

Chapter 36

Sibling Rivalry (1853)

After [Philip] Carpenter stayed at The Knoll, Martineau forwarded "chattels" belonging to him or "M^r Bolding . . . viz, a cap, neckerchief, tooth brush & cocoa nut cup." Carpenter must consider The Knoll his inn whenever he came that way, "unless, indeed, tenants sh^d be here instead of myself." A book on cottage building might be got from her neighbor Crosfield. "Caroline Jones (that is her name) was truly happy to see you & wait on you again," Martineau went on, as was *Robert Fulcher* "for Martha's sake." *She* would be "interested in all the heresy, blasphemy & strife," he could send, "seeing that it is all but the smoke from a good clear fire at bottom."¹

Qualifying her pleasure at Isabella's (her niece's) wedding, Martineau explained to Frances Ogden how matters stood between James's family and herself. Helen, James's wife, had written oddly that they only wanted "to have Robert & me with them to make them quite happy!" *She* would simply write to "the dear girl herself" with her "love and good wishes." Though she did not repent "having allowed James before to play fast & loose" with her, it would be her fault if she "gave him the opportunity of repeating such treatment." James had "traded & insulted M^r Atkinson" and

forfeited her esteem [while] Ja^s & wife have repeatedly injured me, & then declared me ruined, & have wanted to resume, as if nothing had happened, when they found me *not* ruined. I am now very high in reputation & prosperity; & I know that they know it; & they are now doing just what was expected of them. I am sorry for this: but the coincidences are of their own making.

Had Frances seen a Liverpool paper containing "a demand of a peerage & £1000 a year for me! What a bore it would be!"²

(To confirm Martineau's current high reputation, a biographical piece in the *Lady's Newspaper* of 19 February 1853 included a large print of the Gillies portrait showing Martineau's hand cupped to her ear. In high-flown terms the writer lauded Martineau's determination, life and works - but faulted her imaginative creations).³

Martineau's crucial review of *Villette* as well as her comments on *Ruth* nearly coincided with Matthew Arnold's gift of a copy of his *Poems* of 1853. Thanking him for the "honour & pleasure . . . of having your volume from your own hands," Martineau gushed at how cheering it was to meet with his "*true doctrine* . . . & with its exemplification (in part) in your poems." Indeed, *she* was "intriguing in various directions to get this book under the eyes of the subjective novelists, who abound so, just now." Such women wrote only "their own (usually morbid) feelings . . . taking their own sick experience for 'human life', w^h they think it their particular function to describe & *expose*." From Arnold, she hoped for "very much more."⁴

Staying in touch with her Eastern journey friends (while worrying about Richard Yates' health), Martineau reported deaths in the family of Lady Kavanagh of County Wexford. Arthur Macmorrough Kavanagh, the deformed son who forced his company on them in the Eastern desert, now inherited the family property which he was "too little likely to manage . . . well." At Ambleside, meanwhile, the "real winter weather" delighted Martineau as she was "extremely busy" and happy among her "many & very arduous duties."⁵

On a Sunday, Martineau wrote to Hunt: "Here is a notice of a book w^h has impressed me very much" (she was mentioned in the preface). What tone the *Daily News* had taken about Kossuth in America she did not know, but "entre nous" she had inside knowledge about the postponement of a trial involving a friend of the Baroness Von Beck. On another subject, she noted that Lord John Russell was to bring forward his "Education measure" on the 4th. Did Hunt want her to undertake that? Was he likely "to get any inkling about Russell's proposals beforehand?" If so, she would be "glad of a little preparation, & time for thought." Concerning her copy of *The Times*, the railway guard asked yesterday if her "paper had not better come by post" now they had an evening delivery. If Hunt approved, would he give directions accordingly?⁶

After a fortnight Martineau informed Hunt she would keep "Colonial Social Structure" till the subject turned up. Today she was to see Kay-Shuttleworth and "his wiser brother" (Joseph Kay):

& I will get out of them every thing I can think of on this Education matter, & then send you (tomorrow) an article, probably of a rather statistical sort, on the proportions of educated, uneducated, & vagabond juveniles . . . rousing up the demand for additions in Committee.

Russell's speech about an "imprisoned youth" would give her a text. Yet really the "Whig chiefs" provoked disgust: "J.K. Shuttleworth . . . told me that the Times article on Monday (Education) was by my precious cousin, H^y Reeve."

Five days later in the *Daily News*, Martineau sneered at Reeve's "coaxing admonitory tone to Lord John" and the flimsy excuses for Cabinet members' non-action on education in Scotland. "That's the way they do business!" she stormed. "That's the way all our millions are governed!" But Hunt must soon get an Irish article done: the state of things there was "[m]ost exhilarating."⁷

By March, Martineau had evidently forgiven George Smith for turning down her half-written novel. She agreed to let him bring out a cheap (3rd) edition of *Deerbrook* - his offer of £50 seeming very liberal (sent "by return of post!" she exulted to Fanny Wedgwood). And yes, the copyright was her own, as was that of the *Playfellow*. That morning she sent Smith a manuscript on behalf of a novice [?] woman writer, assuring him there was a copy - which was more than she could say of any of *her* writings - and wishing "All good luck to it! - for Miss Carman deserves it." Smith's words on "the prudery that would condemn 'Esmond,'" delighted her, but she gasped at the "change since the last century, when very young ladies used to read *Clarissa Harlowe* and the like!" He should have heard "Miss Winkworth talk on Saturday, - about *Esmond*, *Villette*, *Ruth* & others: so robust & pure & candid & true, - all she said!"⁸

Sending Holyoake an enclosure, Martineau said she craved a long conversation with him about abolitionists, American slavery and the "now intolerable iniquities of the 'Leader.'" Of better cheer, Prof. Nichol liked her translations of Comte's mathematics, astronomy and physics that would go to press as soon as he returned them. Biology was to follow. Comte was "very poor" and she had arranged for him to have part of the profits, but he must not know until the money could be sent. Would Holyoake devote "a few spare thoughts" in the coming months on how to extend circulation of Comte? Would he like twenty-five copies of the first volume "to give away in favourable quarters?" If Nichol was reliable, as he was, she believed the work would have an influence on the public mind.⁹

Fanny Wedgwood's disapproval of *Letters on the Laws* apparently forgotten, Martineau wrote to her about "the death of M^{me} Sismondi" (Fanny's aunt, widow of the historian) and begged for "substantial tidings" of other Wedgwoods; "and do you tell Ras, that I found myself £142 into pocket by that journey" (to Ireland). Next retailing the pleasant story of Martha's wedding, Martineau added that her family had sent her "two excellent girls," one "a capital dairy woman" and the other "a clever and educated girl, - the daughter of a rascally ruined attorney." The latter was beside her, "making out the table of contents" for Comte, "mathematics and all! (which does not mean that she understands about indeterminate coefficients and the like.)"

Their valley was "full of weddings." Grace Davy was "not allowed to have "Capⁿ Hawley" because he was poor, but Susan Arnold was marrying "the candid-looking engaging youth, John Cropper of Liverpool," and the "wonderful little Jeannetta Claude (the South-American girl)" was "to marry in August - Dubois Reymond!" Finally, Martineau's young friend and helper Jane Claude was marrying David Carman next Saturday and would presently sail for Melbourne, where she and Jane, "to whom she was very kind," would "meet face to face in the street, some day, - there being no time to let Jane know!" At the moment, she was dreading this evening's "last party for these young people" ((Jane Claude's friends), longing for "12 hours hence, when we shall all be asleep."

Yet her work on Comte was so comfortable she would forego coming to London this spring. "Prof^r Nichol . . . put his imprimatur . . . on the 3 first Books," but it would be autumn before she finished. Meanwhile, she had refused other work except for the *Daily News*, which went on "most gloriously." The "Atkinson letters" had made a new start (a mistaken claim) and the *Playfellow* was likely to be reprinted. "O! 'Esmond!'" she burst out. "That book marks its own year in one's life. I never did justice to Thackeray before." *Villette*, on the other hand, was "marvellously powerful, but grievously morbid; & not a little coarse" (as her *Daily News* review claimed):

I held out strenuously against this last imputation on the other two, but am obliged to yield up the case now. In truth I am deeply sorry. What has become of the old heroism w^h made our grandmothers bear their interior conflicts in silence & humility and cheerfulness! What apology *can* C.B. offer to 100,000 women, - especially governesses who find the eyes of the world turned to pry into their secret troubles? They complain, - & how justly, - that they are made objects of speculation & pity to their employers, & even to their pupils, who read "Jane Eyre" & "Villette."

All three Brontë sisters appeared "quite unlike all other women" in their notion of the "kind & degree" of love for the opposite sex. "Curren" was now "in better health & spirits than for years," but her books were more and more morbid, and Martineau hoped for some woman "with power like, or equal to, C.B.'s, [to] bring us up to high art again, & not sink us into the subjective slough as she is doing." (Martineau may have been more hurt than she admitted by Brontë's cancellation of a second visit to The Knoll. Gaskell noted that Brontë had "had an uncomfortable kind of coolness with Miss Martineau, on account of some *very* disagreeable remarks . . . on *Villette*").

Ruth would not help, all "strewn with beauties" as it was, but "sadly feeble & *wrong*," and Gaskell's "making Mr Benson [Ruth's protector, a nonconformist minister] such a nincompoop" was, for example, fatal. Yet what a beautiful new "Cranford" Gaskell had given them! ("Stopped Payment, at Cranford," Gaskell's latest in the last group of stories in *Cranford* appeared in *Household Words* in April. In fact, the bank failure in the plot resembled a short episode in Martineau's "Berkeley the Banker. - Part I.")¹⁰

Now Martineau must run to the post, dress flowers and *herself* and see to getting "the painters & cleaners shoved out of sight" for tonight's party. What did Fanny know of Elisabeth Reid's health? She was to have come "3 weeks ago & was ill," and Martineau was expecting other guests. Another vexation loomed: Eliza Follen's letters had become "sadly variable, & entre nous, unreasonable . . . conceited & foolish." Follen laid "down the law" on matters she knew nothing about. "Only *think* of her asking Mr^s Stowe . . . all sorts of questions about her private affairs [and] circulating the answer!" Martineau had received "a *well worn* copy, in Emily Taylor's writing, - about the family poverty, &c &c," and had asked Mary Arnold to forward it with her disclaimer. "Sir J.K. Shuttleworth" was there, "nursing his dying mother," Martineau ended to Fanny. Whenever she went to London she would stay with *him* - and the William Henry Willises, the Richard Martineaus and Elisabeth Reid. Her Ambleside neighbors were well, though Mary Arnold "*much* aged."¹¹

"In great haste" the same day, Martineau sent Richard Webb (her recent host in Dublin) a note and newspaper "adv^t" on the sailing of a packet of the "White Horse Line of Australia," on which Jane Claude and her new husband were going to Melbourne on "the 28th inst." Sailing with them "w^d make all the difference to Alfred [Webb's son or dependant?] on the voyage." Jane's husband, David Carman (the "orphan son of a Scotch clergyman [aged 27]"), had a guaranteed salary as agent for a great London firm that exported corrugated iron houses. When the couple came to tea tomorrow, she would tell them about Alfred.

On 1 May, Martineau wrote to Webb again: she had Alfred's card of introduction, the newlyweds' ship had not yet sailed, and Jane's mother was going to London tomorrow "to see her daughter once more." If Webb could "lay hands on" her old paper in the *Penny Magazine*, "A Month at Sea" would give Alfred sound advice for his sea voyage. While "beating about in the Mediterranean," she learned an added "piece of wisdom": he should give in to seasickness at first, and when finally up he should have "some cheese *mashed*, with some salt, & a little . . . cayenne pepper, & eat it with biscuit [and] a tumbler of porter." A daily bath was essential. His ship had "baths on the deck," but she "used to have a bucket of sea water down every morning; & carried a little tub; & it was a prodigious solace, I assure you." Alfred must not "distress himself if he finds he *does next to nothing*," and should take "all manner of old linen, to throw overboard when dirty," especially since (she couldn't resist interjecting a dash of anti-Irish humor) "Ireland has a fine reputation for old clothes, & it will be hard if she can't, like a good mother-country, supply her son with rags enough for a voyage." He needed slippers for deck wear and "a good stock of shoes" for use on land; he should "abstain from acid drinks at sea, in thirsty climates;" where fresh water was stinted, most people liked malt liquor; and he must not be alarmed at his "appetite, when 300 miles out." Finally, he should "eschew coloured spectacles" in favor of "wire-woven goggles" from Dolland's, worn by people in the desert.

"Only think! - Parker Pillsbury is coming!" she wrote to the Webbs for the third time two days later. Could not Webb's partner and son manage the printing for a week so the Webbs

could "come & get a good airing?" She had plenty of room, even "supposing M^r P. should want, as an invalid, the best accommodation. . . . And you would be so happy together in the mornings [as dedicated abolitionists] when I am [at] work!"¹²

Martineau's "glorious" *Daily News* writings on American, Irish, British and colonial topics, as well as on the continuing efforts for an international copyright (not yet passed by the American Senate) had begun to appear three times a week by agreement with Hunt. "All the early attempts at secrecy were over," she confirmed in her autobiography, when she was identified by "some Galway priests" as the writer of an Irish letter. Having finished Comte's biology portion on 23 April, she had "five months for the last three volumes [on 'social physics'], which were by far the easiest to do, though half as long again as the first three."¹³

Along with a "perpetual succession of guests from April till the end of September," Martineau also persevered with Comte and found time to write to Dickens. He answered genially that, while anxious to see the result of her "Comte labors," he had a request. As in her "Bleaburn" story for *Household Words*, he hoped she would lend her "powerful and useful aid to Shuttleworth's scheme" (plans for a trade school?) and pointed to a paper in the next *Household Words* he thought would interest her, "Home for Homeless Women," containing the results of his own experience in the management of "the Institution to which it refers."¹⁴

Martineau's next *Daily News* leader on Ireland dealt with the Commons' discussion of extending the income tax there, which she insisted would be cheerfully paid owing to the improved economy.¹⁵ Seemingly still unsure about writing for a newspaper, on 28 April she had begged Hunt for:

Hints, please - a list as long as your arm Without such guidance, I must occasionally come to a stand; for nobody here knows any thing. Our Puseyite folk read the Morning Herald, & talk the most incredible stuff . . . & the Arnolds & a few other liberals always ask me for news.

For the sake of *Daily News*, he must give her "all the light & guidance" possible. Was "any thing known of what the B. of Trade [meant] to do about Agricul^t Statistics?" Today she looked for "first tidings of the Gervinus affair," but how curious was "the silence of the Times . . . about him!" And

the Wages-rise, - espec^y in Ireland . . . ought to have more notice If one might venture pathos & moral fervour in a newspaper, the public mind might be gloriously roused. . . . Just say whether the Irish transformation, calmly & *businessly* [sic] treated, may be a subject (as she had hinted in *Letters from Ireland*).

A year had gone by since Hunt made her a "'gentleman of the press,' - or Maid-of-all-Work to D. News," which she had enjoyed except for the anxiety of "being so entirely alone, - so far off." If he came to her for "a draught of fresh air, & relief from the din," he "sh^d have such trout for breakfast" as she had just eaten. Applications for her house "for August & onwards" would soon come in. Did he want any exploring done? Jokingly, she named Wales, the Channel islands, the Isle of Man and the Scotch islands. "I shall want to be by a good library to finish Comte," she ended. "London w^d do nicely, - but for the perverse look in the eyes of friends whom I decline going to now."¹⁶

[Quizzing Carlyle about the editor of *Fraser's*, probably in June, Martineau must have invited him to The Knoll. "I envy greatly the solitude of your pretty Westmoreland Cottage," he

answered, "above all, the *silence* of it; - and would fly at once to some such place, if I had wings - which I haven't!"]¹⁷

Another of Martineau's special areas in the *Daily News* concerned farmers' problems like drainage and labor. Through the spring and early summer of 1853, she censured the Royal Agricultural Society for obstructing the distribution of agricultural statistics (*opposed by farmers*) while praising the society for publishing facts about drainage.

Her political leaders for *Daily News* now included continental as well as British and American topics. (Writing *History of the Peace* had given her a confident grasp of modern European history, especially when it allowed her to focus on individuals who intrigued her). In two leaders on Georg Gottfried Gervinus, professor at the University of Heidelberg and current martyr to academic freedom, she eulogized the believer in scientific history and wittily put down those who failed to keep up with intellectual developments. Like Comte (who posited progressive stages in man's intellectual development from the theological, to the metaphysical, to the positive), Gervinus traced progressive stages of political freedom in the Western world, expressing admiration for English constitutional monarchy and American democracy. When charged with high treason, Gervinus claimed his work was a *scientific* study, and Martineau pointed to the "favourite horror, PLATO'S Republic," of a "little German potentate, and his little court." By meddling with scientific history, she scoffed, the Grand Duke of BADEN showed rash ignorance of a study that was "so true [he] might as well attempt to hush up the Newtonian philosophy." Gervinus, on the other hand, saw that "great natural laws" were "for ever at work in politics as everywhere else," and that progress could not be stopped. Comparing Gervinus to Galileo in her second article, she declared the impossibility of annulling a good book, once published and well known. "No number of Grand Dukes [were] equal to such a task," she averred.¹⁸

When Hunt came to see Martineau in the summer, they rowed out into Lake Windermere in a rented skiff "to pay a visit a few miles off." On their return, the windy rain caused dangerously high swells that threatened to overturn the small boat. Shrugging off the notion of danger, Martineau told Hunt lightly that her affairs were in order and drowning was an easy death; yet *he* was badly frightened for himself and for his wife and children. At Hunt's request, she began periodically to contribute pieces to the *Daily News* on holiday accidents caused by unsafe boats, climbing or not knowing how to swim. Her letter of 6 June 1854, for example: "Accidents to Whitsun Holiday Makers," pointed to the dangers of fog, wind and rain in Cumberland, where tourists got lost on the mountains or their small rented skiffs were swamped by swells on Lake Windermere.¹⁹

¹ HM to PPC, "Tuesday," *CL*, 3: 301 (Martineau often used colorful small-town *misdeeds* to illustrate her writing).

² HM to Frances Ogden, Friday [1853?], Armit Library MS HM 367/23 (partly pbd. *CL* 3: 256-57).

³ "Miss Martineau," *The Lady's Newspaper. With which is incorporated the Pictorial Times*, 19 February 1853: (first two pages).

⁴ HM to MA, 21 February [1853], *CL* 3: 267-68; in *Poems* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans; 1853), Arnold asserted that no poetical enjoyment can be derived from poems "in

which suffering finds no vent in action [but show] a continuous state of mental distress . . . unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance," Preface viii.

⁵ HM to Anne Yates, 28 February [1853], *HM/FL* 212-13; Martineau had taken a strong dislike to the spoiled young Irishman, an avid sportsman and traveller in spite of disabilities (see HM to FW, 5 November 1866, *HM/FW*, 273-77).

⁶ HM to Hunt, Sunday [c. 20 March 1853], *CL* 3: 269; "LITERATURE. *White, Red, Black Sketches of Society in the United States during the Visit of their Guest*. By Francis and Teresa Pulszky" [an account of Kossuth's visit], *DN*, 24 March 1853: 2, cols. 1-2; for Russell's measure, see next note.

⁷ HM to Hunt, 6 April [1853], *CL* 3: 273-74; for Reeve [?] on Russell's measure for the "extension and improvement of education of the people of England" aimed at keeping close ties with the Church, see *The Times*, [Monday] 4 April 1853: 4, col. 3 (see also, *The Times*, 5 April 1853: 3, cols. 4-6--5, col. 1 and 6, col. 1); for Martineau on education and juvenile delinquency, see *DN* 7 and 11 April 1853, Appen., *HM/DN*.

⁸ HM to George Smith, 22 March [1853], NLS, George Smith Papers, MS. 23183 100-101; HM to FW, 11 April [1853], *HM/FW* 123-27; for Martineau's destruction of her manuscript, see chap. 33, note 87; Knight had given up *Playfellow*, but a "Second edition" (London: Addey and Co., 1853) printed by Bradbury and Evans included a preface dated Ambleside, July 1853.

⁹ HM to Holyoake, 9 April [1853], *CL* 3: 274-75.

10. HM to FW, 11 April [1853], MS Wedgwood Papers, UKL (partly pbd. *HM/FW* 123-27); *Playfellow* (London: Addey and Co., 1853); William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Henry Esmond, Esquire* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1852); Elizabeth Gaskell to [John Forster, late April 1853], *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* 230-31; "Stopped Payment at Cranford," *HW* 7 (2 April 1853): 108-15; Martineau's two-part "Berkeley the Banker" (*Illus. Pol. Econ.*) touted wise use of paper money; see also Martineau's letter: "SAVINGS BANKS DEFALCATIONS" (signed "A FOUNDER OF A SAVINGS BANK"), *DN* 18 July 1853: 4, cols. 4-5.

11. Martineau cited the visit to Britain of Harriet Beecher Stowe and her husband at the invitation of British antislavery groups in *Daily News* leaders of 22 April and 9 May 1853 focusing on American cotton, slavery and Stowe's healthy effect on Englishmen of all ranks: see "Harriet Beecher Stowe/Cotton Supply," *HM/DN* 11-17 (and see Appen. *HM/DN*).

12. HM to [Richard Webb], Sunday, 11 April, Mayday and 3 May [1853], *HM/FL* 213, *CL* 3: 277-79 and TCD MS 4787/45; American abolitionist Parker Pillsbury, in Britain seeking support for the (Garrisonian) American Anti-Slavery Society - notably for their annual bazaar (see Temperley, 240).

¹³. See Appen., *HM/DN*; *Auto*. 2: 409, 390.

14. *Auto*. 2: 390; Charles Dickens to HM, 19 April 1853, *The Letters of Charles Dickens* 7: 67-68); for "The Sickness and Health of the People of Bleaburn," see chap. 33; see "HOME FOR HOMELESS WOMEN," *HW*, 23 April 1853: 169-75, on Dickens's (patronizing) regulations for the home founded by Burdett Coutts to prepare destitute women for emigration, with case studies.

15. *DN*, 3 May 1853, see Appen., *HM/DN*.

¹⁶. HM to Hunt, 28 April [1853], *CL* 3: 275-76; see "Gervinus," *HM/DN*, 217-24, and below; after *Letters on the Laws* not all Martineau's London friends had wanted her to stay.

¹⁷. Carlyle joked that the editor of *Fraser's* must be "the man 'Mrs Harris' of some effective Mrs Gamp . . . the real manager [being] *young* Parker the publisher" (William John Parker, the son, was *editor* and William John Parker, the father, was publisher): TC to HM, 15 June 1853, *Carlyle Letters* 28: 172-73.

¹⁸. On agricultural statistics and arterial drainage, see for example *DN*, 15 April, 28 May and 28 July 1853 (Appen., *HM/DN*); Georg Gottfried Gervinus, *Einleitung in die Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century. From the German. With a brief notice of the author by the translator* [London: Bohn, 1853]); for "Gervinus," see *DN*, 14 February and 14 March 1853 (Appen., *HM/DN*).

¹⁹. *Auto.* 2: 409-10; "ACCIDENTS TO WHITSUN HOLIDAY MAKERS" [letter signed "A.Z."], *DN*, 6 June 1854: 3, col. 3 (see also, *Guide to Windermere* [1854] 17-18) and *DN*, 4 September 1854, 30 July 1855, 12, 23 August 1856, 21 June 1859 and 27 June 1865 (Appen., *HM/DN*).