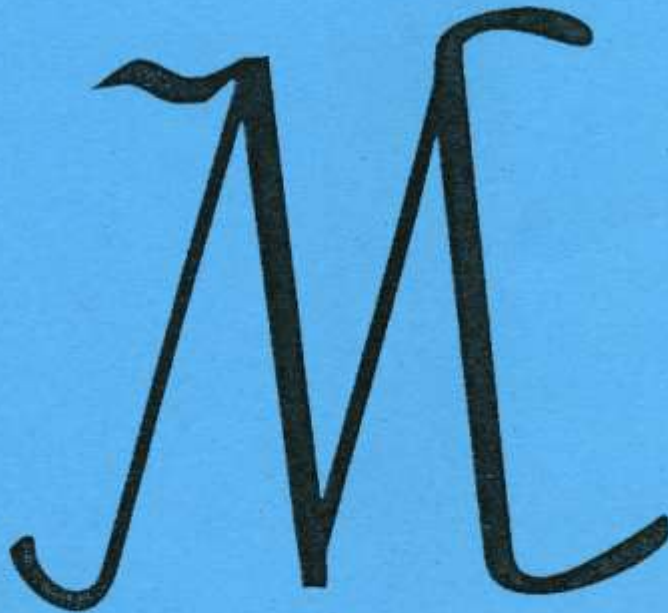


The
Martineau
Society



THE MARTINEAU SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL

As you will have realized, there has been no Martineau Society Newsletter for a year. This is because to celebrate the Bicentenary Year of Harriet Martineau's birth, we brought out a Miscellany of collected articles from previous Newsletters and conferences, edited by Sophia Hankinson, and otherwise concentrated our efforts on what I hope members will consider was a highly successful celebration. Thanks for this are largely due to our Chairperson, Barbara Todd, who arranged an exciting programme of events in Ambleside to coincide with the actual 12 June birthday: a full report follows after this editorial.

Other bicentenary events included two conference panels arranged by Deborah Logan in the United States. The first of these, at Ann Arbor in August, in connection with the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, focused on Harriet Martineau's journalism (Anka Ryall was among the speakers); while the second was in New York after Christmas at the prestigious Modern Language Association conference, held annually in the United States. The speakers were Valerie Sanders, Deborah Logan, Maria Frawley and Linda Peterson: despite being billed to present their papers at 8.30am on a Sunday morning, they actually had an audience! In this country, Barbara Todd gave an interview to the Radio 4 programme 'Woman's Hour,' which was broadcast some weeks after the actual bicentenary celebrations; and Deborah Logan and Valerie Sanders were guest editors of a special issue of the journal *Women's Writing* devoted to Harriet Martineau (now published by Triangle Journals).

We very much hope the momentum will be kept up in the year *after* the bicentenary. A Harriet Martineau conference is planned in Italy (University of Macerata) next July by Silvana Colella, and we will be returning to Harris Manchester College in August for our annual general meeting with its mixture of talks, excursions and society business.

NOTICEBOARD

With great regret we announce the deaths of Martineau Society members Barbara Hartas Jackson on 18 May 2002 [see separate obituary by Alan Middleton] and Hugh Kinder, in December 2002 [obituary to follow in the next Newsletter].

New book: Caroline Roberts, *The Hour and the Woman: Harriet Martineau and Victorian Ideologies* (University of Toronto Press, 2002: cost: £32). Valerie Sanders has reviewed this for the journal *Nineteenth-Century Literature*.

Harriet Martineau Bicentenary Conference, Ambleside, 11-14 June 2002

The long-awaited, long-planned-for Bicentenary Conference finally happened last June, and was a resounding success! Nearly seventy people attended, ranging from those in the Ambleside area to visiting scholars from as far away as Texas, Alaska, Tromsø, Umeå, Kentucky, and Puerto Rico. We were particularly pleased to welcome members of the Martineau family – Hugh and Audrey Kinder, and Christopher and Margaret Martineau – as well as representatives from the Gaskell and Brontë Societies.

Those who wanted to stay in the centre of Ambleside were comfortably accommodated at the Salutation Hotel, which also

served as a base for the meetings, papers, and formal meals. The programme began on the evening of 11 June with this year's Wordsworth Memorial Lecture in Rydal Church, given by Professor Ken Fielding on Harriet Martineau and Wordsworth. This was hosted by the Wordsworth Trust, who generously provided the audience with wine, sandwiches and shortbread after the lecture. As it was a very pleasant early summer's evening, this was an encouraging start to the celebrations, though in true Lake District tradition, the good weather soon broke!

The birthday day itself – 12 June – was entirely dedicated to celebrations ingeniously arranged by Barbara Todd. Although there was a programme of events, we were never quite sure what additional surprises were going to be sprung on us: starting with the breakfast-time distribution of paper fish on which we were asked – nay, ordered – to write a wish for Harriet's birthday. These were briskly collected up to make a reappearance later in the day. After breakfast, umbrellas at the ready, we went to see the cottages Harriet Martineau had had built in Ambleside on Ellerigg Road through her building society initiative. This was followed by a visit to the Armitage Museum for the official opening of their new exhibition, and to see their collection of Martineau material, to which – thanks to the generosity of Christopher Martineau – has now been added a donation of books and a photograph of Harriet's niece Maria. This was also the venue for the launch of Barbara's new book, *Harriet Martineau at Ambleside* (which is reviewed in the latest issue of the *Gaskell Society Journal*). While we were waiting to go in and out of the Museum, we were entertained by Pete Moser (son of Sir Claus Moser) a one-man band singing a specially-written song about

Harriet's achievements. Our next stop was the old Rydal Road Chapel just outside The Knoll, Harriet's house, where she gave her lectures on health issues and British history in the late 1840s and early 50s after she came to live in the area. Sophia Hankinson unveiled the plaque commemorating its use, for which the Society had raised money via members' donations. It was satisfying to see this project finally brought to fruition, and right that Sophia, founder of the Society, should be the person to unveil it.

By this stage we were ready for a drink – with only the short walk up to The Knoll for bucks fizz on Harriet's garden terrace. This was the nearest we could come to having her actually there with us, and it was indeed a very special occasion. It was generous of Barbara Todd and Maureen Colquhoun to let us trample all over their garden, albeit in such a good cause. From drinks we proceeded to lunch, at the Wateredge Hotel, which the Society colonised for an hour or two; and from lunch to a boat trip on Lake Windermere, during which Barbara braved the noise of the engines and the slap of waves against the side of the boat to read us Harriet's own account of the cruise around Belle Isle. Disembarking on to dry land again at Brockhole, we were greeted by what looked like Harriet's cow and ear trumpet on the shore: actually props from the Welfare State International group who took us on a delightful journey into the forest where we met several other creatures associated with Harriet, and the children of the party helped to make a surprise concoction in a cooking pot. This, in fact, was where the breakfast fish popped up again. By then it was unseasonably chilly, so the welcome appearance of refreshments (buns and mulled wine) was one of the 'birthday surprises' we had been promised.

Not that it was all over yet. Back at the Salutation Hotel, after our bicentenary celebration dinner, we were all given a piece of a truly magnificent birthday cake with 200 candles on it – baked by the local firm Lucy's (where some of us had dinner the following day). Amazingly it didn't set the hotel fire alarms off, and we could enjoy our last round of entertainment for the day, the 'My Harriet' talks arranged by Anka Ryall: a series of brief after-dinner talks by Martineau scholars saying what aspect of Harriet's career most mattered to them. I doubt if any of us have ever had such an amazing day for our own birthdays. We certainly went to bed, as the phrase goes, 'tired but happy.'

The next morning was devoted to the serious business of lectures: a series of papers given by four women professors from around the world. Professor Valerie Sanders (Hull) began with a lecture on Harriet Martineau and Queen Victoria: a relationship that was marred by Harriet's feeling that the Queen, though more dutiful than her wicked uncles, was temperamentally unstable, and after Albert's death, quite unable to perform her constitutional duties adequately. Professor Marion Just (Wellesley College, Massachusetts) compared Harriet with Alexis de Tocqueville, especially in relation to their views about women in the United States, and Professor Elisabeth Arbuckle (Puerto Rico) analysed the significance of Harriet's friendships with the Wedgwood circle, which she argued provided her with reassurance and a response to her work from outside the family. The final lecture, held in the evening, was given by Professor Gaby Weiner (Umeå, Sweden), and entitled 'Interpreting A Life: The Truth and Harriet Martineau.' This generated a particularly lively question-and answer session:

both Gaby and Elisabeth have kindly offered their papers to be included in the Newsletter. The first half of both has been included in this issue; the second will follow later in the year.

In the afternoon, we were offered a choice of a guided walk to Loughrigg Tarn, a visit to Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount, a peaceful few hours in the Armit Library – or a quiet lie-down, if necessary! I went on the walk, led by Edna Garlick of the Lake Parish Council, and thoroughly enjoyed both the scenery (including a dramatic cave) and the tea at Edna's house (where the view was amazing). This was the evening most of us went out to the local restaurant, Lucy's on a Plate, for an appetizing informal supper, before returning to the hotel for the Great Harriet Debate. The motion was that 'This House believes that Harriet Martineau Was Not a Feminist,' proposed by Valerie Sanders and seconded by R.K. Webb, while Deborah Logan and Carol Keller defended her feminist credentials. Further comments were offered from the floor before the event succeeded in provoking and irritating the audience into feeling they were ready for bed.

On the last day of the conference, the Society's AGM was held in the hotel, the Minutes of which you will be receiving separately. Suffice to say that all the sponsors of the bicentenary event were warmly thanked, especially the Lakes Parish Council, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and Ambleside Rotary Club, and above all, Barbara Todd for inventing and arranging the whole amazing experience. When I started writing my D.Phil thesis on Harriet Martineau back in 1979, I have to say I never imagined that I would be celebrating her bicentenary in such jolly and distinguished

company, and in her own back yard, so to speak, twenty years later!

Valerie Sanders

Christopher Martineau's Presents

Amongst all the delights and interests of Harriet Martineau's Bicentenary celebrations, one occasion - as joyful as it was unexpected - will certainly forever remain in my memory.

On Harriet's 200th birthday (after a chilly early morning walk to see the still sturdy and beautiful cottages built by her Building Society a hundred and fifty years ago), we were beginning to reassemble outside the Armit Trust for the opening of their commemorative exhibition and the launch of my book, *Harriet Martineau at Ambleside* (which, in spite of almost 10 years' work, I'd only *just* managed to get published in time!), a little blue car drew up, driven by a cheerful, spry and even bluer-eyed octogenarian, Canon Christopher Martineau, with his wife, Margaret, in the passenger seat, and a mysteriously heavy cardboard box in the boot - containing 'a few presents for you,' he said.

Christopher (the eldest son of Sir Wilfrid Martineau, grandson of Ernest, great-grandson of HM's nephew and executor, Thomas, and great-great-grandson of Harriet's beloved elder brother, Robert), none of us had ever met before (although some will remember his late younger brother, the kindly Denis, attending our AGMs in Oxford a few years ago). And, as if his very presence was not exciting enough, the contents of the cardboard box (which Alan and I had hardly time to examine properly before our three-day action-packed celebrations were over), proved to be simply astonishing! There were signed first editions of books both by

Harriet and James (I have listed these below); a rare photograph of HM's 'glorious niece,' Maria (1827-1864) - a particular favourite with so many of us, although we had no idea that any image of her existed; a leather embossed pocket book, with the initials 'J.M,' originally belonging to James, and bequeathed to Maria's younger sister, Jenny (1832-1920), who, of course, bore the same initials - containing various little keepsakes of hers: - an envelope addressed to Miss Clara Martineau, for instance, enclosing a charming letter from a cousin, dated March 1914, with a print of the famous Maclise cartoon, depicting HM as a mischief-making witch, heating a long-handled cauldron over the fire with her feet on the fender and a cat on her shoulder - 'Why a cat - I know not - I believe your great-aunt loathed them,' he writes; another letter from Mary Arnold, describing a makeshift, hands-upon-a-hat (Ouija-board) experiment conducted at Fox How by her eminent son-in-law, W.E.Forster; a manuscript 'Chronological List of Harriet Martineau's Works (as far as I have been able to ascertain)' from Maria Weston Chapman, and, most importantly, - an autograph, declaring that 'I believe in the equality of human rights, without regard to clime, complexion, or sex,' signed by William Lloyd Garrison. Then, what may prove to be the greatest treasure of all - a poster-roll containing an excellent pastel copy of HM's 1849 portrait by Richmond. Signed 'C.F,' and dated 1864, its colours are as vibrant and delicate as if they had been drawn yesterday, although the surround is very foxed, so we have temporarily placed it in the expert care of the National Portrait Gallery, whose conservator is currently preparing a full report concerning its condition, with her recommendations for treatment. Once this is done, then we, and the Armit Trust, will be

in a position to apply for grants to cover the cost of restoration - so, watch this space!

After a hurried Committee confab about how we should best look after our presents, it was proposed, and afterwards ratified at the AGM on 14 June, that, while all the Harriet books and artifacts should remain the property of the Society, they should be placed on semi-permanent loan at Ambleside's Armit Trust Museum, and that the James books should be similarly placed in the library of Harris Manchester College.

Here is the book list:

Harriet Martineau

Household Education; Life in the Sick-Room; Traditions of Palestine; The Essential Faith of the Universal Church, Settlers at Home; Feats on the Fjord; The Crofton Boys.

James Martineau (variously inscribed)

Lectures delivered at Liverpool, 1839; The Seat of Authority in Religion; Endeavours after the Christian Life (Vols 1&2); Faith and Self-Surrender; Types of Ethical Theory (Vols 1&2)

Any further details of these or other relevant items in their collections may be obtained from: Michelle Kelly, Curator, Armit Trust (e-mail: mail@armittrust.fsbusiness.co.uk) or: Susan Killoran, Librarian, Harris Manchester College (e-mail: susan.killoran@harris-manchester.oxford.ac.uk)

With love and gratitude to Christopher Martineau and all our very best wishes to him and to Margaret for happiness in their new home.

-Barbara Todd



Annex Martineau
AUTHOR OF "ILLUSTRATIONS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY"

The famous Maclise cartoon which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* 8,
November 1833

The Truth and Harriet Martineau: Interpreting a Life:¹

Gaby Weiner, Umeå University, Sweden

But no one but myself can properly do the most important part – the true account of my conscious transition from the Christian faith to my present philosophy.

(letter from HM to Holyoake, 15.02.1855, British Museum)

Her love of the truth is proverbial among her friends, and even among such are averse from her present views. One friend says... "I always was of the opinion that Harriet Martineau was at once the most veracious and the most credulous person of my acquaintance", ... and a chorus takes up to chaunt...

(Letter from Elizabeth Browning to Miss Mitford, January 15, 1845, (Miller, 1954, p. 233-4).

Harriet Martineau used to say of me, with a show of ACCURACY never accurate which distinguishes her.... (Jane Carlyle in McQueen Simpson A & M, 1977, p. 253

'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'régime' of truth (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Introduction

I start this paper with four quotes: the first two subscribe to the truth claims of Harriet Martineau; the third implies that Martineau made a show of truth (accuracy) which was unfounded; and the fourth refers to the way in which truths are socially and culturally constructed and maintained. The quotes set the scene for the paper, which puts forward the proposition that far from being an advocate of 'the' truth, Harriet Martineau recognised that control of communication was crucial to the advancement of 'her' truth. We can recognise this

¹ Paper presented at the Harriet Martineau Bicentenary, Ambleside, England 11-14 June 2002

impulse today, for example, in the rush into print of ex-politicians and celebrities, and in the communication management strategies of New Labour.

By way of an introduction, however, I first present briefly the outcomes of my doctoral study, which throws light, perhaps, on why anyone should be concerned about Harriet Martineau and truth-telling. I then consider some ideas about truth-telling before presenting evidence on Harriet Martineau's own engagement with the truth.

I was initially attracted to researching Harriet Martineau for two reasons; a request from the Australian feminist, Dale Spender, to rescue Harriet Martineau from obscurity for her book *Feminist Theorists* (Spender, 1983) and Martineau's work on education and women which seemed substantial enough to provide the basis for a doctoral thesis.

However during my eight years' or so work (part-time) on the thesis (completed in 1991), my research focus shifted as I began to doubt the 'truthfulness' of what I was reading, whether that written by Harriet Martineau herself or by her numerous biographers and commentators. Each appeared to take up a different position on the value of Martineau's life and work, and on her importance to different disciplines and to history. Yet, even if they disagreed, biographers drew primarily on the same texts (the *Autobiography* and *Illustrations*). As I worked on my thesis, I pondered on how I

could determine who was closest to the 'truth' about Harriet Martineau (Weiner, 1991).

Harriet Martineau as subject of history and object of text

In the event, my thesis provided a reassessment of Harriet Martineau's place in mainstream and feminist scholarship. It focused on Harriet Martineau, first, as a subject of research and, second, as an object of text.

As a *subject of research*, I argued, Harriet Martineau can be understood as a nineteenth-century, female, unmarried, middle-class, writer, reformer and intellectual, who, on the one hand, achieved public recognition and acclaim in patriarchal Victorian England, and on the other, provided a bridge between the Enlightenment and first wave of feminism of the second half of the nineteenth century. Harriet Martineau's prioritisation of economic and legal advances for women mark her out as an advanced feminist theorist. At the same time, her life experiences led her to prioritise different features relating to women's rights at different periods. For example, in her earliest writing, Harriet Martineau focused on woman as *equal* to man, socially, politically and educationally; later, she focused on the importance of *economic independence*; and towards the end of her life, she placed greatest emphasis on woman as *self-contained*, and as responsible for her own destiny. At other times, her womanhood was subsumed as she identified more with Unitarianism, Victorian radicalism, people with handicaps, the intellectual elite and so on.

As an *object* of text, Harriet Martineau was examined through the eyes of biographers and commentators, ranging from her contemporaries to commentaries written more recently (including my own). I detected distinct differences, according to historical period and ideological positioning. For example, many writing in the *nineteenth century* emphasised her unmarried status and the extent (or not) of her womanliness. The perception of unmarried women as unfulfilled, unnatural and sexually repressed led to judgements that those who strayed into the male discourse of the public sphere, were masculine and also in Harriet Martineau's case, 'egotistical'. By the *early twentieth century*, public sphere women were re-conceptualised as unusual and eccentric, rather than unnatural. Interest in eugenics generated heightened interest in appearance and mentality, and the new science of psychology led to speculation about Harriet Martineau's personality, sexuality and her relationships with family and friends. Nonetheless, several (women) writers toward the end of this period, such as Rivenburg (1932) located women such as Harriet Martineau within mainstream developments in the history of ideas, rather than in the ghetto of historical eccentricity. In the *early post World-War II period*, there was greater availability of historical sources, which meant that biographers knew more about Harriet Martineau. This was counterbalanced, however, by entrenched views about the preferred qualities of women. At a time when women were being exhorted above all else to be homemakers, Wheatley writing in 1957 was most concerned to establish her subject as a warm and sensitive woman, somewhat distanced from the nineteenth century feminist movement and Webb writing in 1960 regarded Harriet

Martineau as a somewhat inferior representative of an extraordinary historical era. Tellingly, he placed highest value on her writing style and the neatness of her manuscripts.

However, feminists consistently esteemed Harriet Martineau highly: as one of the catalogue of great women of the nineteenth century and an important early campaigner for women's causes. As second wave feminist ideas began to take hold, the trickle of writing on Harriet Martineau early in the twentieth century became a steady stream from the 1980s onwards. Accounts of Harriet Martineau written in the *late twentieth century* displayed little interest in her appearance or womanliness, being concerned, rather, to explore whether claims about her intellectual and feminist achievements could be defended, and what implications this had for extending knowledge about women. This was certainly the position that I took when I started my research in the early 1980s.

As I pursued 'my' truth about Harriet Martineau, however, it became strikingly obvious that biographers' differential assessments of Harriet Martineau's achievements and 'their' notions of the truth about her life, were dependent both on individual political and cultural loyalties, and prevailing truth-regimes about women. This could also be said of Harriet Martineau's work, which was clearly oriented towards producing 'her' own truth about herself. Discussion of the latter provides the main focus of the next section.

[to be continued]

her to his friends like the Carlyles (Thomas Carlyle recorded, a bit sourly, that Martineau had 'started into lionhood' since *his* last visit to London).

On Hensleigh's resignation, Fanny and her children left London to go to stay with his father in Staffordshire. Martineau then began the long correspondence of over 120 letters to Fanny and her immediate family that comprise the largest group of extant letters written by Martineau to one person or small coterie. In the letters, Martineau comments on passing events (including the latest books and articles), worries about members of her family, and confesses her private female concerns. Though revealing anxiety over money, she flaunts her independence and dedication to writing. After Erasmus and the Wedgwoods helped to collect a testimonial fund for her in 1843 that permitted her to build a house for herself and insured her future security, she occasionally sent Fanny copies of her accounts for the year, to prove how well she could manage.

The presentation of the testimonial fund in July 1843 in fact led to one of Martineau's few contretemps with the Wedgwood circle. At the advice of her friend, Elisabeth Reid, Martineau determined to spend £100 of the donated money on a set of silverplate, including cutlery and tea and coffee service. Erasmus was horrified – Jane Carlyle told her husband Erasmus 'thought at first she must have gone mad.' What would people think, after the conscientious effort to present Martineau's case as one of deserving *need*? Some letters about purchase of the plate that flew back and forth between Tynemouth and London are missing, but at last the uxorious Hensleigh agreed to order the silverplate. 'Here you have a full authorization from me to execute the commission you so kindly

undertake,' Martineau writes. 'The more I think of it, the more I feel sure that this proceeding is fit and proper, as expressing a part of my feelings on this gratifying business.' (Fanny's reaction to Martineau's ordering of the silverplate has not been recorded. Raised by an impractical father, Fanny did not usually concern herself over material possessions. People and politics interested her more. Martineau, on the other hand, seemed on this occasion to value the elegant cutlery for the sake of propriety).

[to be continued]

IN MEMORIAM: Barbara Hartas-Jackson and her twin sister Ruth were born in 1909 in Pennsylvania, USA, where their father was a university professor. They were the great-great-grand-nieces of Revd Brooke Herford, the eminent Unitarian minister. Their childhood was spent in Manchester, and Barbara was educated at Roedean School, Sussex, where she was assessed as having 'high intellectual capacity ...a pleasant-natured girl of a refined and sensitive type, patient and persevering and extremely careful, conscientious and dependable'.

In the early days of the second world war she worked as secretary to the head of research at the Roche pharmaceutical company in Welwyn Garden City. During the war she was greatly concerned about the fate of friends whom she had met at international jamborees in Denmark and other countries. From 1948 she worked for the Guide International Service, helping refugees and displaced people in north Germany; a photograph taken in 1951 shows her helping at a children's tea party at Aurich Staging Centre, where 1500 desperately poor women and children from southern Europe lived, waiting to join menfolk who had already

emigrated to Canada. Subsequently Barbara worked at a camp in Blankensee, which housed thousands of DPs who had been rejected for emigration, usually for health reasons. On returning to England in 1952 she gave talks about the situation of displaced people.

Her next job was as a caseworker with the Family Service Unit in Manchester; later she worked for the German Welfare Council in London. She lived in Putney in the 1960s, but subsequently, with her sister Ruth, she bought and restored Maypole Cottage in Chieveley, Berkshire, where they cared for their father until his death. The sisters continued to live there until Ruth's death in 1994, after which Barbara continued to live there alone, with support from carers and neighbours, until her own recent death. The two sisters were lifelong members of the Unitarian movement, founder members of The Martineau Society, and loyal members of the MCO Chapel Society. Barbara was a governor of Manchester College, Oxford, until it became part of the University. Support from the Berkshire County Blind Society, which supplied her with special cassettes, tapes, and other aids, meant that despite her almost complete loss of sight she could continue her involvement with the Ockenden Venture and its work for displaced people and refugees. She was also an active member of the Trefoil Guild and the Horticultural Society. She corresponded with friends in many countries, depending on visitors to read correspondence to her but proud of her ability to touch-type her replies, which she did until two years before her death, aged 92, on 18 May 2002. All who had the privilege of knowing her will remember her clear and incisive mind, and her gracious stoicism in the face of adversity.

SALE OF MISS HARRIET MARTINEAU'S FURNITURE

It may interest members to see the following piece, dated 23 September 1876, recently discovered in the archives of *The Westmorland Gazette*:

The contents of the Knoll, Ambleside, the residence of the late Miss Martineau, were submitted to public competition by Mr Derome, of Kendal, on Wednesday and Thursday, and the sale attracted a large number of her admirers. Many of the articles which possessed personal interest sold at high prices. The ink stand, described by the auctioneer as the fountain which had so much enriched the world of literature, sold for £1.12s; while a smaller one used by Miss Martineau while an invalid sold for 18s. The library table went for £5.10s; a small reading table for £3.15s; chess table £2.15s; letter balance 18s; a small bronzed vase 24s. The engravings all sold at high prices, and many small articles in china and glass were keenly competed for and carried off as mementos. The books were not for sale, having been divided by Will amongst nephews and nieces...

Barbara Todd

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An updated and corrected list of members' E-mail addresses

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles, book reviews, letters, notes and observations, for the next Newsletter should be sent by the end of May to Prof Valerie Sanders, Department of English, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX

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