

The Martineau Society

Newsletter No. 32

Winter 2012

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Editor's Note

This issue of the *Martineau Society* Newsletter is larger than usual and not, sadly, for the best reasons. The greater length is required to include obituaries for two of the Society's leading members – Professor Robert Webb, our current Vice-President and who was our founding President in 1994, and Alan Middleton, our founding Secretary. We will remember them with affection and thanks for their charm, their wisdom and their hard work in setting the *Martineau Society* on its way.

This issue does bring you lots of interesting reading. John Warren looks closely at Harriet Martineau's Unitarian religious background and the attitudes, if not the ideas, with which she was imbued by it. Your editor has been introduced to the word "soteriology" and which the Shorter Oxford Dictionary informs him means "the doctrine of salvation", a strange and unusual concept for this modern day Unitarian. Whatever happened to those religious ideas of Harriet and which, like Unitarianism, changed during her lifetime, what clearly survived in Harriet was a strong sense of social duty.

As we slip into the New Year, we look back to last year's very successful Society Conference at Bristol. Gaby Weiner gives us a revised version of the paper she gave at the Conference on Charles Dickens in the 200th anniversary year of his birth in 1812. Notwithstanding this celebration, the paper looks at Charles Dickens in a fascinating, if not an entirely flattering light.

Alan Middleton's last article for the *Martineau Society* Newsletter explores the difficult relationship between Harriet and James Martineau and John Vint starts to explore Harriet's success as a popular writer on serious social issues – in some ways even more popular than Dickens. Part II of the paper will appear in the next issue. Mollie Martineau and Sophia Hankinson have sent us an interesting snippet of their correspondence about Erica Martineau, a descendant of Robert Martineau, the brother of Harriet and James. According to the School's website, Erica's success as the headmistress of Polam School, Darlington, lives on there in the form of the *Erica Martineau Award*.

The extract of the family tree provided by Mollie has an interesting feature. Erica's brother, Robert, became the Bishop of Blackburn. It seems that many descendants of staunchly Unitarian families reflected their wealth and success in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by slipping off into the respectability of the Anglican Church. As we have seen in the recent marriage of Kate Middleton, this was a path which might lead even to a throne.

Many thanks to all our contributors. Please forgive the errors, entirely failures by your editor, and enjoy the Newsletter.

As a member, you should by now have received news of the *Martineau Society's* 2013 Conference to be held from Thursday 25 July to Sunday 28 July, 2013, at the Oxford Hotel, Oxford. Please do book your place as a delegate early. The number of places the Society has contracted to fill with the Oxford Hotel is limited. It may be possible to add more, should the demand come well before the closing date of 25 June, 2013. See our website – www.martineausociety.co.uk – for more information and the booking forms. The Society's conferences are educating and packed with spotlights into the darkest, interesting corners of history. They are always happy and fun occasions. Please do contribute a paper and something exotic to the social evenings.

To finish on a happy note – may we all congratulate John Lund, our member who lives near Ambleside and who has just celebrated his 100th birthday.

Harriet Martineau; or, Safety First

John Warren

In *Life in the Sick-Room* (1844), Harriet Martineau wrote:

“Every man, and every woman, who for an hour helps to keep closed the entrance to the region of ideas, - are, in so far, ministers of Hell.”¹

Scholars are unlikely to be surprised, either by Martineau's peremptory claims for the benefits of access to intellectual stimulation, or by the strength of her language. But the reference to Hell is another matter. It might be assumed that her Unitarian upbringing had consigned Hell

¹ Harriet Martineau, *Life in the Sick-Room* (L.C. Bowles & W. Crosby, 1844), p. 159.

to the outer reaches of regrettably-potent superstition, and that her vocabulary was hyperbolic rather than theologically specific. Indeed, her autobiography is adamant that “I never suffered more or less from fear of Hell. The Unitarianism of my parents saved me from that.”² Perhaps so. But this paper will argue that, for as long as she retained her religious faith, Martineau was wedded to a soteriology which posited an after-life which might rightly be feared, and that this belief seeded and conditioned her personal relationships, her interpretation of her own life, her early fiction and an engagement with the community which gave it shape and purpose.

What, then, was the soteriology of the young Martineau? It is perhaps best exemplified by considering her concept of ‘safety’. ‘Safe’ and ‘safety’ are her chosen terms when faced by tragedy. The death of her revered brother Tom, a beau-ideal and the best hope of the Norwich Martineaus for the coming generation, did not prostrate her. Instead, she wrote to his young widow:

“Do you know, Helen, I can hardly help thinking that I have lost all feeling, so little has been the grief excited by this event (Tom’s death). But I suppose it is part owing to the long, long preparation, and to the perfect feeling of serenity which I cannot but have with respect to him...Oh! who that loved him, would wish him back again? No! he is happy, and we will be happy in that conviction.”³

That serenity comes from her belief in his safety: the same safety which enveloped their baby Philip, who died while Tom and Helen Martineau were in Madeira in a fruitless quest to offset the consumption which killed Tom. Martineau wrote to Helen of “your sweet pure minded child, who has had experience of the love of God, and who has never had cause to fear His frown.”⁴ Also safe, it seems, was Martineau’s fiancé, John Henry Worthington, whose apparently callous treatment at her hands has much exercised biographers. In the event of his mental and physical prostration, she did not visit him, broke off the engagement and demanded the return of her letters. Some, such as Fenwick Miller, have apportioned blame to Mrs Martineau, claiming that her mother insisted on this course of action in the face of her daughter’s wishes and distress.⁵ For her more recent biographers, the Worthington episode is a puzzle which cannot be resolved by ascribing to Martineau stock feelings of love and devotion; nor can its unfortunate denouement be ascribed to the interference or advice of others. Webb sees it as an example of her ‘sexual uncertainties’ which she greeted at various points in her life with ‘hysterical self-righteousness’⁶, whereas Pichanick sees the episode as symptomatic of her “extraordinary ability to desensitize herself, to untrammel the emotions, and to devote her energies completely to a life of the mind.”⁷ What neither biographer does is to note the similarity between her behaviour in the Worthington case and her response to Tom’s death: nor do they link Martineau’s reaction to that of her brother James, who resolutely refused to visit his college friend and colleague as he lay in his extremity. Significantly, she supported James’s decision, and hammered home yet again her message to Helen Martineau:

² Maria Weston Chapman (ed.), *Harriet Martineau’s Autobiography*, 2 vols (Osgood, 1877), i, 130.

³ HM to Helen Bourn Martineau, 7 July 1824 in Deborah Logan (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*
5 vols, i, 21.

⁴ HM to Helen Bourn Martineau, 7 July 1824, *Collected Letters*, i, 21.

⁵ F. Fenwick Miller, *Harriet Martineau* (Allen & Co., 1884).

⁶ R.K. Webb, *Harriet Martineau A Radical Victorian* (Heinemann, 1960), p. 51.

⁷ Valerie Kossew Pichanick, *Harriet Martineau The Woman and her Work* (University of Michigan Press, 1980) p. 21.

“I have been dreading lest James should go (to visit Worthington). I earnestly trust he will not. Where no good can be done, dangerous excitement of feeling should be avoided.”⁸

We recall that she professed not to be emotionally prostrated by Tom’s death, and instead interpreted it as a consummation devoutly to be accepted as a fit ending to a noble and dutiful life: Tom, in short, was revered because of what he had become – further moral progress was scarcely possible, and so he was rewarded with the safety of Heaven. She describes her engagement to Worthington as essentially justified by their mutual quest for moral progress through a shared sense of duty: precisely what, in Webb’s terms, Rational Dissenters saw in self-betterment and piety:

“a fulfilment of God’s promise for the future.”⁹

‘Our first object in loving each other was our mutual improvement; our highest desire, to fit ourselves & each other for heaven. His trial is past; safely past: and if my advancement is to be wrought by other means than I had hoped, I cheerfully give up my own desires, and must make the loss of my friend more efficacious than his help would have been.”¹⁰

‘I think our highest hopes in this world were hopes of improvement and of usefulness: if he is dismissed from his labour, if his improvement has reached the highest point it is to attain in this world, I have still the path open before me....He has given me motives, he has given me aids which will retain their power, I trust, till we meet again.”¹¹

We note once more the discourse of ‘safety’, which clearly needs to be set into the context of Martineau’s fear of God’s frown. It also needs to be set into the context of Martineau’s religious and intellectual milieu which, although it did indeed deny the existence of Hell and eternal punishment, did not deny a potential afterlife of prolonged, if not permanent, pain. The key influences on Martineau’s thought are David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Belsham and Lant Carpenter. She poured avidly over the writings of Thomas Belsham (1750-1829)¹², and, although Martineau claims to have felt uneasy with Belsham’s ingenuity in employing figurative meanings for uncomfortable doctrines such as hell and punishment, this is likely to reflect her mature attitude to biblical exegesis (and perhaps W.J. Fox’s assessment of Belsham in the *Monthly Repository* of 1830¹³) rather than her youthful welcoming of

⁸ HM to Helen Martineau, December 2nd 1826, *Collected Letters*, i, 41.

⁹ R.K. Webb, ‘Rational Piety’ in Knud Haakensesen (ed.) *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (CUP, 1996), pp.10-11.

¹⁰ HM to Helen Martineau, December 2nd 1826, *Collected Letters*, i, 40.

¹¹ HM to Helen Martineau, December 7th 1826, *Collected Letters*, i, 42-3.

¹² Thomas Belsham was former professor of divinity at Daventry Academy who, on his conversion to Unitarianism, took a similar post at the short-lived New College, Hackney: he was subsequently minister at the Essex Street chapel. His *Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind* (1801) was, in R.K. Webb’s judgement, the standard textbook on metaphysics and psychology as drawn from Priestley and Hartley.

¹³ See Anon. (W.J. Fox), ‘On the character and writings of the Rev. T. Belsham’, *Monthly Repository* NS 4, (April 1830), p. 249. Fox comments that Belsham ‘did his work by the sole agency of the understanding. He could accomplish little or nothing by means of the imagination, or of the

Belsham's skill in explaining away eternal damnation.¹⁴ Belsham was heavily influenced by both Hartley and Priestley, and Martineau's attitude to the mechanisms of the after-life was similarly the product of her understanding of an associationist eschatology. David Hartley was the apostle of associationism, and his *Observations on Man* (1749) - familiar to Martineau through Priestley's edition¹⁵ - rejected a mind/body dualism in favour of a materialist psychology, which included an insistence on a corporeal after-life. This meant that those who had sinned would be subject to a corporeal punishment which was, nevertheless, reformatory rather than permanently punitive: its aim was to equip the sinner for heaven. Hartley speculated that:

"With respect to the Punishments of the Wicked in a future State, we may observe, that these may be corporeal... For Sensuality is one great Part of Vice, and a principal Source of it. It may be necessary therefore, that actual Fire should feed upon the elementary body...in order to burn out the Stains of Sin."¹⁶

These words are echoed in the writings of the educationalist and Unitarian minister Lant Carpenter, whose school Martineau attended and whose acolyte she became. Offering a defence of Belsham's thought against the alleged misrepresentations of Bishop Magee, Carpenter is keen to emphasise that this is not to be seen as subscription to the doctrine of purgatory but, instead, to the conviction that God's providence leads towards progress and increasing perfection of human life. Even evil itself tends to its own destruction: in this way, suffering can be a vital tool in the curing of moral evil in this life, and that, in the life to come, "the sinner, purified by suffering, will be fitted for a life of holiness and bliss". The sinner's pain will be

"intense and lasting in proportion to the sin itself, but it will come to an end in the Final Restitution: when suffering has done its work, and the deep stains of guilt have been removed as by fire, suffering will be no longer continued."¹⁷

Carpenter, in rejecting eternal punishment, rejects the view of God that a doctrine of hell presupposes - namely, a vindictive and fundamentally immoral being - and is careful to avoid the use of the word 'hell' itself.

affections'.

¹⁴ See *Autobiography*, i, 29.

¹⁵ Martineau commented of the Priestley edition that she studied it 'with a fervour and perseverance which made it perhaps the most important book in the world to me, except the bible'. See *Autobiography*, i, 80. As for Priestley's own eschatology, although he appears to have accepted universalism eventually, he did not always eschew the word 'hell'. One may perhaps assume that Martineau was unacquainted with his *Catechism for Children, and Young Persons* (Johnson, 1791): "Qu. *Where shall you live again, if you have been wicked?*" An. "If I have been wicked, I shall go to hell, where I shall be very miserable" (p. 15). For an able discussion of the Unitarian contribution to the eschatology debate, see Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians: A study of the nineteenth-century theological controversies concerning eternal punishment and the after-life* (Clarendon, 1974), pp. 34-5 in particular.

¹⁶ David Hartley, *Observations on Man, his frame, his duty, and his expectations, in two parts*, 2 vols (Richardson, 1749), ii, 399.

¹⁷ Lant Carpenter, *An Examination of the Charges made against Unitarians and Unitarianism: and the Improved Version, by the Right Rev. Dr Magee, Bishop of Raphoe...* (Parsons and Browne, 1820), pp. 281-2. Carpenter's admiration for Hartley underpins this apology for Unitarianism. He comments that 'Dr. Johnson never made a wiser remark, than when he placed Hartley's *Observations* as next in value to the Bible' (p. 286).

The centrality of this doctrine to progressive Unitarian thought¹⁸ is also reflected in the article 'On Future Punishment' in the *Monthly Repository* of December 1830 by 'W.T' – probably William Turner.¹⁹ The author considers that, for those of vicious habits, the painful discipline to be undergone will be long and intense, but:

“must be gone through before such persons can be rendered fit to partake in the blessings of heaven”.²⁰

Martineau places very similar words in the mouth of her character Dr Sneyd in her *Illustrations of Political Economy* tale 'Briery Creek'. Significantly, Sneyd is intended to represent Priestley, whose status as 'the great apostle of Unitarianism' led to her intensive study of his character and works²¹. Martineau came to follow Priestley in making the connection between the denial of the separate existence of a soul and the materiality of man, the doctrine of Socinianism and the Necessarian philosophy: in Priestley's terms,

“equally part of *one system* (his stress), being equally founded on just observations of nature, and fair deductions from the scriptures.”²²

However, the *Autobiography* places greatest stress on the influence of Hartley, and does so in terms which clearly combine his eschatology with Martineau's overwhelming sense of duty.

“I cannot at this hour look at the portrait of Hartley prefixed to his work...without a strong revival of the old mood of earnest desire of self-discipline, and devotion to duty which I derived.”²³

Martineau, then, links safety with duty, and that duty was defined, not as adherence to religious formularies or as the earnest fulfilling of household responsibilities *per se*, but as a social activism which underpinned her writings and life. She envisages, then, a preliminary afterlife which would welcome or prepare the soul for heaven. If sin had rendered the soul

¹⁸ As suggested in the pages of *The Monthly Repository*, not all Unitarians were confident in a final restoration of mankind, or of the absence of punishment in an after-life. In the June 1820 edition, for example, three letters engage in the controversy. Two reject the image of a punitive deity, but one denies the scriptural basis of a doctrine of final restoration, and worries that it promotes a potentially-fatal carelessness about sin. This writer, Joseph Jevans, stops just short of declaring a belief in a place of eternal punishment, but uses the word hell in quoting scripture on the fate of the wicked, and 'dare not say' that this 'second death' will not be 'literally executed'. See *The Monthly Repository* XV, CLXXXIV, 337-45. Jevans (1749-1839) was the long-serving Unitarian minister at Bloxham, Oxfordshire: see www.unitarianhistory.org.uk/ministerobit1800.html (accessed 7 April 2012). Some correspondents are concerned about the impact of Necessarianism on the deterrent effect of the fear of punishment, and, in so doing, imply a readiness to accept the possibility of punishment in the after-life. J.S. comments that 'if man be the creature of the circumstances in which he is placed, why his good actions should be rewarded with immortality and ever-lasting happiness, or his evil deeds subject him to future punishment or annihilation, appears to be a subject involved in the deepest and most impenetrable obscurity'. Letter of April 11, 1820 to *The Monthly Repository* XV, CLXXIII, May 1820, 277.

¹⁹ Martineau describes Turner as 'my mother's pastor and friend before her marriage' *Autobiography*, i, 25, and it was the influence of his daughter Ann that had helped to turn Martineau's piety into practice.

²⁰ 'W.T', 'On Future Punishment', *The Monthly Repository* NS 4, 48 (Dec 1830), 802.

²¹ *Autobiography*, i, 81.

²² Joseph Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit, to which is added, The History of the Philosophical Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Soul, and the Nature of Matter...* (J. Johnson, 1777), p. 356.

²³ *Autobiography*, i, 81.

initially incapable of appreciating its final place with God, that necessary preparation would be agonising and horribly prolonged. Thus, her adored brother, she believed, was safe: his life of duty, progress and social activism meant that there should have been no painful delay in his journey to the presence of his maker. She hoped for safety for herself, and safety for her fiancé, John Hugh Worthington, cut short in the midst of their plans for a life of rigorous commitment to progress for self and community. Indeed, this is precisely the message to be imbibed through Lant Carpenter's sermons, which emphasised what he called 'social piety'²⁴: in reminding the reader that God 'giveth to everyone a law of duty'²⁵, he stresses the critical moments in one's life where moral character is at stake – and it is departure from duty which is a sign of imminent corruption and danger.

What, then, would get in the way of duty? A short answer might be – behaviour like that of Helen Bourn Martineau. The Martineau family had a clear view of the duties of the widow, and required from her a particular type and standard of conduct based upon an emotional steadfastness and an acceptance of the ways of providence. Harriet's letters overtly offered a model of response to the loss of Tom to which Helen was to subscribe. Clearly, prostration through grief was unacceptable – as was any feigning and untoward display of emotions. She was to accept that 'many quiet years must be in store', and that within the Martineau family she could be 'safely soothed either in sorrow or in peace'²⁶, looking forward to reunion in Heaven with Tom and her little boy. Having made the mistake of writing to Harriet to complain of feelings of despondency and apathy, Helen is subjected to an epistolary battering. Such feelings are labelled as not so much sad as sinful, and the virtues of disciplined study, early rising, physical exertion and engagement with public charities are extolled. Characteristically, these are Harriet's own recourses and reflect her own household: she writes of the hours from 5am to 8.30am as a time of personal freedom, wherein:

"you can get several hours to yourself without your mother being aware of it".

Her main themes, however, are the dangers of excitement of the feelings (underlined twice in the letter) occasioned by the twin indulgences of surrounding oneself with people who enjoy talking about feelings and the luxury of the sofa:

"it is excitement instead of rest to lie and think on the Sofa."²⁷

Harriet's mother also managed to combine concern with warning in a letter to her newly-widowed daughter-in-law:

"I have not my love entered at length on many subjects which are near my heart. I would rather talk with you, & I dare not stir up feelings which may interrupt duty."²⁸

The Martineaus clearly suspected Helen of a taste for emotional and enervating display, and this may not have been unfounded. Mary Robberds, the wife of the minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, wrote:

"There is perhaps no one but ourselves who know your very peculiar uncommon fancies and feelings...and even we feel so far doubtful as to urge it upon you, my

²⁴ Lant Carpenter, *Sermons on Practical Subjects* (Philp and Evans, 1840), p.58.

²⁵ Carpenter, *Sermons*, p. 8. Martineau commented that Carpenter's sermons were 'the best I ever listened to' in conveying ideas to a youthful audience. See *Autobiography*, i, 26.

²⁶ HM to Helen Martineau, 7th July 1824, *Collected Letters*, i, 20-1.

²⁷ HM to Helen Martineau, 12 May 1825, *Collected Letters*, i, 31-2.

²⁸ Elizabeth Martineau to Helen Martineau, July 11th 1826, JRUL UCC MFL, C1/40.

dear Helen, to do nothing precipitate...It sounds rather dull, but perhaps it may be some comfort to come to a calm, sedate person who, if she has not the power of securing the ecstasies and raptures, is not apt to descend to invective and threats. I hope it is not presumptuous to say that though I may sometimes disappoint you as not going to the extent of your feelings, you will always find me your faithful & sincere friend."²⁹

In the event, Helen's actions apparently justified the Martineaus' fears. By 1825, the Martineau family in Norwich had begun to remark on a supposed improvement in Helen's temperament and outlook; this, they duly ascribed to the impact of Tom's character, his ordered life and his concern for others which offset what Harriet called her

"weak sentimentality which, it was thought, Mr Robberds encouraged."³⁰

However, evidence of a growing attachment between Helen and Edward Tagart, the new and young minister at the Octagon Chapel, brought to the fore all the old criticisms of her emotionalism and her lack of a sense of duty and combined them with resentment at her failure to respect sufficiently the memory of her husband. For good measure, family members were outraged at what they saw as Tagart's presumption, fortune-hunting (Helen was relatively wealthy) and lack of gratitude to a family whose patronage had been so vital when he settled in Norwich and struggled to meet the challenges of serving a congregation not known for its deference towards its minister. A marriage between Helen Martineau and Edward Tagart represented an attack on a world-view and a value system that underpinned the Magdalen St family and its relationship with the community. That world-view and those systems were so potent because they reflected a heady combination of feeling refined and intensified by religious principle, of a concept of personal and civic duty and the peculiar circumstances of a family where relationships were at once deep and problematic.

Firstly, the Helen and Tagart engagement was an implicit rejection and besmirching of the beau-ideal; Helen Martineau should not have considered a second marriage, since she had hardly begun to demonstrate her worthiness of the first. Tom's death should have been an agent for her self-improvement, which was the only and necessary solace. Secondly, Tom's life was the compelling model for the right relationship between his religious faith and social activism, and between household and community. Helen's role was to follow that example. Thirdly, he had linked the new generation of the Martineau family with the prestige and city-wide status of his uncle, the surgeon Philip Meadows Martineau, and his widow should have recognised that she had obligations to honour him by an appropriate and perhaps permanent widowhood. In short, Tom Martineau was and remained, in the eyes of his parents, brothers and sisters, the embodiment of the best that the family had to offer to itself, to its chapel and to its community. It was therefore a privilege to have been his wife and a privilege to remain his widow. To contemplate marriage to a man so apparently flawed as Tagart, so beholden to the Martineaus and so unspeakably ungrateful, ought to be unthinkable: Hyperion to a satyr. We should note the reported language of Harriet in what must have been an exciting tête-a-tête with Helen:

²⁹ Mary Robberds to Helen Martineau, September 8th 1826, Dr Williams's Library (DWL hereafter) WL 24.242/6.

³⁰ HM to JM, 8 January 1825, HMC MS. J. Martineau 1, p. 45.

“...by allowing my thoughts to dwell for one moment on Mr. T I had sullied her brother’s memory – that I had raised myself in the world & in the public estimation by a connection with their family...”³¹ *Sullied*, indeed.

Space permitting, it would have been revealing to have tracked in detail the impact on Martineau’s early fiction of her discourse of safety and duty and its application to personal relationships. For instance, In *Five Years of Youth; or, Sense and Sentiment* (1831), the danger of the compromising of duty by self-centred emotionalism is recast as an attack on sensibility. Its victim, the character Anna Byerley, shares Helen Bourn Martineau’s alleged attachment to reverie and lassitude. She also shares Helen’s attachment to the sofa. Despite the clarion call of filial duty, Anna is unable to act when faced by her imprisoned father’s urgent need. Linking rampant sensibility to intellectual incapacity, Martineau comments that:

“the feeble-minded girl was frightfully agitated. She had shrunk shivering on the ground, and clung so convulsively to the sofa, that it was impossible to raise her.”³²

Not for her is the repentance and restoration of Austen’s Marianne Dashwood; instead, Martineau leaves Anna’s fate in the balance. One is tempted to add a footnote: in Martineau’s terms, Anna has failed to do her duty, and so her safety is compromised. Unless she reforms, and adopts a life of social piety, she is unfit for heaven: and Martineau’s soteriology proposes for her a prolonged period of pain.



Charles and Catherine Dickens (photos Wikipedia)

³¹ Helen Martineau to John Gooch Robberds, September 6th 1826, DWL 24.242/5.

³² Harriet Martineau, *Five Years of Youth; or, Sense and Sentiment* (Harvey and Darton, 1831), p. 222.

Puncturing the image: Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, gender and power

Gaby Weiner¹

“He [Dickens] is a virtuous and happy family man, in the first place. His glowing and generous heart is kept steady by the best domestic influences; and we may fairly hope now that he will fulfil the natural purpose of his life, and stand by literature to the last....nothing could exceed the frank kindness and consideration shown by him in his correspondence and personal intercourse we have had; and my cordial regard has grown with my knowledge of him.” (Harriet Martineau)²

“In the autumn of 1849, my misgivings first became serious. Mr. Willis [the assistant editor of *Household Words*] proposed my doing some articles on the Employments of Women (especially in connection with the Schools of Design and branches of Fine-Art manufacture), and was quite unable to see that every contribution of the kind was necessarily excluded by Mr. Dickens’ prior articles on behalf of his view of Woman’s position; articles in which he ignored the fact the nineteen-twentieths of the women of England earn their bread, and in which he prescribes the function of Women; viz., to dress well and look pretty, as an adornment to the homes of men. I was startled by this; and at the same time, and for many weeks after, by Mr. Dickens’s treatment in his Magazine of the Preston Strike, then existing, and of the Factory and wages controversy, in his tale “Hard Times”.” (Harriet Martineau)³

Harriet Martineau published 47 pieces in *Household Words* between 1850 and 1854 and was one of the journal’s mainstay authors during its early years. For a number of years, she enjoyed a cordial relationship with the editor, Charles Dickens (1812-1870), as we can see from the first quotation above. However the relationship broke down in a very public dispute in the mid 1850s. In the second quotation above Harriet gives several reasons for the break: Dickens’ attitude to women; his position on the Preston Strike⁴; and his treatment of the Factory and Wages legislation, with a fourth added later, the rejection by Dickens of a Christmas story written by Harriet which was favourable to Catholicism.

Of particular interest to me is how the dispute between two of the foremost literary figures of the time raises issues of gender and power, and in particular as Crawford ponders, ‘how a male-dominated public sphere responded to the emergence of women authors’ determined to have a public voice’. Crawford maintains that the differences between the two writers reveal how Harriet ‘resisted the dominant author of his age and his effort to

¹ Revised version of paper presented at the annual meeting of the Martineau Society, Bristol, 12-15 July 2012

² *Harriet Martineau’s Autobiography*, 2, London: Smith, Elder and Co., 419, 1877, p. 379

³ *Op Cit.*, p. 419 (extract inserted later when Harriet was reviewing the proofs)

⁴ Dickens wrote an anti-Utilitarian article entitled ‘On Strike’ for *Household Words* where he pointed out faults of both sides involved in a strike and lockout in Preston in February 1854. His novel *Hard Times* is said to draw on the Preston strike.

enact that which she most feared....being silenced.¹⁵

The source of the initial dispute was Harriet's pamphlet, *The Factory Controversy: A Warning Against Meddling Legislation* written in 1855⁶, the main argument of which was that certain protective measures proposed by the government were impractical and unworkable. She was critical of the chief factory inspector, Leonard Horner, who had been appointed to inquire into child factory labour, and also of Dickens, who had taken up the question of factory accidents in *Household Words*. Five articles had appeared in *Household Words* written by Henry Morley, a close associate of Dickens, on the dangers involved in unfenced machinery. As Crawford notes, Harriet offered a searing indictment of her opponents and, in particular, of Dickens himself – "He should not meddle with affairs in which rationality of judgment is required"⁷ was one of her milder comments'.⁸ The harshness of Harriet's criticism caused the *Westminster Review* for whom she originally wrote the article, to refuse to print it. It was eventually published in pamphlet form by the National Association of Factory Occupiers, although Harriet sought to distance herself from accusations of partiality by stating that the article was written before she came to know of the existence of the Association⁹.

She asserts her general opposition to what she calls 'meddling legislation' affecting relationship between the classes. In a closely-written article, she draws on statistics to show 'fewer accidents from the shafting of mills than from any other industrial apparatus of any magnitude' and to question 'the true relation between the millowner and the government on the one hand, and his workpeople on the other.'¹⁰

In terms of Dickens' say in the matter, she accuses him of not presenting both sides of the argument and of using his skills more to inflame than to enlighten:

"If he [Dickens] must give the first place to his idealism and sensibilities, let him confine himself to fiction; and if he will put himself forward as a social reformer, let him do the only honest thing, — study both sides of the question he takes up."¹¹

The riposte came in *Household Words* in an article in 1856 entitled 'Our Wicked Mis-statements'¹², mostly written by Henry Morley. Patronising in tone, it uses strongly gendered language to dismiss Harriet's sixty pages worth of detail and argument as the 'hasty' and 'partial' ravings of a 'sick lady':

⁵ Iain Crawford, Gentleman of the Press or Maid-of-all-Work: Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens and the Rise of a Victorian Woman of Letters, paper in preparation, 2012

⁶ Harriet Martineau. *The Factory Controversy; A Warning Against Meddling Legislation*. Issued by the National Association of Factory Occupiers, 12 Corporation Street, Manchester. Printed by A. Ireland & Co., Pall Mall. 1855

⁷ Ibid, 44

⁸ Crawford, "A giraffe . . . forced into a flower-pot": Dickens and Martineau on America, unpublished paper, 2012

⁹ In her introduction to the pamphlet, Harriet writes that at the time she wrote the article 'I did not then even know of the existence of your Association : and I mention these facts to obviate all pre text for the charge that my article was in any way instigated by any factory occupiers' (p. iv).

¹⁰ *The Factory Controversy*, p. 8

¹¹ Op Cit, p36

¹² Dickens, C & Morley,H., Our Wicked Mis-statements, *Household Words*, 19 January 1856, 13-15

“If no question of public justice were involved, we should prefer misinterpretation to the task of showing weakness in a sick lady whom we esteem. We have a respect for Miss Martineau, won by many good works she has written and many good deeds she has done, which nothing she can say or do will destroy; and we most heartily claim for her the respect of our readers as a thing not to be forfeited, for a few hasty words, or for a scrap or two of argument too readily adopted upon partial showing.”¹³

In referring to the fact that the editor of the *Westminster Review* had turned down the original article, the tone of ridicule continues:

“It will be seen that the editor of the Review exercised the discretion of a gentleman. We regret very much that the National (or Lancashire) Association has been less discreet, and, by issuing the paper as a pamphlet at its own expense, has been less friendly to the lady than the lady wished to be to them.”¹⁴

Dickens’ (and Morley’s response) aimed primarily to undermine Harriet’s reputation as an author. No other writer of or contributor to *Household Words* was attacked and humiliated in this way, and, until Dickens’ public announcement of his separation from Catherine, he made no similar public attack on an individual woman’s reputation. Crawford notes a ‘strikingly similar corrective note’ concerning Dickens’ treatment of Harriet and of his wife on the couple’s separation, while Lilian Nayder, Catherine’s biographer observes Dickens’ general difficulty in dealing with female opposition and his tendency towards forceful repudiation.¹⁵

Harriet’s falling out with Dickens is explored in a number of texts (e.g. Fielding and Smith, 1970; Fielding, 1999; Crawford, 2012¹⁶) though few have focused on her criticism of Dickens’ attitude to women, especially his behaviour towards his wife Catherine and his general treatment of women in his journal-writing and fiction.

Dickens’ marriage

Briefly (for those who don’t know it), Dickens began wooing Catherine Hogarth just as his work was beginning to become recognised and following a protracted period of unrequited love. Catherine was all that could be expected in the wife of a Great Man; pretty and amenable, supportive of his work, socially adept when accompanying him on trips abroad, and sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to help him in his work, at least in the first years of their marriage. However, over the years, Dickens fell out of love with her. He found Catherine increasingly unattractive and accused her of being an incompetent mother and housekeeper. Significantly, he blamed her for the birth of their 10 children, which, he said, caused him constant financial worries.

¹³ Op Cit, p. 13

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lilian Nayder, *The Other Dickens: the life of Catherine Hogarth*. Cornell University Press, 2010

¹⁶ K. J. Fielding and Anne Smith, *Hard Times and the factory Controversy: Dickens vs. Harriet Martineau*, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 24, 4, 404-427, 1970; Ken Fielding, ‘Likeness in Unlikeness’: Dickens and Harriet Martineau, *Martineau Society Newsletter*, 4-20, 1999; Crawford *op cit*.

The crisis came to a head in May 1858 when Catherine accidentally received a piece of jewellery meant for his mistress, the young actress Ellen Ternan. When the couple separated, Dickens and the children excepting the oldest boy Charles remained in the family home at Tavistock House, while Catherine and her son were exiled to a more modest residence. Georgina Hogarth, Catherine's sister took over the management of the Dickens household and little communication was allowed between the two residences. Dickens' explanation took the form of a statement in *Household Words* on 12 June 1858. His legendary humour and lucidity were noticeably absent:

“Some domestic trouble of mine, of long-standing, on which I will make no further remark than that it claims to be respected, as being of a sacredly private nature, has lately been brought to an arrangement, which involves no anger or ill-will of any kind, and the whole origin, progress, and surrounding circumstances of which have been, throughout, within the knowledge of my children. It is amicably composed, and its details have now to be forgotten by those concerned in it... By some means, arising out of wickedness, or out of folly, or out of inconceivable wild chance, or out of all three, this trouble has been the occasion of misrepresentations, mostly grossly false, most monstrous, and most cruel — involving, not only me, but innocent persons dear to my heart... I most solemnly declare, then — and this I do both in my own name and in my wife's name — that all the lately whispered rumours touching the trouble, at which I have glanced, are abominably false. And whosoever repeats one of them after this denial, will lie as willfully and as foully as it is possible for any false witness to lie, before heaven and earth.”¹⁷

Harriet's response to the news was characteristically trenchant and analytic. In a letter to Henry Bright a couple of weeks after Dickens' announcement, she implied that she had long been sceptical of the professed domestic happiness of the Dickens couple because of what she saw as his high-handedness and controlling influence. It could not but bode ill:

“About the Dickens case, - I will just say that my rejoicing in the domestic happiness I formerly heard so much of from their intimates was deepened by some surprise; - so that I am not so wholly confounded at this manifestation [Dickens' separation from his wife] as many people are. I mean that I always, from the observation of a long life, distrust such an amount of sentimentality, combined with self-love in the husband, as has always existed in the D household. Moreover, amidst it all, he openly & thoroughly regarded his wife as 'his woman'; provided another to take care of the children & walk with him when Mrs. D was unable,- which she usually was;- chose her to dress in black velvet, & and sit at her embroidery, at leisure for him, and so on. After this sort of life,- now, when she has borne him above a dozen children (9 living) & the time for collapse has come,- exhaustion, indifference, indolence &c, is she to be turned adrift, because she is (if she is) subject to that fretfulness & jealousy which are the specific results of such a life as he has chosen

¹⁷ *Household Words*, 12 June 1858

that her's sh^d be?"¹⁸

Writing more than a century before the feminism of 1970s onwards, her analysis is remarkably familiar. She notes the patriarchal culture of domesticity of the Dickens' household characterised by the husband's 'ownership' of his wife which included control over appearance, movement, status and financial security. In this situation and with heavy child-bearing duties, Harriet surmised, it is not surprising that Catherine became exhausted and dull.

Harriet's perceptions were further strengthened by a visit from Frederick Evans (of Bradbury and Evans, Dickens' former publisher) to Ambleside in 1860. Evans told of the marital discord of the Dickenses, and especially Dickens' cruelty to his wife. In a letter to Fanny Wedgwood, Harriet reported:

"I ask what 'cruelty' meant; and he said 'Swearing at her in the presence of guests, children and servants;' – swearing often and fiercely. He is downright 'ferocious' now, and has quarrelled with almost every friend he had....Dickens had terrified and depressed her into a dull condition; and she never was very clever....He is *awful* at home now,- restless, despotic and miserable. Quite a lost man, apparently. He was, I think, from the moment when he, with his advantages, attacked his dumb and defenceless wife in print."¹⁹

Several weeks later, Harriet again wrote of this matter to Henry Bright. She had met, she wrote, Mr. Evans who was a 'trustee' of Catherine Dickens 'chosen by M^r Dickens himself': "This gentleman (M^r Evans) says M^{rs} D. Is absolutely free of the offences charged against her in her husband's public letter; & that M^r D's temper was so ferocious to her that his nearest c^d not bear to go to the house. M^{rs} D. is now cheerful, - kindly treated by her son, son-in-law & married daughter. Dickens is wretched and in an awful temper, so that he has hardly a friend left."²⁰

Harriet clearly took some delight in Dickens' discomfiture, placing the main responsibility on him for the break-up. More recent commentators, however, disagree about who was most to blame. Miriam Margolyes, similarly to Harriet, argues that Dickens terrified and depressed his wife and was guilty of mental cruelty towards her²¹ whereas Elisabeth Arbuckle places responsibility on Victorian society more than on Dickens, himself. Moreover, she accuses Harriet of exaggerating the extent of Dickens' cruelty, primarily because of her own experiences of, and aversion to him:

"The 'real causes' of Dickens's separation from his wife included his liaison with Ellen Ternan, but perhaps the unreasonable expectations of both parties in a Victorian marriage were most at fault. HM probably exaggerated the account of Dickens's cruelty, stimulated by her own dislike of Dickens and her discomfiture

¹⁸ Letter sent to Henry Bright from Harriet Martineau from Ambleside, dated 24 June 1858. In Valerie Sanders (ed.) *Harriet Martineau: Selected Letters*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 153-4

¹⁹ Letter to Fanny Wedgwood dated October 20th 1860, in Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (ed.) *Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood*. Stanford Ca.: Stanford University Press, 194-195, 1983

²⁰ Letter from Harriet Martineau to Henry Bright dated 8th November 1860. In Valerie Sanders (ed.) *Harriet Martineau: Selected Letters*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 184-5

²¹ Miriam Margolyes and Sonia Fraser, *Dickens' Women*. London: Hesperus Press Ltd, 2011

over *The Factory Controversy*.”²²

As to Catherine, she behaved with both dignity and spirit in her newly single life. Though she had little contact with Dickens after their separation, she remained attached and loyal to him and his memory. She continued to maintain social relationships with many of her original acquaintances, remained a keen theatre-goer and re-established family relations with her children and grandchildren on Dickens' death. Catherine died in 1879 and left the collection of letters she had received from Dickens to her daughter Kate. She is reputed to have said 'Give these to the British Museum, that the world may know he loved me once'.

Dickens on women

Dickens' public view of women as evidenced in his fiction and non-fiction was contradictory. For *Household Words*, he took much the same stance as Harriet in recognising that, while most women would be mainly engaged in the home and with the family, many were breadwinners, compelled to work through circumstances not of their making. As Slater writes of Dickens:

“Ideally he believed, of course, that all women should be fully occupied with their own families and domestic duties, but he also recognised that many women who did not marry would have to earn their living and that, in the lower ranks of society, wives and mothers often had to be breadwinners, the men being unemployed – the women workers in some East End lead-mills, for example.”²³

Dickens gave space in *Household Words* for articles on 'the woman question', for instance, a series of women doing so-called masculine jobs in France such as porters, waiters, shopkeepers, typists etc.²⁴ He also invited Harriet to write a series on employment for women which she declined on the grounds that her views on women were inconsistent with his.

However, in terms of his fiction and his treatment of the women who he came into contact on an everyday basis, Dickens is more vulnerable to criticism. Anne Isba, a biographer of Catherine, tells of Dickens' infatuations with young girls and his infantilisation of women generally²⁵, while Patricia Ingham implies that his perception of women was somewhat uni-dimensional (at least compared with his portrayal of men) in her identification of five different (stereo) types of women in his novels: the excessive female, the true mother, the nubile girl, the fallen girl, and the passionate woman.²⁶

²² Arbuckle, p 199, n 12

²³ Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women*. London: J. M. Dent Ltd, 328-9, 1983

²⁴ Edmund Dixon, The Rights of French Women, *Household Words*, 5, 218-221, 22 May, 1852; Edmund Dixon, More Work for the Ladies, *Household Words*, 6, 18-22, 18 September, 1852.

²⁵ Anne Isba, *Dickens' Women: His Life and Loves*. Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2011

²⁶ Ingham, Patricia. *Dickens, Women, and Language*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992

Concluding thoughts

Harriet was undoubtedly an important contributor to Dickens' *Household Words* in the first years of its existence although she openly admitted that payment was an important part of the relationship. The Factory Controversy clearly blew the relationship apart, with Dickens' stung at the strength of Harriet's critique. Perhaps by this time, he also had less need of her as a contributor. It is at this point that he chose to exert the extent of his patriarchal power and influence to pour vitriol over a fellow author, rather than engage in a less personal and more generous public debate. And it is this bullying characteristic -- the resort to ridicule and humiliation when facing obstruction from a woman, be it unwanted wife or critical colleague -- which reveals his actual rather than professed position on women and their place in Victorian society.



James Martineau (photo Wikisource)

Closed: House and Heart. Harriet's Exclusion Zone Imposed on Brother James - or, Adjustment to the Pedestal

Alan Middleton

When writing his Biographical Memoranda, James Martineau refers to the time in 1854 when, 'I found that my sister's house and heart were closed against me'.¹ Negotiations by the other siblings, appealing to Harriet to unlock the doors to let James in, were curtly rejected. What had made Harriet so adamant?

Valerie Sanders asked a similar question in a paper given at The Martineau Society Conference of 2000, the centennial anniversary of JM's death. The paper is now recorded in *A James Martineau Miscellany*.² Valerie discussed the matter in a comprehensive, analytical, and professional manner. I shall offer a layman's simplistic view of the situation.

First let us consider some of the history prior to Harriet's unbending decision - a review of some well-worn quotations from her *Autobiography* and other sources. The following is an extract from one of her letters, when she was 21:

'Oh! That James could be with me is always my reflection when I am enjoying any pleasure of this kind, for he better than anyone else besides can enter into and share my feelings and to him better than to anyone besides can [I] declare every thought of my heart.'³

In their early days Harriet saw James as her life guide: 'My brother James (then my oracle) ...' (ABv1,108), a sentiment which developed further to the point where James was 'my idolized companion' (ABv1,117). When he went to college she missed him so much that on his return to the college after the vacation, she was 'left to her widowhood' (ABv1,118). And she confesses:

'All who have ever known me are aware that the strongest passion I have ever entertained was in regard to my youngest brother' [James] (ABv1,99).

Harriet had erected a mental pedestal upon which she set her 'glorious, laborious brother' (Lv1,345). When James married Helen Higginson, Harriet's feelings towards her brother did not change. In one of her letters, while she was staying with James and Helen in Dublin, she writes about the problems and projects James is busy with and then concludes that she has written enough about him:

'But I must not write more of him; & I wonder I can so easily, so nearly as he belongs to me' (Lv1. 97). And in the same letter she writes, 'What a paradise would life be to me if I could live with him and Helen. It is their dream as well as mine that we shall manage it sometime.' (Ah! - would it work?)

How could such a 'dream' turn into a blunt refusal even to see him? Had the pedestal

¹ Biographical Memoranda, p336. I am grateful to the Revd Dr Ralph Waller, Principal of Harris Manchester College, Oxford, for allowing me to read his doctoral thesis, 'James Martineau: His Emergence as a Theologian, His Christology, and His Doctrine of the Church, with some unpublished papers', within which is transcribed James Martineau's Biographical Memoranda from the original MS. Page numbers relate to the Thesis.

² Available from HMC. <librarian@hmc.ox.ac.uk>

³ From a transcription of Harriet's letters in James's shorthand notes at HMC. By Wm S Coloe, CSR, Jersey City, NJ. 28 April 1823, pp20-21.

collapsed?

Well, as ever, one of those essentials of life - Time - will reveal all. There is a saying that 'Time is a great healer', but Time is also a great changer, and Harriet's view of life was changing. She had travelled to America, and the Middle East, and was brought back unwell from Europe, then was confined to the sick room for four years. Perhaps all this, especially being a sickly recluse in her own rooms at Tynemouth, gave her time to think about the meaning of life and her attitude towards religion. Remember, she had been a religious fanatic.

Just after her remarkable recovery at Tynemouth, Harriet was introduced to Henry Atkinson, a young philosopher, in May 1845. Now, he was just the right person to encourage her thoughts; they exchanged many letters, and he provided answers to some of her questions. They shared similar beliefs about religion, and he was a practising mesmeriser.

Harriet felt that the facts and experiences which they had discussed in their letters were sufficiently educational that such were worthy of publication, and she persuaded Atkinson to collate them into book form; hence we have *Letters on The Laws of Man's Nature and Development*,⁴ published in 1851. In typical Harriet fashion, she could see that the book would probably upset some people, and indeed some of her friends, but it would serve as a statement of her current beliefs. Needless to say, it upset her marvellous brother, James, and, as he says in his Memoranda:

'to my amazement, her convictions had yielded to the most incompetent arguments' (BM,335).

Henry Atkinson (HGA) did not mince his words; in one of his letters he said:

'A selfish theologian is not for this age. His theology prevents the admission of higher truths, and the development of man's nobler nature' (LL,239).

One can imagine James's amazement and dismay when he read this. He was a theologian and philosopher of some repute, and these *Letters* talked of the brain, extra-sensory perception, mesmerism, and religion - the conventional religious practices were criticised.

James was faced with a dilemma. As a reputable theologian of the time he would inevitably disagree with much of the book, so, should he publish a review or should he keep quiet? The dilemma was compounded by the fact that the book was co-authored by Henry Atkinson and Harriet Martineau. In his Memoranda James said the dilemma was solved for him:

'... my colleagues urged upon me the necessity of reviewing the "Letters" ' (BM,335).

So he showed his hand and the review appeared - all 38 pages of it:

⁴ I was privileged to read James's personal copy at HMC.

'[I] freely said of him [HGA] what I should have said of any anonymous and unrelated author' (BM,337).

The review was, in his estimation, as fair a treatment as he would give to any other publication.⁵

But, Oh! it amounted to a mocking of both authors, especially Mr Atkinson. Although the book included letters by HGA and HM, James refers repeatedly to '*his*' book, implying that Harriet's contribution was negligible;⁶ this in itself must have been degrading to Harriet. And there was plenty else to which Harriet might object; for instance, the title of the review was given as "Mesmeric Atheism", while Harriet was at pains to claim that she was not an atheist:

'I am, in fact, (if one must take a name) a secularist' (Lv3,236).

James piles on the scoffing comments:

'The authors appear to live exclusively among people who see through brick walls, taste and hear across half the land; ...; who have electric telegraphs laid into the future and the past, and can report histories they have never learned, and coming events that have made no sign of their approach.'

And then he adds, with a touch of sarcasm:

'We wonder that this faculty has not found its way to the Stock-Exchange, where the prevoyance of next week's price of shares would not be without its reward' (PR,227).

Two comments of James seem contradictory:

'Miss Martineau ... by a tyrannical exercise of mesmeric sympathy reduced his [HGA] English to the standard of her own' (PR,230).

Is James saying that Atkinson's command of English is better than Harriet's?

Because later in the review James talks about grammar and says:

'... nothing in literary history [is] more melancholy than that Harriet Martineau should be prostrated at the feet of such a master ... and meekly undertakes to teach him grammar in return' (PR,234).

James then goes on to further deride Atkinson, describing him as:

'... so incompetent and vacillating' (PR,236). 'He adds up all the items he finds written in his own sum, and puts down his triumphant aggregate, unaware that it makes a difference when half are positive and half are negative' (PR,240).

The review was open for anyone to read, and how derogatory it was, even if it was a fair treatment. One can imagine what Harriet's thoughts might be:

'Oh! James. Why have you done this? I have made up my mind, as you have told

⁵ *Prospective Review*, No XXVI, Art.IV, pp224/262.

⁶ HGA is responsible for 58 per cent of the contributions, and HM for 18 per cent. Twenty-four per cent are citations from other sources.

me to do, and now you scorn me. And you have insulted my friend.'

James has worked himself into a corner by going public. He should have known better and admits rather wordily in his Memoranda:

'Looking back at this calm distance at the whole transaction, I think it open to reasonable doubt whether it was well for me to become the critic of the "Letters" at all...' (BM,337).

However, he writes in the *Daily News* of 5 Jan 1885 that he:

'cannot accept Mrs [Fenwick] Miller's invitation to express repentance for the article in the *Prospective Review* of 1851. That article embodies my unaltered judgment of the book which it reviews ...'.

From James's frame of reference there is nothing wrong in the review, it's that poor fellow Atkinson who is at fault. But from Harriet's perspective it is James who is in need of enlightenment, although she acknowledges that he is still a good thinker but lacking in some areas; as she says in a letter to Chapman [Nov 1854]:

'... by the last Westminster [Review] ... Jas is brilliant; but he is unsafe from his want of sound knowledge & reason' (Lv3, 333).

So she still reads what he has to say. Furthermore, James has misjudged the extent of his exclusion, because the heart of Harriet still has room for him. She shows a soft spot for him and his family when she writes to Mrs Ogden, two years after the Review:

'James has worked very hard till past middle life, and we shall all be glad to see his children to help' (Lv3, 300), and to Chapman: 'James's sweet daughter [Isabella] marries next Wedy' (Lv3, 290) [1853].

Maria Weston Chapman, who wrote the 'Memorials' volume (vol III) of Harriet's Autobiography, reports that Harriet made a request:

'When you speak of my brother James, be as gentle as you can' (ABv3,322).

To sum up, James is still sitting, albeit uncomfortably, on a pedestal - but it has been greatly reduced in height, to something more like a plinth. Harriet has moved on and sees life from a different perspective from the time when James was her oracle. In a letter to one of the several self-righteous people who felt it their duty to show her where she is wrong, Harriet endeavours to put her case:

'I am not aware of any book which I can refer to as offering a view of the convictions I have arrived at, after a long life of much study & thought ... I hold the fundamental principles of the Positive Philosophy ... of Comte.' (Lv5, 283)

And, as you know, one of her great achievements was the translation and condensation of Comte. One more of her letters, this time to Philip Carpenter [1856]:

'The ignorance of these pious strangers who take my case in hand is astonishing. It never occurs to them to learn what I believe and why; but they send me a New Testament supposing it to be a book of wh. I am ignorant. The complacent ignorance of the evangelical clergy and women is of a grosser order than I meet

with on any other subject' (Lv4,5).

Although James would like to meet Harriet, he realises that trying to change her views is not an option because, as he says in his Memoranda:

'the condition of happy intercourse [with Harriet] must be the suppression of all serious dissent from her judgment' (BM,338).

In such a situation it would serve no purpose to talk to James: he is 'addicted to theology' (ABv2,330), and she has made up her mind on Comte. The only way to make sure of not getting into discussion is not to see her brother. I think she is afraid that he would use his erudite skill to disturb her confidence in Comte, and she does not want to risk it. I conclude with an extract from another of Harriet's letters to Mrs Ogden (1853):

'I do not repent having allowed James before to play fast and loose with me: but it would now be my own fault if I gave him the opportunity of repeating such treatment ... Above all, he has forfeited my esteem irreconcilably; & the only honesty & decency are in silence' (Lv3,257).

So be it.

Works cited:

ABv=HM's *Autobiography with memorials by Maria Weston Chapman*. (London. Smith, Elder & Co., 1877) (v=volume)

BM=JM's *Biographical Memoranda* (see note 1)

Lv=*Collected Letters of Martineau* ed Deborah Logan.
(London, Pickering and Chatto, 2007)

LL=*Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature & Development*,
by HGA & HM (London, John Chapman, 1851)

PR=*Prospective Review* (1851)

DN=*Daily News*

Recent Martineau Descendants – A Note from Mrs. Mollie Martineau

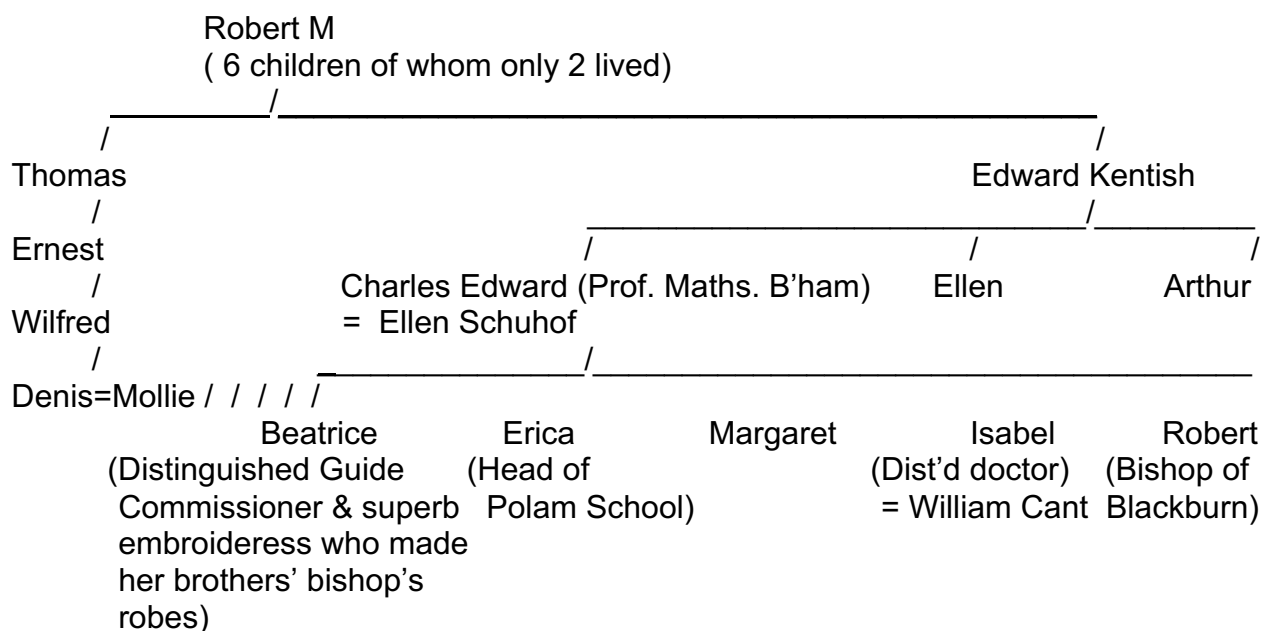
Courtesy of Sophia Hankinson

"Dear Sophia, Yes, of course, I knew Erica Martineau well. Erica was a local cousin – not a granddaughter of Robert Martineau but a great-granddaughter. Here is a slice out of the family tree.

Denis (Martineau – Mollie's husband. *Ed.*) once met someone on one of our Swan-Hellenic cruises who had been at Polam School, Darlington, when Erica was

headmistress. She was a very good head, I believe. Erica and her two unmarried sisters lived at The Moat on the way to Stratford-upon-Avon and, when they retired, at a smaller house near Solihull, in retirement. Erica did a lot of excellent water-colour painting and had small exhibitions of her work.

Her younger sister, Isabel, was the first Miss Martineau in the Birmingham branch of the family to marry for over a century – the others were all maiden ladies of good works. Isabel won many prizes as a medical student and married William Cant – both of them worked at the Children’s Hospital here in Birmingham for many years as very distinguished doctors. William Cant was godfather to our eldest son and I see his son and daughter regularly when they visit Birmingham. Mollie.”



Harriet Martineau and Social Conflict: Political Economy into Fiction into Melodrama (Part 1)

John Vint

Social conflict was a feature of early industrial Britain. The development of markets, the division of labour and the introduction of machinery brought change and, with it, conflicts between capital and labour. The introduction of machinery also raised profound questions for politicians and political economists and provoked strong reactions by workers from as early as the 1790s and this was particularly prevalent in the 1820s and

1830s as the use of machinery spread.

Alongside this and sometimes associated with it were the issues of wages and employment and industrial action which could be taken to protect either or both. Strikes were an important feature of the early industrial landscape and the popularizers of political economy paid much attention to them.

Harriet Martineau was perhaps the most successful popularizer of Classical political economy. In her work she concerned herself with the question of the opposition to machinery and to the more general question of strikes. Both themes are apparent in the early stories 'The Rioters' (1827) and 'The Turn-out' (1829)¹, written before she read political economy, and in the tales 'The Hill and the Valley' and 'A Manchester Strike' from her *Illustrations of Political Economy* 1832 - 4. With the *Illustrations* she made her name and future and she outsold Dickens for a while².

It has been argued by Booth (1969) that by the 1820s a new kind of melodrama had emerged in British theatre. Unlike earlier melodramas which often had foreign settings, the new genre had wider, native subject matter – British villages and farms, mills and factories, shops and city streets. Favourite characters were the villainous squire or employer, and the honest and virtuous worker and crime was a common feature. Among the varieties of these domestic melodramas were a few 'Factory' plays. In the 1830s two of these plays were performed in London. One, the 'The Factory Lad' by John Walker, was produced at the Surrey theatre in October 1832; the other, 'The Factory Strike' by G. F. Taylor, was put on at the Royal Victoria in 1838. It has been argued that these melodramas were influenced by the two tales from Martineau's *Illustrations* already referred to as well as the first tale 'Life in the Wilds'.

This paper examines Martineau's contributions to the debate concerning machinery and strikes, the economics ideas concerning wages and machinery, the nature and implications of her fictional accounts from the *Illustrations*, and how these in turn influenced the two London melodramas.

The paper is in two parts: this first part examines Harriet Martineau's background and influences including aspects of political economy and two tales from the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. The second part (to follow) examines the two plays referred to above and presents some general conclusions.

Harriet Martineau: Background and Influences

As a young woman Harriet Martineau's future was by no means certain to have been so successful as it proved to be. Her father's textile business suffered financial losses in

¹ 'The Rioters' is a story of machine breaking in Manchester and the 'The Turn-out' a tale of a strike in a cloth manufacturing town.

² Sales have been estimated at 10,000 for the first volume of *Illustrations*. This compares well with the novels of Dickens, for example, which typically sold 2,000 or 3,000 copies. See Fletcher (1974, p.370).

1825 and he died the following year, leaving six children for whom no proper provision had been made. The business completely collapsed in 1829 and Harriet was faced, like many young women in her position, with either getting married or becoming a governess like two of her sisters. The deafness from which she suffered from the age of sixteen made a career as a governess or a music teacher unlikely and the man to whom she was briefly engaged had unfortunately died. Before she was twenty she had been writing articles and sending them to religious periodicals and in particular the Unitarian *Monthly Repository*. Now bankruptcy both impelled and freed her to move from amateur writer to professional, as she wrote in her *Autobiography*:

“I began to feel the blessing of a wholly new freedom. I, who had been obliged to write before breakfast, or in some private way, had henceforth liberty to do my own work in my own way, for we had lost our gentility...” (1877, I, p141).

As Elaine Freedland has put it, ‘the iron laws of political economy rescued her from the iron laws of middle-class domestic economy’ (1995, p38). She was brought up in a Unitarian household and a key element in her thinking was a strong belief in the right to work. This belief came to underpin what some would say was her conservative attitude to strikes as well as her very progressive views on slavery.

Inspired by the reading she did in order to review Thomas Cooper’s *Lectures on the Elements of Political Economy* published in London in 1831, she determined to remedy her lack of knowledge of political economy by further study. An important moment in her career came when she read Jane Marcet’s *Conversations On Political Economy*.

“I took up the book chiefly to see what Political Economy precisely was; and great was my surprise to find that I had been teaching it unawares, in my stories about Machinery and Wages. It struck me at once that the principles of the whole science might be advantageously conveyed in the same way (1877, III, p138).”

She thus embarked on the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, a series of twenty four fictional tales written to elucidate the principles of Classical political economy to a wider audience. There was a twenty fifth concluding essay in the series entitled ‘The Moral of Many Fables’ which was not a tale as such but a ‘summary of the Principles of the Work’. The theoretical structure of the set of tales as a whole was taken from James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy* but there were other influences including Smith, Malthus and McCulloch. There was underneath all of her economic ideas an overriding set of convictions from her Unitarian background. Principal amongst these as Hoecker-Drysdale has put it, was the belief in Necessarianism ‘which recognised both the influence of natural laws on human existence but, at the same time, the moral responsibility and agency of each individual’ (2003, pp185-186). As Martineau wrote in her *Autobiography*:

“the workings of the universe are governed by laws which cannot be broken by human will...no action fails to produce effects, and no efforts can be lost. I have no doubt...that true Necessarians must be the most diligent and confident of all

workers.” (1877, I: pp85-86).³

Ideas of Classical Political Economy

Wages

In Classical economics wages were seen as advances by capitalists to workers to maintain them through the period of production. This can be visualized in terms of farming – workers have to be maintained while the crops are growing. They are advanced money wages to purchase goods (known as wage goods) required to live (food, clothing etc) set aside from last year’s harvest. The quantity of these goods, available from last year, is fixed during this year’s growing period. The wages fund expressed in terms of these ‘wage’ goods cannot be altered until the next harvest. If the next harvest is more bountiful, workers could be allocated more and if the number of workers had not changed their wages would go up. This is easy to understand in harvest terms but the Classical economists used the same idea when thinking about industrial production.

One implication of the wages fund doctrine for workers was that strikes for more wages were futile since the amount of goods available was fixed. Strikes would reduce output at the end of the production period and the fund for wages would be smaller in the following year. In the longer run what was important for the working classes as a whole, was the relationship between this wages fund and the population. If the fund grew faster than the population, wages would rise. If the population grew faster than the fund, wages would fall. Thus, the future standards of living of the workers were for themselves to determine by controlling population. The acceptable way of doing this was by delaying the age of marriage. This theory was criticised by W. T. Thornton beginning in 1867 and recanted by John Stuart Mill in 1869 – a rare, possibly unique, event in the history of economics.

Machinery

The prevailing view concerning machinery taken by political economists at the end of the 1820s was a positive one. Ricardo argued that there may be some short disruption caused by restructuring capital if this was at the expense of the wages fund.⁴ However, most political economists argued that this was seldom the case and that in the longer run the effects of machinery were beneficial.

The question of machinery ranged far wider than discussions among the leading political economists of the day. The introduction of machinery was of profound significance to ordinary working people who resisted its introduction in many ways including machine-breaking and riots. Major disturbances occurred in Lancashire in 1826 as a result of a financial crash and the violence in the manufacturing districts was directed towards

³ Quoted in Hoecker-Drysdale (2003, p103).

⁴ This could happen, Ricardo argued, if men were taken away from producing wage goods and made to produce machinery. This would reduce the size of the wages fund and possibly wages. `

machinery. This outbreak prompted numerous calls for the spread of knowledge about political economy and machinery among the working class.⁵

There were further riots against the introduction of agricultural machinery in the rural areas of southern England in 1830 and these underlined the need to educate workers in the 'truths' of political economy concerning machinery and wages. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge published *An Address to the Labourers, on the Subject of Destroying Machinery* (1830) which sold in large numbers. This was followed by *Results of Machinery* (1831) written for the S.D.U.K. by Charles Knight.⁶ Indeed the riots stimulated Martineau to attack machine-breaking in 'The Hill and the Valley'.

The Hill and the Valley

'The Hill and the Valley' (1832), the second of Martineau's *Illustrations*, is a tale of industrial conflict and machine-breaking. At the end of the Tale Harriet presented as usual *Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume* (tale) and here she lists among others:

Machinery economizes Labour, and therefore assists the growth of Capital.

The growth of Capital increases the demand for Labour

Machinery, by assisting the growth of Capital, therefore increases the demand for Labour

The interests of the two classes of producers, Labourers and Capitalists, are therefore the same; the prosperity of both depending on the accumulation of Capital.

The tale is set in an iron works in a South Wales valley run by a man called Wallace with his partners. Other characters include a local man Armstrong who disapproves of the works, Wallace's wife, and a trusted worker Paul. These characters discuss issues relating to the works and in this way Martineau brings out key points of political economy. For example, Wallace expounds the notion that inherent in capitalist production is a harmony of interests between workers and capitalists:

"It is the interest of our men and ourselves that the productiveness of our trade should be increased to the utmost; that we should turn out as much work as

⁵ See Berg (1980, pp.102-106). McCulloch attributed opposition to technical progress to an ignorance of political economy in *A Discourse on the Rise, Progress, Peculiar Objects and Importance of Political Economy* (1824, p.84).

⁶ See Webb (1955, pp.112-122).

possible, and that therefore we should improve our machinery, divide our labour to best advantage, and bring all our processes to the greatest possible perfection.” (p39).

Martineau has Wallace putting forward very clearly the positive view of machinery taken by the leading economists of the day:

“Machinery, as it does the work of many men, or that which it would take one man a long time to do, may be viewed as *hoarded labour*. This, being set to work in addition to natural labour, yields a greatly-increased produce; and the gains of the capitalist being thus increased, he employs a yet larger portion of labour with a view to yet further gains: and so a perpetual progress is made.”(p41).

Eventually the iron works faced a change of fortune - the price of bar-iron fell by a half due to unstable political and economic conditions. There was glut which may prove to be more than temporary due to increasing competition from abroad. Wallace and his partners were faced with a difficult challenge and they initially responded by reducing their own consumption but when this failed to improve matters they were faced with harder choices. Wallace argued that at all costs fixed capital (buildings, machinery etc) must be maintained. If there *were* to be any changes they would be to *add* to fixed capital – not in the form of more furnaces but by substituting machinery for the labour which demanded wages. The partners agree that they would do this but not until they had tried to save the situation by reducing the rates of wages.

The first wage reduction was accepted quietly, the second with murmurings, but the third was met with threats of rebellion. In the end machinery had to be introduced and some men and boys were dismissed:

“This created an outcry; but how could it be helped? There was no other way of preserving the capital of the concern, and on that capital everyman belonging to it depended as much as the partners. The work-people to be dismissed were, of course, chosen from among the least industrious and able.” (p91).

It could be argued that Martineau is putting forward Ricardo’s case that under certain circumstances the effects on the workers are harmful but ultimately she is much more sanguine about these effects than he was. In the story Martineau, as narrator, says that it was hoped that the sacked workers would find jobs elsewhere but they stayed until they had spent everything, tried to encourage those still in work to resign unless wages were increased, and were swearing at the machinery and the employers. Even those who moved away returned and indulged themselves in the spreading of discontent.

At this point Martineau forces up the pace and heat of the conflict. A boy is accidentally killed by part of the new machinery of which he was in charge. The new machinery was blamed for the death by some of the workers and the boy’s mother. The workers shouted for revenge and Paul tries to calm them down. In due course the workers came to Wallace’s house where his partner and family were also staying and demanded that the machines be dismantled and that they should all be allowed to attend the funeral. These demands were refused. In the end a crowd, brandishing clubs and shouting, set off led

by the deceased boy's mother. Near the works they stopped, formed silently into a compact body, and attacked the first building destroying the machinery and gutting the place. Other buildings followed and then the boy's mother set fire to the offices where the books were kept and wages paid. More moderate workers stopped her, fearing the destruction of the entire works. A group comprising some of the workers, Paul, and some gentlemen tried to defend the works but to no avail. In the end the soldiers arrived, surrounded the building and made Paul their first prisoner. Although some of the guilty pointed out his innocence he nevertheless did not flinch from his duty in pointing the finger at them. The tale ends with prisoners being taken away. The works is in ruin and will be closed down, and as the prisoners leave Wallace addresses the assembled crowd as to the righteousness of his actions and the wrongfulness of theirs, arguing that the workers have lost most from the conflict. He reminded them that their jobs were gone, and that disgrace and the penalties of the law awaited many of them. Many of you must regret the events, he told them, but the best course of action now was to teach the children to obey the laws and make it clear to them that:

“however sad undeserved poverty may be, it is easily endurable in comparison with the thought which will haunt some of you until your dying day – ‘my own hands have brought this misery upon myself, and upon those who look up to me for bread.’ (pp 132-133).

The contemporary view taken by most political economists concerning machinery is clear in this tale and the story illustrates the points made in Harriet's *Summary of Principles*. The general view presented strongly by Martineau is that machinery is beneficial via its effects in the longer run although there may be some increase in unemployment in the very short run. However unlike Ricardo who continued to be concerned about the social conflict which would arise and which was unavoidable, Martineau puts the responsibility on the workers. First, the people sacked were the laziest and the less able so they had some part in their own misfortune. Secondly, they should try to find jobs elsewhere but instead of doing this they loitered to spread discontent. Their actions in firing the factory were of course wholly unacceptable and unnecessary and ultimately to the detriment of the workers more than the owners. The Necessarian message is that the laws of political economy cannot be countered by human agency but individuals could and should by their actions endeavour to obey the law and avoid trouble for themselves and their families. Martineau's objective is to persuade readers of the immutable nature of the laws of political economy and the harmony of interests inherent in them in order to change their behaviour.

A Manchester Strike

Harriet Martineau's tale 'A Manchester Strike', which was No. 7 in her *Illustrations* series, focuses on the role of combinations (trades unions) and strikes.

At the end of the Tale Harriet presented her *Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume* (tale) and here she lists among others:

The fund from which wages are paid in any country consists of the articles required for the use and consumption of labourers which that country contains.

The proportion of this fund received by individuals must mainly depend on the number among whom the fund is divided.

Combinations of labourers against capitalists (whatever other effects they may have) cannot secure a permanent rise of wages unless the supply of labour falls short of the demand;—in which case, strikes are usually unnecessary.

Strikes affect it only by wasting capital, and are therefore worse than useless

The context of the story is a wage reduction by some capitalists in Manchester and the book begins with a not unsympathetic description of the impact of this on a worker, William Allen and his family. Allen is portrayed as an intelligent moderate man whose views are sought after by other workers and who tries to hold them back from striking. In the end, however, against his better judgement, he becomes their leader in the conflict. He is contrasted with Clack who has a persuasive tongue and urges the men to strike. There are a number of employers in the tale and one of the themes is the different rates which they pay for the same work. One of the employers, Wentworth, is presented as a sympathetic, wise and kindly man. In giving advice to a deputation of union representatives, he makes use of the wages fund doctrine in an agricultural context to explain that the amount available for wages during any period is fixed and that a strike simply reduces the size of the fund for the next period.

Despite Wentworth's efforts the strike goes ahead and later in the story Wentworth has another opportunity to impress upon the workers the importance and relevance of wage theory. Referring to the situation that will pertain at the end of the strike, he argues that by then the wages fund will be wasted:

“We have been consuming idly, and so have you; and there must needs have been great waste. And what is it which has thus been wasted? The fund which is to maintain you; the fund out of which your wages are paid. Your strike has already lasted long enough to change our ground of dispute. You will find that the question with the masters now is, whether fewer of you than before shall be employed at the same wages, or fewer still at higher wages, or as many as before at lower wages than you have yet received. Keep on your strike a little longer, and the question will be, how many less shall be employed, at how much less. Keep it on long enough, and the question will be entirely settled; there will be no wages for any body. Do you understand me?” (1832b, pp.97-98).

So here again the wages fund doctrine is being explicitly employed by Martineau to argue against strikes and this was something that was in the main avoided by the major Classical economists. Again, while this is not explicit, the analysis relates to two time periods. Wentworth is examining the impact of a strike during this period of employment and output, upon employment and wages in the next period. The main effect of the strike is to reduce output and revenue in the current period thereby returning less capital to the

employers and reducing the likely future size of the wages fund. The wages fund, of course, *could* be maintained at its previous level in the next period but only by reducing other forms of capital outlay and this would ruin the business.

It is possible to see here how a wage fund analysis was employed to analyse the implications of strike action for the levels of output and revenue, and the future volume of the wages fund. The futility of strikes thus derives from the argument that in the immediate term there is no more to be had by the workers, and that, moreover, strike action taken between now and the next production cycle may damage the employers' ability to pay even the same rate as now. At the back of this discussion is the argument, at times more explicit than others, that although workers are powerless in the short run, the power to improve their lot *does* lie with them in the long run, by having fewer children. Wentworth goes on from there to argue like Malthus, that unfortunately when things are good for workers and wages are high they tend to respond by bringing up large families. The effects of this are not immediately felt, but when they are the workers often fail to associate the accompanying fall in wages with their actions a generation before. Wentworth goes on to draw the obvious moral lesson from this and in doing so comes close to spelling out the dynamics of the long run wage theory in arguing that the worker should "do what in him lies to prevent population from increasing faster than the capital which is to support it." (1832b, p.104).

The employers meet and agree that the firms paying the lowest wages will raise them to the average and the higher payers will reduce theirs likewise. The workers accept this equalization and the strike ends, although not all the workers will get their jobs back. Allen has a meeting with Wentworth to see if he can work again but Wentworth although feeling sorry for him says that he can now only employ two-thirds of the number who went on strike. Priority will go first to those who left unwillingly and the remaining jobs will go to those who have worked for him for many years. Allen, the sensible counsellor, the wise restrainer of the men and the unwilling leader is thus punished and condemned to a life hauling a water-cart in summer and sweeping the streets in winter.

Martineau's work, then, represents a powerful integration of Classical theory and fictional narrative. She uses the wages fund doctrine to explain the consequences of strike action and the Malthusian population argument to say what workers should do in their own best interests. The outcome of the story is ultimately a victory for the power of popular political economy.

Part 2, to be published in the next issue, will consider the two factory plays performed in London in the 1830s and which were held to have been influenced by Martineau's tales. Some overall conclusions will also be presented.

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Obituary for Professor Robert Kiefer Webb

Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle

A founding member of the Martineau Society, Robert Kiefer Webb passed away in February 2012. Professor Webb's *Harriet Martineau, A Radical Victorian* (1960) launched our current academic study of Harriet Martineau, while books such as *The British Working Class Reader, 1790-1848: Literacy and Social Tension* (1955) and *Modern England: From the 18th Century to the Present* (1968) made him a doyen of 20th century American historians of Great Britain.

Graduating from Oberlin College (admired by Martineau) *summa cum laude* in 1947, Webb served in World War II, completed his master's and doctoral degrees at Columbia University, took up a Fulbright fellowship at the London School of Economics and received two Guggenheim fellowships as well as several research grants from the

National Endowment for the Humanities. A full professor at Columbia and later at UMBC (Maryland), Webb served as editor of the *American Historical Review* and of the *AAUP Bulletin*. He contributed multiple entries to the *ODNB* and continued to publish material on a range of Unitarian figures. Sociable and outgoing, Professor Webb generously aided all who asked for help on matters Victorian: his death is a sad loss to the Martineau Society.

***Obituary for Alan Jack Middleton 3 July 1926 – 30 September 2012 -
Dad remembered by his family***

Eric Middleton

Dad was born in Norwich in 1926, the same year as the Queen. As far as we know they never met – but his work was very secret – so you never know!! He had one sister, our Auntie Ethel, who still lives in Norwich, but at 92 she is not strong enough to make the journey today. Instead, her friends are holding a memorial service with her in her church in Norwich.

While at school Dad learnt woodwork and became very skilful at it. When he was 12, amongst other things, he made a well crafted piano stool which is still in use in our family home in Grove today. Throughout his life he made fine wooden shelves, fittings and other objects for our home. He was hands on with all other sorts of DIY too and he encouraged us to make use of his tools too – provided that we used them for the right purposes.

He left school at 14¾ and became an apprentice draughtsman. No doubt this helped him with all the entertaining line drawings that he later did for us children. In the course of his apprenticeship he also learnt a lot about electricity. In his job during the war he was involved in making motors and generators for the Merchant Navy and Admiralty. He also learnt about STRESS which was to be his speciality throughout the rest of his working life.

Towards the end of the war he joined Dads' Army (the Home Guard). As a memento of this he collected the entire 7 series of the BBC Dads' Army comedy on video tapes and filled a shelf with them.

He met Mum at the Baptist Church they both attended in Norwich. Later they started attending the Unitarian Octagon Chapel where they were married in 1949. They had a relatively peaceful life together for a year then I was born! From then on life got more and more challenging as more of us arrived until there were 7 of us – well 9 if you include Mum & Dad who started it all.

In 1952, about 2 weeks into the reign of Elizabeth II, our family of 3 and a bump moved to Luton. Dad worked on aircraft design as a stressman at Luton Airport. He learnt to fly and one of my earliest memories is going up for a joy-ride with him which was quite bumpy and scary. Mum went up with him once and was sick and never went up again. I also remember riding behind him pillion on his motor bike (no helmet) over local footpaths to get to the airport – also very scary.

In 1955 Dad got a job with Western Airways at Exeter Airport and our family of 6 moved there just after all we children had had measles. In Exeter there were more opportunities to go flying with him over the Exe estuary – still quite scary.

One day in 1956 Dad arrived home with an enormous old car, a pre-war Standard 9, so now we had a family car like other families. When the roads were clear we could get up to 40 miles an hour in it. He regularly took us all out in it all over South Devon at the weekends; we had to take it in turns to stand up behind the driver's seat. However busy he was he always found time to take us where we wanted to go. That car took us on our annual holiday to Norwich, 300 miles each way with one or two punctures per journey. In 1958 it took us to Dortmund in Germany and back again. Soon after that Dad bought a Bedford Dormobile so there was plenty of space for all of us, and we could go even faster than 40 mph.

In 1960 recession hit and Western Airways was taken over by Westlands. Dad kept his job but had to commute weekly to Yeovil. He looked around and then got employment at the National Institute for Research in Nuclear Science at Harwell, where he stayed for the remaining 31 years of his working life. Our family of 7 moved to nearby Wantage. As he no longer worked at an airport, that was the end of his flying career.

In 1965 we watched as a new house was built for us on a new housing estate in Grove, just outside Wantage. Our family of 9 moved in and it has been “the family home” ever since. So that is how we grew and moved around - Dad, Mum, Eric, Ruth, Richard, Audrey, Yvonne, Shirley and Andrew. As years went by there were grandchildren too – David, Esme, Jonathan, Lara, Alexander, Katherine, Maybelline, Luke and Chloe.

Dad's work as a Stress-man at Harwell was a mystery to us so we agreed amongst ourselves that he must be a bog-cleaner, or more politely, a toilet attendant. Of course we should not have talked about this outside the family, because even the toilets at Harwell were covered by the Official Secrets Act. Shirley says that she was 36 when she discovered his approximate profession when she had to put her father's profession on her marriage certificate. Yvonne used his fictitious occupation to get free tuck for herself at school.

Dad studied hard during his working life. He would often bring work home with him but he would put it to one side when we wanted his help with our homework. Though his help might often be a question back to us, “What do you think?”. Or he would look at what we had done and suggest that we should think again. Andrew remembers him answering many questions with the same answer, “Well it's all relative” which was most frustrating.

Dad was a prolific reader of serious books, but he had no time for fiction (except on television). Some examples. He read up on Unitarianism, its origins and its thinkers. He had 2 thick books on the life of Hitler and he read every word. He read books about π and got us to memorise it to many decimal points 3.14159265358979323846.... Right up to a few days ago he was building up files of information on the Retail Prices Index.

He enjoyed playing the organ and piano and ukulele. He often played the organ at the Unitarian Chapel which he attended at Harris Manchester College in Oxford.

Whenever we discussed anything with Dad he was always knowledgeable and careful with his statements and we got the impression that he was always right. Though Yvonne managed to get a signed statement from him saying, "I AM NOT ALWAYS RIGHT".

Dad always wore a jacket at home usually with a collar and tie - even when gardening or looking under the bonnet of a car. Though when he got down to serious gardening or DIY he would wear a boiler suit. I have my suspicions that he would even wear a jacket under that. I had the impression that he was still wearing the same jacket this year as he wore in the 1950s, but Mum tells me that is not so.

Dad and Mum taught us to be careful with money and never to spend money that we have not got. He was the founder, president and sole member of the Scrooge Club because he disliked the commercialism of Christmas. But he was no kill-joy; he had a great sense of humour.

Dad was tee-total all his life and was uncomfortable about going into pubs to eat until he recognised that many of them had turned into cafés. He liked simple food like banana sandwiches, raspberry sandwiches, apple pie, roast beef and batter puddings. He would not touch onions or tomatoes and had his own frying pan to avoid being tainted by them. He had to tolerate a lot when we started to introduce more exotic foods with their smells; his answer to that was to install an extractor fan.

Mum & Dad have been good parents to us and good grandparents to our children. They have had 63 years of marriage and they have loved and supported and cared for each other all that time as well as caring for us. While they may have had some private disagreements they never got cross with each other in the presence of us children. They have been great role models for us all.

"Harriet Martineau at Work" - Alan Middleton's Contribution to the Martineau Society

by Sophia Hankinson

After the shock of Alan's death, it was an honour to be asked by Janet to 'add my twopenn'orth' at the Oxford crematorium service (led by Revd Peter Hewis, Chaplain to Harris Manchester College, a long-term friend) on 11th October 2012. Iris and Rod Voegeli and I were proud to represent two of the concerns with which Alan was most deeply involved: the Octagon Unitarian Chapel, Norwich, and the Martineau Society.

It was at the Octagon, about the time of their marriage in 1949, that I first became aware of Alan and his pretty bride - a picture-book couple - and it was always a pleasure to see them again when, after his job took them to other parts of England, they returned on regular visits with their growing family of little ones - eventually seven children.

Life then made it impossible for me to attend the Octagon frequently for some years, so it was not until after I retired that we met again - in particular about 1991. I recall the day when they introduced me to Yvonne, their middle daughter, who was living, as I was, at King's Lynn.

It is ironic that at the Martineau Society's last meeting at Bristol in July, Alan and I, realising that few present members knew the origin of the Martineau Society, decided to write it all down. Later I sent him a draft for comment, asking him to add his own recollections. He promised to, and I was looking forward to finalising the combined result with him on his last visit to Norwich; it was to be called "Harriet Martineau at Work" for the chain of coincidences, we felt, could only have been arranged by someone like her. Sadly, illness curtailed the visit and we didn't meet on that occasion - the first time Alan has ever let me down!

Soon after retirement in the early '90s, I went to the local library to find something to read: a biography of John Masefield, I thought - a long-time hero of whose life I knew little - now was the chance. No Masefield on the shelf, however, but in its place a volume of Harriet's Autobiography. Half an hour later, I was still standing there, absorbed in that awful childhood, and had to take the book home.

At the time I was concerned with updating the history of the Octagon Chapel, and mentioned to Alan, when asking him if he could lend me the earlier history, that I had been reading Harriet's Autobiography. Funny thing, he replied, so had he. Right, I said, we were always embarrassed when visitors to the Octagon asked about the Martineau family and we knew little beyond the monument to Philip Meadows Martineau and a few portrait prints in the Vestry: it was time we started a Martineau Society, and he had better be Secretary.

This was said almost in jest, but when I mentioned it to Revd Frank Schulman (then Chaplain to Harris Manchester College Oxford) on one of his visits to take a service at Norwich, he replied quite seriously "What a good idea! - they are much revered in US, especially Harriet Martineau" and reeled off a string of names of eminent American scholars including Professor R K Webb whose 1960 biography was the last word on

Harriet. I should write to them, and also ask Rev Ralph Waller, Principal of HMCO and expert on James, to host an Inaugural Meeting.

It took some time and a lot of help, but eventually that meeting was held in July 1994, and about 35 people came. Bob Webb was elected President, and to my great embarrassment I was made Chairman (a role which I had assumed Ralph Waller would accept). As prophesied, Alan became Hon Secretary, while Iris Voegeli took on the Hon Treasurer's tasks and Valerie Sanders volunteered for the role of Newsletter Editor. There was talk of future meetings: someone mentioned that Harriet's house at Ambleside was now in private hands, but sight-seers were not welcome. Another visit to Oxford was proposed for next year's AGM.

Full of enthusiasm, however, those with Norwich connections could not wait a whole year, and a one-day visit to Norwich was arranged for 7th January 1995 when eight people attended, including a Professor Ken Fielding all the way from Edinburgh. Would he need a hotel? no, he would be staying with his sister - but it was not till after the meeting, walking to the bus, that it transpired that his sister and I had known each other at school, but I hadn't known she was still in Norwich.

As Saintsbury Professor of English, Ken's speciality was Victorian writers. He was familiar with Harriet's writings and had a cottage in Grasmere, from which he had visited her house: he found the new owners only too happy to show visitors round. Moreover, touring the Thomas Browne Library at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (where Philip Meadows Martineau had operated) we were delighted to meet Hugh Kinder, consultant surgeon, a descendant of Philip's brother John, and to note his resemblance to the portrait of Philip Meadows Martineau.. On that 'Trail' we were also shown the back of Gurney Court, Harriet's birthplace, by Mr Richard Gurney, and saw the view of the bay window reproduced in vol.I I of the Autobiography, almost unchanged, and visited Martineau House.

All this, and subsequent proceedings, are now visible online....

These new contacts brought us further invaluable members in Barbara Todd and Maureen Colquhoun, the new owners of the southern half of The Knoll, who invited us to meet in Ambleside. This we did, in 1996 and for an unforgettable special Harriet Martineau Centenary meeting in 2002. Throughout these formative years, Alan was the kingpin of the Martineau Society, steering us through registration as a Charity and through other early conferences with unfailing steadiness and efficiency.

When I apologised to Janet for the Society taking up so much of Alan's time, she just said, in her gentle way: "If it wasn't that, it would be something else!" That was the kind of man he was. But again, he certainly blossomed under the extra stimulus, diversifying into William Morris, Auguste Comte and other related topics (these papers are also available on the website). He also shone as a contributor to the concerts held after our annual

Dinners - his version of 'The Singing Postman' as recently as last July will remain in our memories: a man of surprises, we shall miss him dreadfully.

The full extent of Alan's contribution will not be seen until his meticulous archive becomes available: Janet has kindly offered it to the Society, and to look after it until a permanent home for it is found, it is hoped in Harris Manchester College Oxford.

The Martineau Society

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

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

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

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The moral consciousness, while thus pausing short of its complete development, fulfils the conditions of responsible life, and makes character real and virtues possible. Ethics therefore have practical existence and operation prior to any explicit religious belief: the law of right is inwoven with the very tissue of our nature, and throbs in the movements of our experience; it cannot be escaped by anyone till he can fly from himself.

James Martineau *Study. I, Introduction*



Harriet Martineau

(Marble bust in Wellesley College, Massachusetts, as seen in the visit by the Martineau Society Conference in July 2009)