

THE MARTINEAU SOCIETY

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CONTENTS: NEWSLETTER NO 7

Editorial Note	2
Harriet Martineau - Builder - Barbara Todd	2
The Knoll - headed notepaper	6
Family Tree - Robert Martineau's Descendants	9
Harriet Martineau: Bibliography	10
Martineau Allusions - Alan Middleton	12
Gaston Martineau's Story (ctd) -Prof E Arbuckle	14
Harriet Martineau Sociological Society	18
Martineau Society Spring Trail 1996: The Knoll	20
Addresses for Communication	20

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Seventh Martineau Society Newsletter - which includes a new feature. It has been suggested that we should compile an extensive bibliography of the Martineaus which might prove useful to scholars and general readers alike. This will be offered in instalments, beginning in this issue with the standard biographies and book-length works on Harriet, and progressing gradually towards the less well-known journal articles. Readers are invited to send in any additional titles on James or Harriet for future issues.

The Editor also apologizes for the duplication of paragraphs on pp. 9-10 of the previous Newsletter, which affected Professor Arbuckle's article.

HARRIET MARTINEAU: BUILDER

'There have been few things in my Life,' Harriet writes in her Autobiography, 'which have had a more genial effect on my mind than the possession of a piece of Land.'

Until her early forties she had always lived and worked in other people's houses - either at the family home in Norwich, then rented accommodation, during her first years of fame and literary lionisation in London (under the demanding eye of her mother) or, alone in lodgings for five years of debilitating illness at Tynemouth. But, with health restored, she arrived at Ambleside in June 1845, having taken lodgings for six months at the northernmost tip of Lake Windermere with the prospect of 'basking in the summer sunshine, and roving over hill and dale in fine weather, and reading and working beside the window overlooking the lake in rainy hours.'

But she didn't 'bask' for very long, since she quickly realised that it was in this Lake country that she really wanted to be - permanently. With her mother now

Martineau Society, 7th Newsletter, February 1997, page 4 (of 22)

settled in Liverpool - and her writing guaranteeing her financial independence - why not? By the end of that first month, she had bought the land on which to build the Knoll at Ambleside.

'No true woman, married or single, 'she wrote, 'can be happy without some sort of domestic life; - without having somebody's happiness dependent on her, and my own ideal of an innocent and happy life was a house of my own among poor improvable neighbours, with young servants whom I might train and attach to myself; with pure air, a garden, leisure, solitude at command, and freedom to work in peace and quietness.'

With customary enthusiasm and extraordinary rapidity she designed the house herself. 'It was the newest of entertainments to me; and seriously did I ponder all the requisites, - how to place the bedrooms so that the beds should not be in a draught, nor face the window, nor the fireplace, &c.' The old Wordsworth took a keen and benevolent interest in the whole affair and she greatly benefited from his advice. His own home, Rydal Mount, was light and airy with large windows facing the view - not turned in on itself for protection in bod weather, as so many Lake District houses then were. She describes how 'where my study now is, he had thrown himself down among the hazel bushes, and talked of meadows, and of the right aspect and disposition of a house, one summer day, when he and his wife and daughter had come to visit to view the site, and give me the benefit of their experience.' Moreover, he approved of the economic practicality of the scheme. 'It is,' he said, 'the wisest step in her life; for the value of the property will be doubled in ten years.'

But practical economics informed everything that Harriet did, and not simply on

her own behalf. With her design completed, she engaged a local contractor, John Newton, with the understanding that she would pay him £100 down every alternate month on condition that the workmen received their wages weekly - it then being 'the pernicious custom of the district to give very long credit, even in the case of workmen's wages.' This being settled, building began in August and continued apace 'without a difficulty, or a shadow of misunderstanding throughout.' 'Surely she must have mesmerized the workmen,' Mrs Wordsworth wrote to Henry Crabb Robinson, 'for our builders are never so alert as hers must have been.'

On 29 September Harriet was writing to her friend Fanny Wedgwood: 'I send you a plan of my cottage, - not doubting your liking to cast your eye over it. The situation is unspeakably lovely. The walls are rising daily, and the upper storey is begun today. It is capitally built, of the grey stone of the country. It is to be covered in by the middle of November, and finished by April next.'

And, in spite of the wettest weather within living memory (1845/46 was the winter of the Irish potato rot and ensuing famine) - the meadows below the Knoll being completely flooded, John Newton, builder, was as good as his word. On 5 February 1846 she informs Fanny Wedgwood:

'The house is nearly finished: we are burning fire to speed the drying of the plaster: the terrace is to be finished tomorrow, - the drive is made, the planting begun, the necessary earthenware ordered from Staffordshire, the metalware from Birm?, - and the wardrobes &c of our clever Ambleside joiners. Today I have been buying my garden tools; and next week, when my pretty little quarry has yielded all the stones wanted for the terrace wall and the porch, and is my own to

embellish, and when the wet field is rolled to smooth over the cart ruts, - we begin to garden a little.'

So, with two young maids, Harriet moved into her new home (which she was to occupy until her death more than 30 years later), on April 7 1846. She wrote:

'That first night, when we made our beds, stirred up the fires, and locked the doors, and had some serious talk, as members of a new household, will never be forgotten, for its sweetness and solemnity, by my maids or myself.'

The first summer passed busily and swiftly - setting the house and garden to rights - and entertaining a flood of family and friends. By the first Autumn she was off on a journey to the Holy Lands, not returning to her beloved Knoll until almost a year later. Now, however, in the winter of 1847/8 she turned her attention (while writing her book on Eastern Life), to her poor 'improvable' neighbours. She began a course of lectures to them which proved immensely popular, and she soon realised that the only way that they could improve their living conditions, their health and security was by learning how to build for themselves.

'In a place like Ambleside,' she writes, 'where wages are high, the screw is applied to the working men in regard to their dwellings. The great land-owners, who can always find room to build mansions, have never a corner for a cottage: and not only are rents excessively high, but it is a serious matter for a working man to offend his landlord, by going to chapel instead of church, for instance, when he may be met by the threat - "If you enter that chapel again, I will turn your family out of your cottage; and you know you can't get another." When the people are compelled to sleep, ten, twelve or fourteen in two rooms, there can be little help for their morals or manners.'

- Knoll, Aubleride Docomber 29 Dear Spring aun very glad you wrote to me. It is a pleasure to me to hear from you; a I must say it is a pleasure to see such handwriting, I should have been thankful at your rose to write so well. I made a heating hand of it till being deliged to write so much as i do grave

A letter written on Harriet's notepaper headed with a picture of The Knoll

So, she taught them, crowded into the Methodist chapel below the Knoll, about sanitation and drainage and, most importantly, the principles of a Building Society. With her builder, John Newton, she studied the reports of the Sanitary Commission sent to her from London. Carefully, too, they costed the cottages that could be built. In December 1848, the Prospectus of the 'Windermere Permanent Land, Building and Investment Association' was issued, the first paragraph of which reads: 'The object of this Association is to place within the reach of every member the means of securing a comfortable existence in old age.'

A bitter irony for John Newton, for, in that same month, with a fever epidemic raging through the Vale, caused by those very insanitary conditions he intended helping Harriet to alleviate, he was himself struck down, dying at the age of 41, and leaving a widow and nine children. Harriet was deeply affected by his death, but, - on she went. The Building Society (the first in the north of England) was founded in February 1849. Each share was valued at £120,000 -(precisely the amount for which the most generous of the cottages could be built - which could be repaid in weekly instalments over a 13-year period) - with no member to hold more than four or less than half a share. A London friend, Mrs Reid (one of the founders of Bedford College), lent the money to buy the land. In May 1851, Harriet again writes to Fanny Wedgwood:

'The grandest thing is the Building Society. It was only in February that Mrs Reid bought the field for us: and now every yard of it is sold and all to members of the society...It is no small matter to see the life and spirit aroused among the people. Instead of daundering to the pot-house, they come up to me with their eager notions about the land and the dwellings: and we have merry meetings on the

ground; and there is work for the old and the feeble as well as for the builders.'

13 cottages were eventually built, and she tells in her 1855 <u>Autobiography</u> how 'more were in prospect.' But sadly, the robust health she had enjoyed since moving to Ambleside ten years earlier, broke down, and no longer having the energy to keep the Society going, she dissolved it, seven years after its inception, in March 1856, with all the investors repaid with healthy interest.

'The eye of visitors is now caught,' she wrote, 'by an upland hamlet, just above the parsonage, where there are two good houses, and some ranges of cottages which will stand, as the builders say "a thousand years."'

And almost 150 years later, they are still there, with long sloping gardens in front of them, facing due south and wonderful views of the surrounding fells and Lake Windermere gleaming a mile below. So, I am glad to say, is The Knoll - all as sturdy and beautiful as ever. For Harriet Martineau the Builder was a trail-blazer too, as she was in every respect of her life and work - informed by creative aestheticism, blazing intelligence, practical common sense, and her all-pervading humanity.

Barbara Todd,

The Knoll, Ambleside, 1996

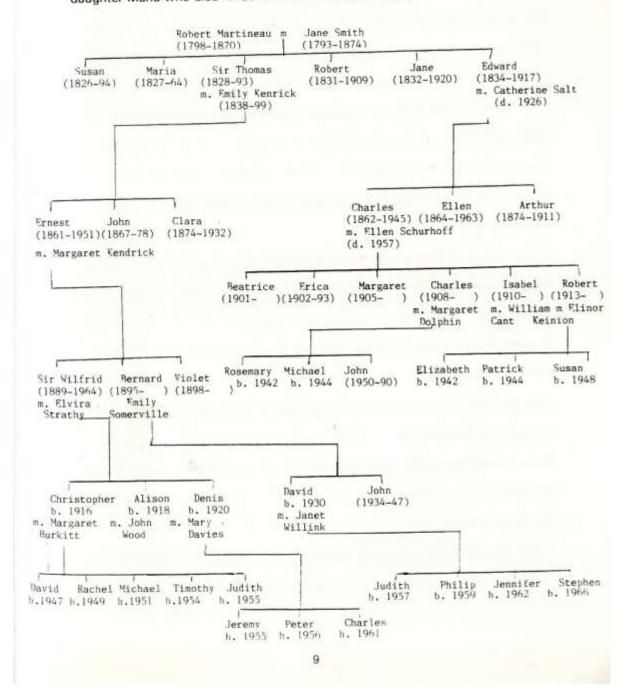
Sources

Harriet Martineau's Autobiography (1877)

Elisabeth Arbuckle (ed) <u>Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood</u> (1983) Dr Williams Library, Birmingham University Library, the British Library, and Cumbria Archives, Kendal.

FAMILY TREE

This issue's section of the Martineau family tree focuses on the descendants of Harriet's and James's brother Robert, Lord Mayor of Birmingham. It was Robert's daughter Maria who died 'in service' at the Knoll in 1864.



MARTINEAU BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Newsletter will gradually build up a bibliography of material on the Martineaus, to act as a resource for scholars. Listed in this issue are book-length studies of Harriet published since 1960, and books with substantial sections on her.

The two most recent biographies are:

Valerie Kossew Pichanick, <u>Harriet Martineau: The Woman and Her Work, 1802-76</u> (University of Michigan Press, 1980)

R K Webb, <u>Harriet Martineau, A Radical Victorian</u> (Columbia University Press, 1960)

There are two published selections of Harriet's letters:

Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (ed), <u>Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood</u> (Stanford University Press, 1983)

Valerie Sanders (ed), <u>Harriet Martineau: Selected Letters</u> (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990)

Selections of her Writings

Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (ed), <u>Harriet Martineau in the London Daily News</u> (Garland Publishing, 1994)

Joan Rees, <u>Writings on the Nile: Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, Amelia</u> Edwards (The Rubicon Press, 1995)

Gayle Graham Yates (ed), <u>Harriet Martineau on Women</u> (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1985)

Other Close Studies

Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, <u>Harriet Martineau</u>; First Woman Sociologist (Berg Publishers, 1992) Shelagh Hunter, <u>Harriet Martineau: The Poetics of Moralism</u> (Scolar Press, 1995) Valerie Sanders, <u>Reason Over Passion: Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel</u> (Harvester Press, 1986)

Gillian Thomas, Harriet Martineau (Boston: Twayne, 1985)

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Books containing Chapters about Harriet Martineau:

Deirdre David, Intellectual Women and Victorian Patriarchy: Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot (Macmillan, 1987)

Estelle C Jelinek, <u>Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism</u> (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1980)

Joseph Kestner, Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867 (Methuen, 1985)

Ivanka Kovacevic, Fact into Fiction 1750-1850 (Leicester UP, 1975)

Ivan Melada, <u>The Captain of Industry in English Fiction 1821-1871</u> (New Mexico, 1970)

Linda H Peterson, <u>Victorian Autobiography: The Tradition of Self-Interpretation</u> (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986)

Valerie Sanders, <u>The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in</u> <u>Nineteenth Century England</u> (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989)

Margaret Walters, 'The Rights and Wrongs of Women: Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, Simone de Beauvoir,' in <u>The Rights and Wrongs of Women</u> ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (Penguin 1976)

Ioan Williams, <u>The Realist Novel in England: A Study in Development</u> (1974) Robert Lee Wolff, <u>Strange Stories</u> (Boston, 1971) - on <u>Deerbrook</u> Alan Middleton has compiled a selection of casual references to Harriet in other books on diverse subjects.

* From Alison Adburgham, <u>A Punch History of Manners and Modes</u> (Hutchinson, 1961): 'Even the workers and writers in the cause of women's suffrage, themselves immune from the more extravagant whims of fashion, were taunted by the tyranny in which fashion held the majority of the women for whose emancipation they were striving. Punch admitted that Miss Harriet Martineau was as well qualified to choose a representative as any man but pointed out that women on the whole were more gregarious than men: 'They all go in droves, as you see in that matter of fashion. Whilst the crinoline mania lasted, what was the good of pointing out the absurdity of the crinoline? How many women did it induce to leave their hoops off? Rather than that they died at the fire-grate, martyrs to fashion. Ask any woman to drop her monstrous chignon. You might as well request a black cat to turn white. Is it not fair to say to the fair sex - "Emancipate yourselves from the tyranny of fashion, and then you shall enjoy the rights of free women"?' (p. 98: Crinoline and Chignon fashion)

* From Augustus J C Hare, <u>The Gurneys of Earlham</u> (2 vols, George Allen, 1895) 'When Amelia Alderson married him [John Opie] in May 1798, her chief inducement to do so was his promise that he would never separate her from her father [James Alderson, Surgeon, St George's, Colegate, Norwich] to whom she had entirely devoted herself from the time of her mother's death, when she was fifteen. But they were an interesting couple. Mrs Siddons said of Opie, "When I am with him, I am always sure to hear something which I cannot forget, or at least which never ought to be forgotten." Horne Tooke says. "Opie crowds more wisdom

into a few words than almost any man I ever knew"; while of his love of art Northcote records, "Many artists paint to live, but Opie lives to paint."

To the Earlham [Gurney] sisters, Mrs Opie's musical talents gave her an especial charm. "She was perfect as a musician," says Mrs S C Hall, according to the simple perfecting of those days, and sang with power and sweetness the songs then in vogue - 'Sally in our Alley,' &c. In the open Boulevards at Paris she had created the greatest sensation by singing 'Fall, tyrants, fall.' She would practise for hours with Rachel Gurney and her younger sisters, whom Miss Martineau describes as -

'A set of dashing young people, dressing in gay riding-habits and scarlet boots, and riding about the country to balls and gaieties of all sorts. Accomplished and charming young ladies they were, and we children used to hear whispered gossip about the effects of their charms on heart-stricken young men.'

[The seven Gurney girls were born between 1776 and 1785, which makes them approximately twenty years senior to Harriet].

Not only the charms of its young ladies attracted all the young officers quartered at Norwich to Earlham, but the fishing and shooting which their father was always willing to bestow. For John Gurney was the most good-natured and popular of men.' (Vol I, pp. 95-6)

[There is no other reference to or mention of Miss Martineau in the book - it was assumed that everyone knew who Miss Martineau was].

 Verily Anderson, <u>The Northrepps Grandchildren</u> [of the Gurneys] (Hodder and Stoughton, 1968):

Cites the same quotation about the Gurneys ('A set of dashing young people')

as above, and refers to Harriet Martineau as "that dyspeptic Radical battle-axe", who was said to be the ugliest woman in the world' (p. 90).

* Stewart H Holbrook, <u>The Story of American Railroads</u> (Bonanza Books, 1947): 'In 1836 Harriet Martineau, a woman who spoke her mind, reported that the few railroads in the South were pretty bad. The railbeds were poor, she said, the engine boilers leaked, and trains were more likely than not to arrive hours late. Possibly she was somewhat prejudiced against railroads by what happened to her on one short trip; sparks from the locomotive burned thirteen great holes in her gown.' (p. 27)

* Lynne Reid Banks, Path to the Silent Country (Penguin 1977):

A factual fiction story primarily about the latter part of Charlotte Bronte's life. Describes Charlotte's meetings with Harriet Martineau and Mrs Gaskell, among others.

- p. 10 HM famous writer and activist
- p. 23 Charlotte meets HM at HM's cousin Richard's house in Westbourne Street.
- p. 63 HM challenging and disturbing
- p. 74 Charlotte visits Ambleside
- p. 144 HM's review of Villette shocks Charlotte and breaks their friendship.

Elisabeth Arbuckle: Gaston Martineau

Continued from the last Newsletter...

Gaston Martineau, great-great grandfather of Harriet and James Martineau, was born in Bergerac about 1660. Although the Martineau name appears in manuscript and printed sources as early as the twelfth century, clear records of Gaston go

back only to his grandfather, Denis, and his father, Elie Martineau - also of Fontenay-le-Comte and Coulanges-les-Reaux - in Poitou. Bergerac lies sixty miles east of Bordeaux on the picturesque Dordogne River. Most inhabitants of this flourishing capital of a fine-quality wine district in the 16th century were Calvinists, and the town suffered during the religious wars. In 1621, for example, Louis XIII took the precaution of demolishing Bergerac's fortifications.

Although Louis XIV's anti-Huguenot policy normally forbade practice by Huguenot doctors and surgeons, Catholic practitioners could not always be found. Bergerac, with a population of 10,000, had many Huguenot doctors and surgeons and, apparently, an important medical college. Gaston would have been apprenticed to a Master of the Surgeons' Guild, possibly a family member, at 13 or 14. He would have spent seven years learning the practice, reading prescribed texts and passing examinations for admission to the Surgeons' Guild. Gaston duly qualified as a Master Surgeon at Bergerac, but his movements for the next two or three years are not known, and his name does not appear on a list of protesters against the destruction of the Calvinist church in Bergerac in 1684.

Gaston may have gone directly to the Protestant centre at Dieppe in 'High' Normandy (part of a triangle, with Le Havre and Rouen, from where many of the refugees to register at the French church in Threadneedle Street set out). He may have practised among members of his father's family in Poitou until the Revocation made it too risky. Or he may have lived in hiding at Offranville, near Dieppe, where the family of Guillaume Pierre, his future father-in-law, had property. Then, in late October 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes. Gaston, acting quickly, arranged to sail from Dieppe to arrive in England soon after the turn of the year 1686.

By far the greatest proportion of refugees leaving France were single men. Records at the French Church in Theadneedle Street, London, show that the refugees came in waves. The church was well-known on the continent, with the largest French congregation in England and a well-organized poor relief administration. The first great wave of refugees had come at the start of the <u>dragonnades</u> in 1681-2, the second followed the Revocation in 1686-8, and a third came in the last years of the 17th century. In spite of earlier injustices and persecutions, the shock produced by the Revocation is revealed by the tenfold increase in the numbers of arrivals registered at the French Church in 1686. And another tenfold increase - mostly during the summer months when the Channel crossing was less hazardous -came in 1687 (the peak year for the registration of refugees at the Threadneedle Street Church).

Among the French refugees on the ship carrying Gaston to England was young Marie Pierre, daughter of Guillaume Pierre of Dieppe. Guillaume, like Gaston, had escaped arrest and must soon have chosen to stay in England. Probably on 20 March 1686, he and his children, including Marie, became naturalized citizens. When James II attempted to suspend the laws against Roman Catholics (and Dissenters) and to promote Catholics to positions of trust in 1687, his policies caused a national outrage. Opposition to Protestant foreigners temporarily disappeared, which may have decided Gaston: on 21 March 1688, he became a citizen, along with other men and women from Bergerac. In December 1688, James II fled to France, William and Mary peacefully took the throne, and Parliament permanently established Protestantism and the toleration of Dissent in England.

Gaston Martineau may have gone to Spitalfields when he first reached England. Numerous English surgeons practised in London, and French-speaking refugees had been settling in Spitalfields since the 16th century. The hamlet took its name from St Mary Spital, a twelfth-century priory and hospital. Merchants from towns of the Hanseatic League, who were not allowed to live within the city walls, had lived there and maintained the gate. Spitalfields then became the site of gentlemen's houses and fields. Later it was a refuge for Nonconformists, like Quakers, and English weavers also lived in the area. At the Revocation, the new wave of Huguenot immigrants who flooded the district included many silkweavers. Eventually, Spitalfield silk-weavers formed a prosperous and wellinformed artisan society. Near Spital Square, master weavers lived in homes with distinctive wide-latticed windows in the upper floors. They employed local English workers to help with the weaving of silk and wool cloth, but in such neighbourhoods French continued to be spoken. Moreover, at the turn of the 17th century, none of the seven French churches in Spitalfields had adopted the Anglican service.

Strong community spirit and practical charity characterized the French-speaking community at Spitalfields. An organization that might have been known to Gaston Martineau was the Maison de Charite de Spittlefields, founded in 1690. 'La Soupe', as it was called, offered soup, meat and bread to needy individuals and families. Century-long records show donations and bequests from prosperous Huguenots, as well as outlay for meat, flour, bread, rent of a house and payment for the cooking and serving of the food. (Fluctuations of the cloth

trade had made Spitalfields the scene of riots in 1675-6 and 1683, and greater distresses undoubtedly affecting the French community came in 1693 and 1696). Spitalfields, by a letter patent from James II in 1688, had one of three churches that the King had allowed French ministers to build within the city and suburbs of London, and La Patente de Spitalfields boasted many members from Poitou and Normandy. The church register shows that there on 26 September 1693, 'Gaston Martineau, Me. Chirugien, de Bergerac en Perigort, f. d'Elie Martineau et de Marguerite Barbesson, - et Marie Pierre, ff. de Guillaume Pierre et de Marie Jourdain, de Diepe en Haute Normandie' were married, and that one of their witnesses was also a Master Surgeon. In the following July, Marie, first child of Gaston and Marie, was baptized at the 'new church at London'. Gaston, however, was soon to make another move: in 1695 - perhaps owing to economic uncertainties among the Spitalfields weavers - Gaston took his young family to the thriving East Anglian town of Norwich. His possible ties to other Martineaus in London, who anticipated him and continued as members of the French Protestant churches there, have not been traced. Gaston had now taken the decision to leave his extended family and friends for a second time.

[The final section of Gaston's history will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter]

THE HARRIET MARTINEAU SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The first meeting of the Harriet Martineau Sociological Society, recently founded by Dr Michael Hill, University of Nebraska, was held in Amsterdam on 18 May 1996, at the meetings of the International Sociological Association Research Committee on the History of Sociology. The Society was born out of the expansion of shared sociological interests in Harriet Martineau and the increase in professional papers, conference sessions, articles and books focusing particularly on her contributions to early sociology and social science.

Membership in HMSS is by affirmation of interest coupled with a personal research programme and/or professional interest focused at least in part on Harriet Martineau and/or other early women sociologists; there are at this time no dues or formal organizational rules - everything is proceeding in a co-operative, voluntary, and <u>ad hoc</u> fashion.

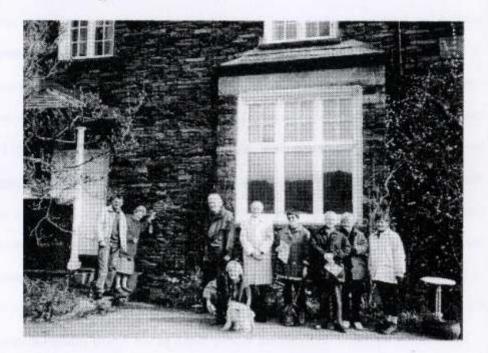
The Society will meet annually at sites agreed upon and which, where possible, reflect some significance in the life and/or work of Harriet Martineau. The second meeting, a Harriet Martineau Sociological Society 1997 Working Seminar, will be held at Mission Point Resort, Mackinac Island, Michigan, May 20-22 1997. Martineau recalls her visit to Mackinac Island in volume II of Society in America. Members of the seminar will explore the sights and trails of the island which Martineau visited in 1836. All scholars working on the sociological contributions of Harriet Martineau and related early women sociologists are invited to present, discuss and/or critique their current projects.

The Society will meet in Montreal in July 1998 at the XIVth World Congress of Sociology of the International Sociological Association, where a session on 'Harriet Martineau and the theoretical foundations of modern sociology' is being organized by Professor Hill. In 1999 the HMSS hopes to meet in Ambleside in England's Lake District where Harriet Martineau built a home and resided from 1846 until her death in 1876. More on that later. Those interested in joining the HMSS and/or

participating in the seminar should contact: Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, 4015 Hampton Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H4A 2L1 Canada OR Michael Hill (Jan-May 1997), 2799 Mizpah Park Road, Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022 or (permanent address) 2701 Sewell Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502 US. Reservations for the seminar can be made by calling the Mission Point Resort (800) 833-7711.

- Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, Liaison for the Harriet Martineau Sociological Society and The Martineau Society.

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