

The
Martineau
Society

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The Martineau Society

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Contents

| | |
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| Editor's Note | 2 |
| "Harriet Martineau and Darwin's Sacred Cause" by Stuart Hobday | 2 |
| "Echoes of Harriet Martineau from America" by Elisabeth Arbuckle | 8 |
| "The Boston Conference July 2009: A Personal View" by Barbara Todd | 15 |
| Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting, 20 July 2008 | 20 |
| Early Notice of the 2010 Conference – 15-18 July 2010 at Ambleside | 25 |
| Martineau Society Contact Information | 25 |

Martineau Society Subscription Information:

Yearly subscriptions are due on January 1st.

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

* Overseas: Individual members \$30 // Concessionary rate \$20. This may be paid in dollars to Prof. Elisabeth Arbuckle, Condo. Montebello M526 Trujillo Alto PR00976 USA.

Editor's Note

Those who attended the Society's Conference in Boston, USA, in July this year had a wonderful time. The pace was frenetic and the reward a magical miscellany of learning, historical and sightseeing experiences. The organisers, in particular, Will Frank, Iris and Rod Voegeli and our esteemed Secretary, Gaby Weiner, are thanked with universal acclaim. The Society's first adventure abroad, in the footsteps of Harriet Martineau, was a great success.

This Newsletter gives you two of the papers given at Boston and another contributor, Barbara Todd, gives you "a personal view" of the fun and interest-packed six days of the Conference. There will be further papers from the Boston Conference in future editions of the Newsletter.

Do look at the Early Notice of the 2010 Conference and AGM at Ambleside. You may be sure it will be another interesting and enjoyable occasion.

If you have not done so already, please visit the Society's new website on www.martineausociety.co.uk. At present, the text is similar to the former website but this will alter quickly as the new website is more flexible and can be changed more easily. We can be sure the website will spread news of the Society far and wide. Our thanks for the new website to Gaby and David.

Many thanks to our contributors. Do forgive any errors, entirely the failure of your editor, and enjoy the Newsletter.

Harriet Martineau and Darwin's Sacred Cause

Stuart Hobday

A survey of recent biographies of Charles Darwin and what they say about Harriet Martineau – particularly the work of James Moore and Adrian Desmond.

In recent years there have been a number of new biographies of Charles Darwin in response to a continued growing interest in his ideas in the light of modern science. These biographies have had unprecedented access to primary materials particularly Darwin's own letters and papers. These biographies make numerous mention of Harriet Martineau and potentially add greatly to a renaissance of interest in the life and work of this nineteenth century radical. The books that I am primarily concerned with are Adrian Desmond's biography of T.H.Huxley, Moore and Desmond's joint biography of Darwin and their 2009 sequel to this, *Darwin's Sacred Cause*. It is also worth comparing these with the comprehensive work of Janet Browne in her two part biography of Darwin.

Before looking directly at the literature it is worth considering the key questions in the relationship between Martineau and Darwin. They were particularly acquainted in the period 1835 – 1840 in the years following Darwin's return from

voyaging on the Beagle when he lived in London. This was the height of Martineau's fame and activity as a London figure. This was the period of time when Darwin developed his idea of Natural Selection which was to have such an impact in 1859. Key questions concerning Darwin are how did this man, who came from a very traditional background, become so radical? Having had his idea why did he delay publication for nearly 20 years? I believe that Harriet Martineau had an influence of both of these questions and this is reflected in these biographies.

The link person between the two was Charles' older brother Erasmus Darwin and these biographies also reflect on the importance of this sibling relationship. In particular Janet Browne in her 1995 book *Voyaging* emphasises the importance of this relationship between the brothers claiming it to have been strangely neglected by historians:

Charles Darwin idolised his older brother...their relationship was marked by close bonds of mutual regard, ties far stronger than mere brotherly concern. They came to enjoy the same circle of London acquaintances, the literary side mingling freely with the scientific. Erasmus eventually idled away his bachelor existence on a private income in London, thoroughly indulged by his father and sisters, his lazy charm sought out by other men's wives, Jane Carlyle and Fanny Mackintosh Wedgwood chief among them, as well as delighting Harriet Martineau when he felt energetic enough to escort her.

Browne's biography focuses much on the personal relations between members of this circle. She reports that for some time Harriet Martineau was a strong candidate for marriage to Erasmus but also amid this speculation there were references in the family correspondence to Charles marrying Harriet: speculation which did not please the brother's father. They were all underestimating Harriet's determination to remain single and pursue her work. Browne reports the importance of Martineau as a link to Thomas Malthus whose work so influenced Darwin's ideas:

Erasmus' friend Harriet Martineau had built her literary fame on Malthus's back, to the point of being derided by the Quarterly Review as a 'female Malthusian – an unmarried woman who declaims against marriage.' Where Malthus wrote bleakly about an inexorable increase in population, Martineau presented a much more optimistic account of human nature amid the workings of capitalism. Malthus she complacently remarked considered her one of the few people who properly understood his doctrine. Harriet Martineau had in fact nurtured a soft spot for Malthus since they first met. Despite her deafness and his speech impediment they discovered they could carry on a conversation with perfect ease. Darwin no doubt heard a great deal about him when visiting the literary lioness 'in

her den'.

Browne's biographies focus much on the family circle and personal whereas the work of James Moore and Adrian Desmond has much more of the historical and intellectual context in tracing the development of Darwin's radicalism. As a consequence they give much more credit to Martineau.

In their 1991 biography of Darwin they really capture the excitement of the London years and present Martineau as an influential figure on the impressionable young Darwin in a crucial period in his thinking. Mentioning the numerous times they describe the Malthusian circle suggests Harriet was a 'confidant' of Darwin within the 'social whirl' but also stresses the shared Unitarian background of this circle as part of a 'progressive natural radicalism'.

Charles was in and out of his brother's house this spring. Eras's was a hive of intellectual activity. After five lonely years at sea, Charles embraced his brother's ready made circle of friends, revelling in his intimate dinners with Eras and Harriet Martineau. Here the buzz was radical and dissenting and 'heterodoxy was the norm.

Martineau's scientific attitude was typical of radical Unitarians. She saw nature as predictable, predetermined, invariant. It was subject to law and order, not the province of miracle. Among Unitarians such 'determinism' encouraged views on life's self development.

Moore and Desmond then speculate on the political differences between those from Anglican and Unitarian backgrounds.

The Anglican priests were keeping the people down. This was why some radical Unitarians saw reform and evolution as going hand in hand. A self developing nature held no terrors for them. Eras's group, with Martineau at its centre, gave Charles the licence to work out his own deterministic theories.

This theme of progressiveness is developed by Moore and Desmond. They show that Darwin and Martineau had this as a shared goal. They report that Darwin read and reflected on Martineau's publication *How to Observe Morals and Manners*: the only book by a woman to appear in Darwin's notebooks intrigued as he was by her insistence for the need of evidence in making judgements about humans rather than hearsay and speculation, and an assumed morality as part of human nature.

They also present the shared enthusiasm for the work of French positivist August Comte.

He was enthralled by a review of the French mathematician August Comte's Positive Philosophy, which convinced him that his view of the world was the right one...Others were taken by Comte's Positivism. Martineau went on to translate the book and wrote ecstatically: 'We find ourselves suddenly living and moving in the midst of the universe...not under capricious and arbitrary conditions...but under great, general, invariable laws, which operate on us as part of a whole..' Darwin had already indulged in similar flights and Positivism simply intensified them. 'What a magnificent view one can take of the world.

Moore and Desmond also introduce the idea that they were to develop as the central theme in their 2009 book *Darwin's Sacred Cause*: that Charles Darwin was strongly motivated by the anti-slavery cause; to show that human beings had much more in common than they had differences; that evolution implied equality and emancipation. Anti slavery thinking was part of the Darwin – Wedgwood Unitarian creed and was still a controversial issue in the 1830s despite the abolition of the slave trade. Slavery in America was still a large and ingrained institution and racial theory was used by many thinkers to justify it. Harriet Martineau had just returned from America when she became close to Darwin and she had been fuelling the abolitionist movement in America.

In Moore and Desmond's original Darwin biography Harriet Martineau appears as an influential figure in Darwin's thinking and in the development of his ideas. In their long researched sequel she comes even more to the fore with their emphasis on the slavery question as a motivator for him. There are several lengthy passages devoted to her influence although not always glowing, at one stage describing her as 'an acquired taste'. It does though paint a picture where they had another thing in common other than a progressive ideology and that is that they are both fully aware of ideology in the wider world. Neither was narrow in the English view of the world and in particular both had an interest in America. Darwin had voyaged around South America whilst Harriet had been touring North America for two years: very different from many of their London acquaintances who rarely ventured away from the capital. They had both witnessed slavery first hand and both now had correspondence around the world.

Darwin dined with activists in London. Harriet Martineau, self reliant and self willed, a cloth manufacturer's daughter, who made her way by her prolific journalism, met Erasmus first. A Unitarian, a free trader and rather radical, Martineau knew all the political worthies. Just back from America, she was single, deaf and indomitable, with strong views on the dissolubility of marriage. Her relationship with Erasmus was well developed by the time Darwin saw them together. He was astonished at Erasmus driving her about. Fanny would see Erasmus signal 'the cab is waiting' and Harriet jump up, ready to be taken home which made them 'very

much married'. Fanny and Erasmus knew it was only a 'comfortable relationship', like her own marriage, 'excusing him' from 'reading her books'. It didn't excuse Darwin. He now not only had the only detailed castigatory travelogues of Southern slavery – Martineau's three volumes of *Society in America*, and three more of retrospective Western travel, all published within two years of Darwin's return – but their author mooching around the dinner table. He would read them all. But there was no rush while she was a fixture at Erasmus's brilliant parties next door and stood ready to compare 'our methods of writing'.

Martineau's two years of fact finding were intended to measure American society against the nation's founding beliefs, but she was never a neutral observer. Even before returning home, she had come out for immediate and complete emancipation without compensation for slave owners. Any Darwin or Wedgwood woman visiting America might have had the same experience. They all shared the same radical Unitarian – Humanitarian heritage to which Harriet added the moral obligation to speak out.

Martineau's stories were standard fare at dinner parties. Having arrived in America amid rising anti-abolitionist violence she had dared to speak at Boston's female branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society as angry protesters stoned the building. She stood up for what she called 'the holy cause', and William Lloyd Garrison, the ultra abolitionists driving force, publicised her words in his inflammatory rag *The Liberator*. Travelling with her ear trumpet through the south she denounced slavery as an 'utter abomination' and 'inconsistent with the law of God'. For abusing Southern hospitality, the slave holders hated her. Newspapers invited her back so they could cut out her tongue. In Charleston, South Carolina, where she saw a woman sold with her children in the slave market, they called her a secret 'incendiary', and she learnt of plans for her lynching. The prospect galvanised her: after 'witnessing and being implicated in the perils and struggles of the abolitionist', she wrote *Society in America* in the white hot hope of mobilising a moral army to free the blacks. This was Darwin's frequent dining companion as he penned his own incendiary racial-evolution notes.

Moore and Desmond also reflect on the influence of Harriet Martineau's publication of her *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature* in partnership with Henry Atkinson which so scandalised the Darwin – Wedgwood circle and led to a cooling of relations between them and her save for Erasmus's continued correspondence with Harriet. This atheistic tract was published in 1851, 8 years

before the *Origin of Species* and in the middle of Darwin's delay in publishing his own ideas. In his biography of Thomas Henry Huxley, who became known as 'Darwin's Bulldog', Adrian Desmond reports the shock of this work as 'for many readers their first encounter with the unimaginable'. In this book Desmond also places Martineau as at the centre of a general ideological movement, challenging orthodox religious creationist views, that was preparing the way for Darwin to publish. Darwin himself however would have been well aware of the reaction that Martineau had caused.

By now Harriet was writing anti-slavery diatribes as a journalist in the *Daily News* and in 1858 she published one of her most outspoken pieces in the *Edinburgh Review*. In *Darwin's Sacred Cause* Moore and Desmond speculate on the impact of this on Darwin:

This out and out abolitionist took no prisoners. Long after her baptism into American politics she still wielded a deadly pen. From the Lake District, beneath a portrait of her hero William Lloyd Garrison, she poured forth *Daily News* leaders on the moral bankruptcy on the South, the empowerment of the Negro and the greatness of abolitionists. The fiery response to her Westminster article convinced her that 'the whole course of American politics is determined by the slavery question'. Small wonder that her ear trumpet was mistaken for a megaphone.

To cap it all she was now a self proclaimed atheist, one of the first that England's gentile ladies had ever met. She was proselytizing on this too, hence Darwin's quip, 'there is no God and Harriet is his prophet'. Her lapse from Unitarianism was accepted, more or less. Aunt Fanny did wince, but Erasmus sympathised and Charles was unruffled.

They all seemed to thrive on Harriet's moral resilience, God or no. Fanny Wedgwood was a devoted admirer and they corresponded copiously between visits. Martineau in 1858 confided that she was writing another dangerously topical essay....his (Darwin's) present book on species and varieties came first and just as well. Though the natural selection manuscript undercut pluralism and slavery in its own devastating way, nothing from him in the *Edinburgh Review* could have bettered 'The Slave Trade in 1858'. It was Martineau's sharpest expose since the martyr age of the United States.

Moore and Desmond argue that Darwin's background and the influence of contemporaries such as Martineau were particularly to manifest in his later work. Also that these influences have been underestimated. A statement on the dust jacket of the book outlines the argument:

Darwin's Sacred Cause restores Darwin's humanitarianism, tarnished by

atheistic efforts to hijack his reputation and creationist attempts to smear him. Desmond and Moore argue that only by appreciating Darwin's Christian abolitionist inheritance can we fully understand the perplexing mix of personal drive, public hesitancy and scientific radicalism that led him finally in 1871 to publish *The Descent of Man*.

They place Harriet Martineau as central in maintaining and stimulating his progressive and radical thinking that was built of a similar ideological upbringing. Moore and Desmond's work does much to help continue re-establish her as an influential thinker and an influence on modern ideologues rather than a peripheral figure.

Main Works Cited:

Janet Browne: *Charles Darwin Vol 1 Voyaging* (Jonathan Cape 1995) and *Vol 2 The Power of Place* (Cape 2002)

Adrian Desmond and James Moore: *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and Quest for Human Origins*. (Penguin 2009)

Adrian Desmond and James Moore: *Darwin* (Michael Joseph 1991)

Adrian Desmond: *Huxley Vol 1 The Devil's Disciple* (Michael Joseph 1994) and *Vol 2 Huxley: Evolution's High Priest* (Michael Joseph 1997)

Echoes of Harriet Martineau from America

Elisabeth Arbuckle

In March 1835, a slightly snobbish dinner guest at the home of Governor Robert Hayne of South Carolina remembered Harriet Martineau as "ungraceful and oddly arrayed, yet dignified and agreeable, and the short, primitive courtesy with which she met the more elegant . . . salutations of her host. She sat erect, with the trumpet at her ear, and the corners of her mouth drawn slightly down." In addressing her, Governor Hayne "seemed occasionally to forget that he was not speaking in the Senate." Hayne, a quietly handsome man, possessed "clear blue eyes," while Martineau's "plainer physiognomy possessed the same redeeming point." Yet her light blue eyes, "full of intelligence and brilliancy . . . betrayed glimpses of latent humor, and might have afforded no slight forewarning of the handling afterwards received by those who paid her such adulatory homage."ⁱ

By the following August, Martineau had gone to stay for the second time with Catharine Sedgwick, the popular author of domestic fiction, at Stockbridge. Sedgwick noted in her journal that Martineau had been "homaged, not to say worshipped, by the great as well as by the small." Her dress was "simple, unexpensive, and appropriate," her character praiseworthy—although in the realm of ideas she was "quite aware of her own superiority." A sampling of other Americans on whom Martineau was to make a vivid impression included Elizabeth Peabody, William Lloyd Garrison, Dr. Charles (and Elizabeth) Follen, Ezra Stiles Gannett and Maria Weston Chapman—all of whom she met in Boston. Peabody (the future sister-in-law of Nathaniel Hawthorne and founder of the American kindergarten) was teaching at Bronson Alcott's idealistic Temple School. With Martineau, she shared pedagogical concerns over Alcott's methods. After Garrison had met Martineau for the second time the following March, he described her to his wife as "plain and frank in her manners, and not less so in her conversation."ⁱⁱ Gannett, assistant to Dr. William Ellery Channing at the Unitarian Federal Street church in Boston, was an enthusiast for Martineau's *Traditions of Palestine* and her Unitarian prize-essays and had sent useful travel information before she set out. (Later, an embarrassing incident took place at his home in Boston when the recently married Gannett suddenly went down on his knees and declared Martineau to be his "true mate.") Gannett may have had a nervous breakdown soon afterwards and was allowed to travel to the Continent. Martineau was kind when she saw him again, and Gannett became a significant figure in the Unitarian and Universalist Association.

In Martineau's second book on America, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, she told of witnessing "the introduction into the new country of the spectacle of the German Christmas-tree." Martineau loved young people, and six-year old Charley Follen had begun to feature in the accounts of her American adventures. With her companion, Louisa Jeffery, Martineau had come to stay with Charles and Eliza Follen during the Christmas festivities. To decorate a Christmas tree, Charley and his friends had "gilded and coloured very prettily" a collection of half-egg shells. Martineau recorded amusedly that waiting for the surprise revelation of the tree to unsuspecting neighbors, Charley went into fits of giggling and twisting himself about. Charley went along with Martineau and the Follens the following summer (after Louisa had returned to England) when they travelled west to Chicago, through the Great Lakes and from Pittsburgh "traversed the entire State [of Pennsylvania] to Philadelphia by canal and rail-road." Seated on the deck of the canal boat gazing at the scenery, they had to "remember perpetually to avoid the low bridges . . . every quarter of an hour," and Charley thought the "horizontal ones," where they had to "lie down flat" the best. Martineau remembered fondly that Charley "understood the construction and management of the locks," and that he loved going ashore with his father to pick flowers and "run along the bank to the next lock." When Dr. Follen died in the explosion of a steamship in 1840, Martineau was deeply concerned for Charley's future.ⁱⁱⁱ

After Martineau's return to Britain, the publication of *Society in America* in 1837 produced a variety of strong reactions among Americans. The Liverpool correspondent of the *New Yorker* in fact warned in advance that Martineau's work was clever, "but not very complimentary to America or Americans," Martineau being a "[George] Thompson in petticoats [who seemed] to think Garrison only one remove from a saint." In Cincinnati in July 1837, Flash's Book Store (where Martineau had stopped) placed an advertisement for the book in the *Daily Whig and Commercial Intelligencer*. No fewer than four New York editions of *Society in America* came out in 1837, though the Lexington (Kentucky) *Intelligencer* had posited in June that it would probably be "read with more avidity than gratification." Soon Martineau's work on America was reviewed by almost every major periodical in the country, the abolitionist press awarding it almost unanimous praise. Martineau, said the *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine*, was "the most truly American of all the English. . . . With the best opportunity in the world to see the best side of slavery . . . she has exposed the sin with a power of rebuke that will mightily advance the cause of freedom."

As predicted, there were numerous protests against a visitor who had accepted hospitality from Americans and ungratefully attacked their institutions. "Does a woman of circumscribed education and recluse habits feel herself competent to teach a whole nation?" thundered the *American Quarterly Review*: ". . . have we not outstripped [the British] in wholesome laws, and in many of the arts? Until their demoralizing Malthusian and agrarian principles infected our land, introduced by these itinerant lepers, were we not prosperous beyond example? Does this poor flimsy tool of a nest of poisonous radicals suppose we are to look upon the impertinences of her pen as a standard by which we are to regulate ourselves?"

More urbanely, a writer in the *Literary and Theological Review* objected to Martineau's extreme views on women's rights, slavery, American political parties and religious philosophy, and commented wittily: 'we might fairly observe, as she does, when, speaking of the American women, she talks of their "pretension to mental and moral philosophy," the less that is said on that head, the better.

One attack, in the *North American Review*, pointed to Martineau's gullibility in believing prisoners' tales. Her English radical notions of American liberty, the reviewer snorted, had "about the same clearness . . . as an oyster's dreams of lark-catching." In the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the noted writer William Gilmore Simms (signing himself "A South Carolinian") tempered the personal slander of the *American Quarterly Review*, but charged that Martineau was simply: 'one of those strong-minded, bold, disputacious persons, who are never satisfied until they have formed a leading notion of every topic to which their thoughts may be addressed Miss M., with a surprising capacity, and a boldness rather remarkable than attractive, theorizes upon all.'iv

Martineau's *Retrospect of Western Travel* in 1838 helped to calm American tempers. Yet most Southerners and a few Bostonians never forgave her for

joining the Garrisonians. During the two decades after Martineau toured the United States, she fell seriously ill, recovered with the help of mesmerism and began to publish an ever widening range of fiction and non-fiction. American friends noted her changing interests. When Ralph Waldo Emerson came to stay at The Knoll in February 1848, he reported: "I found H. Martineau loaded to the lips with her *Eastern Travel*." Over the next week Emerson called on Wordsworth and the Arnolds and commented that he took "satisfaction in seeing them [all] at home, as geologists like to find rocks in place." After Martineau expounded her insights on the history of Christianity to Emerson, he reported further: "It was very curious to hear her recite in the words of the English liturgy all the creed and traditions of Christendom as she found them on gates and walls cut, painted and sealed up before the birth of Abraham. Murray astounded refuses to print her book."v *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (1848) was only mildly shocking, however, compared to Martineau's next book: *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development* (1851), a formal renunciation of Christian faith that was widely attacked in the American press (Henry David Thoreau, however, defended the work as not so bad as the fear it engendered).

Three years later, Thoreau's fellow New Englander Nathaniel Hawthorne met Martineau for the first time. Hawthorne was serving as consul at Liverpool (a political appointment) and described Martineau jauntily as 'a large, robust (one might almost say bouncing) elderly woman, very coarse of aspect, and plainly dressed; but withal, so kind, cheerful, and intelligent a face, that she is pleasanter to look at than most beauties. Her hair is of a decided gray She is the most continual talker I ever heard; it is really like the babbling of a brook; and very lively and sensible too; and all the while she talks, she moves the bowl of her ear-trumpet from one auditor to another, so that it becomes quite an organ of intelligence and sympathy . . . like a sensitive part of her, like the feelers of some insects. If you have any remark to make, you drop it in; and she helps you . . . as she slightly directs it towards you All her talk was about herself and her affairs; but it did not seem like egotism, because it was so cheerful and free from morbidness'vi

When the American Civil War began in April 1861, Martineau had for two years been contributing "letters" (mainly running summaries of English news) to the radical abolitionist publication, *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. At the beginning of 1862, however, she raised readers' hackles by her condemnation of American policy in the boarding of the British vessel Trent (carrying representatives of the Southern Confederacy to Britain) by Captain Charles Wilkes of the U. S. Navy. Even her American antislavery friends were angry, and she was forced to resign. In her final "letter" to the *Standard* of 7 February 1862, she charged that the American abolitionists had descended from the lofty patriotism of twenty-five years past. Meanwhile, few Americans knew that Martineau was responsible for a constant stream of *Daily News* leaders and articles and that attacked slavery and censured the South. The editor of the

Standard in fact continued to send Martineau complimentary copies until she asked in 1865 that it be discontinued, the "American Antislavery Society, having fulfilled its mission of rousing and convincing the nation."

By 1862, Charley Follen had graduated from Harvard and was serving on committees of the (Garrisonian) American Anti-Slavery Society. That June he informed Garrison that he'd resigned his membership of the committees partly because of the board's treatment of "Aunt Harriet." Charley was in fact going to Port Royal, one of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina that had been captured by Northern troops. He and other volunteers were to help run a plantation, paying former slaves wages in Northern greenbacks. A week later, he told Maria Chapman he was "off like a shot for Port Royal." Chapman "ran up to town to see him off" and found him in good spirits, "in hopes of doing great good" (Charley's benevolent act, however, was to end in an unnerving escape back to the North).

Another echo from America in 1865 concerned Martineau's early conversations with Dr. Follen, Charley's father, on the philosophy of the Immanuel Kant. One of Martineau's letters of introduction in America had been to Professor and Mrs. John Farrar of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Farrar was Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Harvard, and his wife (the former Eliza Ware Rotch) wrote improving books for young people. On 24 August 1835, Martineau and Louisa were the Farrars' guests for a Harvard commencement. The following August, the Farrars were Martineau's shipmates on the return voyage to England (another shipmate was Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, later to be responsible for the Trent incident). To help pass the long days on board, cabin passengers devised entertainments and lectures. Martineau offered a talk on Kant, based on her conversations with Dr. Follen—a fact she seemed later to forget. Then in 1865 Eliza Farrar published *My Life's Romance; or, Recollections of Seventy Years' Experiences in Various Parts of the World*, in which she alleged that Martineau had not only given a lecture on Kant during the voyage but had revealed to shipmates the contents of government documents and had told government secrets. Martineau was predictably furious. Farrar had not only confused incidents and dates, she fumed, but had shown her to be guilty of "breach of trust." When Martineau called Farrar to account, Farrar offered merely an "apology and submission [and pled] 'ignorance of political economy, and failure of memory.'" With a title like *Recollections of Seventy Years' Experience*, Martineau snorted, "What a book to write with 'an impaired memory!'"

Martineau's retirement from the *Daily News* in 1865 did not include giving up her concern for American politics. The American tariff, among other faulty policies, was now a major target. Her battles, however, were now carried on through correspondence. In June 1876 the published reactions in America to Martineau's death contained widely varying estimates. The *Nation* compared her to George Sand, but "Mme. Sand's irregular and passionate pedigree, ending



Dr Charles Follen



Ralph Waldo Emerson

in the single life of a grass widow . . . finds its very opposite [in Martineau's] Huguenot severity of morals, transplanted to the congenial soil of England." Harper's declared that: "The greatest among Englishwomen, except George Eliot, has just departed from among us." Her genius was not only "various and remarkable . . . but singularly masculine in its characteristics." The *New York Independent* eulogized Martineau's "clearness of judgment and fidelity to conviction," for which Americans must honor her. Among most Americans, the news of Martineau's death brought regret mixed with admiration.vii

Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, which appeared the following year, drew a number of different responses. Dr. Henry Bellows, in the *New York Inquirer*, began with a mild insult: "Great as Miss Martineau's talents were, and she knew it, she says she had no genius, and I agree with her." While reasonable, Martineau was incapable of profound judgments and large sympathies and had "no poetic insights" into character. The greatest and "the last of her secularistic school," she would remain, with all her talents, "rather as a warning than as an example."

The *Atlantic Monthly* attacked Martineau more forcefully, even though the publishers, Ticknor and Fields of Boston, had agreed in 1861 to publish the autobiography (that year, Martineau contributed five articles to the *Atlantic*). In May 1877, the reviewer of her autobiography began: 'The bad end to which persons who misbehaved toward Harriet Martineau pretty surely came, whether they wronged, or slighted, or even decidedly disagreed with her, ought to be a warning, [her] wilful enemies and her erring friends [being] alike subject to very cataclysmal retributions.' Martineau's autobiography was "a hard-hearted book," yet the reviewer found it "abundantly entertaining," with "the most interesting gossip about all sorts of important people and events." The events of Martineau's life, told with a "stern simplicity," unfortunately contrasted with Maria Chapman's mishmash of "Memorials . . . and one cannot help wishing . . . that Mrs. Chapman had been a little less Orphic."viii

Perhaps chagrined at censure of her "Memorials" volume, Maria Chapman conceived a new plan to honor the memory of Harriet Martineau. In April 1878, she visited the studio of the noted Boston sculptor, Anne Whitney. Whitney was reportedly "'flabbergasted' by the challenge of rendering such a significant figure and agreed to make a sketch-model [but] concluded that 'it was difficult to tell where Mrs. Chapman left off and Harriet Martineau began.'" Whitney worked out a design, however, telling a friend that "the goddess [Martineau] is extremely good looking as she evolves from my innermost." Having prepared a plaster bust, Whitney had the full-size seated statue cast in plaster and then cut in marble. Among the Boston-area supporters of Whitney's work were Bronson Alcott and his daughter Louisa May, who viewed the statue before its official unveiling at the historic Old South Church on 26 December 1883.

Sadly, one last chapter remains to these "echoes from America." Chapman had been disappointed when the Boston College of Liberal Arts, founded in 1873 and having a one-third female enrolment, turned down her offer of the statue, "for reasons unknown." After Chapman's death Whitney (teaching sculpture at Wellesley College) arranged for Harriet Martineau to be placed in the atrium of the glamorous new College Hall as "an incentive and an inspiration to young woman." Harriet then became the focus of a legendary "initiation" for freshmen students at Wellesley, who were somehow forced to squirm through the bars of the upright chair on which "she" sat. There on the night of 16-17 March 1914 the statue perished in a devastating fire, probably caused by a heated insect case in the zoology lab. Martineau herself— staunchly supportive of scientific pursuit— would no doubt have accepted the loss with resignation.^{ix}

i. Martineau described Alcott's methods as "outrageous absurdities [and] those who survive the neglect of bodily exercise and over-excitement of the brain, will be found the first to throw off moral restraint" (*Society in America* [New York: Saunders and Otley, 1837] 2: 277-78); William Lloyd Garrison to Helen Garrison, 7 March 1836, *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison* (Cambridge, MA Belknap Press of OUP, 1971) 2: 59.

ii. Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838) 3; Harriet Martineau to Fanny Wedgwood, 8 March [1840], *Harriet Martineau's Letters to Fanny Wedgwood*, ed. Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1983): 29-33.

iii. *New Yorker* 3 (24 June 1837): 212 and 221, *Intelligencer* 4 (27 June 1837), *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine* 2 (July 1837), *American Quarterly Review* 22 (September 1837): 21-53, *Literary and Theological Review* 4 (September 1837): 445-68, *North American Review* 45 (October 1837): 418-60, [William Gilmore Simms], "Miss Martineau on Slavery," *Southern Literary Messenger* 3 (November 1837): 641-57.

iv. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller, 2 March 1848, *the Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (New York: Columbia UP, 1939) 4: 27.

v. *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, ed. Maria Weston Chapman (London:

Smith, Elder, 1877) 3: 275

vi. *The Nation. A Weekly Journal devoted to Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 23 (20 July 1876) 43; "Harriet Martineau," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 53 (October 1876): 715-19 (the anonymous writer of this obituary was almost certainly *not* an American, but Martineau's old friend Richard Monckton Milnes).

vii. *New York Inquirer Atlantic Monthly*

ix. L. B. Reitzes, "The Political Voice of the Artist. *Anne Whitney's Roma and Harriet Martineau*," *American Art*, Spring 1994: 45-65

The Boston Conference July 2009: A Personal View

Barbara Todd

It had been 42 years since I had last seen Boston. My former husband and I had lived there for a while in the 1960s. He was directing for the Radio and Television station WGBH and I was acting in the Charles Street Playhouse Theatre Company. We had been married in Massachusetts in 1958 on the beautiful island of Martha's Vineyard (where my brother-in-law, the writer Ruthven Todd, lived). We then both worked for the CBC in Toronto, where both our children were born, but we all managed to escape back to the Vineyard every summer, either staying in Ruthven's house or renting various 'summer camps' near the ocean, often pumping our own water and spending long happy days boating and crabbing, tumbling in and out of the water, and having clam bakes by the seaAnd now aged 76, I had flown out of Heathrow for the Society's first American Conference and I found myself back in Boston again. - A very different Boston and a very much older me!

Fortunately, I'd decided to arrive a couple of days before the Conference began to get myself orientated. And I certainly needed orientating! To begin with, I felt totally confused. I recognised almost nothing. We were staying at the comfortable Unitarian residence on Beacon Hill near the State House. And although this 18th - 19th century area has mercifully been beautifully conserved, were these streets ever really quite so dauntingly steep or the paving so hazardous? I took a "Duck Tour" all over down town Boston and across the Charles River to try and spark my memory. These "Ducks", which are intriguing vehicles, half boat and half truck, can run on both land and water. They were invented during World War 2 to assist in transporting beach supplies during the Normandy landings. (They were especially interesting for me since when I was a child, my father was one of the engineers who designed and constructed the famous Mulberry Harbours which floated the Allied troops across the Channel). Well, I don't know whether our "Duck" (an original model) sparked my memory much, but it certainly shook up my bones! Anyway, it was a great fun. Our driver (called a "conductor"!) explained that so much of Boston had been transformed in the late sixties by the