

The  
Martineau  
Society

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## The Martineau Society

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### Martineau Society Subscription Information:

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

\* UK: Individual members £15 // Concessionary rate £7.50 // Institutional membership £30. Life membership rate is £150.

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### **Editor's Note**

Many thanks to our retiring Newsletter Editor, Deborah Anna Logan, whose excellent work has brought us so much information and interest. Your new editor will struggle to keep up Deborah's high standards in this and future Newsletters. It is fitting that the first article of this Newsletter should be a review by Gaby Weiner of Deborah's major new work – *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau* – in no fewer than five volumes. One is tempted to conclude – "if you can't find it here, it doesn't exist!"

You will have noticed the change in the type-face or font from the Times New Roman of previous Newsletters to Arial in this issue. This search for a clearer script arises from suggestions from members of the Society (who, it has to be admitted, are the visually-challenged). Do forgive any errors which may have crept in. They are entirely the fault of your new editor. Our thanks as ever to our contributors. We hope you enjoy the Newsletter. –Bruce Chilton

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### **BOOK REVIEW**

**Deborah Anna Logan, editor. *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*. March, 2007. 5 volumes, pp 2036, Pickering & Chatto. ISBN 978 1 85196 804 6, £450/\$750**

This is a magnificent collection of Harriet Martineau's hitherto unpublished letters, put together by two of our Society members: Deborah Logan who is the main editor and who has undertaken the bulk of the work, and Valerie Sanders who is Advisory Editor. I put aside several weeks of the summer to peruse the collection and found the exercise enormously interesting and fruitful, not only because it gives me a chance to get to know a more intimate Harriet Martineau but also because it provides a sense of the flow of her life – from rather breathless, aspiring young writer of seventeen to elderly though still often razor sharp author in her seventies.

Chronologically arranged, each volume of letters offers an insight into the person that was Harriet Martineau at various stages of her life. Volume one covers the years 1819 to 1837 when Harriet was at her busiest and most volatile, and seeking to position herself in relation to what was to become a long writing career. The volume closes with her voyage to America and follow-up correspondence to new American friends. Volume two covers the years 1837 to 1845 and Harriet's developing maturity as an author. It shows her complete involvement in the authorial experience parallel to a seeming acceptance of a life of invalidism, even though still in her 30s. Volume three covers the years 1845 to 1855, and marks another change of direction, away from the 'prone couch' as Logan puts it, to a regained sense of physical and mental wellbeing. This volume also displays Harriet's deepening confidence and authority in expressing opinions and judgements, on public as well as private matters. Volume four



covers the years, 1856 to 1862, described by Logan as a period of 'prolific output of both needle and pen', accompanied yet again by deteriorating health and exacerbated in the late 1860s by financial uncertainty about some of her investments. In the final volume (number five) Harriet continues to exhibit 'an undiminished intellectual engagement with domestic, national and international events', as Logan notes, despite increasing ill health which eventually results in her death in 1876 at the age of 74. The final volume also contains several poignant letters from Maria Martineau, Harriet's long-time nurse and housekeeper, which reveal the extent of Maria's involvement in her aunt's affairs also as 'secretary, copy-editor, friend and soulmate' (5, vii) – and from other 'carers'. All these show the extent to which Harriet relied for support, especially in her later years, on family networks and relations. All the volumes contain informative footnotes which provide background information on the issues discussed, appendices of Harriet's published work over the period covered plus, in volume five, a welcome subject index which allows readers to pursue Harriet's line of thought on particular topics or her correspondence with a particular individual.

As most Society members will be aware, Harriet had a lifelong antipathy to the publication of personal letters because such a possibility denied the opportunities of friends writing to each other 'frankly'; although occasionally she sanctioned the preservation of certain correspondence to record a point made or to be included in her volumes of autobiography after her death (3, 360). Writing for Harriet, as for many literary figures of the day, was a means of keeping up with what was going on around her and in society more widely, as well as to sustain her career as author and campaigner. Her fear about letters getting into the wrong hands (or being republished without her permission) predates more recent concerns about the dangers of wrongly forwarded emails or text messages, or being photographed in a compromising situation – particularly dangerous for 'celebs' who have an image to maintain. Thankfully, at least for those of us interested in Harriet today, many of her correspondents ignored the command to burn her letters, thus allowing us to see aspects of Harriet's character and identity missing from her other, more 'formal' writing. Thus, emerging from the letters in particular is her ironic humour –sometimes against herself - her playfulness with print, her concern about her craft and what can only be described as her honest-to-goodness humanity. Others no doubt will note different characteristics, depending on their own interests and perspectives – see for example, Maria Frawley's review in the *Times Literary Supplement* (12 September 2007) which focuses largely on the people Harriet knew and the motif of sickness that hovered over her life.

As indicated earlier, the value of this large collection of hitherto unpublished letters which covers over fifty years of Harriet Martineau's life is that it is better able to show progression, maturity, change of viewpoint and the impact of life experience than more focused collections (such as Valerie Sanders' *Selected Letters* or Elisabeth Arbuckle's *Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood*, 1983). This type of collection is also, I want to argue, more revealing of the individual than the more manicured genre of published works. As a

sometime writer myself, mainly of academic texts, I am particularly interested in Harriet's attention to the detail of getting her work published, her anxiety about misprints and copyright law, and the delight of eventual public recognition of her work. For example, there is a poignancy to the letter dated October 1832, at the time when the impact of the *Illustrations* was beginning to be felt; 'Mr Ker... showed me a letter of four sheets from Lord B., every syllable of which is about me & his plans for me' (1,155).

Characteristic of the first volume is Harriet's lack of confidence in work in progress yet her youthful joie-de vivre about life when it is going well. In the first instance, she writes to her mentor William Johnson Fox in August 1832, 'I am striking off on an altogether new track in 11 [the political economy tale entitled *For Each and For All*]. How I shall manage it, I don't know, but am full of fears at present' (1, 147). To Eliza Flowers a couple of months later she is ecstatic: 'How is your life now dearest? Healthy & easy? Mine is marvellously. I am perfect as to ease and sanity & ready to jump for glee at the thought of business to come – to say nothing of pleasure' (1,161-2). The first volume closes with comments about her trip to America, including descriptions of the sights she has seen and some surprising new skills she has developed such as rifle shooting (in Lexington) as well as some useful condensations of her (then) views on slavery, women, education etc.

The letters in volume two seem to come from a different person entirely; not the aspiring young writer delighted with the world but one who is wearied by illness, aware of mortality, and in retreat from celebrity status and the attractions of the metropolis – 'I cannot be quiet in London - there are too many letters, parcels, foreigners, public objects &c for an invalid' (letter from Tynemouth, 1840, 2, 56). Like Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth Barrett Browning among others, Harriet seems to embrace invalidity at various points in her life primarily as a means to continue as a writer yet avoid what might be today termed 'burn out'. Thus in a letter to Fox in 1840, her workload is portrayed thus:

Meantime, I am most thoroughly enjoying a quiet domestic life .....- reading much, walking & talking much, & writing a little, when able: e.g. the notes on the localities of Shakspeare's (sic) Italian plays, in Knight's edition; the "Dressmaker" in K's Trade Series, & the "Appeal" for the Oberlin. Also an account of the "Newcastle Improvements" about to appear in the Penny Magne. I mention these things to show you that I am not wholly disabled. I have besides a very large correspondence (2, 44).

The impression gained from this volume is of someone thoroughly engaged in the literary world; a genuine woman of letters. If Harriet is not writing about her own works and/or about payment, she is collecting material for the next book or asking for books to be sent to her or giving thanks for books received – and this characteristic of the letters continues almost until the end of her life. She uses correspondence to gossip about the behaviour of the better-known, to report on the activities of close family or to defend her own actions; for example, her refusal of a Civil List pension when ill but acceptance of a £1,400 testimonial



from friends to support her during the same. Thus of her letter-writing, she notes in 1843 to Henry Crabb Robinson: 'My letters are (not "like talk" but) talk – a flowing out of the moment to you & the fire' (2, 156). The volume ends with Harriet's cure through mesmerism; and growing feeling of wellbeing; 'The disease for some time has been giving way, and I am merely infirm – not at all ill – I have left off all the medicine, have lost all pain and distress – walk a mile every fine day...' (2, 333). She goes 'cold turkey' to come off pain-relieving drugs: 'I have not touched an opiate since Thursday noon; & no previous reducing & diluting can prevent the final relinquishment from being very disagreeable. A few difficult days & harassed nights are inevitable: but I have had the opiates hidden away, - so as not to be tempted...' (2, 336).

Volume three presents us with yet another Harriet; healthy, energetic and delighted in her regained health. As Logan notes, she is nowhere so engaging as in the letters of this period, which are 'characterized by a Romantic passion for nature and an introspective analysis of her personal priorities' (3, vii). She writes about building a house in the Lake District ('I am buying the field, & going to build the cottage', 3, 21), travels to the Middle East and nearer to home, her new occupation as a journalist for the *Daily News*, and the variety of more 'daring' literary ventures such as *Letters on Mesmerism*, *Eastern Life*, *Letters from Ireland*, and *History of England*. Now in her early 40s, Harriet walks and climbs and rides – indeed she finds herself 'as good a horsewoman as ever' - and enjoys the 'warm welcome back to life' from her friends and being free to live as she pleases (3, 14, 16 & 19). She takes pleasure in the company of her celebrated neighbours, complains about the 'terrible rush of tourists' (3, 113) and worries about the health of her family and friends. As Frawley mentions in her review, sickness and death permeate the letters; for example, in 1848, Harriet excuses herself from not writing sooner thus; 'my mother is dying & my heart & hands are very full' (3, 124). The volume ends in 1855 with the onset once more of a bout of illness and an intense intimation of imminent death, resulting in the speedy completion and printing (though not distribution) of a two-volume *Autobiography* (which was eventually published in 1877).

However, Harriet was to live for another twenty more years or so. The last two volumes document various ups and downs in her health and an increasing reliance on youthful family members, especially Maria Martineau. Her intellectual efforts also continue apace, in particular, her journalism and activities around the campaign to repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts led by Josephine Butler. Once more, she uses declining health as a reason for withdrawing from certain longstanding commitments, for instance, involvement with the *Westminster Review*. At the same time, she continues to write and correspond, and to take on other, apparently hugely burdensome tasks; for example, in 1859, 'I have this morning accepted an engagement (dependent on my health) to supply the link wanted between European and American politics, by means of fortnightly letters to a really good New York weekly paper (*NASS*)...The vast audience is one consideration (4, 161). Living largely on 'wine, laudanum & ether', she reports managing to keep going though expresses surprise at 'being still here' (4, 4).

The unexpected death of Maria Martineau in 1864 is a terrible shock for

Harriet - 'the best & happiest period of my life has closed, & that nothing can ever be like it again. There is no other Maria' (5, 59) - and she never really recovered from it. She officially retired from the *Daily News* in 1866 aged 64, though faced financial anxiety in 1868 when her investments failed, even if only temporarily. Nevertheless friends and family rallied round, for example, by organising the republication as a book, of the obituaries written by her for the *Daily News*. Right to the end (only two weeks before her death), Harriet was answering questions from her friend Maria Weston Chapman about George Trevelyan (editor of life and letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay) and about Macaulay himself, although was clearly finding the physical act of writing almost impossible: 'You see I cannot write: I will leave this open for a chance of something better tomorrow' (5, 352). On her death, Harriet's frame of mind is seen by Susan Martineau as accepting to the end: 'she herself was longing for the "rest" after her life's work was done' (5, 368).

What have I gained from this collection of *Letters*? Now more than ever, my main perception of Harriet Martineau is as a campaigning writer (or 'organic intellectual', as termed by the Italian philosopher, Antonio Gramsci) whose life revolved around and was structured by her wish or need to write and be read; and by a desire to make a difference to the society in which she lived. She lived, breathed, and embodied the world of books and periodicals of the period, and this collection provides an absorbing insight into the life of an organic intellectual, unusually, a lone female. For Harriet, who lived at a distance from the metropolis, letter-writing (and the existence of a good postal service) allowed business to be conducted and political and social (as well as family) discourses and networks to be maintained.

Having now done a preliminary trawl through the *Letters*, my next task will be to focus on topics that have long fascinated me such as Harriet's views on education and/or women and to see whether differences are discernible over time between viewpoints expressed in Harriet's correspondence and her more known publications. This is a rich resource indeed! However, its retail price currently will be beyond the pocket of many Society members. So we need also, individually and collectively, to ensure that this fine collection finds its way into university and local libraries - a campaigning aim with which I am sure, Harriet herself would have concurred.

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### **Harriet Martineau and the Gilmans in Charleston, South Carolina, 1835 A Painful Divide**

**Willard C. Frank, Jr.**

The English political economist and reformer Harriet Martineau and Charleston's Samuel and Caroline Gilman developed a deep and affectionate friendship during Harriet's visit to Charleston in 1835. When Harriet continued her



journey, she expressed "the pain of parting" from her dear friends in Charleston. Yet before the year was out, Harriet rejected the Gilman invitation to return to Charleston, for it was "too painful to stay long in slave countries," and soon rejected the Gilmans themselves. Friendship had turned into a painful divide that would never be bridged.<sup>1</sup>

Harriet Martineau, with publishing success already giving her stature, instead of the conventional grand tour of Europe, chose to tour America, where language and her deafness would not be much a barrier, and where she could examine a little-known country and see how far Americans lived up to their professed principles. Despite her keen intellect and extensive knowledge, she demonstrated not only ignorance but rather surprising naiveté about human behavior. It was more of a journey of discovery than even she had anticipated.<sup>2</sup>

She received a warm welcome wherever she went. There were at least four reasons. First, her literary fame, especially for her books on political economy, had preceded her. Second, she had a witty, engaging personality. Third, Harriet came to question and listen, to understand, while being open and clear on her own values, and not to prejudice, which put her interlocutors at ease.<sup>3</sup> Fourth, her Unitarian affiliation led ministers throughout the land to open their homes to her and her companion Louisa Jeffrey as their guests. Unitarian clergy from New York, Philadelphia, throughout the South, and up to Boston were her hosts.<sup>4</sup> Through a network of Unitarian ministers, all of whom knew each other and most of whom were educated at Harvard, the Martineau traveling party passed from one clerical household to the other. Harriet always expressed how warmly these ministerial families took her and Louisa in. She found "that a little Unitarian sympathy intermixes delightfully with the kindly feelings which have endeared to us every place in our progress."<sup>5</sup> As a rule, only when her travels took her to a location without a Unitarian clerical presence did she lodge with, and be hosted by, other than a Unitarian minister or prominent lay person. Her statement that she and Louisa were "handed on by the families of senators, to the care and kindness, of a long succession of them, from the day we reached Washington, till we emerged from the Slave States at Cincinnati"<sup>6</sup> appears only the case only when there was no local Unitarian minister to welcome her in..

Harriet's first priority was to tour the slave South. She had proclaimed,

<sup>1</sup> Harriet Martineau to Samuel Gilman, 29 March [1835], and Harriet Martineau to Louisa Gilman, 10 November [1835], *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, 5 vols., ed. Deborah Anna Logan (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 1: 265, 278-279.

<sup>2</sup> The main biographical studies are Deborah Anna Logan, *The Hour and the Woman: Harriet Martineau's 'Somewhat Remarkable' Life* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2002); Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, *Harriet Martineau: First Woman Sociologist* (Oxford: Berg, 1992); R.K. Webb, *Harriet Martineau: A Radical Victorian* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960); and Vera Wheatley, *The Life and Work of Harriet Martineau* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, 3 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 1:viii-x.

<sup>4</sup> For example, her hosts were the families of the Rev. William Ware in New York, the Rev. William H. Furness in Philadelphia, and the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman and others in the Boston area, and in the South, the Rev. Charles Briggs of Richmond, the Rev. Samuel Gilman of Charleston, and the Rev. Stephen Bulfinch of Augusta.

<sup>5</sup> Harriet Martineau to Samuel Gilman, 11 February 1835, *Collected Letters*, 1:260.

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*, ed. Maria Weston Chapman, 2 vols. (Boston: Osgood, 1877), 1:343.



preeminently in *Demerara*,<sup>7</sup> that slavery was a gross abomination economically, socially, and morally. Here in starkest terms was the raw disparity between the theory and the practice of society in America, the open wound she hoped her sociological and moral insights might help heal.

She experienced slavery during her long stay in Washington, during her travels through the majority black sections of Virginia, through a piney "grand cathedral aisle of 300 miles"<sup>8</sup> in North Carolina, and into South Carolina. Again, her party jounced by plantations, small farms, and pine barrens, with blacks ever the large majority at every hand, over eighty percent in some sections. Further, the black population of South Carolina was naturally growing faster than the white.<sup>9</sup> Slave insurrections and conspiracies, of which the Nat Turner rebellion of recent memory was the most vivid, sent chills down the spines of white Southerners, who out of fear enforced harsh slave laws and maintained wary vigilante patrols. Yet at the same time, white Southerners entrusted their tender infants to the care of black nannies, and assured themselves that their slaves were happy and content. A few but growing number of slaves ran away, tried to evade their pursuers, and escape to the free states and Canada if they could. Plantation life was divided into two distinct hierarchical societies. Slaves in response to inquiries told the English visitor what they thought she wanted to hear. Even for whites, formal education was minimal. Harriet documented these dynamics by recounting story after story she had heard along the way.<sup>10</sup>

Early on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1835, the Martineau party arrived in Charleston after delays imposed by the imperfect mechanical novelty, the railroad train. Charleston in 1835 was a commercial port city of 31,000, a city of sandy streets, fine homes, and stinking waterfront. Black servants and laborers were omnipresent, and black children were forever at one's heels. After a fortnight of observing the inhabitants of Charleston closely, Harriet evaluated the character of white Charleston as "a place of great gayety [sic], without much ease and pleasure. ... The general mind was full of mystery and anxiety at the time of my visit; and that some hearts are glowing with ambitious hopes, and others sinking in fears, more or less clearly defined, of the political crisis which seems to be now at hand. These are the influences which are educating the youth of Charleston, more powerfully than all schools and colleges, and all books; inducing a reliance on physical rather than moral force, and strengthening attachment to feudal notions of honor and of every kind of good; notions which have no affinity with true republican morals. The prospects of the citizens are 'dark every way,' as some declared; for the rising generation must either ascend, through a severe discipline and prodigious sacrifices, to a conformity with republican principles, or descend into a condition of solitary feudalism, neither sanctioned by the example

<sup>7</sup> Harriet Martineau, *Demerara: A Tale, Illustrations of Political Economy*, No. IV (Boston: Bowles, 1832).

<sup>8</sup> Harriet Martineau to Edward Everett, 12 March 1835, *Collected Letters*, 1:262.

<sup>9</sup> According to the 1830 census, the total population of South Carolina was 581,185, and the slave population 315,410, or 54.27% of the whole. In the 1840 census, the total population of was 594,398, and the slave population 327,038, or 55.02% of the whole.

<sup>10</sup> See particularly the compilation "Country Life in the South" in Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), 1:208-223.

nor cheered by the sympathy of the world; but, on the contrary, regarded with that compassion which is precisely the last species of regard which the feudal spirit is able to endure."<sup>11</sup>

One outlet was extreme passionate politics. Senator John C. Calhoun, the fiery advocate of nullification of federal laws, and Unitarian whom Harriet had met in Washington, strutted around Charleston like an emperor, with townspeople fawning at every step, which only increased Calhoun's fierce demeanor. He was very cordial to Harriet, however, and took her on a personal tour of the city.<sup>12</sup>

The hosts to Harriet and Louisa in Charleston were the Rev. Samuel and Caroline Howard Gilman. Through the network of Unitarian ministers, especially William Furness of Philadelphia, an intimate of the Gilmans, they learned of Harriet's planned journey through the South. They already knew Harriet's writing well, including her views on slavery. The *Monthly Repository* was already an integral part of their literary life, as Samuel had contributed a series of critical commentary, called the "Critical Synopsis," of articles appearing in it, including Harriet's numerous contributions. Added to the attraction the Gilmans had for Harriet was the fondness both had for her brother James, then a young Liverpool minister. By "a true and happy impulse" Caroline and Samuel sent Harriet "a letter of invitation to stay with us as long as she remained in Charleston." The letter reached Harriet while she and Louisa were hosted by the Rev. Charles Briggs of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Richmond, Virginia.<sup>13</sup> Harriet accepted the offer with "great pleasure," and set off on the journey through North Carolina to Charleston. It was the beginning of a full, singular relationship, at first glad and then painful.

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Samuel Gilman (1790-1858) was the son of a wealthy merchant family of Gloucester, Massachusetts. A graduate of Harvard College, he remained as a tutor of mathematics while studying for the Unitarian ministry. An accomplished writer for prominent intellectual journals, he had reformist instincts and also enjoyed and wrote poetry. On first meeting his future wife, he recited a poem he had seen and memorized, not knowing that she was its author. In 1819, the Second Independent [Unitarian] Church in Charleston sought a minister to succeed one who had gained his liberal faith from Joseph Priestley and had just died, and wrote to President John Kirkland of Harvard, also a Unitarian, for a recommendation. Kirkland picked Gilman, who went off with his new bride to start a new life in the South.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On society in Charleston, see *Ibid.*, 1:223-229. The quote is in 1:240-241.

<sup>12</sup> For Harriet's experiences with Calhoun, see *ibid.*, 1:147-149, 178-184, 229-230; Martineau, *Society in America*, 1:93-103.

<sup>13</sup> Caroline and Samuel Gilman to Elizabeth Martineau and Ellis Gray Loring, 1835, in Maria Weston Chapman, *Memorials of Harriet Martineau*, in Martineau, *Autobiography*, 2:234, 237.

<sup>14</sup> For the life of Samuel Gilman, see Daniel Walker Howe, "A Massachusetts Yankee in Senator Calhoun's Court: Samuel Gilman in South Carolina," *The New England Quarterly*, 44:2 (June 1971), 197-220; and "Samuel Gilman: Unitarian Minister and Public Man," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 17:2 (1973-1975), 45-53.





Samuel Gilman

In 1819 Gilman was ordained in the Second Independent Church, later known as the Archdale Street Unitarian Church, which he served to his death in 1858. His congregation included many theologically liberal merchants and professionals, with whom he had much in common theologically and socially. His theological precepts came from Old and New England: Arminianism, rationalism, and Scottish "common sense" philosophy. Gone was original sin and total human depravity, and in their place was hope that human moral effort, not a belief system, could elevate one toward salvation. The Bible, however, still remained as Holy Scripture and its miracles as true events understood through common sense. Gilman summarized principles to which the church was dedicated as "to Truth, to Freedom of Conscience, to Spiritual liberty, to Honest Inquiry, to enlightened Charity, and to enlarged Christian love."<sup>15</sup> In the context of his bellicose adopted city, Gilman increasingly emphasized more the passive than active virtues, softly to enkindle but not to fire up the imagination.

Socially and culturally, many middle class professional and merchant parishioners stemmed from New England. Through them and in his mind Gilman maintained nostalgic ties to the region of his upbringing. They formed a New England Club not to lose the associations of their past. He journeyed back to New England whenever possible. For the Harvard College jubilee commencement ceremonies of 1836, he composed "Fair Harvard," yet sung at

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Gilman, "Discourse Delivered at the Dedication of the Remodelled Unitarian Church, in Charleston, S.C.," in *The Old and the New: Or, Discourses and Proceedings of the Re-Modelled Unitarian Church in Charleston, S.C.* (Charleston: Courtenay, 1854), 69. For Gilman's theology, see his attributes of "Liberal Christianity" in *Ibid.*, 65-69; E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978), 62-66; Conrad Wright, "The Theological World of Samuel Gilman," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 17:2 (1973-1975), 54-72; John Allen Macaulay, *Unitarianism in the Antebellum South: The Other Invisible Institution* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001), 20-46, 112-127.

commencements today, and for Calhoun's funeral he composed on request an "Ode" of quite partisan tone.<sup>16</sup> Gilman was ever torn between his longing and his duty.<sup>17</sup> As time passed and sectional differences widened, Samuel Gilman found himself increasingly isolated from the Unitarian clerical fraternity of the North. Whereas Unitarians with a Southern orientation praised the Gilman ministry in Charleston, the American Unitarian Association, centered in Boston, ignored it.<sup>18</sup>

Facing the passionate adherence in Charleston to the culture and institution of slavery and the politics of states' rights over the federal constitution, Gilman managed to remain in public a Unionist, but opted to remain quiet on slavery. He focused his calling on pastoral care, not the prophetic voice. The Gilmans did own slaves as household servants, which by effect put him above suspicion in town. Evidence indicates that the Gilmans did work to develop in their slaves a level of literacy, widely seen as a dangerous practice. Family history maintains that he did buy young slaves, to educate and send them north to freedom—an even more threatening practice, and perhaps true. Were it true, he would have had to manage it in absolute secrecy, perhaps in concert with his abolitionist brother-in-law, Ellis Gray Loring. Charleston was a major port for the maritime route to freedom, and so the opportunities were more available for Gilman than for most other whites, had they been so inclined. Evidence, however, is lacking for a definitive answer.<sup>19</sup> Gilman's church did include black members, whose presence and increase he encouraged, a possibly unique position publicly stated in the extant literature.<sup>20</sup> Yet, given the progression of white cultural assumptions of the time, North and South, Samuel Gilman acted publicly as if there were no disparity between his professed Christian virtues and

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Gilman, *Contributions to Literature: Descriptive, Critical, Humorous, Biographical, Philosophical, and Poetical* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co., 1856), 547-548, 550-551.

<sup>17</sup> See Howe, "A Massachusetts Yankee," 214-219. David Haberly argues that Gilman would have gladly returned to minister to a church in the North, but his reputation became increasingly tainted by his acceptance of the ways of the South, making it virtually impossible to find a Unitarian position outside the South. See David Haberly, "Samuel Gilman," Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography, at <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/samuelgilman.html>. However, he and his wife were so deeply established in Charleston, so drawn to their sense of duty to the people of the town, and so revered even by non-Unitarians of the town, that one cannot be sure how readily they would have relinquished Charleston for the North.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the reports of Jared Sparks, in the *Unitarian Miscellany and Christian Monitor*, on Gilman's efforts in South Carolina in 2:12 (Dec. 1821), 164-167; 2:13 (Jan. 1822), 191-195; and 6:43 (July 1824), 109-110. The *Annual Reports of the American Unitarian Association*, however, are silent on the South from its founding in 1825 until the *Ninth Annual Report*, 27 May 1834, when Mr. Swelt hoped he would be pardoned if he added to the reports and animated discussion of the work done and to be done in the West a few words if the work done in the South. These remarks (pp. 40-44) were met with silence.

<sup>19</sup> Evidence of helping slaves become literate include Caroline Gilman's letter to her sister, Jan. 5, 1820, in Mary Scott Saint-Amand, *A Balcony in Charleston* (Richmond, Va.: Garrett and Massie, 1941), 15. As for sending slaves north to freedom, despite such educational efforts and family oral history, available evidence leaves an open question whether Gilman actually freed any of his slaves. Macaulay, *Unitarianism in the Antebellum South*, 164; Haberly, "Samuel Gilman," doubt it. Thinking it possible or likely include Howe, "Samuel Gilman," 48; George H. Gibson, "Unitarian Congregations of the Ante-Bellum South," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 12:2 (1959), 63; and Douglas C. Stange, "Abolitionism as Maleficence: Southern Unitarians Versus 'Puritan Fanaticism'—1831-1860," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 26:2 (April 1978), 153.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Gilman, "Farewell to the Old Church," in *The Old and the New*, 29.



the practices of the slave system to which he seemed to accommodate himself. He kept his personal views on slavery to himself, but it is clear that he did nothing to dispute the institution, which would have meant instant dismissal from his pulpit and practical banishment from the city. He kept his public reforming efforts on safe ground, as temperance pleas against distilled spirits. As sectional strife deepened, Samuel Gilman retreated ever more wearily into sentimentality and an inner refuge from a world that increasingly tore at his peace of mind.

Caroline Howard Gilman (1794-1888) was born of prosperous parents in Boston. She had a limited formal education, but invested herself heavily in self-education, including walking four miles to take French lessons. At an early age she started writing poetry, her first being on Biblical themes. Some found their way into literary journals, including the prestigious *North American Review*. After a long courtship, she married Samuel Gilman in 1819 and immediately moved to the quite different culture of Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>21</sup>

Caroline was a Unionist and temperance advocate like her husband. His church was "the church of my faith and my love." Her prolific writing was much affected by the sentimental morality common of the age. She felt called to weather trials of joy and sorrow with strength and work, which drew the couple closer together. She was ever drawn to emulate self-reliant women of character and courage. She developed a reputation for plainspoken opinions, ambition, and even a degree of petulance. Yet she argued for the subordination of women to men in the world and in the family, paternalism being necessary to master an unruly world in town and on plantation. She acted as a self-directed independent woman, but she made no overt claims for greater rights for women. However, her husband was always supportive of her creative independence. She constantly held that both blacks and whites were better off with the system of slavery. She maintained the near universal opinion of her race and class in the South that blacks were happier under slavery than were white workers in the factories in the North and in Britain. Where increasing sectional tensions and controversy over slavery induced Samuel to withdraw into an inner world, they propelled Caroline to be an outspoken supporter of the South and of slavery. This divisive issue, however, eventually debilitated and reduced the creativity of both of them. She managed the household, including the slave domestic servants. Of her seven children, four, all girls, survived to adulthood.<sup>22</sup>

Caroline's great affinity was children's literature. In response to the loss of her infant son, in 1832 she poured her energies into founding, managing, and editing a fortnightly newspaper for youth, *The Rose Bud*, perhaps the first of its kind. It continued as *The Southern Rose Bud* and then *The Southern Rose*, with increased adult material as her youthful readers matured.<sup>23</sup> Subscriptions came from all quarters of the country, with the South heavily subscribing, 540 in Charleston alone. After a seven-year run, the paper ceased in 1839 in the wake

<sup>21</sup> Caroline Gilman, "Autobiography," in *The Female Prose Writers of America: With Portraits, Biographical Notices, and Specimens of their Writing*, ed. John S. Hart, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Butler, 1864), 49-57; Saint-Amand, *A Balcony in Charleston*, 1-5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* The surviving children were Aby Louisa, Caroline Howard, Eliza Webb, and Anna.

<sup>23</sup> *The Rose Bud, or Youth's Gazette*, vol. 1 (1832-1833); *The Southern Rose Bud*, vols. 2-3 (1833-1835); *The Southern Rose*, vols. 4-7 (1835-1839).

of the loss of her last child and increased exhaustion. During its time, the *Rose* journals, and her books that derived from them, made Caroline Gilman a literary figure of national reputation and the most popular woman writer in the South.

Prominent in the *Rose* journals were three serialized novels from Caroline's pen, each descriptive of a supposed reality and full of sentimental moral lessons. One depicted the life of a New England housekeeper, the second a Southern plantation matron, and the third paternal tyranny by a demented father of a naive young girl, Ruth, and her eventual rescue. A lesson in all three was that paternalism must be morally uplifting. All three were eventually published in book form, were well regarded North and South, and sold well.<sup>24</sup>

She idealized plantation life in *Recollections of a Southern Matron* as the paternalistic management of a black and white household, peaceful, restrained and kind, and the slaves carefree, docile, and doltish. Education of white and black children is chancy, undirected and inept. The contrast between the sentimentally idealized Northern household and the model Southern plantation is striking. These tales were to build a young reader's moral character, but even Caroline could not reconcile the inequality, violence, and ignorance of her idealized Southern extended household with the ampler moral coherency of the Northern home. With rising passions and controversy in the South, however, Caroline's depiction of the happy plantation appears almost "naively hopeful."<sup>25</sup>

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In these circumstances, when Samuel and Caroline Gilman were perhaps at the apogee of the extent possible of joyous creativity, Harriet Martineau and Louisa Jeffrey arrived in Charleston, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1835, and made their way to the large Gilman house at 11 Orange Street, with its long side piazzas in Charleston fashion, and just a few minutes walk from Samuel's church. Both parties greeted and responded to each other with instant warmth. The Gilmans found Louisa Jeffrey "an original, keen, frank, intelligent young lady, and secures friends in every quarter." Caroline and Harriet, in their literary pursuits and creative independence, had much in common. Despite the obvious and openly presented differences over slavery, their minds and heartfelt affections met and merged in mutual fondness and stimulation. "We expected an elegant, talented, good woman," wrote Samuel to his sister and brother-in-law, the noted abolitionists Louisa Gilman and Ellis Gray Loring. "We did not expect, in addition to all this, a lively, playful, childlike, simplicity-breathing, loving creature, whose

<sup>24</sup> Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a New England Housekeeper* (Boston: Harper, 1834); *Recollections of a Southern Matron* (New York: Harper, 1838); *Love's Progress: Or, Ruth Raymond* (New York: Harper, 1840).

<sup>25</sup> Gale L. Kenny, "Mastering Childhood: Paternalism, Slavery, and the Southern Domestic in Caroline Howard Gilman's Antebellum Children's Literature," *Southern Quarterly*, 44:1 (Fall 2006), 65-87; Jan Bakker, "Caroline Gilman and the Issue of Slavery in the *Rose* Magazines, 1832-1839," *Southern Studies*, 11:3 (Fall 1985), 273-283; Jan Bakker, "Another Dilemma of an Intellectual in the Old South: Caroline Gilman, the Peculiar Institution, and Greater Rights for Women in the *Rose* Magazines," *The Southern Literary Journal*, 17:1 (Fall 1984), 12-25; William Stanley Hoole, "The Gilmans and the Southern *Rose*," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 11:1 (January 1934), 116-128.



moral qualities as much outshine her intellect as these last do those of the ordinary run of mankind. But exactly so, and without any exaggeration, or enthusiasm on my picture, we found her." "Her laugh is exquisitely amiable, frequent, and joyous," they remarked. The Gilmans gave Harriet and Louisa full freedom of the house and, given the invitations that streamed in for Harriet, to come and go as they pleased. Carriages constantly were in attendance to whisk Harriet and Louisa off for some party or outing. Gifts poured into the Gilman home for their English guests. The Gilmans restricted their interference to inviting friends to breakfast with their guests. Harriet was in attendance at church services, and made encouraging comments on Samuel's sermons. Harriet particularly enjoyed participating in the Gilman daily routines. Caroline wrote to Harriet's mother that "we shall never forget ... the winning manner in which she gave and inspired confidence at home. I love to remember the frank and hearty air in which, when we had fought through a day of varied and sometimes exhausting engagements, she threw aside her cloak and said to my husband and myself, at eleven o'clock at night, 'Come, now, let us have a little talk!' How far we looked down into each other's hearts in those winged midnight hours! and what a treasure of friendship was garnered up...."<sup>26</sup> They would converse on Carlyle, Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth and spiritual growth "to your heart's content." Harriet discovered that the Gilmans had reserved some time daily for family prayer, and she always arrived punctually with her own Bible to participate in that family time of spiritual centering. "Dining out frequently and passing the evening at one or two parties," Samuel continued, "as soon as she came home at night and had read at my request a devotional hymn in her own sweet and primitive manner, she would take Caroline on one side and me on the other, and there, fixed eye to eye and soul to soul, would she enchain and enchant us until long after midnight, when we were obliged to tear ourselves away, only out of tenderness to her. I do not think a woman ever lived who had such power to inspire others with affection."<sup>27</sup>

"She loves children, and children love her," Samuel continued. "She has brought a Bible play for Sunday evenings, in which adults join with great interest. On the last day of her being in Charleston she resisted several invitations in order to comply with our girls' desire to have her visit their dancing-school. Caroline and I accompanied her eighteen miles out of town, where we spent the day in rambling in the woods or reading her works. We could not have done any thing else. On our return home at night we found that our Louisa (fourteen years old) had beguiled the time by composing her first piece of music and calling it the 'Martineau Cotillon [sic].' I have purchased the Boston edition of her 'Illustrations' for my wife, and Miss M[artineau] has written, after a little coaxing from her, one or more sentences in every number, giving a precious bit of history or remark respecting the tales."<sup>28</sup>

Samuel noted that Harriet only remained in the Gilman household two

<sup>26</sup> Caroline and Samuel Gilman to Elizabeth Martineau and Ellis Gray Loring, 1835, in Chapman, *Memorials*, in Martineau, *Autobiography*, 2:234-237.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 235-236.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 236-237.

weeks, but "she at once domesticated and ensconced herself among us as quietly and closely as if she had come for ten years." "She contrived to run through several books in one fortnight, besides writing to her numerous correspondents and ringing up her journal; yet she never was in a hurry, never kept people waiting, and seemed only to hanker for long, sweet, private conversations with Caroline and myself." "When I asked my Caroline ... if she was not jealous of my growing too fond of Harriet Martineau, my glorious wife said, 'O, no! Take all the comfort in her that you can.' She has a wonderful power of inspiring confidence, and extorting from those in whom she is interested the whole history of their past lives." As one South Carolinian wondered, "how can you make people love you so?" And to Harriet's mother, Caroline wrote, "her journey through the United States has thus far been one of triumph, – the best kind of triumph too, for she has been borne along on our hearts."<sup>29</sup>

There remained the barbed issue of slavery. "When we dined with General H.," Samuel wrote, "we were invited an hour before the other guests, that he might give her, at her request, his views on slavery. She studiously avoided arguing on these subjects, but quietly and keenly directed her attentions and questions to gentlemen of all parties in such a manner as to bring out the whole scope of detail of their several opinions. She made no secret of her aversion to slavery. She perceives and acknowledges, however, that the movements of the abolitionists have injured and retarded the cause of the slaves here."<sup>30</sup> Samuel's adored sister and brother-in-law, the Loring of Boston, were active abolitionists, and the Gilmans far from seeing them as blood-thirsty fanatics, admitted in them only this one fault, which they forgave. Yet, the Gilmans were very reticent in discussing the Loring with Harriet, for Caroline possibly due to their abolitionism, and for Samuel possibly out of embarrassed conscience or, alternatively, because of possible secret trafficking in blacks shipped north.

For all the warmth of the budding friendship with the Gilmans, Harriet noted that Caroline "had rushed into that admiration of Slavery which the native ladies do not entertain. I never met with a lady of southern origin who did not speak of Slavery as a sin and a curse, – the burden which oppressed their lives." Harriet, however, had not been able fully to penetrate the mind of Caroline, to whom "the South is dearer to us for its troubles." Harriet and Caroline visited the Charleston slave market, and to Harriet's surprise, Caroline "observed to me ... in full view of a woman who, with her infant, was on the stand, – that her doctrine was that the one race must be subordinate to the other, and that if the blacks should ever have the upper hand, she should not object to standing on that table with her children, and being sold to the highest bidder."<sup>31</sup> It was an unconvincing statement, but perhaps showed an inner conflict in Caroline's psyche, which by her strong stand in defense of slavery she was trying to avoid facing. Harriet, however, perceived only the surface of Caroline's pronouncement.

Yet Harriet kept reflecting on what she was seeing. In a letter to Samuel's

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-237.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-236.

<sup>31</sup> Martineau, *Autobiography*, 1:344; Caroline Gilman to Louisa Loring, 17 January 1833, in Saint-Amand, *A Balcony in Charleston*, 27.



brother-in-law from the upper South two month's later, Harriet reported that "I have been fancying, through all the Southern States, how, if Jesus himself were to rise up amidst them he would pour out his compassion and love upon those who are afflicted with an inheritance of crime. If his spirit were in us all the curse would be thrown off in a day; and as it is, I am full of hope that the day of liberty is rapidly approaching, notwithstanding the mutual quarrels of colonisationists and abolitionists, and the hard thoughts which the friends and masters of slaves entertain of each other."<sup>32</sup> Still, to Harriet, slaves were objects to be liberated, not complex human beings to engage. She never gave the Gilman servants, whom she could observe in depth, either personalities or a voice. This is regrettable, as even many abolitionists made blacks into stereotypical caricatures.

When the day came for the Martineau party to depart, the new friends found only warmth and affection for each other, in contrast to the officious and domineering Calhoun, who traveled with them for a ways. The Gilmans gave Harriet and Louisa packets of food for the journey, and bestowed on Harriet a little locket which she wore every day. Along the way, other gifts arrived to the traveling party: mittens, a little cross pin, and copied sheet of music to the cotillion the Gilman daughter Louisa had written in Harriet's honor. "What friends you are!" Harriet wrote Samuel and Caroline from the road. "Your letters have rejoiced my very heart!" "I miss your smiles and voices sadly, and remember a hundred things that I wanted to ask you about, but neglected. Our time with you was too short, though long enough, I fancy, to originate a friendship which will not be short. I wish we all knew how rich a world we live in, – rich in the harvest of love and sympathy, which, if we did but know how to reap it, would presently nourish up our inner life into that strength which it is created to attain."<sup>33</sup>

After some days in Columbia, Harriet and Louisa took the novel railroad "cars" to Augusta, Georgia, where the Unitarian minister in Augusta, Stephen Greenleaf Bulfinch, was to be their host. Harriet persuaded the Gilmans to join them, and for Bulfinch to preach on Sunday afternoon, and Samuel Gilman to preach a sermon Harriet had liked in the morning. Harriet and Louisa would stay in August a few extra days, just for the pleasure of the company of the Gilmans and more long conversations. When the friends met in Augusta, Harriet could only remark, "Really you do know what friendship is," but finally, "I was sad at parting from you."<sup>34</sup>

Before setting off, Caroline obtained permission from Harriet to reprint in the *Southern Rose Bud* an article she had written in March 1834 for *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, "Letter to the Deaf" which gave hope and suggestions to such sufferers. Caroline added a note that to present Harriet to her readers, she selected not a selection of literature, a children's piece, an observation on gardening, or a discussion of "the grave interests of a nation," but one that captured "the moment when with her clear patient eye and encouraging voice,

<sup>32</sup> HM to Ellis Gray Loring, 27 May 1835, *Collected Letters*, 1:267.

<sup>33</sup> HM to SG, 29 March [1835]; HM to SG, 1 April [1835]; HM to SG, 12 June 1835, *Collected Letters*, 1:264-266, 268-270.

<sup>34</sup> HM to [Stephen Greenleaf Bulfinch], 29 March [1835]; HM to SG, 29 March [1835], *Collected Letters*, 1:264, 266.