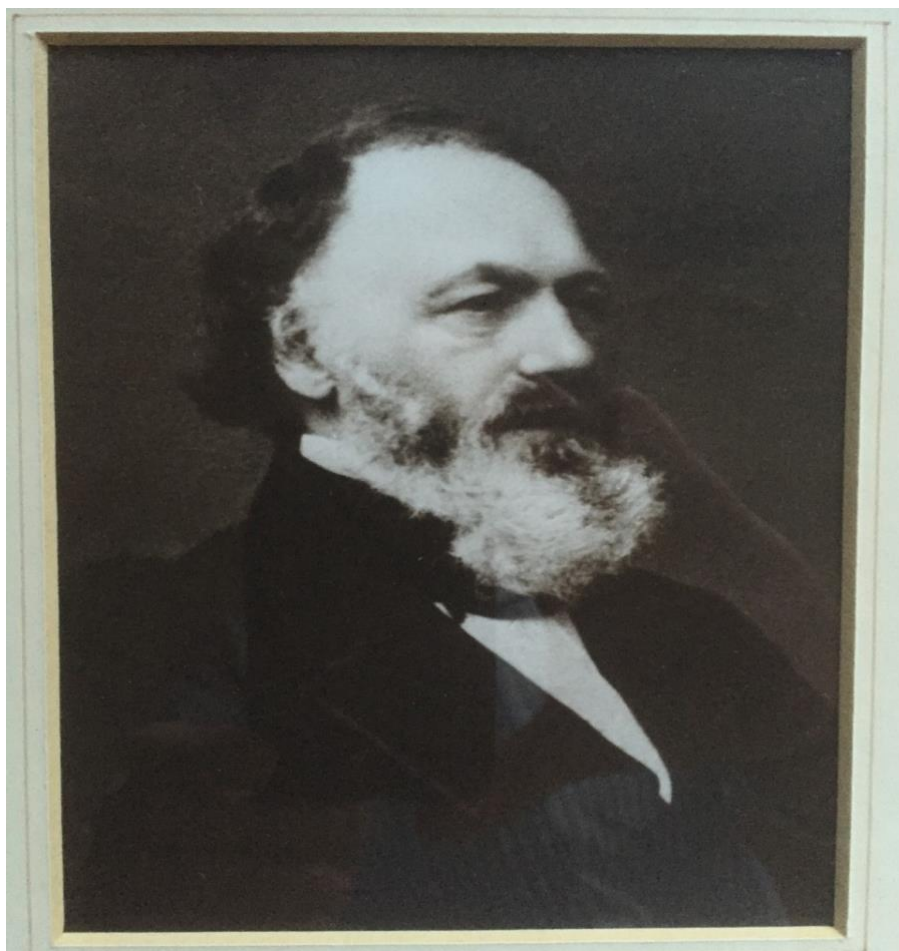
#### ***Ruth Watts***

Harriet Martineau's connections to Birmingham can be seen through a web of Birmingham links, both direct and indirect, to issues she cared about. Such links in Harriet's lifetime can be discerned largely through examining family connections and economic issues, ethical and religious links, social concerns such as slavery and women's rights and education for all.

The major connection through her family is discussed elsewhere here: her brother Robert lived in Birmingham where he became Mayor in 1846 and Harriet often visited his mansion in Edgbaston; from the mid-fifties her 'glorious niece' Maria Martineau, Robert's daughter, and then Maria's younger sister Jenny cared for her<sup>1</sup> while their brother Thomas was a key adviser to her on her business and legal affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Harriet sometimes used her Birmingham relatives for help in her research. For example, in 1864 Susan Martineau advised concerning how the best ribbons were made in Coventry when commenting on a paper Harriet had sent them. Earlier in 1851

she had begged her aunt to write against tight lacing, citing a school in Birmingham where a girl had died and others were ill through taking no notice of strictures against this practice.<sup>3</sup> Another instance can be seen over Harriet's somewhat dogmatic views on the New Poor Law and trade unions, which despite her sympathetic depictions of poverty and working-class life, lost her much working class support. In October 1859 she included evidence from her relatives in Birmingham, when she published 'Secret Organisation of Trade Unions' in the *Edinburgh Review*, seeking to expose the extent of trade unionism and their powers over individual members. In the nineteenth century, Unitarians in Birmingham generally did not support trade unions though were keen on the cooperative movement. Harriet's correspondence with her nephews Thomas and Robert Francis Martineau about strikes demonstrates that Robert was helping her find 'materials for this most important article', although he admitted that the diversity of Birmingham manufactures meant there was little trouble with strikes there. Saying he could find out more from Coventry, he went there on Harriet's behalf only to discover this was a 'lockout' by the masters not a strike by the workers. He sent her other documents including an acerbic letter of the Flint Glass Masters' Association to the *Edinburgh Review* against the idea that they are 'despots' who 'stringently' rule their workmen.<sup>4</sup>



Robert Martineau (1795 – 1870)

Mayor of Birmingham 1846 – 47



In the late 1850s Harriet's article did gain her a brief authoritative standing on labour matters of the kind she had enjoyed in the 1830s, but attitudes were changing and many, including the Prime Minister Gladstone were supportive of the new skilled trade unionists so Harriet lost her place as an authority on the labour question.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Harriet's generally more sympathetic attitude to workers was illustrated in the article for *Household Words* which she wrote after visiting Chance's Glassworks in Smethwick, Birmingham in 1852 which produced the glass for the Crystal Palace which housed the Great Exhibition in 1851. In depicting daily life in the factory, she reflected on the differentiated work of men, women and children, the dispiriting extreme heat and noise in some areas but also the reading rooms for the men and the school set up for the children. Protection for workers was provided by a Provident Society or 'Sick Club' and generally the conditions of employment and pay compared favourably with other factories of the day.<sup>6</sup>

Undoubtedly, an early connection would have been religion. Harriet's family in Birmingham were Unitarians and, whilst she was still one, she may well have worshipped with them at the New Meeting at which Joseph Priestley, the one Unitarian whose work she always cherished had been minister 1780-91. When in *Briery Creek*, in her *Tales of Political Economy*, she aimed to teach people how to live together in cooperative communities where all could attain a fair living and an education which could develop their whole being, she modelled its humane leader Dr Sneyd in America on Priestley and his family.<sup>7</sup> Priestley's educational philosophy and activities had greatly influenced both Harriet and Birmingham Unitarians. Male Unitarians such as members of the Ryland and Follet Osler family, whom she might well have met in Birmingham, had been educated at Hill Top School and its successor Hazelwood, schools which were run by Priestley's ardent follower Thomas Wright Hill and his amazing family. (All five sons had outstanding careers as inventors or educationalists while Matthew Davenport became Recorder of Birmingham. Rowland invented the penny postage stamp.) Their aim was useful, pupil-centred education which provided pupils with enough knowledge, skills and understanding to allow them to continue self-education through life, one hopes, making them happy and most useful citizens. Hazelwood became a brilliant showplace for almost revolutionary methods and principles of education in middle-class boys' education at the time. Not so well-known but also very advanced for the day, especially in its teaching of geography and interest in science, was the school for girls in Edgbaston run by Priestley's granddaughter Catherine Finch.<sup>8</sup>

Harriet would not have visited the same building of the New Meeting that Priestley preached in, for it was destroyed in the riots of 1791. The chapel continued in Moor Street from 1802, however, and, although, like its sister congregation the Old Meeting, was relatively small – the number of subscribers were 180 in 1811, 148 in 1854, 253 in 1888 – yet actual attendance at services was much larger, especially in the later century when large audiences were drawn by message of social service. The Birmingham Unitarians had significant educational concerns. Their Sunday schools were exceptional, attracting many working-class pupils for their broad secular education and democratic organisation, the boys' schools being particularly successful with their benefit societies, savings clubs and the like. When, in the 1830s some working-class teachers thought democracy was somewhat lacking, they formed their own flourishing Unitarian chapel at Newhall Hill. From mid century, Unitarians in

Birmingham began establishing day schools too, run on the same strictly nondenominational principles. The Old and New Meetings also ran successful charity schools (these becoming one school for girls from 1813), focused on elementary education and useful work but with the ladies in charge taking much care taken over general well-being and health of the girls, even when they went into service. Like elsewhere, Birmingham Unitarians also ran a domestic mission to the very poor from the 1840s. The New Meeting Ministry to the poor, run by John Gent Brooks, a former stocking weaver and Chartist, flourished with evening schools, a Mutual Improvement Society and, when established in Lawrence Street, large, popular Sunday schools, a free day school for 120 girls under a college trained Mistress and flourishing recreational activities. Such developments continued for decades under a series of excellent missionaries and with support from wealthier patrons such as Joseph Chamberlain, Mrs Kenrick and Robert Francis Martineau.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, notwithstanding on - going deep opposition to their religious beliefs and various internal tensions, Birmingham Unitarians became a significant voice in civic concerns. For example, despite legal disabilities and social scorn, between 1733 and 1838 there only 27 years when one of the members of Old or New Meetings was not Bailiff, an important post in Birmingham. Birmingham became incorporated in 1838 and from 1841-93, 23 of its mayors were Unitarian. Many others were influential Councillors and officers involved in civic and educational reforms. This before even the 1860s to the 1890s when the Chamberlain and Kenrick families, together with other Unitarians and powerful Quakers, dominated the civic life of Birmingham and implemented their civic gospel.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, by this time, many of the congregation of the New Meeting were becoming, like Harriet's relatives, richer and more powerful, many of them moving to fashionable Edgbaston.<sup>11</sup> Some of them were also becoming dissatisfied with 'the dry bones and thrashed-out chaff' which Thomas Henry Ryland described had become the preaching at the New Meeting. Like many other Unitarians in the 1840s, he and his wife became enthralled by the liberal, ardent, non-denominational preaching of George Dawson, then a new, Baptist minister at Mount Zion. Robert Francis Martineau, indeed, was 'enchanted', exclaiming "Oh! ... this is the preaching I have longed for all my life".<sup>12</sup> When, after 1846, Dawson and his admirers set up the non - denominational Church of the Saviour, some Unitarians left the New Meeting while others worked to reform it. Thus it was superseded in 1860 - 2 by the Church of the Messiah erected in Broad Street, although some members regarded this as an example of social snobbery, marking a wider gulf between the richer and poorer members of the congregation.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, those others, like the Martineaus, who became strong supporters of this new church, desired both religious and social change. This was particularly seen from 1868 when the Rev Dr Henry Crosskey was appointed. His insistent message that local government should promote the material and moral welfare of all its inhabitants appealed both to his Birmingham congregation and many others, fitting well with the 'civic gospel' preached by both Dawson and the Congregationalist minister Robert Dale. As Asa Briggs said, under his leadership, 'the Church of the Messiah became more than the centre of a small sect: it was a cultural and intellectual centre of a whole society, a place where ideas about society were openly and critically discussed'.<sup>14</sup> Members of the congregation included Joseph Chamberlain, Arthur and William Kenrick and Robert Francis Martineau. Interestingly, both Dawson and Crosskey had

been strongly influenced in their religious views by James Martineau. Crosskey had studied under James at Manchester New College and deeply absorbed his views on 'the 'all - pervasive indwelling of God in humanity and in the universe and a system of ethics based upon reverence for the person and work of Christ.'<sup>15</sup>

Harriet had long since disassociated herself from Unitarianism by then, but she would have appreciated many of the educational and civic policies of Birmingham Unitarians. Crosskey had preached against slavery – an issue in which Birmingham women, including some Unitarians, had played a prominent role.<sup>16</sup> He admired the radical American abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison and he and his wife, Hannah, were to the forefront in many educational and social initiatives. In particular, both were ardent supporters of women's rights, including the suffrage and higher education. Helen Plant has called their chapel 'a centre for feminist activists': this included both women and men from the Unitarian network. Crosskey, an eminent geologist, gave lectures on religion and science to women; he was President of the Birmingham auxiliary of the Women's Liberal Association and of the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society, to both of which many females from leading Unitarian families belonged: by 1885 half of the latter's committee and all of its officers were from the Church of the Messiah. For example, the family group of the Taylors and Oslers were energetically concerned in these feminist ventures, particularly Catherine Osler who was deeply involved in the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society and the Birmingham Women's Liberal Association, among other committees both local and national.<sup>17</sup>

Plant argues that it was Crosskey's interpretation of James Martineau's theology of gender equality, together with the ideas of radical Unitarians that led him to believe that women should be admitted into all areas of life. Certainly Birmingham Unitarians of both sexes in the 1870s and 1880s, worked together on many committees for social and educational reform.<sup>18</sup> Harriet would have rejoiced, for instance, in the clear lead Unitarians, together with Quakers and some other women, helped Birmingham give on the admission of women into medicine and the appointment of women doctors,<sup>19</sup> and similarly in the fight against the Contagious Diseases Acts.<sup>20</sup> Individual women prominent in other ventures included Alice Beale, founder of the Birmingham District Nursing Society and first president of the Birmingham Settlement, and Louisa Ryland, whose donation of well-planned, beautiful parks, full of leisure facilities, helped change the whole conception of such urban amenities.<sup>21</sup>

Crosskey was also much involved in the establishment and teaching at Mason Science College, founded in 1880, which like its successor, the University of Birmingham of 1900, not only opened up chances for higher education to men of the area but also to women on (ostensibly at least), fully equal terms – the first English University to do so. Joseph Chamberlain, the driving force behind the new university, was its first Chancellor with his close relative Charles Beale as his Vice-Chancellor and members of the Kenrick and Martineau family on the Council. Similar names appear among those supporting the earlier Mason College.<sup>22</sup> These families, both men and women, were prominent, together again with Quakers and a few other Nonconformists, on the committee which, under the leadership of a liberal Anglican, George Dixon, established the first modern, independent, proprietary, non-sectarian, girl's high school in Birmingham – Edgbaston High in 1877.<sup>23</sup>

Birmingham Unitarians of this period supported other schools for the middle-classes, but they are best known for their national leadership in the agitation setting up the

National Education League which was heavily financially supported by the Kenrick, Martineau and Chamberlain families. This led to the 1870 Education Act, which for all its limitations, at last supplied elementary education for all which, early in Birmingham, and in the next two decades nationwide, became free and compulsory. Chamberlain, Crosskey and others played a prominent role in Birmingham's proud implementation of this.<sup>24</sup> This was in line with the working class education and public culture promoted by Unitarian men and women into the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

These issues could be discussed and analysed in greater detail and more added but one hopes they illustrate why Harriet found, or would have found, much of the interests and preoccupations of her family and colleagues in Birmingham congenial.

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Todd, *Harriet Martineau at Ambleside* (Carlisle: Bookcase, 2002), 26, 185-87, 189, 191-96; 'Martineau Family', *Wikipedia* (accessed 25/03/2016), 1-7

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Cadbury Research Library [CRL], Harriet Martineau Papers, HM 669-75; HMM B/1/1, B/4

<sup>3</sup> Letters from Susan Martineau to Harriet Martineau, Cadbury Research Library [CRL], Harriet Martineau Papers, HM, 661-3

<sup>4</sup> Harriet Martineau on Strikes, CRL, HM, MSS 3/I, 1321-26; see also 3/I, 1319-1417; Emily Bushrod, *The History of Unitarianism in Birmingham from the Middle of the Eighteenth Century to 1893*, (unpubl). University of Birmingham, M.A., 1954), 234. Influential Unitarians opposed the Chartists but teachers of the Old Meeting Sunday Schools admired the Birmingham Chartists – *Ibid.*, 234-35

<sup>5</sup> Mark Curthoys, "Secret organisation of trades": Harriet Martineau and 'free "labour"' in Ella Dzelzainis and Cora Kaplan (eds.) *Harriet Martineau: Authorship, society and empire* (Manchester UP, 2010), 138-50

<sup>6</sup> Tom Gidlow, 'Making glass at Chance's Glasswork: a visitor's account from 1852', vol. 4, *West Midlands History*, Art and Industry in the 1851 Exhibition, (2016), Issue 1, 32-36

<sup>7</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Briery Creek, Illustrations of Political Economy* No. 22 (1834). Available at <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=AUPQAAAAMAAJ>

<sup>8</sup> Ruth Watts, 'Joseph Priestley and his influence on education in Birmingham' in *Joseph Priestley and Birmingham* ed. by Malcolm Dick (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 2005, 48-64 [Incidentally, Priestley on Poor Law similar to Harriet?]

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760-1860*, (London: Longman, 1998), 72-3, 170-71, 178-79, *passim*; Emily Bushrod, *Unitarianism in Birmingham*, 151-205; H.G. Wilson, 'A hundred years of religious and social work in Birmingham: The Church of the Messiah Domestic Mission', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, vol. VIII, no. 3, 113-21

<sup>10</sup> Emily Bushrod, *Unitarianism in Birmingham*, 1-5, 222-29, 239; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* ((Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1968; 1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1963), 184-240

<sup>11</sup> Bushrod, *Unitarianism in Birmingham*, 4-5, 11

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Ryland (ed.), *Reminiscences of Thomas Henry Ryland*, (Birmingham: The Midland Counties Herald Limited, 1904), 137-8

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 138-49; Bushrod, *Unitarianism in Birmingham*, 206-18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 202; Helen Plant, 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus': aspects of Unitarianism and feminism in Birmingham, c. 1869-90', Vol. 9, *Women's History Review*, No. 4, (2000), 722

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 73; Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 196, 202

<sup>16</sup> Clare Midgely, *Women against Slavery* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 43-4, 46-7, 50, 173; *The Fifth Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall and their respective Neighbourhoods for the Relief of British Negro Slaves established 1825* (Birmingham: Printed by B. Hudson, 1830), 7-10

<sup>17</sup> Plant, 'Unitarianism and feminism in Birmingham', 724-30

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 730-36

<sup>19</sup> Ruth Watts, 'Universities, medical education and women: Birmingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', *History of Education* 42 (2013), no. 3, 306-19

<sup>20</sup> Paula Bartley, *Prostitution Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 74, 90-1 *fn.s* 17, 18; Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (London: Routledge, 2013; 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1980) Appendix A. Such a group of women were found in the Birmingham

Ladies Association for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, while Robert Francis Martineau was Chairman of the male Midlands Electoral Union engaged in the battle

<sup>21</sup> M.D. Green, *Images of England. Birmingham Women* (Storud: Tempus Publishing, 2000), 52-9; Victor Skipp, *The Making of Victorian Birmingham* (Studley, Warwickshire: Brewin Books, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1983), 181-2

<sup>22</sup> Plant, 'Unitarianism and feminism in Birmingham', Eric Ives, Diane Drummond, Leonard Schwarz, *The First Civic University: Birmingham 1880-1890. An Introductory History* (The University of Birmingham, 2000), 23, 132, 136, passim

<sup>23</sup> Janet Whitgut, *Edgbaston High School 1876-1976* (Published by the Governing Body, 1976), 30, passim

<sup>24</sup> Ruth Watts, 'Education in an enlightened city? Education in Birmingham from the eighteenth century to the twentieth' in *Birmingham The Workshop of the World* ed. by Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick (Liverpool University Press, to be published 2017); Roy Church, 'Kenrick family (per.c.1785-1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn. Jan 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/articles/53/53590-article.html?back=> [accessed 12/06/2008]

'[www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk/.../famous-unitarians...](http://www.midland-unitarian-association.org.uk/.../famous-unitarians...) Midland Unitarian Association 'Famous Unitarians', (2016)

<sup>25</sup> See for example, *Diaries of Rebecca Kenrick 1839-89* 2 vols., MS 2024/1/1-2 (CRL or Bham Lib?); Ruth Watts

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## ***Harriet Martineau on Emigration: Homes Abroad***

***John Vint***

### **1 Introduction**

Harriet Martineau was in her early teens as the Napoleonic Wars came to an end in 1815. England had emerged victorious but paid the price of victory. The depression in commercial activity which followed lasted for six years, but the agricultural depression lasted until 1836. The National Debt grew from £261 million to £885 million between 1792 and 1815 and the population grew from under 8.75 million to 10.5 million in the same period. Discharged sailors and soldiers swelled the number of unemployed. Increased use of machinery in manufacturing led to thousands of spinners, combers and hand loom weavers losing their jobs. No one class suffered more than the agricultural labourers. Their money wages had doubled but the cost of living had trebled and the rise in expenditure on poor - relief reflected that situation, rising from £1.9 million to £5.4 million in 1815, and on to £7.9 million by 1818.

The increase in population, poverty, and pauperism, and the rising costs of the Poor Law were all key issues which Political Economy was developed to address.

The key solutions put forward by them were:

1. Delay age of marriage - Malthus and Martineau.
2. Contraception - not for Malthus, a man of the cloth; nor for Martineau, a single woman; but acceptable for James Mill and later and much more openly for John Stuart Mill.

3. Repeal of the Corn Laws – reduce price of bread a key staple in the diet – improve standard of living – reduce poverty and pauperism.

4. Emigration of poor people and paupers to Australia and elsewhere paid for from the parish rates.

This paper considers Harriet Martineau's tale *Homes Abroad* which addressed the last of the four above. Martineau was in favour of emigration and wrote the tale to set out her case. In this paper the story and the arguments about emigration related only to the emigration of paupers and the poor to Australia.

## **2 The Story of *Homes Abroad***

The tale is set in Kent – a 'Home in Paradise' is the heading of the first chapter and Martineau describes the setting in bucolic terms redolent of H. E Bates's *Darling Buds of May*.

To the traveller who merely passes through it, it looks like a fruitful garden, capable of affording support to as many inhabitants as can gather round its neat towns, or settle on the borders of its orchards, hop-grounds and corn-fields (p.1).

Yet, she says:

..it is certain that nowhere, - not in the alleys of Manchester or the cellars of London, - is more abject, hopeless poverty to be found than in some of the county parishes of Kent (p.1).

In the parish of A\_\_\_\_\_, she writes there were 2,000 people of which 450 were labourers and of whom 300 were agricultural labourers. The farmers were doing badly and could not employ all the workers or if they employed them could not pay them sufficiently. There were 50 or 60 able-bodied men more than were wanted, and these men and their wives and families were a heavy burden on the parish rates. Despite the beautiful and seemingly verdant environment there was poverty and pauperism, recklessness and crime. It made no difference that new dwellings for the poor were being built - 'for their creation was no sign of prosperity' – they were built by 'speculators in pauperism, who depended on the rents being paid out of the rate'.

One central character who grumbled that bread was being snatched by new-comers from the once-prosperous inhabitants was a man named Castle, who through no fault of his own and although in the full vigour of life, was snatched from comfortable independence to the very verge of pauperism. He had justified his marrying early by supporting the two children of his first marriage and preparing them for maintaining themselves by proper work training. Frank had served his apprenticeship and was a skilled and hardworking workman. His sister Ellen was in service as a dairy maid.

Castle married again to a woman much younger than himself who was not used nor prepared for hardship. Martineau writes that 'she did nothing for her husband but bring him children and nurse them until they died', which they almost all did as times grew worse and comforts became scarce. Only one little girl, Susan, remained at home of all his second family. There were also two teenage lads (of the second marriage) Jerry

and Bob who had been disowned by their father as 'rogues and vagabonds'. News came that the two sons had been arrested for robbery and assault and if not hanged they would be transported. Despite his wife wishing they would hang, the neighbours prevailed upon Castle to go to the magistrate and clarify the ages of the boys as they looked older and this might help in mitigation.

The position of the family was getting worse. Ellen lost her place of work to a parish girl and Frank was out of work and felt that nothing could be done but to seek his fortune elsewhere. News came that the boys were to be transported and the family decided to try to emigrate to somewhere near where the boy would be sent. Canada, the Swan River settlement (in what later became known as Western Australia), New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) were all considered. Frank went to speak to the curate of the parish, Mr Jackson, who had been involved in sending out some parishioners to Van Diemen's Land. He said that the prospects there were good as there was a great demand for labour and Ellen's situation would benefit from the great scarcity of female servants, especially dairy - women. The normal procedure was for labourers to contract themselves to some settler for a period of five or seven years at a certain rate of wages from which the expenses of the passage and of food, clothing and lodging were to be deducted. The parish would advance the necessary sums for the conveyance (to be paid out of the deductions from wages), and Ellen might get part of her expenses paid for by the government who wished to send out a number of young women to supply the need for the female population in the Australian colonies. Frank made the point that all the family were in need including his grandparents. Mr Jackson replied that 'those who help you to go must consider the welfare of the country as well as yours. The parish must pay more for the passage and maintenance of your grandfather than he will probably cost them at home'. Frank realises that in sending over a *young* couple, the parish also sends over all their descendants. Jackson goes on to reassure Frank that his parents, although not young, are still healthy and can work in the colony and repay the cost of sending them. Mr Jackson made representations on the family's behalf to government appointees in charge of emigration and eventually all was settled. They family would emigrate to Van Diemen's Land and the boys would be transported there also.

Having outlined the 'push' factors Martineau describes the departure, the journey, the arrival and their new lives in Van Diemen's Land . It was a different world which was challenging at first, but they were soon settled and appreciated that they were much better off than had they stayed at home. Harriet Martineau describes their various adventures – an Emu hunt, some interaction with the Aboriginal people and so on.

In the course of the story and in the *Summary of Principles* at the end, Harriet Martineau laid out the arguments for emigration. I will return to consider these elements of the tale after a discussion of the approach to the issues taken by the political economists.

### **3 The Early Nineteenth Century debate: Assisted Emigration as a Cure for Poverty and Pauperism**

***Robert Wilmot Horton***

Although not a political economist Horton was a leading advocate in the emigration movement as a member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme from 1818 to 1830. Although some political economists had written on the subject of emigration earlier, Horton was the catalyst for the debate of the 1820s. Horton's view was based on the wages fund doctrine which was in line with classical thinking. Wages depended on the **demand** for labour, which consisted of the fund for the payment of wages, and the supply of labour. If the wages fund was not growing fast or was static because of economic recession or depression and population was growing, the supply of labour could outstrip the demand leading to unemployment, poverty and pauperism. Horton was a strong believer in the need for emigration to solve this problem. Emigration could bring the supply of labour back down to be in line with the demand. In Ireland (where there was no Poor Law) the problem was destitution linked to the pattern of small land holdings and the only solution, Horton argued, was to remove some at least of the excess labour in agriculture. Irish landowners could then consolidate holdings and increase efficiency. He argued that the attraction for English landlords was reduction in the cost of poor relief and a reduction in the further future burden from the influx of Irish immigrants into England.

In 1821 he was appointed under-secretary in the Colonial Department with a salary of £2000 (£150,000 today). He worked very hard on the issue of emigration between 1823 and 1830, and as a result in 1823 and 1825 the government supported emigration from Ireland to Canada along the lines he outlined. Some 2,500 emigrants left Ireland at a cost of over £56,000. Later he succeeded in getting parliamentary assent for the establishment of two Select Committees, in 1827 and 1827, to consider further the question of emigration and he was encouraged to bring forward bills to allow emigration from parishes in England paid for from the parish rates. These bills were not successful due to concerns about expenditure and lack of interest. Horton also worked together with Nassau Senior on this question as we shall see.

### **Thomas Robert Malthus**

Writing in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Principles of Population*, in 1817 when there was considerable post war unemployment Malthus accepted that emigration may be useful as a temporary expedient. However later in the 1820s while in discussion with Horton and agreeing with him on the need on a temporary basis, he had doubts about the level of support needed for emigrants, and concern that emigration might lead to a vacuum to be filled with further growth in the English population or by Irish immigration. For Malthus the optimal solution for population growth was 'moral restraint' or virtuous celibacy – the postponement of marriage with strict sexual continence during the waiting period. Winch argues that there is evidence to indicate that Malthus believed that strict moral restraint would not be practised by many people. The alternatives were, for him, both vices - birth control and prostitution, and Winch points out that Malthus in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition (1826) of the *Principles* seems to suggest that, if faced with a choice, he would have preferred the latter.

### **David Ricardo**

Ricardo had his doubts about the question of emigration and vacillated in parliament and in writing to Horton – giving some support but regarding it as an experiment. His main concern was that the cost of supporting paupers at home might be less than had been calculated. However since the existing Poor Law did not employ people



productively he was in favour of the scheme. His main argument for reducing poverty was the repeal of the Corn Laws.

### **James Mill**

Mill wrote an article on 'Colonies' in the *Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1825. He understood that population pressure would lead to the need for emigration but laid down strict conditions for any scheme of support. Thus the land which the emigrants are about to occupy in the colony should yield a greater return to their labour than the land which they leave. Also if the expense is too great, the population they leave behind may suffer more by the losses to the wages fund than it gains by the diminution of numbers. Mill was sceptical about the last point.

### **Nassau Senior**

In 1831, Nassau Senior wrote a pamphlet on assisted emigration which embodied a draft of a bill which Lord Howick introduced in Parliament with modifications in the same year. He co-authored the pamphlet with Horton and James Stephen and it was published anonymously. It proposed a change in the law to allow parishes to support emigration as a means of reducing suffering and the Treasury would make loans to parishes which could be paid back later. Unusually the emigrant would not be required to pay back his passage but would be required to renounce all further claims on the parish for support (should he/she return for example). The cost of maintaining a family as paupers was estimated to be about £25 per annum, while the cost of transporting the family to Canada would be about £70 or two to three years of parish support.

Howick's bill was defeated but Senior was not put off. In the Poor Law Amendment Bill which he helped to draft he inserted a clause on emigration which, as he wrote to Horton later in 1836, 'contained the essence' of the bill which they had developed five years before. It is worth noting at this point that as a major figure in working on the reform of the Poor Law, Senior had written a letter to Brougham as early as 14<sup>th</sup> September 1832 which contained the key features of the later 1834 bill including a clause proposing supported emigration. Harriet Martineau was working with Senior and Brougham at that time and was receiving much material and help from them in order to write *The Poor Laws and Paupers Illustrated*. It is also worth noting that *Homes Abroad* was written in 1832.

Apart from Senior, the other political economists I have mentioned, while sometimes prepared to support emigration as a short term solution, were nevertheless lacking in enthusiasm and sceptical. The reason for this was that they thought that the permanent solution lay elsewhere – in moral restraint, the repeal of the Corn Laws or contraception. These solutions would act in the medium term to slow population growth, reduce pressure on the poor and raise their wages and that in the longer run rising wages and better education would help to bring home to people what is in their best interests and thereby encourage foresight and individual effort.

## **4 Harriet Martineau on Emigration in Homes Abroad**

Martineau's approach to bringing out the economics issues surrounding emigration was

to devote an entire chapter to a dialogue between two characters. The chapter was entitled 'Homes on the Waste' and the characters were Mr Fellowes a new character and Mr Jackson who had been supporting the family in their decision to emigrate. Fellowes was a rich young man who had just come of age and was concerned about the problems of poverty and the Poor Law. He engaged Mr Jackson in conversation about the matter and a conversation ensued. Fellowes's answer was to increase the production of food which he thought would be very easy. He argued that there was a large amount of unappropriated land (not used by anyone) amounting to 15 million acres in England all told, which could be cultivated by paupers to increase the output of wheat. The land could be cultivated by the paupers maintained by public funds from the poor rates to become a Peoples Farm. Each family would have a cottage and a piece of land which would be developed by digging and application of manure. This would increase the productivity of the poor soil. The women and children would spin and weave and the whole enterprise would in time become self-sufficient. He proposed at first to carry out an experiment on a small scale with the sixty excess labourers from the village. This would be preferable to people having to leave their homes in England and their loved ones.

Against this Jackson, put forward Martineau's argument in favour of emigration. Jackson begins by asking Fellowes why is there still waste land if it is capable of being cultivated? The problem with the Fellowes scheme is it would mean large numbers working on very unproductive land to produce wheat and this would require more labour per bushel which would put up the price of bread. Jackson argued that every bushel of wheat would cost twice or thrice as much as in Van Diemen's Land. The population would continue to increase and with rising food prices poverty and pauperism would continue. Therefore the better alternative was to send some paupers to Van Diemen's land where land is more productive. There also was the prospect of money being sent home and in time the colonies will want more and more of England's manufactures and will send their agricultural product in return. There would be benefits of the division of labour and trade to both England and the colony.

In short the argument was between a proposal to make paupers work on increasingly unproductive land (diminishing returns) to produce food to supply an increasing population leading, Martineau argues, to a never ending problem on the one hand; and a proposal to send away some poor or pauper families to a colony where output per acre is much higher and where people are in demand for agricultural and service work at reasonable wages. In the tale, Jackson maintains that in three generations time the outcomes will be different. The people who will have emigrated will have taken their descendants with them to a land where they are wanted with benefit to the mother country whereas the descendants under Fellowes scheme will still be here and needing society's support.

At the end of the tale there is an interesting finale. Four years have gone by and Frank, who has been writing to Mr Jackson occasionally, writes once again to propose this time that Jackson may wish to come to join their now prospering little community. Many months pass and the reply to Frank's letter finally arrives on the anniversary of the family's 'arrival in the land of plenty' – their best of festivals. Some fresh arrivals from England appear by wagon that day bringing letters with them, one of which is from Mr Jackson. His letter confirms his intention to emigrate and makes the point that wherever colonization has succeeded best, the emigrating party has consisted of

specimens of every rank and class and each person can as though he moved away in the midst of an entire though small society.

One of the new arrivals is a young labourer from their old village back home in Kent who had been living and working on Mr Fellowes' farm together with his parents and sixty other families. There had been difficulty in providing for all and in order to make room for more paupers Fellowes had advised the sons and daughters to emigrate. Jackson had been vindicated more quickly than he had thought!

## 5 Concluding Comments

Harriet Martineau's tale 'Homes Abroad' was written at a time when the question of emigration was a major and contentious topic of debate in the country. She would have been aware of the activities of Horton and of the writings of the political economists I have mentioned. Given the strong stance she took, it is very likely that the greatest influence on her approach in would have been Nassau Senior bearing in mind his views and their close working relationship in 1832.

The Poor Law Reform Act section on emigration written by Senior came into force in 1834 overseen by the Poor Law Commissioners. Harriet Martineau's tale can therefore be seen as a mixture of arguments in favour of emigration in principle and futuristic fiction similar in form to *The Hamlets*, an optimistic futuristic account of post - Poor Law Reform England.

## Homes Abroad

*Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume.*

Two kinds of colonization have been adopted by the British Empire; - Colonization for the reduction of our home-population, - or Voluntary Emigration; - and Penal Colonization.

The term Colonization is by some applied to a third process, which they wish to see introduced into this country; viz. - Home Colonization.

The objects of Voluntary Emigration, directed by the state, are threefold.

1. To improve the condition of those who emigrate, by placing them where they may obtain subsistence at less cost than at home.
2. To improve the condition of those who remain, by increasing the ratio of capital to population.
3. To improve the condition of the colonized region.

To fulfil object 1, the colony must be so located as to insure health and abundance to its members; and it must be so organized as to secure due co-operation of labour and capital.

To fulfil object 2, the removal of each individual must be less costly than his maintenance at home would be; and the selection must be made with a view to lessening the amount of human productiveness at home.

To fulfil object 3, the colonists must be selected with a view to their productiveness, both as regards capital and population; which includes a moral fitness to compose an orderly society.

It follows from all these considerations that a new settlement should be composed of young, healthy, and moral persons; that all should not be labourers, nor all capitalists; and that there should be a sufficient concentration of their numbers on the new lands to insure a facility of exchanges.

Home colonies may afford a temporary relief to a redundant population, and also increase the productiveness of the lands which they appropriate; but this is done by alienating capital from its natural channels; and with the certainty of ultimately injuring society by increasing the redundancy of population over capital.

Home colonization then, though less injurious than the unproductive distribution of the Charity fund, is inferior to foreign colonization, inasmuch as the one yields temporary benefit to a few at the expense of ultimate injury to many; and the other produces permanent benefit to all.

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“Good Heaven! What sorrows gloom’d that parting day”

by Thomas Falcon Marshall (1818 – 1878) Wiki Commons

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### ***The Martineau Surgeons***

#### ***Lyn Holt***

When I first looked at the Martineau family tree, what intrigued me most was that at least six of them were surgeons.

I began to consider, therefore, what qualities were needed for the making of a surgeon, apart from an obvious, though sometimes limited in the early days, knowledge of anatomy. These were my findings -

Good eyesight.

Manual dexterity

Recognition of experiences and capacity to profit from them.

Capacity for intense concentration.

Ability to react rationally to the unexpected.

Ability to provide a skilful prognosis.

These were accepted by my grandson, who, as an anaesthetist, works daily with surgeons. He added only the ability to work safely when tired.

Now, how much of all this can be said to be incorporated in the Martineau psyche? That is the fascinating conjecture which has intrigued me, and which I am seeking to pursue.

However, what is meant by “surgeon”? There is a world of difference between the father and grandfather (Elie and Denis Martineau) of Gaston Martineau, the first barber-surgeon to arrive in this country in 1685, and Philip Meadows Martineau and his nephew Thomas.

In the age in which the early Martineaus lived surgery was performed by men who doubled as barbers, using the same tools. Others in the medical profession were apothecaries (more or less present-day chemists), and physicians who tended to look down on surgeons, perhaps because of the Greek derivation meaning “hand-workers”. However, then in France the surgeons did not split from the barbers until 1731, and 1745 in England.

These barber – surgeons normally undertook an apprenticeship of at least three years. Thereafter their duties included routinely tooth-drawing, removal of bladder-stones, treatment of venereal sores, and their bread-and-butter, bloodletting. Sharing their doubtful reputations were the out-and-out quacks. There was one example which was “a wonderful restorative which greatly invigorates the whole constitution so as to provoke much venery”. It was for “those who have been almost wore out with venereal engagements” and also “where young persons are not so happy in their conjugal embraces as they would want to be.”

Here’s the recipe:

“Take two live female vipers in the springtime. Put these alive into Canary wine. Add lavender flowers and nutmeg and let them stand for six months. Then strain through a thick flannel.”

Then, presumably drink it. Guaranteed to get you going! Of course, I’m sure no Martineau barber - surgeon would descend to such depths!

And where were the early Martineaus living? The Huguenot Society admits it is difficult to trace them in the early days. There has been an attempt to trace the line from Gaston, the original émigré. by David Martineau and G. Ogilvy, to Romain Martineau (1494). However, Crofton, representing the Huguenot Society, has found several discrepancies, and without intricate access to documents in France he says

“Certain steps in the pedigree advanced by Ogilvy and David Martineau to bridge the gap between Gaston (here in 1685) and Romain (1494) do not hold up under critical examination.”

Apart from Denis, the geographer (c. 1602 – 1651)) and Elie (c. 1630) there seems to be few certifiable details. And there is no means of knowing if any of them were surgeons, although it's highly likely that they were for two reasons :-

1 barber - surgery was traditionally the trade of Jews, Muslims and Protestants.

2 the pattern from father to son as followed in this country must surely have been imitated from past times.

In my opinion, there is a very good reason for difficulty in tracing this family.

With the onset of religious wars in France (from 1562), heightened by the terror of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), surgeons would be much sought after on the battlefield and possibly the early Martineau surgeons became more or less itinerant and difficult to trace. They would have to be wherever treatment for the right faction wanted them. Protestants as they were, they would not have been welcome on a Guise battlefield, whereas Condé's men would clamour for their treatment wherever the battlefield was. So, it seems likely that they would have to move about to different locations.

In fact, the battlefield was where many surgeons learned their trade. Ambrose Paré gives a clear account of the actions needed for treating a gunshot wound: to remove any extraneous articles from the wound, to extract the shot or bullet (by fingers – quite rightly he prefers the sensitivity of the hand to a probe – to unite the lips of the wound by means of knotted sutures and, fortunately, he had found an alternative to the dreaded cautery (boiling oil or a red-hot iron) by using a concoction of egg yolk, turpentine and oil of roses, but aftercare medication he deferentially leaves to his betters, the physicians.

He goes on to say (unnecessarily) that the surgeon must be quick and skilful.

In fact, when speaking earlier of the qualities needed for a surgeon, I omitted to mention speed which was essential, since anaesthetics didn't arrive until 1847.

When mention is made of Harriet's empathy for the suffering of slaves, surely it was as nothing compared to the vicarious suffering the medieval and eighteenth and nineteenth surgeons endured whilst seeing their patients' agony.

This is a literal account of an early nineteenth patient being operated on for a breast cancer without anaesthetic:

"M. Dubois placed me upon the mattress and spread a cambric handkerchief upon my face. It was transparent, however, and I saw through it that the bed was instantly surrounded by seven men and my nurse. I refused to be held, but when, through the cambric, I saw the glitter of polished steel, I closed my eyes,

Yet, when the dreadful steel was plunged into my breast, cutting through veins and arteries, flesh and nerves, I needed no injunction not to restrain my

cries. I began a scream that lasted that lasted unintermittently throughout and I almost marvel that it rings not in my ears still, so excruciating was the agony.

When the wound was made, and the instrument withdrawn, the pain was undiminished, for the air that suddenly rushed into those delicate parts seemed like it was of sharp and forked poniards that were tearing at the edge of the wound, but when again I felt the instrument describing a curve... I thought I must have expired.....”

She survived.

As the religious wars in France continued, before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the writing was on the wall for the Huguenot Protestants. Forbidden to leave the country or to practise surgery, and suffering from a steady erosion of liberties, there was little choice but to emigrate. England was the obvious choice particularly after, under James II, Parliament issued the Declaration of Indulgence, giving freedom of worship. The alternative, Protestant villages and towns having been laid waste by the ‘dragonnades’, was the horror of life as a galley slave. But, long before the Revocation, emigrating to England was steadily increasing. In 1571 the emigrants incredibly comprised a third of the population in Norwich and in 1582 there were 4,679 of them.

So that, when the surgeon, Gaston Martineau arrived there in 1695, he was part of a tight-knit group of Protestants. They were “people of the book” so they valued education, and they were unusually literate. Although still “strangers” as they were known, as textile workers their trade secrets were appreciated, though not without limitations (restriction of number of looms etc.) With the advent of the “New Draperies” the cloth trade in Norwich prospered. The lighter material, cheaper to produce and more versatile, was on a roll (no pun intended). Textiles, as we know, became a parallel trend in the Martineau family, not just in Norwich, but elsewhere.

Gaston had studied medicine at Bergerac where he was born, and where there was a substantial medical college. His future father-in-law was also a surgeon. He left Bergerac in 1684 and went to Dieppe, which like Bergerac was one of the few protected areas. He may previously have been in hiding at Offranville, a family seat, where he may have practised in secret. He then in Spitalfields, London, married Marie Pierre whom he had known on his passage from Dieppe.

Presumably, he earned a living by treating his fellow emigrants in London, or whatever patients he found until 1695 when he moved to Norwich.

He was not alone in his profession – amongst earlier refugees had been Pierre Chamberlen, the inventor of obstetric forceps, and the surgeon and anatomical writer Paul Bussière who has been credited with the establishment of the first dispensary in London.

Gaston Martineau had ten children, of which

David I (1697 – 1748) was the second. He became a surgeon, and must have



practised privately since the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital was not built until 1771

England at this time was an uncomfortable place in which to live. The English found the French food peculiar particularly oxtail soup, and fashions eccentric, and suspected that some of the French were getting rich at their expense, and the French were suspicious of Anglican Protestants and were only nominally supported by James II who was afraid that they were anti-monarchist. But the Huguenots had fled from persecution and danger and tenacity and perseverance had become part of their character.

I have found little evidence of this David (David 1), (Gaston's son) except that he had nine children, half of whom died in infancy - not unusual at this time - and he died at the age of 32.

But now we come to the time when a little more is known. Since the church used by the Huguenots tends to be St. Mary-the-Less we do have a tablet there. The eulogy to David II (1726 - 1800) we hear in a paper to the Royal Society uses the Latin tag "Fortes creantur fortibus, et boni bonis", and goes on to say:- "This golden maxim was strikingly exemplified in the general history of the Martineau family". From a mural we hear "He was eminently distinguished as a surgeon, as a man of most amiable manners, and as the best of fathers "

And it was at this time that Norfolk and Norwich most needed surgeons.

We do know that David Martineau, who died at the age of forty-two, having caught a fever from one of his patients, performed lithotomy, probably in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, which had been founded in 1771 by William Fellowes. (He had been preceded by the Bishop of Norwich, Thomas Hayter who asked Benjamin Gooch to design the hospital).

And there was a problem - bladder stones. Hardly a new one. Samuel Pepys in 1660 recorded in his diary that he was celebrating the removal of such a stone two years previously, and had even kept it as a memento.

But bladder stones in Norfolk and particularly in Norwich, had almost reached an epidemic – much the greatest in the country. Some reasons for this have been suggested: poor nutrition and excessively cereal diet. It is true that after the collapse of the textile industry there was a degree of poverty in the county. But, what surprised me is that there is scarcely a mention of dehydration and, when I read that, although almost disappeared in Europe, the problem of bladder stones is still endemic in some developing countries. I found this was significant: the water in some third world countries is still unsafe. In Norwich, particularly, as is recorded in Rosemary O'Donoghue's book "Norwich, an Expanding City", every attempt to improve the water supply in the mid eighteenth century was resisted on the grounds that it was unnecessary. This seems to me the reason why those outside of the municipality fared slightly better: there was always the River Wensum! And my point is, if you know the water is unsafe, you don't drink it and you end up being dehydrated. So perhaps a combination of dehydration and poor nutrition had caused the problem.

Anyway, a solution was required. The problem needed a Martineau! Lateral

lithotomy had been successfully tried before in France, by “Frère Jacques”, a self-styled Franciscan friar who is credited with four thousand lithotomies by lateral cystotomy. But, in this country, apart from Cheselden in London, the older, slower and more painful operation was normal, widening the prostatic urethra with a knife and using a fluid dilator. In Norwich the situation was helped in that the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital had been built by public subscription in 1771 by Thomas Ivory, the architect of the Assembly House and the Octagon Chapel. Although it was not at all the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital that we know today, having only three surgeons and three physicians, the doors were locked at nine, and it was serviced by nurses who were told to “behave with tenderness to patients and civility to strangers.”

But it had several eminent surgeons in its early history: John Yelloly (1774 – 1842), William Donne, Edward Rigby, William Cadge, Gooch (of Gooch’s splint) and Philip Meadows Martineau. Martineau had been taught in Macclesfield, then went to Dereham where he was under the tutelage of William Donne. This was followed by further medical experience in Paris and then he was appointed Assistant Surgeon in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and Consultant Surgeon in 1793 until he resigned in 1828. As previously said, he was not the only skilled surgeon, but he was internationally famous. In Paris he was said to be “le lithotomiste le plus célèbre de son époque.” He performed a hundred and forty such operations with a mortality of eighteen, contributing to the story that, as many of the surgeons lived in St. Giles, a principal Norwich street, that the foundation stones of the dwellings there consisted of bladder-stones!

Apart from the successful number of operations, what also increased the reputation of the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital was the careful recording and coding of the actual stones, which remain in storage to this day.

In a paper published for the Medical & Chirurgical Society in 1821, Martineau tells us exactly how he did it:-

“I take a staff in which the groove is much wider and deeper than usual, and having found the situation of the stone, I give it to the assistant in nearly in nearly an upright and straight direction, and make my first incision long and deep. After the incision I make sure that the staff is not altered, and then, feeling for the groove, I introduce the point of the knife into it, as low down as I can and cut the membranous part of the urethra, continuing my knife through the prostate into the bladder, and make a lateral enlargement of the wound in withdrawing the knife. I now take the staff in my right hand, while I introduce the blunt gorget and make sure it is not slipping out of the groove and this will be prevented by depressing the gorget as it is pushing into the bladder.”

He goes on to suggest that this manoeuvre needs practice, and, finally he uses fingers or forceps to extract the stone. There is no mention of anaesthetic or sterilisation, but alcohol and opiates had been well known for centuries as pain - suppressors, and heat and alcohol were used for sterilisation, and to succeed so well there must have been some attempts at anaesthesia and sterilisation. Not exactly like the entire department given over to sterilisation in a modern hospital.

This very skilful medical member of the Martineau family was not only an eminent

surgeon: he was one of the founders of the Norwich City Library. And, in addition, he founded the Norwich Triennial Festival, partly to support hospital funds. He was also a hospital governor. His portrait in the Octagon Chapel, to my mind, reflects the breadth of his vision. Incidentally he became well to do, unusually for a Martineau surgeon. He built himself a country house in Bracondale Woods, where there is an arboreal memorial to him. Apparently he spent the summer months there and the winter in St. Giles. Sadly his house in Martineau Lane was destroyed in the construction in the 1960s of County Hall.



Norfolk and Norwich Hospital (1771 - 2003)

When Philip Meadows Martineau retired in 1848 it was not expected that this would be the end of the Martineau surgeons in Norwich. There was the up and coming Thomas Martineau, his nephew, also a skilled surgeon. He was being groomed to follow his uncle both in public and private practice. This was Harriet's elder brother who taught her Latin and whom she adored. He was the inspiration for her career as a writer. After reading aloud one of her earlier articles he was so impressed that he said "Leave it to other women to make shirts and darn socks; and do you devote yourself to this." Harriet so valued his opinion because he was the known family omniscient.

Sadly, after developing tuberculosis, Thomas had to give up his profession and after a vain attempt at recovery, first in Devonshire, then in Madeira he died. What was even worse, his small son also died and there is a memorial to him in Madeira. Harriet reacted in the same way as always. She had a phobia at that time about dying and grieving and wrote to Thomas's widow rejecting commiseration. She seemed to think grieving was a sinful indulgence and a distraction. She reacted in the same way to the loss of her fiancé, Worthington, and I do wonder if the guilt she felt for her lack of response to her father's mortal illness had something to do with it. So, as predicted by Harriet, Thomas was the last of the Martineau surgeons. Now, to return to my original conjecture. As far as we know all the Martineau surgeons were successful in their careers, so it can be assumed that they fulfilled my original requisites for a surgeon - manual dexterity, etc. To ascertain whether these requisites were characteristics found in any Martineau it seems appropriate to test them out on the Martineau we know best, that is, Harriet.

1 Good eyesight? Like many people deficient in one of the senses, she made up for it in another. She had no difficulty in reading, could do fine needlework, and in the Lake District she could see well enough to locate tiny ferns from crevices in rocks.

2 Manual dexterity? Since she was able for a short time, after the family business failed, to earn a living by the use of her needle, there is no doubt about her skill in using her hands. Indeed she continued most of her life making decorative silk purses for her friends.

3 Now we come to the third requirement, recognition of experiences and capacity to profit from them? The whole family had suffered from the nuisance of a deaf friend who annoyingly insisted that every word should be repeated and, because of this experience, Harriet resolved she would never ever ask for repetition. She also learned from experience that if she complied uncomplainingly with her mother's wishes they would have a happier relationship.

4 Capacity for intense concentration? This Harriet certainly possessed. She worked daily from eight to two, and turned out an enormous quantity of writing.

Since she did not believe in correcting or revising her work, this necessitated intense thought before she put pen to paper.

5 Ability to react rationally to the unexpected? The results of mesmerism were as great a surprise to Harriet as to her family and friends. But she did not let it overwhelm her or distract her from what she considered her life's work and calmly set off on a journey to the East.

6 A skilful prognosis? No, this one she got hopelessly wrong. She rushed through her autobiography in a fortnight because she believed her death was imminent – and then lived for a further eleven years. But, had she been a surgeon, she would have had the medical knowledge to know more.

So, taking Harriet as the litmus paper, is it possible to assume that the Martineau family did indeed have an innate ability for surgery as part of their psyche? Could there have been a Doctor Harriet Martineau, CH.B? No, of course there couldn't. Why? Because in the nineteenth century, just as in the twenty-first, she had committed the one fatal and unforgiving error – she was born a woman!

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Eastern Daily Press Jan 2016 "Sterilising"



## Mediaeval Medical Instruments

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### **Recent New Members** (UK unless stated)

Georgette Vale (referred to as Georgette Hale in last *Newsletter*)

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### **The Martineau Society**

The Martineau Society was founded in the early 1990s by members of the Octagon Unitarian 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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## ***Reconciliation***

Word over all, beautiful as the sky

Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and  
ever again, this soil'd world;

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,

I look where he lies white – faced and still in the coffin - I draw near,

Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

*Walt Whitman*



Bust of Harriet Martineau closely examined by Barbara Todd  
( Martineau Society 2009 visit to Wellesley College, Massachusetts)