THE EARLY JOURNALISM OF ELIZA METEYARD

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Abstract: The Early Journalism of Eliza Meteyard

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This thesis argues why Eliza Meteyard (1816-1879) is a significant but neglected nineteenth-century woman writer. She was supported by well-known contemporary writers including Mary Howitt, Douglas Jerrold, Samuel Smiles and Charles Darwin, and recognised as a pioneer by the next generation of feminists including those in the Langham Place Group. By the 1870s she had established herself not only as the author of *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865-1866), but also as a writer of social problem narratives, and as a feminist. This thesis focuses on her periodical writing of the 1840s, when her basic tenets as a social problem writer were established. It begins by introducing her early life and career, and turns to the journals published for the advancement of the people, for which Meteyard wrote during that decade. These considerations are preliminary to focusing attention on her writings in three fields: political economy, gender, and popular education. Meteyard was not an instinctive writer of fiction, but a journalist who employed fiction along with articles to respond to the social problems of her day, and a social reformer who endeavoured to educate the public. Her writings dealt with topical issues, including the reduction of hours of work, practical education for artisans, the formation of co-operative associations, Chartism, employment for women, prostitution and sanitation. In some respects Meteyard was more like a modern journalist than a Victorian one; she was an early example of an investigative journalist, who researched her articles and stories thoroughly, and utilised her network of contacts to inform her writing.

An important element in my thesis is a bibliography of all of Meteyard's known published works, which demonstrates the range of her writing, and her exceptional productivity. It adds more than one hundred and twenty contributions to periodicals to the existing bibliography of her writing.

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Introduction

Preceding Studies

In 1894 the *Dictionary of National Biography* introduced Eliza Meteyard (1816-79) as a novelist, a contributor of 'fiction and social articles to the periodical press', the author of stories for children, as well as of various books on Wedgwood.[1] However, since the turn of the twentieth century she has been acknowledged mainly as the biographer of Josiah Wedgwood, especially among art historians. A number of studies have referred to her works on Wedgwood, including the first edition of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (1940), which listed only three of her books, *The Hallowed Spots of Ancient London: Historical, Biographical and Antiquarian Sketches* (1862), *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865-66), and *A Group of English Men (1795-1815) Being Records of the Younger Wedgwoods and Their Friends* (1871).[2]

A prolific contributor to cheap periodicals, Meteyard attracted the attention of scholars working on Victorian popular culture and print culture in the 1950s. A pioneering study by Louis James, among others, mentioned Meteyard as an associate of William and Mary Howitt,[3] both prolific writers and editors, and central figures among London's liberal intellectuals in the mid-nineteenth century. In his *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (1952) Carl Ray Woodring introduced Meteyard as a

[1] C. W. Sutton, 'Meteyard, Eliza (1816-1879)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, 58 vols (London: Smith, Elder; Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1885-1900), XXXVII, ed. by Sidney Lee (1894), pp. 308-309.
[2] G. Parsloe comp., 'Eliza Meteyard (1816-1879)', *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, ed. by F. W. Bateson, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940-19; rep. 1966), III, *1800-1900* (1940; rep. 1966), p. 899.
[3] Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 124. See also pp. 126-27.

‘feminist and miscellaneous writer, whom Mary had adopted into her brood’.[4] In her *Laurels and Rosemary: The Life of William and Mary Howitt* (1955) Amice Lee referred to one of Mary Howitt’s letters in which Meteyard was portrayed as a struggling but financially independent woman writer.[5] While Woodring and Lee touched on Meteyard’s biography, Margaret Dalziel singled out three of her short stories, ‘The Glass of Gin’, ‘Lucy Dean; the Noble Needlewoman’, and ‘Mrs. Dumple’s Cooking School’,[6] in her *Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago: An Unexplored Tract of Literary History* (1957). Dalziel regarded the stories as exemplifying a ‘hatred of strong drink, an interest in female emigration’ and ‘a general concern for the poor’, all of which were characteristic topics of the morally improving *Eliza Cook’s Journal.*[7]

Although the *New Cambridge Bibliography* dropped the entry on Meteyard in 1969,[8] Christopher Kent mentioned her five years later as one of the early, active women members of the Whittington Club, in his words ‘a forgotten experiment in social reform promoted by some of the leading figures of early Victorian Bohemia who decided to bring the advantages of club life to the lower middle class clerks and shop assistants east of Charing Cross’.[9]

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[4] Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Laurence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 120.

[5] Amice Lee, *Laurels and Rosemary: The Life of William and Mary Howitt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 188.

[6] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], ‘The Glass of Gin’, *Eliza Cook’s Journal*, 26 May, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 June 1849, pp. 53-57, 69-73, 88-93, 100-104, 120-23, 133-37. Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], ‘Lucy Dean; the Noble Needlewoman’, *Eliza Cook’s Journal*, 16, 23, 30 March, 6, 13, 20 April 1850, pp. 312-16, 329-31, 340-44, 360-64, 376-79, 393-95. Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], ‘Mrs. Dumple’s Cooking School’, *Eliza Cook’s Journal*, 8, 15, 22 June 1850, pp. 86-89, 101-104, 124-27.

[7] Margaret Dalziel, *Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago: An Unexplored Tract of Literary History* (London: Cohen and West, 1957), pp. 57-59.

[8] *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, ed. by George Watson, 5 vols (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969-1977), III: *1800-1900* (1969).

[9] Christopher Kent, ‘The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform’, *Victorian Studies*, 18 (1974), 31-55 (pp.46, 31). Since R. Kelly published *Douglas Jerrold* (New York: Twayne, 1972), scholars have developed an interest in the club and in Douglas Jerrold (1803-57), a playwright and journalist, and

In the 1980s, with the arrival of third-wave feminism and a new stage of feminist literary criticism, Meteyard attracted more attention. In *The Fallen Angel* (1981), Sally Mitchell, discussing the unchaste woman as represented in a wide range of fiction from 1835 to 1880, reintroduced her as a writer deeply concerned with the fallen woman question and 'unique among English writers of her period in considering that there is even a choice to be made [between marriage and a career]'.[10]

In the 1980s scholars working on Victorian social problem discourse also became interested in Meteyard, noting her involvement in what became known as the 'Condition of England Question'. Both Joseph Kestner and Catherine Gallagher devote several pages to Meteyard's well known story 'Lucy Dean'.[11] Their concern has an undercurrent of Marxism literary theory in focussing on conflicts between classes or between capital and labour. At the same time, they also associated 'Lucy Dean' with the woman question. In *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (1985), Kestner regards 'Lucy Dean' as 'espousing a strong personal if not political independence for women', observing that the story 'reflects the numerous organizations formed to promote emigration or employment of distressed women'.[12] Gallagher, in *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form* (1985), saw the typical 'feminization of the image of the working class in industrial fiction' which 'arose from and contributed to the paternalist rhetoric of the

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the club's first president. See Monica Fryckstedt, 'Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine', *Victorian Periodical Review,* 19 (1986), 2-27, Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995; rev. 1998), pp. 140-70, and Michael Slater, *Douglas Jerrold, 1803-1857* (London: Duckworth, 2002).

[10] Sally Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading, 1835-1880* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981), p. 31.

[11] Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 17, 19, 144-46, 150, 210. Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 136-42, 144, 146.

[12] Kestner, *Protest and Reform*, pp. 144-45.

factory reformers' in the story. She regarded it as one of 'the didactic domestic tales' in which '[women] become workers and then working-class mothers, the bearers of social progress; their private lives are thereby given social importance'.[13]

Meteyard also attracted attention from scholars interested in Victorian print culture. Monica Frycksted's article on 'Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine' published in the *Victorian Periodicals Review* (1986) contained a list of contributions to the magazine, and singled out four contributors enlisted by Jerrold — Meteyard, Geraldine Jewsbury, Eliza Lynn (later Linton) and Dinah M. Mulock (later Craik), noting that they were 'women who were, or were destined to become popular novelists'.[14]

The Feminist Companion to Literature in English (1990) also contained an entry on Meteyard. Probably because of its feminist agenda, it listed her novels *Struggles for Fame* (1845), *Mainstone's Housekeeper* (1860) and *Lady' Herbert's Gentlewoman* (1862), all concerned with women's issues, as examples of her writing. It suggested erroneously that Meteyard had been a regular contributor to Dickens's *Household Words*, possibly misinterpreting a letter Dickens had written to her. [15]

In a paper based on Louis Althusser's work on ideology, and reader-response theory, published in 1994, Kay Boardman found Meteyard's 'The Glass of Gin' to be 'a site for ideological struggle', and pointed out the middle-class gender myth embedded

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[13] Gallagher, p. 142.
[14] Fryckstedt, p. 8.
[15] 'Meteyard, Eliza, "Silverpen", 1816-79', *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. by Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements, Isobel Grundy (London: B.T. Batsford, 1990), pp. 734-35. Meteyard's letter is missing, to which Dickens replied to ask her to send an example of her writing. *The Letters of Charles Dickens* , ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002), VI: *1850-52* , ed by Storey, Tillotson and Nina Burgis (1988), p. 1n5. See also *Household Words: Conducted by Charles Dickens: Table of Contents, List of Contributors and Their Contributions Based on the Household Words Office Book in the Morris L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists, Princeton University Library*, comp. by Anne Lohrli ([Toronto]: University of Toronto Press, [1973]). To compile the list Lohrli employed the office account book which Dickens's subeditor kept.

in the text.[16]

'Lucy Dean' was reprinted in *The Slaughter-House of Mammon: An Anthology of Victorian Social Protest Literature* in 1992.[17] This story, with its seamstress heroine who emigrates, has attracted the attention of scholars of postcolonial literary criticism as well as those working on the representation of the seamstress in Victorian literature. In 1995, Lynn M. Alexander, one of the editors of *The Slaughter-House of Mammon*, compared 'Meteyard's idealized portrait of emigration' represented in the story with G. W. M. Reynold's 'carefully crafted' depiction of a slop worker's life in *The Seamstress.*[18]

This line of feminist studies with reference to the social progress of the Victorian working class led to *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51* published by Kathryn Gleadle in 1995.[19] Its focus is on Meteyard herself rather than on her fiction. It presents her as a member of an informal network of early feminists closely connected to the radical unitarians.[20] In the following year, Helen Rogers portrayed the writer as a middle-class woman radical, and

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[16] Kay Boardman, ' "The Glass of Gin", Renegade Reading Possibilities in the Classic Realist Text', *Gendering the Reader*, ed. by Sara Mills (New York; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), pp. 199-216 (p. 200). Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* (London, New Left Books, 1971). Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[17] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], 'Lucy Dean; the Noble Needlewoman', rep. in *The Slaughter-House of Mammon: An Anthology of Victorian Social Protest Literatur*e, ed. by Sharon A. Winn and Lynn M. Alexander, fwd. by Joseph A. Kestner (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill, 1992), pp. 205-55.

[18] Lynn M. Alexander, 'Loss of the Domestic Idyll: Slop Workers in Victorian Fiction', *Keeping the Victorian House: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by Vanessa D. Dickerson (New York: Garland, 1995), pp. 291-311 (p. 307).

[19] Gleadle used the phrase 'the early feminists' to argue that the awakening of nineteenth-century feminism lay in the 1840s, rather than the late 1850s which witnessed the active Langham Place Circle (Gleadle, p. 181). See also Kay Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame: Eliza Meteyard's Principled Career', *Popular Victorian Women Writers*, ed. by Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 46-65 (pp. 53, 62n35).

[20] This thesis uses a small initial letter 'u' for the phrase 'radical unitarian', as a radical unitarian, as will be seen later, did not necessarily belong to a Unitarian congregation.

considered the part she and another woman radical, Mary Leman Gillies (née Rede; her other married name was Grimstone), played in forming post-Chartist political culture.[21]

In the same year, 1999, Meteyard was given an entry in the third edition of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, with a more detailed list of her works.[22] Michael Slater touched upon Meteyard briefly in his biography *Douglas Jerrold 1803-1857* (2002), pointing out the essence of her writings, at least in the 1840s, as dealing with 'exceedingly grim subjects' connected with social evils.[23] In 2003 Lynn Alexander regarded 'Lucy Dean' as 'the first example of seamstress emigration presented to the Victorian reading public' slightly before Emily's emigration in Dickens's *David Copperfield*, serialised in 1849-50.[24]

In 2004 Kay Boardman published 'Struggling for Fame: Eliza Meteyard's Principled Career'. This paper can be regarded as the first attempt to outline Meteyard's writing career. Her purpose is to consider 'the choices and disappointments facing the committed, yet unexceptional minor writer' whose career was 'devoted to the pursuit of an ideal'. She also introduces Meteyard as a children's story writer, and throws light on her 'lifelong commitment to the development of the decorative arts and the humanising effects of art and beauty'.[25] In the same year, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Bibliography* published a revised entry on Meteyard, based on the one in the original *Dictionary of National Bibliography*.[26]

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[21] 'From "Monster Meetings" to "Fire-Side Virtues"? Radical Women and "the People" in the 1840s', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 4 (1999), 52-75.

[22] Lynn Alexander comp., 'Eliza Meteyard, "Silverpen" 1816-79', *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, ed. by Joanne Shattock, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, IV(1999), cols. 1354-55.

[23] Michael Slater, *Douglas Jerrold 1803-1857*, (London: Duckworth, 2002), p. 196.

[24] Lynn M. Alexander, *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), p. 115.

[25] Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame', pp. 46, 55.

[26] Fred Hunter, 'Meteyard, Eliza (1816–1879)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, ed. by H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, 60 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn., May 2005

In the following year Johanna M. Smith applied queer theory to see 'a lesbian narrative space' in Meteyard's two stories 'The Hidden Ring' and 'Lucy Dean' in her 'Class, Gender and Sexuality in *Eliza Cook's Journal*',[27] a chapter of *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers* (2005).[28] The *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (2009) also has an entry on Meteyard, written by Helen Rogers.[29]

In 2011, extracts from 'Lucy Dean' were published under the category of writings which campaigned for 'Emigration to Australia as a Solution to Abuses in the Clothing Trade' in *Abuses and Reforms*, the second volume of *Clothing, Society and Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*.[30] The editor, Clare Rose, adopts the method of new historicism to juxtapose two literary works, 'Lucy Dean' and a parlour ballad 'The Female Emigrants' by Edward Elliston, 'composed and copyrighted as a commercial venture', with four contemporary articles published in the *Morning Chronicle*. The purpose is to show the public response to the wretched state of needlewomen, which became widely known through investigations such as Henry Mayhew's.[31]

Susan Brown's 'Networking Feminist Literary History: Recovering Eliza Meteyard's Web' in *Virtual Victorians: Networks, Connections, Technologies* (2015), exploits the possibility of employing digital network analysis, to quote James Mussell, 'to visualise the personal, social and political connections between contributors to

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<http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18624>

[27] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], 'The Hidden Ring', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 3, 10, 17, 24 November 1849, pp. 8-12, 25-30, 41-45, 55-59.

[28] Johanna M. Smith, 'Class, Gender and Sexuality in *Eliza Cook's Journal*', *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Julie F. Codell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.55-65 (p. 60).

[29] Helen Rogers, 'Meteyard, Eliza (1816-1879)', *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press; London: British Library, 2009), p. 410.

[30] 'Emigration to Australia as a Solution', *Clothing, Society and Culture in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by Clare Rose, 3 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), II: *Abuses and Reforms*, pp. 59-65.

[31] Rose, 'Emigration to Australia', pp. 39-41.

particular publications'.[32] To reveal Meteyard's own connections, Brown searches for her on Google, in the Orlando Project, which constructs a digital history of feminist literature, and on NINES, to echo Brown, the 'single largest and most versatile open resource for nineteenth-century studies available today' for the semantic web.[33]

In the *Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing* (2015), Joanne Shattock takes up Meteyard with Elizabeth Gaskell and Margaret Oliphant to consider the 'mid-nineteenth-century's perception of what constituted a professional writer and women writers' increasing sense of their own professionalism', and how 'the early contacts made and the contacts secured played a vital part' in her career. Shattock argues that her professionalism brought her independence, but 'neither lasting success nor financial security'.[34]

Jude Piesse's recent argument about 'Lucy Dean' could be placed in the field of feminist postcolonial criticism. In *British Settler Emigration in Print* (2016), she points out the 'story's ongoing preoccupation with female empowerment, sisterhood, and cooperation' for the cause of female emigration.[35]

As we have seen, various studies have so far shown interest in Meteyard as the biographer of Wedgwood, a writer of social problem discourse, a children's writer, a campaigner for female emigration, a prolific journal contributor, an active member of the Whittington Club, an early feminist, and a social reformer, although her early utopian ideas have yet to be considered. There have been no full-length critical studies

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[32] James Mussell, ' "Beyond the Great Index": Digital Resources and Actual Copies', *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 17-30 (p. 26).

[33] Susan Brown, 'Networking Feminist Literary History: Recovering Eliza Meteyard's Web', *Virtual Victorians: Networks, Connections, Technologies*, ed. by Veronica Alfano and Andrew Stauffer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 57-82 (p. 71).

[34] Joanne Shattock, 'Becoming a Professional Writer', *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women's Writing*, ed. by Linda H. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 29-42 (pp. 29, 32, 34).

[35] Jude Piesse, *British Settler Emigration in Print, 1832-1877* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 126. See also pp. 123-7, 136.

of her work or a book length biography. Her ideas about the antiquarian and decorative arts have scarcely been considered in spite of historians' frequent references to her biography of Wedgwood. There is still no study of Meteyard that manages to connect the various elements in her reformist agenda, and yet there is a connection between them. This thesis attempts a composite portrait of Meteyard, focusing on her periodical writing of the 1840s.

Outline of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate why Meteyard is a significant but neglected nineteenth-century woman writer. If her stories are evaluated solely as literary works, there is a danger that they will be dismissed as unremarkable. Most of them, especially those written in the 1840s, are didactic and allegorical, with flat characters who lack any attempt at analysis. Meteyard's arguments are placed conspicuously in the foreground, and impair the narrative, damaging the interest and attraction which a good storyteller should evoke.

However, these supposedly negative characteristics indicate why Meteyard, her networks, ideas and writing are worth investigating. She was not an instinctive writer of fiction, but a journalist who employed fiction along with articles to respond to the social problems of her day. The purpose of her stories was to educate the public and to convey her message as clearly as possible. Her writings dealt with topical issues, often political or economic, rather than universal subjects, which included the reduction of hours of work, practical education for artisans, the formation of co-operative associations, Chartism, employment for women, prostitution and sanitation, for all of which she wished to present concrete solutions.

In some respects Meteyard was more like a modern journalist than a Victorian

one; she was an early example of an investigative journalist, who researched her articles and stories thoroughly. She also utilised her network of contacts to inform her writing. To understand her arguments, it is necessary to understand the complexity of the social problems about which she wrote, and the prevailing public opinion surrounding them, to which she often objected. It is also important to have some knowledge of the current political context, for example ongoing parliamentary legislation. Meteyard explored current issues and modified her views according to an ever-changing political background. It is helpful to trace, where possible, the range of sources she may have exploited, and useful to know what her colleagues were writing about the same topics. Writing for journals, she expected her readers to have read the work of other writers published in the same journal. She sometimes illustrated their arguments in her own stories, often to refute them. Most of her contributions to the journals are not autonomous for this reason. They cannot be considered separately from these contextual and inter-textual elements.

Another characteristic of Meteyard is her radicalism. As will be seen later, this radicalism often caused editors to turn down her writings. However, at the same time, she was not so radical as to be ignored or neglected completely. She was supported by well known contemporary writers including Mary Howitt, Douglas Jerrold, Samuel Smiles and Charles Darwin, and recognised as a pioneer by the next generation of feminists including those in the Langham Place Group. She acted as a link between generations of radicals. Moreover, as will be shown later, by the 1870s she had established herself and was regarded as a writer of some eminence, not only as the biographer of Josiah Wedgwood, but also as a writer of social problem narratives, and as a feminist. This was achieved in spite of financial difficulties, from which she never managed to extricate herself and which compelled her to apply to the Royal Literary

Fund, recurrently in 1851, 1854, 1859, 1862, and in 1868.[36]

To highlight Meteyard's characteristics as a radical journalist, this thesis begins by introducing her early life and career, and considers the origin of her radicalism. It then turns to what Brian E. Maidment calls the 'journals of popular progress', published for the advancement of the people, or, to quote from one of the journals, with 'the noblest of objects — those of increasing the happiness or elevating the characters of the People'.[37] These journals ranged from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1832-1861), *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* (1845-1848), *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* (1846-1851),[38] the *People's Journal* (1846-1848), and *Howitt's Journal* (1847-1848), to *Eliza Cook's Journal* (1849-1854).

While contributing to these journals in the 1840s, Meteyard imbibed the spirit of the genre and developed her own ideas. These considerations are preliminary to focusing attention on Meteyard's writings in three fields: political economy, gender, and popular education in the following chapters of the thesis.

Meteyard in the 1840s

This thesis focuses on Meteyard's periodical writing of the 1840s. It was a crucial decade, because her basic tenets as a social problem writer were established in the 1840s. She expressed her political, economic and cultural views more freely and straightforwardly in the 'journals of popular progress' of the 1840s, as will be seen later,

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[36] Royal Literary Fund, *Archives of the Royal Literary Fund, 1790-1918* (London: World Microfilms, 1984), Case File no. 1269, Reel 46. See also Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame', p. 62n12.

[37] John Saunders, 'Combining Amusement, General Literature, and Instruction, with an Earnest and Business-like Inquiry into the Best Means of Satisfying the Claims of Industry', *People's Journal*, 3 January 1846, pp. 1-2.

[38] In 1848 Jerrold sold *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, which became the *Weekly Newspaper and Financial Economist*, merged with the *Weekly Chronicle* in 1851.

and was often allowed to participate in editing them; while from the 1850s she was compelled to produce popular articles and stories designed for light reading for a living. In 1857, she wrote to Charles Roach Smith, an antiquarian and her supportive friend:

> As soon as I have time I intend a more elaborate paper for one of the higher serials, and then I can infuse a higher stream of knowledge. . . . You must also, in relation to it, forgive me my sins. I express real penitence; but occasionally I get into a spider's web of work, which necessity of ways and means compels me to do. Last year I had a Christmas book, and serial work, in hand; of this year, up to this date, I have been bound in like way. . . . [39]

The 1840s was also a particularly productive decade for Meteyard. She later tended to reprint the same stories which she had first published in the 1840s.

Although her main focus appears to have shifted from social problems to children's stories, and art and antiquarian subjects, her writing in the 1840s shows that in her own mind, all of these topics were linked. She had a firm belief that education would improve humanity, and that an enlightened society would eventually resolve social evils. While her lifelong interest in popular education was clearly seen in her writings of the 1840s, a belief in education later inclined her to write stories 'calculated to aid in the development of children, physically, morally, and intellectually',[40] to quote from her obituary published in the *Oddfellows' Magazine*, for which Meteyard had been writing until just before her death. As will be shown later, it was also during the 1840s that she developed her faith in moral education, convinced that the environment

[39] Eliza Meteyard, Letter to Charles Roach Smith, 16 June 1857, printed in Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological*, 3 vols (London: George Bell, 1886), II, pp. 108-109 (p.108).

[40] Charles Hardwick. 'Eliza Meteyard', *Oddfellow's Magazine,* July 1879, pp. 135-36 (p. 135).

moulded character. While a polluted environment brutalised man, sensitivity to beauty, nurtured by nature and the arts, would cultivate humanity. As an example, Meteyard considered beautiful pottery, such as cheap but well designed vases and tea-sets, to be effective in exerting the power of beauty in the daily lives of ordinary people. She crystallised this faith in her short story 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1848,[41] and later in her celebrated work *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865-66).[42]

Bibliography of Meteyard's Writing

The bibliography of Meteyard's writing in the latest edition of *Cambridge Bibliography* (1999) contains the titles of twenty books, and nineteen contributions to periodicals. Although it extended the entries in earlier editions, it is still not comprehensive. An important element in my thesis is a bibliography of all of Meteyard's known published works, which demonstrates the range of her writing, and her exceptional productivity. It adds more than one hundred and twenty contributions to periodicals: the number increases to more than two hundred if reprints of these in other journals are included. Also added are a Wedgwood catalogue edited by Meteyard, and two songs written by her. However, even this extensive listing is incomplete.

The lists of Meteyard's writing have up until now been incomplete mainly due to the difficulty in identifying her unsigned stories and articles. The most substantial clue to finding her contributions to periodicals is provided by the list attached to her third application to the Royal Literary Fund in 1862. Meteyard filled in the names of

[41] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes', *Howitt's Journal*, 8, 15, 22, 29 January 1848, pp. 20-23, 43-44, 59-61, 76-78.
[42] Eliza Meteyard, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood, from His Private Correspondence and Family Papers*, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865-1866).

periodicals and the years of her contributions in more detail than in her other applications to the Fund. Although it includes some vague titles of publications (e.g. *Cassell's Newspaper*) the identity of which are still unknown, the application enabled me to refer to the periodicals clearly identified to find most of the new additions to my Bibliography.

According to her application to the Royal Literary Fund in 1862**,** Meteyard claimed to have written for the *Standard of Freedom* in 1847, which is highly likely as many of her close colleagues contributed to the paper. She also claimed to have contributed to *Chambers's Journal* from 1845 to 1862, the *Leisure Hour* in 1855 and 1860, and the *Manchester Guardian* in 1860, but her signature cannot be found, either as 'Silverpen', the pseudonym by which she was best known, or as Meteyard, in these four periodicals.

Sharpe's London Magazine also afforded a tangible clue to finding her contributions to periodicals. It had a regular column, 'Our Library Table', which introduced periodicals for which the associates of *Sharpe's* also wrote. As the column included titles, this was useful in adding to the list of Meteyard's contributions to other journals. The digitisation of a wide range of nineteenth-century periodicals also helped my research, especially in identifying her reprinted stories and articles not only in Britain but also in America.

Other sources have also borne fruit, some of them unexpected. A biographical article on Meteyard in *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art* (1865) mentioned her tale 'John Strong's Box' contributed to *Hood's Magazine,* which enabled me to trace the anonymous story as hers.[43] During my research, several

[43] 'Eliza Meteyard', *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art, with Biographical Memoirs*, 6 vols (London: L. Reeve, 1863-64; Alfred William Bennett, 1865-[67]), IV, ed. by E. Walford with the photographs by Ernest Edwards (London,1865), pp. 33-37 (p. 33). An appendix of this thesis includes two photographs

hitherto unknown unpublished letters by Meteyard were found,[44] one of which was addressed to 'Mrs. Ellis' requesting an extension of the deadline for her story.[45] The date attached to the letter enabled me to identify the journal edited by Sarah Stickney Ellis in the year (1851) as *Mrs Ellis's Morning Call* (1850-1852), and to find Meteyard's story 'The Drooping Raspberries' (1850-1851) published in the periodical.[46]

A Note on Meteyard's Signatures

As Susan Brown argues, unlike George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, Meteyard did not use her penname to disguise her identity.[47] However, Brown suggests that '[w]ithin the literary world, at least', Meteyard was 'at pains to reveal' her gender and identity, quoting a letter to Leigh Hunt, dated 26 June 1848 and signed as Eliza Meteyard , in which she clearly introduced herself as the writer 'Silverpen'.[48] In 1847, when Meteyard had not known the Howitts long, she wrote to William Howitt to tell him that she would send him a ' "Silverpen" article' as soon as possible.[49]

Although some portion of Meteyard's periodical publications were anonymous, and some signed with her initials E. M., many contributions were published with her adopted pen name of Silverpen, or under her real name, or both together. In the 1840s Meteyard was happy with the pen name, which Douglas Jerrold had appended,

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of Meteyard, one of which was scanned from this book. The latest version of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn 2005) does not show any image of her.

[44] The full text of these letters is contained in an Appendix of this thesis.

[45] Eliza Meteyard, Letter to Mrs. Ellis, 8 April 1850, MS, in my possession. See Appendix.

[46] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], 'The Drooping Raspberries', *Mrs Ellis's Morning Call: A Table Book of Literature and Art*, December 1850, pp. 546-62, February 1851, pp. 73-88.

[47] Brown, p. 65.

[48] Brown, pp. 65-66.

[49] Eliza Meteyard, Letter to William Howitt, [1847], MS, in my possession. See Appendix of this thesis.

unknown to her,[50] to her leading article in the inaugural number of *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper.*[51] During the 1850s she began to wish to publish under her real name, anxious to be recognised as 'Eliza Meteyard'. However, she was probably compelled to continue to write as 'Silverpen', such was the value attached by editors to her now well established pseudonym. Her work for *Eliza Cook's Journal* indicates that a compromise was negotiated with the editor. She began to write for the journal as Silverpen in 1849, but from September 1850 signed both names, one of them in brackets. From June to August 1851, she serialised her story 'The Darby Babies' under her own name, but her signature never appeared in the journal after that. Her practice in other publications was similarly varied. She affixed both the names to two stories published in *Sharpe's London Magazine* in 1854 and 1855, but after that contributed fifteen stories to the magazine as 'Silverpen' until 1861. In early 1860 she again signed as 'Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen)' while writing for the *Reliquary* (1860-94), but published under her own name without her pen name from 1865 until her death in 1879.

Due to her ardent desire for approval from others, Meteyard preferred to write for journals which carried her signature, even if as Silverpen. She may have contributed to some journals on this condition. As mentioned, *Mrs Ellis's Morning Call* ran her story 'The Drooping Raspberries' in two instalments, both signed as Silverpen, although the journal rarely published the signatures of any of its contributors.

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[50] 'Eliza Meteyard', *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature*, IV, p. 34. Hardwick, p. 135.

[51] Silverpen [Eliza Meteyard], 'The Early Closing Movement', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 18 July 1846, p. 15.

Chapter 1: Meteyard's Early Life and Career, and Her Forerunners

Childhood in Shrewsbury

Eliza Meteyard was born, prematurely, into a professional middle-class Anglican family, in Lime Street, Liverpool on 21 June 1816.[1] In 1818 when her father William Meteyard was promoted from an assistant to a principal surgeon in the Shropshire Militia, the family moved to Shrewsbury.[2] In the preface to her most celebrated work *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865),[3] Meteyard looked back to her early days:

> The names of Wedgwood and Darwin were amongst the earliest known to me. In the town where I passed my childhood were many who well remembered Mr. Wedgwood, and many pleasant anecdotes were afloat concerning him. Amongst my father's patients were two or three who had known him personally; a descendant of his schoolmaster lived a stone's-throw from our door; and household tastes made Wedgwood-ware an admired object. (I, xi)

In his introduction to the 1970 edition of *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, R. W. Lightbown states that her father's profession enabled the Meteyards to become

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[1] Her father William Meteyard was appointed to be a lieutenant of the Shropshire Militia as a surgeon on 25 August 1799 (*A List of the Officers of the Militia of the United Kingdom*, London: War Office, 1809, p. 58). He was buried in a churchyard of St. Giles' of Shrewsbury, an Anglican established church (Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological*, 3 vols, London: George Bell, 1883-91, II, 1886, p. 106, and Herbert Southam, 'Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh" ', *Notes and Queries*, 7 March 1903, p. 194).

[2] Charles Hardwick. 'Eliza Meteyard', *OddFellow's Magazine,* July 1879, pp. 135-36 (p. 135).

[3] Eliza Meteyard, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood: From His Private Correspondence and Family Papers in the Possession of Joseph Mayer, F. Wedgwood, C. Darwin, Miss Wedgwood and Other Original Sources; With an Introductory Sketch of the Art of Pottery in England*, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865).

acquainted with a noted local physician, Robert Waring Darwin, and his family.[4] In her book *A Group of Englishmen Being Records of the Younger Wedgwoods and Their Friends* (1871),[5] Eliza made a 'little sketch of the old Shrewsbury doctors' including 'Dr. R. W. Darwin', 'drawn from life'. In the preface, she noted a day in about 1827 when she and her father came across him in a valley (xv). Later, as an adult, Eliza was to correspond with his son Charles Darwin in order to borrow his grandfather Josiah Wedgwood's letters to write the biography and several other books on Wedgwood.

William Meteyard was a great influence on Eliza and her work throughout her life. Her worship of her father is reflected in her medical characters, including the anatomist Professor Retzner, who adopts the heroine, and his professional successor Camille Dispareaux, in 'The Angel of the Unfortunate' (1847);[6] the village doctor who guides the protagonist as his mentor in ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft' (1847);[7] Dr. Hall, an anatomist and surgeon in 'The Market — Old and New' (1847);[8] the heroine's father in *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (1850);[9] and Dr. Burnell, an understanding husband, in 'A Winter and its Spring' (1854).[10]

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[4] R. W. Lightbown, 'An Introduction to the 1970 Edition', *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* by Eliza Meteyard, 2 vols (London: Cornmarket Press, 1970), I, [1-32 (p.11)]. See also Fred Hunter, 'Meteyard, Eliza (1816-1879)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn., May 2005 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18624>

[5] Eliza Meteyard, *A Group of Englishmen (1795-1815) Being Records of the Younger Wedgwoods and Their Friends: Embracing the History of the Discovery of Photography and a Facsimile of the First Photograph* (London: Longmans, Green, 1871).

[6] Silverpen, 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', *Howitt's Journal*, 18, 25 September 1847, pp.186-89, 195-99.

[7] Silverpen, ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* November 1847, pp. 453-70.

[8] Silverpen, 'The Market — Old and New', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, June 1847, pp. 519-28.

[9] Eliza Meteyard, *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, 1850).

[10] Silverpen, 'A Winter and its Spring', *Ladies' Companion,* April, May, June 1854, pp. 188-92, 230-35, 294-98. The *Ladies' Cabinet*, the *New Monthly Belle Assembleé* and the *Illustrated London Magazine* also published the story in the same months and the same pages. This story was also reprinted in Eliza Meteyard, *The Lady Herbert's Gentlewomen*, 3 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), III, 255-308.

William was versed in the classics and interested in curios, and he encouraged Eliza in interests which the Victorians would have regarded as 'masculine'.[11] In the preface to *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* she reminisced about her childhood spent with him:

> He was a fine classical scholar, and loved antiquities: I was thus his companion — riding when the distances were great — whilst he traced old British trackways, Roman roads, or visited remnants of primeval forest land, old tumuli, old churches, old halls, farmhouses, and country granges. It was in these latter places, many of them coeval with the Plantagenets and Tudors, that I saw on quaint shelves, or garnishing huge dressers, the tygs, the posset-pots, and the pictured dishes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I well remember one day spent on the Longmynd hills, in order to follow the trackway by which the Romans brought supplies of earthenware from the potteries in the valley of the Severn and the north Staffordshire, to the military stations south and south-west of Uriconium. (I, xii)

Meteyard developed some of the interests stimulated by her father in her book *The Hallowed Spots of Ancient London: Historical, Biographical, and Antiquarian Sketches* (1862).[12]

Mary Howitt regarded Meteyard's first full-length children's book *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (1850) as depicting Eliza's childhood.[13] Meteyard herself said, 'All

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[11] Lightbown, I, [10].
[12] Eliza Meteyard, *The Hallowed Spots of Ancient London: Historical, Biographical, and Antiquarian Sketches, Illustrative of Places and Events as They Appeared and Occurred in the Olden Time* (London: Charles Griffin, 1862).
[13] *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography*, ed. by Margaret Howitt, 2 vols (London: Wm. Isbister, 1889), II, 61.

their varied episodes are substantially true'.[14] Charles Drury, possibly related to Phillip Drury, William Meteyard's colleague in the Shropshire Militia,[15] also claimed that the story was 'practically a history of her early childhood, and the old-fashioned town mentioned therein as having once been the scene of a battle is Shrewsbury, where she was living with her father from 1818 to 1829'.[16] In addition, a contemporary reviewer considered it 'a genuine autobiography',[17] although it is still risky to regard it as completely genuine. As far as the semi-autographical work shows, Meteyard seems to have led a happy early childhood, although one highly irregular for a Victorian middle-class girl. The story is, as promised at the beginning, 'full of freshness about fields, and woods, and mountain streams, and lonely hills, and country churches'.[18] Her childhood communication with nature could be one of the origins of her admiration for nature and for the innocence of children. The story also suggests that the young Eliza learned more outdoors from her father than at home from her mother. Later she came to look upon the usual Victorian female accomplishments as 'useless'. In the story, the heroine's mother has a very different idea from her father's on what their daughter should learn:

> Alice's mamma, who had not the good sense and penetration of her husband, greatly admired such useless accomplishments as painting on velvet, tatting and bead work. . . . But her mamma did not understand how useless such mere

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[14] Eliza Meteyard, preface, *The Doctor's Little Daughter* by Meteyard (London: Arthur Hall; Virtues 1850), new edn., rev. by Meteyard (London: Strahan, 1872), pp. iii-iv (p. iii).
[15] *A List of the Officers*, p. 58.
[16] Charles Drury, 'Eliza Meteyard', *Notes and Queries*, 10 February 1900, p. 103.
[17] 'The Doctor's Little Daughter. By Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen)', *Eliza Cook's Journal,* 26 October 1850, p. 413-14 (p. 413).
[18] Eliza Meteyard, *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (1850), new edn., rev. by Meteyard (London: Strahan, 1872), p. 1. Meteyard states that the 'emendations are little more than verbal' in the preface of the revised edition (p. v).

> acquirements are, either to serve or to improve domestic life; or how much more wise it is to teach boys and girls things that will enable them to think wisely and act rightly, than mere accomplishments, which only serve for an hour. (92)

Alice used to go with her father into 'the great prison of the town, to the great House of Industry, or Poor House, into poor hovels, and strolling wayfarers' homes' (257). Meteyard's childhood experience as a doctor's daughter, seeing the poverty and ignorance among the people with her own eyes, led to her later devotion as a social reformer and writer to the topics of public sanitation, popular education, the rehabilitation of criminals and relief of prostitutes. She referred to 'the enthusiasm, which has burnt in my heart since I was a little child' (317) at the close of her story 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' (1849).[19] According to the memoir in *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art* (1865) Meteyard had 'fully determined' to become a writer at the age of twelve.[20]

The Doctor's Little Daughter suggests that Meteyard's father was too charitable and generous a doctor to the poor to have his practice pay. It seems that the family was in financial trouble from around 1829,[21] when Meteyard suffered from severe scarlet fever. The illness was probably the cause of her considerable deafness,[22] from which she was to be handicapped throughout her life. In 1879, one of her obituaries mentioned

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[19] Silverpen, 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 18, 25 August, 1, 8, 15 September 1849, pp. 243-47, 265-69, 283-87, 297-302, 313-17.

[20] 'Eliza Meteyard', *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art, with Biographical Memoirs*, 6 vols (London: L. Reeve, 1863-64; London: Alfred William Bennett, 1865-[67]), IV, ed. by E. Walford with the photographs by Ernest Edwards (1865), pp. 33-37 (p. 33).

[21] Lightbown, I, [11].

[22] In 1852 Meteyard mentioned her ear condition in a letter to Harriet Martineau, who also suffered from substantial deafness. See Harriet Martineau, 'To Eliza Meteyard', 31 May [1852], *Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, ed. by Deborah Anna Logan, 5vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), III: *Letters 1845-1855*, pp. 228-29 (p. 229).

her '[v]ery severe deafness, which necessitated the constant use of an ear-trumpet', and stated that even 'her truly noble nature' was 'occasionally warped' by the 'calamity'.[23] In 1829, after the fever and at the age of thirteen, she was taken away from her father, to live near Norwich with a childless aunt on her mother's side, who had recently lost her husband.[24]

Early Career

Meteyard had written her first trial novel, which was to be burnt, by the time she was seventeen, in 1833,[25] when she began to assist her elder brother, a tithe commissioner for East Anglia, in 'gathering materials for the reports in relation to parishes' of the area.[26] Through the experience she became familiar with such sources as government inquiries and parliamentary reports, and learned how to present information effectively to support an argument. Meteyard stated that she had 'earned her first literary pound by some little scraps of writing sent to a provincial newspaper, and with that bought a ticket, — second hand — in the Norwich and Norfolk Library, and revelled at will in antiquarian literature of every kind'.[27]

In January 1842 her father died. The necessity to earn a living did not make her take the route which many other single middle-class women chose, to become a governess, as she was very deaf. Many women chose to write for a living, because it did not need special training nor involve an initial cost, and it could be undertaken at home.[28] However, Meteyard was not compelled to write solely from necessity, but had

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[23] Hardwick, p. 136.
[24] Hunter, 'Meteyard, Eliza' <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18624>
[25] *Portraits of Men of Eminence,* p. 33.
[26] Hardwick, p. 135.
[27] Hardwick, p. 135.
[28] Kay Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame: Eliza Meteyard's Principled Career', *Popular*

been well motivated to become a writer from her childhood.

Within the year, she moved to London,[29] an unusual step for a single woman. However, it was, as Harriet Martineau believed, 'essential for a literary career'. It would provide more favourable opportunities for publication, and wider informal networks of professional colleagues. In addition, access to the British Museum and other libraries was necessary.[30] When William J. Fox, the editor of the radical unitarian journal *Monthly Repository,* urged Martineau to take an editorial position in the city, she met with her mother's strong opposition. Then she wondered, why 'I did not assert my independence, and refuse to return — so clear as was . . . the injustice of remanding me to a position of helplessness and dependence, when a career of action and independence was opening before me'.[31] About fifteen years later, as C. R. Woodring notes, Meteyard, 'as stubborn [as Martineau]',[32] but with the less secure financial background of her family, chose the same 'career of action and independence'.

In December 1843 and April 1844, *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* ran Meteyard's 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress' in three instalments.[33] Under the editorial policy of Christian Isobel Johnstone, *Tait's* had become 'more a literary than a political organ'. Many woman writers, such as Mary Howitt, Harriet Martineau, Mary Leman Grimstone,

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Victorian Women Writers, ed. by Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, pp. 46-65 (p. 49)).

[29] Hardwick, p. 135. According to *Portraits of Men of Eminence*, Meteyard 'went to London, accompanied by an aunt, there to take up her abode and devote herself to literature' (p. 33). It is not known if she lived in London at least temporarily with the aunt.

[30] Letters to James Martineau, 26 January 1830, and to her mother, 22 January 1830, qtd. in Linda Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 75.

[31] *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography* (London: Smith, Elder, 1877); 3rd edn., 3 vols (Hants, UK: Gregg International, 1969), I, 149.

[32] Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Laurence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 120.

[33] [Eliza Meteyard], 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1843, pp. 765-75; January, April 1844, pp. 36-42, 245-54.

Mary Russell Mitford, and Catherine Gore, were introduced into *Tait's*.[34] In addition, the radical unitarians including William Howitt and William Bridges Adams, frequently contributed to it.[35] Meteyard's early contribution suggests that she was probably among the many women subscribers to this shilling magazine.[36] She seems to have read Johnstone's 'Lights and Shadows of London Life' and the anonymous 'A London Dressmaker's Diary' published in the journal in 1842.[37] These pieces dealt with the miseries of seamstresses, in which Meteyard would also show an interest in her article 'The Early Closing Movement' (1849),[38] and her story 'Lucy Dean' (1850).[39] It is likely that the women contributors and the radical unitarians, including the Howitts and Martineau, had already had a considerable influence on Meteyard through their writings in *Tait's,* before she came to know them personally. The influence would smooth her acceptance into their circle later.

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine abruptly discontinued the serial of 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress'. Johnstone, who as Judith Johnston notes 'was not afraid to take up cudgels on Women's behalf',[40] allocated eleven pages for the third and final instalment, longer than the previous one nearly by five pages. Meteyard awkwardly summarized the

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[34] Mark A. Weinstein, 'Tait's Edinburgh Magazine', *British Literary Magazines: The Romantic Age, 1789-1836*, ed. by Alvin Sullivan (Westport, CT; Greenwood, 1983), pp. 401-405.

[35] Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51*, rev. edn. (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), p. 43.

[36] Susan Dean, 'The 1979 RSVP Conference', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 12 (1979), 141-43 (p. 142).

[37] [Christian Isobel Johnstone], 'Lights and Shadows of London Life', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1842, pp. 27-29. 'A London Dressmaker's Diary', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, November 1842, pp. 709-18.

[38] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement: Milliners and Dressmakers', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 7 July 1849, pp. 154-56.

[39] Silverpen, 'Lucy Dean; the Noble Needlewoman', *Eliza Cook's Journal,* 16, 23, 30 March, 6, 13, 20 April 1850, pp. 312-16, 329-31, 340-44, 360-64, 376-79, 393-95.

[40] Judith E. Johnston, 'Johnstone, Christian Isobel (1781-1857)', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism: In Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Brussels: British Library and Academia Press, 2009), pp. 323-24 (p. 324).

plot. Several detailed scenes were inserted in the summary. Meteyard herself had announced, 'the *History of an Authoress* may shortly appear at full length before the public' (245), suggesting that she had already written the subsequent parts, and had been prepared to continue the serialization.

In February 1845, Meteyard published her first short story, 'John Strong's Box', anonymously in *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany*.[41] She received a message of encouragement from Thomas Hood, already seriously ill, and cherished it throughout her career.[42] In the same year she published her first novel, *Struggles for Fame*, in three volumes.[43] The publisher was Thomas Cautley Newby, the first publisher of *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and in the words of Elizabeth Gaskell, a 'mean publisher'.[44] Kay Boardman notes that 'there are a number of cameos of the single woman writer in [Meteyard's] fiction'.[45] Indeed, like her creator, the heroine Barbara embraces a high ideal and is thirsty for fame as a writer, while struggling to make her living.

Struggles for Fame highlights Meteyard's recurring themes. First, it is concerned with issues on the woman question, including female education, opportunities for employment and financial independence. These issues can be seen in various of Meteyard's articles and stories, from 'Protection to Women'(1846),[46] 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' (1847),[47] 'The Glass of Gin' (1849),[48] to 'The Shop at

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[41] [Eliza Meteyard], 'John Strong's Box', *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany*, February 1845, pp. 183-95.
[42] *Portraits of Men of Eminence*, p. 33.
[43] Eliza Meteyard, *Struggles for Fame*, 3 vols (London: T. C. Newby, 1845).
[44] Elizabeth Gaskell, Letter to George Smith, 2 October [1856], *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, ed. by J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Mandolin, 1997), pp. 416-18 (p. 418).
[45] Boardman, p. 50.
[46] Silverpen, 'Protection to Women', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 8 August 1846, pp. 78-79.
[47] Silverpen, 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal*, 9, 16 January 1847, pp. 18-20, 36-38.
[48] Silverpen, 'The Glass of Gin', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 26 May, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 June 1849, pp. 53-57, 69-73, 88-95, 100-104, 120-23, 133-37.

Barrow-in-Furness' (1870).[49] After surviving abuse at the hands of a parish nurse and being kidnapped by a dancing troupe, the heroine settles in London to become a writer. Although all the publishers flatly refuse her first manuscript, Barbara chooses her career rather than a comfortable married life, considering a literary career incompatible with the duties of a wife.

Secondly, *Struggles for Fame* presents the author's strong interests in social evils and talent for realistic descriptions of low life. A typical example is the depiction of a filthy parish nursery and its brutalized matron Mrs. Kite and her daughters:

> The floor of the room was of brick, so broken and worn by time, that in places it was sunk into hollows, wherein seemed to be gathered all the filth of a loathsome negligence. . . . One corner of the ill-conditioned chamber held a large bed, that had once possessed curtains — the remnants of which now hung in a thousand tatters, and an ill-concealed rude flock bed, upon which were stretched, some five or six sleeping children. . . . (I, 102)

Some are made to sleep with Godfrey's Cordial, the widely used mixture containing treacle and opium (I, 105-106), so that they would require 'no supper' and 'no undressing' (I, 123). Some are 'tied in a broken go-cart, others seated on the ground' (I, 102). One of the children steals a crust, and 'the hungered child' receives 'repeated slaps upon the head and face' (I, 111). It is a scene comparable to that of Devilsdust's difficult childhood in a nursery of 'infanticide' in chapter five of Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845). Meteyard continued to portray the brutalised population and its weaker victims in her

[49] Silverpen, 'The Shop at Barrow-in-Furness', *Oddfellows' Magazine*, April 1870, pp. 353-60.

works including 'Divinity from Rags' (1846),[50] and 'The Market — Old and New' (1847).

Third, there are signs of Meteyard's firm belief in the potential of the people. In *Struggles for Fame,* the people find the nursery children living in extreme misery, and turn into an enraged mob to attack the house. Their sense of public justice is vindicated when the Kites are put on trial. A reasonable mob was unusual in Victorian social problem narratives. The mob was supposed to be unreasonable and dangerous as represented in *Sybil*, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849), Gaskell's *North and South* (1855), and George Eliot's *Felix Holt* (1866), among other texts. In contrast, Meteyard was to develop her belief in the people's potential in such works as 'The Co-operative Band' (1847)[51] and 'The Prospect of Democracy' (1848).[52]

Although the *New Monthly Magazine* reviewed the novel favourably, pronouncing it 'admirable',[53] it was suspicious about the sex and identity of the obscure writer 'Eliza Meteyard':

> There is some mystification in the preface to this novel, and in the name attached to it, which we shall not attempt to unravel. We have given a sufficient idea of its contents to show that if written by a lady, like many a pencil sketch, it has been touched up by a *master's* hand.[54]

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[50] Silverpen, 'Divinity from Rags', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, December 1846, pp. 541-57.
[51] Silverpen, 'The Co-operative Band', *Howitt's Journal*, 13, 20 March 1847, pp.144-46, 156-58.
[52] Silverpen, 'The Prospect of Democracy', *Republican,* no month given, 1848, pp. 45-47.
[53] 'Struggles for Fame', *New Monthly Magazine*, November 1845, pp. 370-72 (p. 370).
[54] 'Struggles for Fame', *New Monthly Magazine*, p. 372. In this thesis, all italics, capitalisations and underlines in quotations are in the original text unless otherwise noted.

It is doubtful that the *Literary Gazette*'s reviewer had even read through *Struggles for Fame* to the end as he commented only on the early part. However, he also identified the unwomanliness of the author for good or ill:

> The talent of the fair author has been exercised upon an incongenial [sic] and ungrateful soil. The bogs, marshes, and wastes of low life are unfit for female cultivation. No woman of respectability can know their nature from experience, and books can neither teach the facts nor how to treat them. . . . and we cannot but be sorry that a clever and intelligent lady should have fancied she could paint the manners of the base, vile, and criminal. . . . it must be confessed, there are scenes and passages which, from a lady's pen do rather surprise us.[55]

Though the influence of the Newgate novel, as the reviewer pointed out, would become weaker, this review predicted Meteyard's career as a radical woman writer.

Forerunners: The Radical Unitarians

1846 was a crucial year for Meteyard, as she was accepted into radical unitarian circles. As soon as she became acquainted with this group, her social sphere was quickly enlarged. Although she gradually modified her views as she grew older, radical unitarian principles constituted her basic tenets. The category of 'radical unitarian' is a fluid one. Kathryn Gleadle applies the term to certain Unitarians who advocated social reform on the grounds of a particular ideological perspective in the 1830s and 1840s.[56] The radical unitarian coterie was an informal network, whose membership was not fixed.

[55] 'Struggles for Fame. By Eliza Meteyard', *Literary Gazette*, 25 October 1845, Reviews Section, p. 704.
[56] Gleadle, pp. 1, 5.

The circle flourished under distinctive and influential activists including W. J. Fox, William Ashurst, and Mary and William Howitt. Following Gleadle's lead, this dissertation refers to those involved in this fluid coterie, sharing their principal tenets with the other members, as 'radical unitarians'. They did not necessarily belong to a Unitarian congregation in a formal sense. As Gleadle points out, some radical 'unitarians' were only temporarily Unitarians although they often participated in the movement.[57]

The Fox Circle: The First Generation

The first group of radical unitarians formed in the early 1830s around William Johnson Fox (1786-1864), a minister of Finsbury Unitarian Chapel at South Place, better known as South Place Chapel, in London.[58] Mary Howitt (1799-1888) referred to 'the circle of the religious lecturer and (later) Member of Parliament, W. J. Fox, and his friends, the Misses Flower' in her autobiography.[59] James Martineau regarded them as a 'free-thinking and free-living clique' and worried about their influence on his sister Harriet.[60] The core members of the 'clique' were radical unitarians. They firmly supported the cause of all human rights, particularly those of women and the working classes. Highly intelligent, they were nevertheless regarded as, to echo Gleadle, 'an eccentric minority'.[61]

Most of the core members of the Fox coterie came from non-conformist families; some were educated in Scotland, others spending their childhood or youth abroad. Their

[57] Gleadle, p. 5.
[58] Woodring, p. 54.
[59] Mary Howitt, I, 209; Gleadle, p. 42.
[60] Qtd. in R. K. Webb, 'Fox, William Johnson (1786-1864)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn., May 2009 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/10047>
[61] Gleadle, p. 43.

backgrounds help to explain why they were rather free from Victorian social conventions. Eliza (1803-1846) and Sarah (1805-1848) Flower were daughters of a Unitarian political writer and publisher Benjamin Flower, imprisoned for vindicating his right to freedom of expression in 1799. William Bridges Adams (1797-1872), a son of a coach builder, spent his twenties with the Chilean navy. Mary Leman Grimstone, née Rede (1796-1869) came from a blue-blooded family. She was probably born in Hamburg, where her father, a writer, had fled to avoid creditors. Mary (1800-1870) and Margaret (1803-1887) Gillies, daughters of a 'perennial[ly] bankrupt' corn merchant,[62] enjoyed the guardianship of their uncle Adam Gillies, a notable judge in Edinburgh.[63] The family held a privileged position in local literary circles frequented by celebrities including Sir Walter Scott. Thomas Southwood Smith (1788-1861), born into a strict Baptist family, obtained a doctoral degree in medicine from Edinburgh University in 1816. He became a Unitarian minister, but quitted the position to move to London. Richard Hengist Horne (1802-1884) was raised by his grandmother, as financial difficulties compelled his father to enter a regiment of foot. Early in 1825, he enlisted in the Mexican navy.[64]

By 1830 Fox's Unitarian Chapel, and his house in Stamford Hill, had become a pivotal meeting place for various types of intellectuals. They included the utilitarians Southwood Smith, and John Bowring (1792-1872), a Unitarian merchant and political editor of Bentham's *Westminster Review*.[65] William Godwin (1756-1836), Leigh Hunt

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[62] Anne Blainey, *The Farthing Poet. A Biography of Richard Hengist Horne, 1802-1884. A Lesser Literary Lion* (London: Longmans, 1968), p. 96.
[63] Blainey, pp. 2-6, 62-63. [Margaret] Lindsay, 'Some Recollections of Miss Margaret Gillies', *Temple Bar*, October 1887, pp. 265-73 (p. 265).
[64] Blainey, pp. 2-4, 22-33.
[65] For the relationship between utilitarianism and Unitarianism, see John Seed, 'Unitarianism, Political Economy and the Antinomies of Liberal Culture in Manchester, 1830-1850', *Social History*, 7 (1982), 1-25 (p. 12), Francis E. Mineka, *The Dissidence of Dissent: The Monthly Repository, 1806-1838* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 145-48, and Gleadle, pp. 14-15.

(1784-1859) and Charles Cowden Clarke (1787-1877) provided a link with the radicalism of the Mary Wollstonecraft circle.[66] Those of the rising generation included Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), Harriet Taylor (1807-1858), John Stuart Mill (1806-73),[67] Robert Browning (1812-1897), Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873), John Forster (1812-76), Charles Dickens (1820-1870), G. H. Lewes (1817-1878), and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881).[68] Some were from disparate social backgrounds, including William James Linton (1812-1897),[69] who came from 'the uneasy "middling sort" ',[70] and Ebenezer Elliott (1781-1849), 'the Corn Law Rhymer' and a cutlery merchant.[71] Martineau wrote: 'It amazes me now to think what liberality and forbearance were requisite in the treatment of me by Mr. Fox and the friends I met with at his house'.[72]

The Fox coterie began to break up when Fox, a married man, set up home with Eliza Flower in Craven Hill in 1835. Most women of the core circle had some form of financial independence. This seems to have enabled them to ignore the early Victorian codes of respectability. Eliza Flower assisted Fox as a sub-editor of the *Monthly Repository*, which Fox had bought in 1831 and transformed it from a Unitarian into a radical unitarian platform journal.[73] Margaret Gillies, a notable painter, lived with Southwood Smith, and Mary Gillies, a writer and an unofficial co-editor of the *Monthly*

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[66] John Hollingshead, *My Lifetime*, 2 vols (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1895), I, 45. Richard D. Altick, *The Cowden Clarkes* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1948), p. 19. Gleadle, p. 38. Mary Cowden Clark, *My Long Life: An Autobiographic Sketch* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), pp. 24-25.

[67] Gleadle, p. 38. F. B. Smith identifies the Fox circle with Horne, the Gillies sisters, Robert Browning, Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill (F. B. Smith, *Radical Artisan, William James Linton, 1812-97*, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1973, p. 13).

[68] W. J. Linton, *Threescore and Ten Years 1820-1890: Recollections* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), p. 25.

[69] Hollingshead, I, 45. E. F. Bridell-Fox, 'Robert Browning', *Argosy*, February 1890, pp. 104-108. Gleadle, p. 38.

[70] F. B. Smith, p. 1.

[71] January Searle [G. S. Phillips], *The Life, Character, and Genius, of Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn Law Rhymer* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850), p. 71.

[72] *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder, 1877), I, 148.

[73] Richard Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox: Public Teacher and Social Reformer 1786-1864* (London: John Lane, 1919), pp. 159-67.

Repository,[74] and with Horne, although both were married men. Grimstone, as a prolific radical writer, probably separated from her second husband and lived alone in London later, as no record indicates that she moved into Highgate with William Gillies, her second husband and father to the Gillies sisters, in 1844.[75] The scandal of Fox's relationship with Eliza Flower divested the chapel of formal approval as Unitarian, and Fox and his followers were expelled.[76] Even Harriet Martineau, whose talent had been encouraged by Fox, forsook her close friend Eliza,[77] and kept her distance from the group.[78] The sales of the *Monthly Repository* dropped. Horne succeeded Fox to the editorship in 1836, while Fox became more involved in the Anti-Corn Law League, which estranged Horne.[79] Leigh Hunt bought the journal from Horne in 1837,[80] but it came to an end in the same year.[81] The next generation of radical unitarians, including Meteyard, had to adopt a more prudent and tactical strategy as regards gender.

Principles of the Radical Unitarians

The radical unitarians redefined Unitarianism into a new understanding of it for political purposes, under the influence of the Benthamites and the remaining members of the Mary Wollstonecraft circle. W. J. Linton affirmed Fox as the 'virtual founder of that new school of English radicalism', which intended 'radicalism' to refer to attitudes

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[74] Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), p.152n28. Blainey, pp. 62-69.
[75] Michael Roe, 'Michael Leman Grimstone (1800-1850?): For Women's Rights and Tasmanian Patriotism', Papers and Proceedings, *Tasmania Historical Research Association*, 36 (1989), 8-32 (p.23).
[76] Gleadle, p. 35.
[77] Woodring, p. 116.
[78] Gleadle, p. 35.
[79] F. B. Smith, p. 17.
[80] Gleadle, p. 38.
[81] Alana Eastman, 'Horne, Richard Hengist (1802-1884)', *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, p. 290.

that 'looked beyond the established traditions of the French Revolution, and [being] more poetical, escaped the narrowness of Utilitarianism'.[82]

First of all, the radical unitarian ideology embraced the principle of freedom of conscience, which can be traced to the mainstream Unitarians.[83] Russell Lant Carpenter, a notable Unitarian, remarked that Unitarianism 'did not involve any doctrinal system' except the denial of the idea of a Trinity,[84] which the radical unitarians did not necessarily deny. J. S. Mill called them 'Unitarians & liberals, unsectarianized, & with a larger & more tolerant spirit than common', in his letter to Thomas Carlyle in 1832.[85] Sophia de Morgan noticed that the South Place Chapel was 'frequented by persons of all beliefs and of no particular beliefs, drawn there by the great eloquence' of Fox, the preacher.[86]

Second, the radical unitarians hoped to learn from Christ's example,[87] and to promote universal brotherhood beyond classes and religious differences. Like mainstream Unitarians, they saw Christ as not divine but an ideal man, of whom they could make a model.[88] Fox argued in 1835 that Christ's single-minded purpose was 'to unite mankind in brotherly affection and in brotherly interest',[89] thereby associating it

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[82] William J. Linton, *James Watson. A Memoir* (1880; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1971), p. 58.
[83] Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 54. Gleadle, p. 45.
[84] Philip P. Carpenter, *Memoirs of the Life and Work of Philip Pearsall Carpenter*, ed. by Russell Lant Carpenter (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1880), p. 155.
[85] Mill used the phrase to depict the editor Fox and writers of the *Monthly Repository*. J. S. Mill, letter no.58, to Thomas Carlyle, 17 September 1832, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. by J. M. Robson, 33 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-1991), XII: *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848*, ed. by Francis E. Mineka (1963), pp. 116-22 (p. 118).
[86] Sophia Elizabeth De Morgan, *Three Score Years and Ten: Reminiscences of the Late Sophia Elizabeth De Morgan*, ed. by Mary A. De Morgan (London: Richard Bentley, 1895), p. 91.
[87] Gleadle, p. 45.
[88] R. E. Watts, 'The Unitarian Contribution to the Development of Female Education, 1790-1850', *History of Education*, 9 (1980), 273-86 (p. 275).
[89] 'Lectures on the Morality of the Various Classes, by the Rev. W. J. Fox', *New Moral*

with the Benthamites' secular cause. In 1832 the *Monthly Repository* carried the entire speech Southwood Smith made after dissecting Bentham's corpse, in which he claimed that 'the only comprehensive and only right and proper end of the social union . . . [was] the greatest happiness of all members of the community'.[90]

Third, the radical unitarians regarded education as a panacea for social evils based on the theory of associationism, according to which the mind at birth was a tabula rasa. This idea led to their faith that environments and education moulded man.[91] The faith can be attributed to Unitarianism and utilitarianism. Both Unitarians and Benthamites undermined the orthodox Calvinist concept of original sin by claiming that a tabula rasa meant freedom from sin.[92] It follows that the radical unitarians regarded criminals as victims of imperfect environments and lack of education.[93] Martineau quoted favourably from *The Eighth Report of the Committee of the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline* published in 1832: 'The diffusion of education is, in every point of view, the most efficacious remedy for the prevention of crime'.[94]

World, 26 December 1835, p. 72, qtd. in Gleadle, p. 49.

[90] 'On the Character and Philosophy of the Late Jeremy Bentham', *Monthly Repository,* 2 July 1832, pp. 450-58 (p. 451).

[91] For examples, see V [Harriet Martineau], 'On the Agency of Feelings in the Formation of Habit: And on the Agency of Habits in the Regeneration of Feelings', *Monthly Repository*, February, March 1829, pp. 102-106, 159-162. In 1848, she asserted that children could be 'anything [parents] please' if placed under proper circumstances (H. Martineau, *Household Education*, new edn., London: Smith, Elder, 1870, p. 241). See also R. K. Webb, *Harriet Martineau* (London: Heinemann, 1960), pp. 66, 71, Mineka, p. 239, and R. E. Watts, p. 275.

[92] In many respects, the radical unitarians embraced homogeneous opinions with the Philosophical Radicals and the Owenites. It is because all of them set Locke's and Hartleian associationism as a starting point from which to develop social views. See R. E. Watts, pp. 274-75.

[93] For examples, see W. J. Fox, *Finsbury Lecturers: Reports of Lectures Delivered at the Chapel in South Place,* 7 nos (London: Charles Fox, 1835-1836), V (1835), p. 17, 'On the Parliamentary Pledges at the Ensuing Elections', *Monthly Repository,* July 1832, pp. 433-43 (p. 440), and G. E. Eachus, 'On the Propriety of Totally Abolishing Death-Punishment', *Monthly Repository,* January 1834, pp. 332-36.

[94] [Harriet Martineau], 'Prison Discipline', *Monthly Repository,* September 1832, pp. 577-86 (p. 580). See also Mineka, pp. 265-66.

The radical unitarians advocated the necessity of education regardless of sex or class. Ruth Watts argues that 'the stress on associationism led to the belief that inequalities once accepted as physiological and immutable were, in fact, social and modifiable'.[95] Everyone should have the same potentialities at birth. The *Monthly Repository* asked its audience a rhetorical question, 'Is there no beauty in the principle of equalization. . . ?'[96]

Fourthly, the radical unitarians were active as early feminists in the 1830s and 1840s, preceding the women's rights movement based around Langham Place in the 1850s. They regarded female emancipation as a necessary part of, and the measure of progress.[97] In the 1830s, Grimstone was a leading advocate of women's rights,[98] calling women's elevation in the social scale the 'master-motive' of her mind in a letter to Charles Cowden Clarke.[99] William Bridges Adams published an article 'On the Condition of Women in England' in the *Monthly Repository* in 1833. He compared English women to slaves of a Turkish harem, and marriage to a contract which could be dissolved. The article made the mainstream Unitarians furious.[100] Linton began to champion women's rights under the influence of the Flowers, whom he likened to his 'two elder sisters'.[101]

The radical unitarians' feminism may be traced back to three main backgrounds: the Philosophical Radicals, Mary Wollstonecraft's radicalism, and Unitarianism. The

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[95] R. E. Watts, p. 275.
[96] 'On the Duty of Studying Public Economy', *Monthly Repository,* January 1832, pp. 24-34 (p. 31).
[97] Gleadle, p. 48.
[98] Gleadle p. 37. Rogers, p. 125.
[99] Mary Leman Grimstone, Letter to Charles Cowden Clarke, 26 March 1832, MS, Brotherton Collection, Leeds University, qtd. in Gleadle, p. 143.
[100] Blainey, p. 97.
[101] F. B. Smith, pp. 14-15. Linton, *Threescore,* pp. 24-25. The feminist writer Anna Jameson had close contacts with Unitarian circles, and was involved in the Fox group (Gleadle, p. 39). Blainey states Horne became acquainted with her at Fox's house (p. 97). Horne asserted that she contributed to the *Monthly Repository* while Hunt edited it from 1836 to 1837 (Mineka, p. 386, Gleadle, p. 39).

idea of a table-rasa allowed the philosophical radicals including Bentham and Godwin to see women's intellectual capacities as equal to their male counterparts.[102] F. B. Smith called the women of Craven Hill 'disciples of Mary Wollstonecraft'.[103] Gleadle also argues that the Fox coteries could produce a straight line back to Wollstonecraft's radicalism.[104] She highlights the radical unitarians' feminism to distinguish them from the mainstream Unitarians,[105] pointing it out that the majority of Unitarians perpetuated conventional attitudes to confine women in the domestic sphere,[106] although the denomination produced many individuals who assumed an important role in advocating female emancipation.[107]

Fifthly, the radical unitarians embraced trust in nature and science, seeing God's will in nature's healing and guiding power. They admired the Lake poets.[108] The *Monthly Repository* frequently discussed their works, paying special attention to Wordsworth, whose poetry employed biblical imagery associated with natural beauty.[109] However, the radical unitarians did not place industrialisation in contraposition to nature, considering industrialisation to be the fruit of nature and an essential part of it. The view again originated from their Unitarian roots. The Unitarians took it as a human mission in accord with God's will to understand natural law and to utilise scientific discoveries and knowledge through mechanisation for the welfare of mankind.[110] The radical unitarians saw in mechanisation promising opportunities for moral advancement. In *The*

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[102] Miriam Williford, 'Bentham on the Rights of Women', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36 (1975), 167-176 (p. 168). For the relation between Utilitarianism and feminism, see also Terence Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory: Revisionist Studies in the History of Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 158-77.
[103] F. B. Smith, pp. 14-15.
[104] Gleadle, p. 38.
[105] Gleadle, p. 34.
[106] Gleadle, pp. 20-32.
[107] Gleadle, p. 4.
[108] Gleadle, p. 46.
[109] M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 17-70.
[110] Gleadle, pp. 46-47.

Rights of Morality (1832), William Bridges Adams took into account Malthus's theory on population to argue:

> . . . in spite of this constant struggle of population against food, human happiness and human refinement has much increased, and continues daily to increase, because human drudgery is constantly lessening, through the agency of machinery, which thus affords leisure for devising and accomplishing many things, tending to the benefit of the human race.[111]

On the other hand, the radical unitarians recognised that industrialisation had caused the miseries of the working class. They asserted that new social values should be planted so that technology could serve social progress well. The article 'On the Duty of Studying Political Economy', which ran in the *Monthly Repository* (1832), claimed that the people 'must' become acquainted with 'the principles of political economy' for their own happiness.[112] The mainstream Unitarians had had a tradition of paternalistic manufacturers, such as the Gregs and the Strutts,[113] who had practiced new forms of management which would supply workers' wider needs, but the radical unitarians extended this 'positive obligation' to 'every member of society'.[114]

Sixth, the radical unitarians publicised 'enlightened co-operation'. They used the term 'co-operation' generally to refer to a system of local small communities,

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[111] Junius Redivivous [William Bridges Adams], *The Rights of Morality: An Essay on the Present State of Society, Moral, Political, and Physical, in England* (London: Effingham Wilson,1832), p. 40.
[112] 'On the Duty', p. 26.
[113] R. K. Webb, 'The Unitarian Background', *Truth, Liberty, Religion: Essays Celebrating Two Hundred Years of Manchester College*, ed. by Barbara Smith (Oxford: Manchester College 1986), pp. 1-30 (p. 17). Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 124-25. See also David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979).
[114] 'On the Duty', p. 26.

contrasting it with 'monopolies' of self-interest, but distinguishing it from 'charities' given from outside, looking on it as essential to the independent success of the people.[115] Robert Owen is usually regarded as the father of the movement,[116] and the Unitarians warmed to his plan. In the *Monthly Repository* in 1821, John Minter Morgan argued that 'the system of private property was incompatible' with the spirit of Christianity, and pronounced Owen as an 'unwearied philanthropist'.[117] A reader favourably responded to Morgan in claiming the Unitarians to be 'the best qualified to appreciate the force of Mr. Owen's arguments'.[118] The radical unitarians pursued this line. They called Owen 'our friend' and 'the most Christian-minded man now living',[119] and were determined to support the co-operative principle as far as compatible with the existing government and capitalism. Keeping a distance from any destructive and hasty revolutionary ideas, they intended the principle to be a social remedy immediately available, and working gradually as '[m]an cannot bear sudden transitions either bodily or mental'.[120] Fox said, 'Our social arrangements may stop far short of forms contemplated by Mr. Owen, but there seems good reason to expect that they will be modified by the influences of his favourite co-operative principle'.[121]

The second generation of radical unitarians maintained all six principles although

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[115] 'On the Duty', p. 26.

[116] G. D. H. Cole, *The British Co-operative Movement in a Socialist Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951), p. 28.

[117] [John Minter Morgan], 'The Nonconformist', *Monthly Repository,* February 1821, pp. 88-101 (pp. 88, 98). The article is anonymous, but the same one is included in Morgan's book *The Christian Commonwealth* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850).

[118] 'Mr. Owen's Plan', *Monthly Repository,* August 1823, pp. 450-57 (p. 459). See also [William Frend], 'State of Public Affairs', *Monthly Repository,* August 1817, pp. 508-11 (pp. 510-11).

[119] R[ichard] H[engist] H[orne], 'The Innocent Debates on Spain', *Monthly Repository,* May 1837, pp. 305-14 (p. 313). 'The Queen', *Monthly Repository,* August 1837, pp. 80-85 (p. 84).

[120] C., 'The Book of the New Moral World', *Monthly Repository,* December 1836, pp. 742-47 (p. 746).

[121] W. J. Fox, "Art. I. Men and Things in 1823', *Westminster Review,* January 1824, pp. 1-18 (p. 8)

with some modifications, and the principles are clearly reflected in Meteyard's writings, which will be discussed in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2: Becoming a Radical Unitarian

Interconnecting Circles: the Second Generation of Radical Unitarians, the Howitts and Eliza Cook

In the late 1830s, the radial unitarian initiative was taken over by the judicial circle around the lawyer William Henry Ashurst (1791?-1855), who introduced a wider range of left-wing secular activists to the group. These included the Italian revolutionary Guisseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), the leading Chartist William Lovett (1800-1877), the free thinking George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906), and the socialist Robert Owen (1771-1858). Ashurst attracted some of Fox's followers, among them John Bowring, Joseph Cowen, W. J. Linton, and Mary and William Howitt.[1]

In 1843 the Howitts moved into the Elms in Clapton, closer to central London. While Ashurst's Muswell Hill home formed the backbone of London's wider radicalism for upwards of twenty years, by the mid-1840s the Howitts' home had become the centre of the literary radical unitarians. These were the second generation of radical unitarians, among whom Meteyard was numbered. They were the direct descendants of the first generation, as literary in essence as the first, and sharing a large portion of its members: W. J. Fox, Southwood Smith, the Gillies sisters, Leigh Hunt, Horne, W. B. Adams, and Mary Leman Grimstone. However, they were, as Gleadle notes, 'no longer perceived as an eccentric minority'.[2] Although the Howitts had become constant

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[1] Eugene L. Rasor, 'Ashurst, William Henry, Senior (1792-1855)', *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals,* ed. by Joseph O. Baylen and Norbert J. Gossman, 3 vols (Hassocks: Harvest Press, 1979-1988), II: *1830-1870* (1984), pp. 18-22 (p. 19).

[2] Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), p. 43.

attendees at a Unitarian chapel,[3] their solid middle-class Quaker origins and connections probably served to rectify the eccentricity of the first generation of radical unitarians. Their reputation as writers had also grown.

Samuel Smiles (1812-1904), the Unitarian reformer and advocate of 'self-help', was closely associated with the Howitts. Mary described him as 'our literary co-worker and much esteemed friend'.[4] Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-1872), a music journalist was also a friend.[5] According to her *Autobiography*, he was like 'a brother' to her.[6] Also included in this small circle at the beginning of 1846 were Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, Charles Dickens, and Douglas Jerrold.[7]

By September 1850, as Mary Howitt noted in her *Autobiography*, Meteyard had become 'a sufficient old friend' of the Howitt family.[8] They introduced her to many of their close friends, and invited her, together with Southwood Smith, Fox, Horne, Charles Mackay, and Mrs P. H. Prideaux, to a party in January 1847,[9] and again, with Elizabeth Gaskell and the Foxes, for Christmas day in 1850.[10] Samuel Smiles exerted a great influence on Meteyard. They shared a concern with popular education and free libraries. Meteyard regarded him as 'so good a friend'.[11] R. W. Lightbown went so far as describe Meteyard as 'not only a friend of Samuel Smiles, but a fervent adherent of

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[3] *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography*, ed. by Margaret Howitt, 2 vols (London: Wm. Isbister, 1889), II, 12, 38.
[4] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 282.
[5] Amice Lee, *Laurels and Rosemary: The Life of William and Mary Howitt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 163.
[6] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, I, 216.
[7] Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), pp. 115-20.
[8] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 61.
[9] Woodring, pp. 120-21.
[10] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 65. Sally Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class, and Women's Reading, 1835-1880* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981), p. 32.
[11] Royal Literary Fund, casefile 1269, no. 27, 3 November 1863.

the same doctrines' of his self-help.[12] Mary Howitt had known the Quaker radical Charles Gilpin (1815-1874), a campaigner for the abolition of the death penalty and a publisher, since he was 'a little boy'. He was another occasional visitor at the Howitts'.[13] Meteyard wrote a story 'The Gibbet: Its Death and Burial' (1846) to champion its abolition,[14] and acknowledged him in the preface to *The Hallowed Spots of Ancient London* (1862).[15]

The second generation of radical unitarians welcomed those Chartists who intended peaceful protest and their supporters, W. J. Linton, Thomas Cooper, Goodwyn Barmby (1820-81), the poet Ebenezer Elliott, and William Lovett. They all hoped to promote collaboration between the classes whereas Feargus O'Conner's hard-line Chartists thought the use or threat of violence might be inevitable in achieving political change. Lovett, the leading Chartist, won William Howitt's confidence.[16] He worked as the printer of *Howitt's Journal*, and according to his autobiography, cultivated a lifelong friendship with his 'esteemed friends' William Howitt and Meteyard.[17]

At the Elms Meteyard was introduced to a number of early feminists who indirectly contributed to her writing career. Samuel Carter Hall (1800-1889) and his wife Anna Maria (1800-1881) shared concerns about women's employment with the Howitts. Mrs. Hall edited *Sharpe's London Magazine* from 1852 to 1853, and Meteyard was to write for it from 1854 to 1861. Eliza Cook (1812-1889) was also a frequent

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[12] R. W. Lightbown, 'An Introduction to the 1970 Edition', *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, by Eliza Meteyard, 2 vols (London: Cornmarket Press, 1970), I, [1-31 (p. 23)].

[13] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, I, 89, II, 92.

[14] E.M. 'The Gibbet: Its Death and Burial', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, September 1846, pp. 230-40.

[15] Eliza Meteyard, *The Hallowed Spots of Ancient London: Historical, Biographical, and Antiquarian Sketches, Illustrative of Places and Events as They Appeared and Occurred in the Olden Time* (London: Charles Griffin; E. Marlborough, 1862), p. ix.

[16] Joel H. Wiener, *William Lovett* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 116.

[17] William Lovett, *The Life and Struggles of William Lovett: In His Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom* (London: Trübner, 1876), p. 409.

visitor at the Elms. Meteyard became a regular contributor to *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1849. Mary Howitt supported Matilda Mary Hays (1820?-1897) in her determination to found a periodical as an arena for free discussion about women's issues in 1847.[18] The Howitts were introduced to Bessie Parkes (1829-1925) by Barbara Leigh Smith (1827-1891) around the same time.[19] Leigh Smith and Parkes founded the *English Woman's Journal* in 1858, Leigh Smith becoming the major shareholder and Hays and Parkes editing the journal, to which Meteyard was to contribute.

As for feminism, the second generation was more prudent than their predecessors, while supporting the extension of women's rights and opportunities for female education and employment no less than the first generation. Finding Meteyard had met with their colleague Edward Youl, a married man, alone although only on one occasion, William Howitt was sufficiently embarrassed to caution her sternly. Mary warned Meteyard 'not to mention the subject to others — for while E. Y. is married the thing looks wrong let it be as pure as it may'.[20] The Howitts did not cut themselves off from Fox, Eliza Flower, Southwood Smith, Horne or the Gilles sisters, all of whom flouted the existing marriage system. However, their cohabitations may have inwardly embarrassed the Howitts, who had grown up with strict Quaker attitudes regarding the sanctity of marriage.

The Howitts' biographer C. L. Woodring regards the Howitts and their associates' interest in literature and the other arts as 'slack in comparison with the circle's strong bond of political liberalism'.[21] The Howitt coterie connected laissez faire economics

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[18] Lisa Merrill, 'Hays, Matilda Mary (1820?–1897)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn., October 2005 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/57829>
[19] Woodring, p. 175.
[20] Qtd. in Woodring, p. 117.
[21] Woodring, p. 115.

with individual freedom,[22] supporting free trade and the anti-Corn Law movement. Their political orientation conspicuously presented them as liberal rather than radical. They had learned the risk of being extremely radical from the first generation. The second generation became more tactical in disseminating and practising the radical unitarian principles of social reform.

As will be seen later, the Howitts' group broke up in 1848, at which point Meteyard became associated with a group that formed around Eliza Cook, a self-educated poet and journalist, and Charlotte Cushman (1816-76), a charismatic American actress. In spite of Cook's notorious masculine dress and short hair, and the gossip surrounding her intimate friendship with Cushman, her poems were widely read,[23] and her firm feminist views attracted many with similar views, including Matilda Hays, Bessie Parkes, and Barbara Leigh Smith. Meteyard became close to Cook and Cushman, and travelled with them around England.[24] It was through Cushman that Meteyard became friends with Eliza Lynn later Eliza Lynn Linton. The Cushman set included Robert Owen, W. J. Linton, George Henry Lewes, and Matilda Hays.[25] Geraldine Jewsbury and Smiles were also closely associated with this group.[26] Neither Cushman nor Cook was a central figure among the radical unitarians, but their friends partly overlapped with the Howitts' circle.

Douglas Jerrold and the Whittington Club

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[22] Woodring, p. 131.
[23] Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 95.
[24] 'Recollections of Eliza Cook', *New Zealand Herald*, 15 October 1880, p. 6.
[25] Lisa Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman: Charlotte Cushman and Her Circle of Female Spectators* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 154, 156.
[26] Alex Tyrrell, 'Samuel Smiles and the Woman Question in Early Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (2000), 185-216 (pp. 205-206).

The year 1846 was crucial for Meteyard as she became acquainted with the journalist Douglas Jerrold (1803-57). At his death in 1857, she wrote to Charles Roach Smith:

> It [the death] has been a real affliction to me; a deep, lingering trouble, that will always leave its memory and its pain. He gave me name [sic] and place in literature; or at least helped to do so; and my reverence and gratitude are eternal. My hero-worship does not follow much, I fancy, in the world's track; at least there must be truth, and real worthiness in what I reverence; the man, not the coat, with me.[27]

Jerrold came from a family whose livelihood had always been precarious. His parents followed the stage and he supported his family from the age of thirteen. He experienced what he later called 'the struggle of London', while working as a printer's apprentice.[28] This experience may have later generated his idea of establishing the Whittington Club for the benefit of the lower middle classes. In the 1840s, while enjoying popularity as a writer for the successful magazine *Punch*, Jerrold edited the two-volume book *Heads of the People* (1840-41), and invited William Howitt to write for it. The other contributors included Thackeray, Mary Russell Mitford, Horne, and Leigh Hunt.[29] It is not known whether Jerrold or the Howitts got to know Meteyard

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[27] Eliza Meteyard, Letter to Charles Roach Smith, 16 June 1857, printed in Charles Roach Smith, 'Miss Meteyard (Silverpen)', *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological* (London: George Bell, 1886), II, 106-112 (p. 108).

[28] Douglas Jerrold, Preface, *St. Giles and St James*, by Jerrold (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1851), pp. iii-iv (p. iv). Michael Slater, 'Jerrold, Douglas William (1803–1857)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn. <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/14789>

[29] Woodring, p. 54. Michael Slater, *Douglas Jerrold 1803-1857* (London: Duckworth, 2002), p. 114.

first, but Jerrold was one of the visitors to the Elms in 1846,[30] and in the same year she began to write for *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* and *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*.

Although he had no close connection with Unitarianism nor gave evidence of any sincere religious convictions, Jerrold shared the radical unitarian ethos. He was politically liberal, supporting free trade and opposed to the Corn Laws, sympathetic to the labouring and lower middle classes, and a champion of popular education and the co-operative movement.[31] He considered mechanisation part of social progress,[32] and he also endorsed the cause of feminism. The novelist Camilla Toulmin, to whom Jerrold gave encouragement, later commented, 'He had considerable faith in woman's capacities for intellectual pursuits while fully recognising the difficulties under which they laboured when struggling in the battle of life'.[33]

The Establishment of the Whittington Club

The radical unitarians played an important part in the formation of the Whittington Club. William Howitt and Meteyard were deeply involved in it from its foundation. The club was a pioneering attempt to extend the privileges of upper-class club life to the lower-middle classes and also to women, in spite of the dominant club tradition of male exclusivity. In this, they were far ahead of the times. Such an enlightened policy particularly as regards women was unknown until much later in the

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[30] Woodring, p. 120.
[31] Slater, *Douglas Jerrold*, pp. 200-201. For example, see 'The Co-operative League Soirée', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 6 March 1847, p. 285.
[32] See rev. of 'Modern Painters', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* July 1846, pp. 11-16. This review criticised *Modern Painters* for impeding 'Progress' by conveying a regret at such fruits of industrialisation as railroads for damaging natural beauty.
[33] Mrs. Newton Crosland, *Landmarks of a Literary Life, 1820-1892* (London: Sampson Low and Marston, 1893), p. 153.

century.[34]

The original plan came from Jerrold.[35] His *Weekly Newspaper* acted as a vehicle in support of the club, its support developed in articles by Angus Bethune Reach, a London literary bohemian, from July to August 1846.[36] The club offered self-improving opportunities and rational recreation and amusement. Jerrold envisaged everyone as 'his own landlord' in the club. Reach described it as 'a political, a literary, a social, a convivial joint stock company'.[37] As Christopher Kent points out, the basic tenet was born from co-operative principles, to attract various sects of radicals.[38]

A public meeting of the club's promoters was held in September and a provisional committee of thirty two 'gentlemen' was appointed. Although Jerrold's original idea had not included it, female admission for full club membership became a main subject for discussion.[39] As Mary Howitt observed in a letter to Meteyard, 'the timid ones' were apprehensive of its radicalism.[40] The second public meeting was held in October. The first resolution, that ladies should be eligible for full membership, was moved and accepted.[41] Emphasis was placed on the approval of famous literary ladies, such as

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[34] June Purvis, *Hard Lessons: The Lives and Education of Working-class Women in Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 117-20, 122-23. Gleadle, p. 148.

[35] Blanchard Jerrold, *Life and Remains of Douglas Jerrold* (London: W. Kent, 1859), p. 247. 'The Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 25 July 1846, p. 29.

[36] 'The Whittington Club. To the Clerks and Assistants of London', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 18 July 1846, pp. 14-15. A.B.R., 'The Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 25 July, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 August 1846, pp. 29-30, 53, 76-77, 101-102, 124-25, 149-50. Although the first article was unsigned, 'A.B.R.' attached to the others suggests that the writer was Angus Bethune Reach.

[37] A.B.R., 'The Whitington Club', 1 August 1846, p. 53.

[38] Christopher Kent, 'The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform', *Victorian Studies,* 18 (1974), 31-55 (pp.31-34).

[39] 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 12 September 1846, p. 198.

[40] Mary Howitt, Letter to Eliza Meteyard, 23 September 1846, MS (Houghton Library, Harvard University, fMS Eng 883.1), I. See also Gleadle, p. 152.

[41] 'Whittington Club and Metropolitan Athenaeum', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 10 October 1846, p. 302.

Mary Howitt, Harriet Martineau and Mary Leman Grimstone.[42] *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* mentioned 'a committee of ladies', under the regulation of which female admission would be carried forward.[43] The committee would examine female entrance qualifications to keep the respectability of the club,[44] and would act as 'a sort of sanction to the timid ones', to echo Mary Howitt.[45] In the same month, the paper ran Meteyard's article 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', which announced their resolution to admit women, and urged readers to 'rejoice in the liberal spirit of this association'. She highlighted the 'mental co-operation' between the sexes the scheme would cause, arguing that women's moralising power would 'raise the moral characteristics of man' while the club would help women to improve their 'mental powers'.[46]

The first general meeting was held towards the end of October. The secretary read the report of the provisional committee, which thanked Jerrold for publishing their report, as well as the article by 'Silverpen', in his *Weekly Newspaper* in order to gain wider publicity. William Howitt, in the chair, made a speech on the club's keynote policy of female admission, and William Shaen called the venture 'one of the most important social movements of the day'. The founding council members were appointed. They consisted of fifty men and fourteen women. Many radical unitarians and their associates were included: Douglas Jerrold and his son W. B. Jerrold, Angus Reach, Mary Leman Grimstone, the Gillies sisters, W. H. Ashurst, William Shaen, Francis Place, Charles Knight, Camilla Toulmin, the Howitts, and Meteyard. There were also

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[42] 'The Whittington Club', *People's Journal,* 17 October 1846, p. 32.
[43] 'The Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 17 October 1846, p. 314.
[44] Kent, p. 37.
[45] Mary Howitt, Letter to Eliza Meteyard, 23 September 1846, MS (Houghton Library, Harvard University, fMS Eng 883.1), I. See also Gleadle, pp.152-53.
[46] Silverpen, 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 24 October 1846, p. 343.

the journalists Charles Mackay, Percy Bolingbroke St John, and Edward Miall. Some of the council members were associated with Chartism, such as John Huffreys Parry, W. H. Prideaux, and Francis Place.[47] Meteyard affirmed that the club was 'meeting the great sexual question of society'.[48]

The first soirée was held in February 1847, with Jerrold in the chair as President, supported by John Bright, the Cowden Clarks, George Cruikshank, Ferdinand Freiligrath, R. H. Horne, William and Mary Howitt, Charles Knight, Joseph Mazzini, J. Humfreys Parry, Southwood Smith, and 'Silverpen'.[49] The speakers included Jerrold, Knight, George Dawson, John Bowring, and William Howitt. The Ashursts, Goodwyn Barmby, Thomas Cooper, W. J. Fox, Charles Gilpin, Margaret Gillies, William Lovett, and Eliza Lynn also attended. According to the press, between 1,300 and 1,400 people were present, and the number of members was 1,200,[50] which grew to about 2,200 in one month.[51]

In April *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* announced that the council for the ensuing year was to be elected in May. The press clarified the club's policy that women were welcome to join its council and management committees, in order to assume responsibility for its governance. The writer recommended the members 'to give plenty of votes to the ladies', saying, 'It would not be too much to expect to see twenty ladies amongst the fifty members'.[52] The result was seventeen women out of seventy-three

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[47] 'Whittington Club and Metropolitan Athenaeum', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 31 October 1846, p. 371.
[48] Silverpen, 'The Manchester Early Closing Demonstration', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 7 November 1846, p. 391.
[49] 'Whittington Club and Metropolitan Athenaeum', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 6, 13 February 1847, pp. 137, 169.
[50] 'First General Soirée of the Whittington Club', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal*, 27 February 1847, p. 17. 'First Soiree of the Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 20 February 1847, pp. 218-29 (p. 218).
[51] 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 20 March, 24 April, 3 May 1847, pp. 347, 506, 570.
[52] 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 24 April 1847, p. 506.

members. The committee included Jerrold as president and all the vice-presidents were re-elected. Harriet Martineau newly joined as a vice president. Meteyard again took a seat on the council.[53]

In June 1847, the Whittington Club held an opening dinner in the first clubhouse at 7 Gresham Street in the City.[54] By October the club had had nearly 3,000 members, and the original clubhouse became too small for lectures and classes.[55] In October, it was seriously damaged by fire,[56] which induced them to move. In November it met in the London Tavern, to elect Mary Russell Mitford, Maria Edgeworth, Joanna Ballie, Mary Somerville, Lady (Sydney) Morgan, and Leigh Hunt as honorary members.[57] In February 1848 a new clubhouse was opened in the Crown and Anchor Hotel, later the Crown and Anchor tavern, at Arundel Street.[58] The Jerrolds, the Clarkes, Cruikshank, Bowring, Charles Knight, Robert Owen, Thomas Cooper, and Vincent Novello were present. The *Illustrated London News* reported the opening soirée with a half-page illustration of the high-ceiling ballroom full of formally dressed ladies and gentlemen.[59]

Meteyard, the Whittington Club and Women Writers

The Whittington Club attracted many literary women.[60] Some feminist reformers became council members along with Meteyard and Mary Leman Grimstone. These

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[53] Kent, p. 37.
[54] 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 19 June 1847, p. 762.
[55] 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 2 October 1847, p. 1233.
[56] 'Fire at the Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 23 October 1847, p. 1335. 'Extensive Fires', *The Times*, 23 October1847, p. 3.
[57] Mary Russell Mitford, *Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, ed. by Henry Chorley, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1872), II, 18. 'Whittington Club', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 6 November 1847, p. 1405.
[58] 'The Whittington Club Soiree', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* 19 February 1848, pp. 243-44 (p. 243).
[59] 'The Whittington Club', *Illustrated London News*, 19 February 1848, p. 110.
[60] Gleadle, p. 37.

included Matilda Hays, Caroline Stansfeld, a daughter of W. H. Ashurst and wife of James Stansfeld, and Clementia Taylor, the future active supporter of women's suffrage.[61] Eliza Lynn was probably a member as well.[62] She lived alone in London, to borrow her own phrase, as 'one of the vanguard of independent women',[63] and later made the eponymous hero of her autobiographical novel *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland* (1885) depict the club vividly:

> The establishment of the Whittington Club, which was to be the beginning of all social good and the grand refining influence and 'leveller up' of the 'second set,' where ladies were to dance with shopmen, and gentlemen were to squire, but not flirt with shopwomen. . . .[64]

The Whittington Club was important in creating a public space for respectable women at a time when they had little public space available. It came into existence more than a decade before the Langham Place Ladies Reading Room established in 1858, originally a part of the *English Woman's Journal* office. Matilda Hays, a Whittington council member, was one of the co-founders of the journal. In the 1860s the Langham Place reading room served as a meeting place for like-minded women,[65] but the *Saturday Review* criticised it for having 'very naughty reading'.[66] Beth Palmer sees

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[61] There is no date in the printed advertisement for the Whittington Club, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds Archive, Symington Papers, Box 19. So some council members may have been recruited later. See also Kent, pp. 38, 43n28, and Gleadle, p. 141.

[62] Eliza Lynn attended the first soirée held on 17 February 1847 ('First General Soirée of the Whittington Club', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal*, 27 February 1847, p. 17).

[63] Mrs. Lynn Linton, *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1885), I, 253.

[64] Lynn Linton, II, 263.

[65] Marion Diamond, *Emigration and Empire: The Life of Maria S. Rye* (New York: Garland, 1999), p. 35.

[66] Cited in Pam Hirsch, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 1827-1891: Feminist, Artist*

in this condemnation 'the concept' of the reading room 'gendered masculine', arguing 'the reading room must also have been perceived as a space for collaborative, politicized thinking and a focal point for turning reading into action'.[67] This was also the case with the Whittington Club reading room.

Meteyard was active as a committee member of the club only for a limited period, but still it was important to her. While in the midst of this unique co-operative and feminist experiment, her political awareness grew and she became more experienced at thinking and writing strategically. The club served as a source of contacts which enlarged her social sphere, in an era when it was considered unwise for a respectable woman to talk alone with a man or men. As Joanne Shattock observes, 'masculine literary networks and networking were conducted much more in public than those involving women'.[68]

The club served as a gathering place for various radical groups such as early feminists, Chartists, middle-class London radicals, Free-traders, Owenites, co-operationists, Benthamites, European refugees and internationalists sympathetic to them, Jewish emancipators, and the radical unitarians. Among the Whittington members were several editors of journals for which Meteyard was to write: Percy Bolingbroke St John of the *Mirror Monthly Magazine* and Matilda Hays of the *English Women's Journal*. The lawyers John Humpreys Parry and William Shaen became Meteyard's solicitors.[69] Camilla Toulmin and her husband Newton Crosland endorsed Meteyard

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and Rebel (London: Chatto and Windus, 1998), p. 197.

[67] Beth Palmer, 'Reading Langham Place Periodicals at Number 19', *Reading and the Victorians*, ed. by Matthew Bradley and Juliet John (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 47-61 (p. 60).

[68] Joanne Shattock, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Her Readers: From *Howitt's Journal* to the *Cornhill*', *Gaskell Journal*, 25 (2011), 77-87 (p. 78).

[69] Gleadle, p. 42. Shaen would later help to resolve Elizabeth Gaskell's libel dispute with the Robinsons over *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857 (Jenny Uglow, 'Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn (1810–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn. <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/10434>).

when she applied to the Royal Literary Fund in 1854, and Shaen did so in 1868.[70]

The libraries and reading rooms of the Whittington Club were also important to other female members. At an early stage when the club committee had decided to give women full membership, both William Howitt and Meteyard cited the reading room of the British Museum, which had accepted women since the late eighteenth century, as a precedent.[71] Howitt assured the committee that 'such a free mingling of ladies in a club' as in the Museum would not 'lead to the worst consequences; to improper acquaintanceship; to improper advances on the part of insolent or designing men'.[72] Meteyard also declared: 'If a moral guarantee be asked, educated woman may proudly point to her moral *status* in the library of the British Museum'.[73]

The club's reasonably priced dining rooms would have also eased Meteyard's life as well as those of other independent single female members. William Howitt stated that the Whittington Club had 'broken the ice of a most dreary custom in this country' where ladies could 'enter no inn, coffee-house, or hotel, without being shut up in private apartments at an advanced charge'.[74] A respectable woman was supposed to take a private room to dine alone in public.[75] Richard Sennett observes that in the restaurants of the century 'a lone respectable woman dining with a group of men, even if her husband were present, would cause an overt sensation'.[76]

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[70] Royal Literary Fund, casefile 1269, nos 9, 12, 37.

[71] Susan David Bernstein, 'Reading Room Geographies of Late Victorian London: The British Museum, Bloomsbury and the People's Palace, Mile End', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 13 (2011), 1-32 (p. 4) <http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.632> See also Susan David Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

[72] William Howitt, 'Observations of the Proposed Whittington Club', *People's Journal*, 24 October 1846, pp. 236-38 (pp. 237-38).

[73] Silverpen, 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 24 October 1846, p. 343.

[74] William Howitt, 'Observations', p. 237.

[75] Frances Power Cobbe, 'Clubs for Women', *Echo*, 14 March 1871, p. 2. Kent, p. 36.

[76] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism*

The club flourished, but the Howitts soon withdrew from its activities,[77] following an acrimonious dispute with their colleague John Saunders, which will be discussed later. Douglas Jerrold and others took sides with Saunders, which made the Howitts' position untenable. It is likely that the Howitts' faithful protégée Meteyard followed them. Her name was rarely associated with the club or Jerrold following the discontinuation of *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in 1848. The need for financial patrons made the club diverge from the original Whittington ideal of equality among all the members. It became more philanthropic and paternalistic in its attitude to its file and rank members. As a result it lost its solidarity and radicalism, which allowed it to survive until 1873. [78]

The 'Journals of Popular Progress'

As a result of her connections with the Howitts and Douglas Jerrold Meteyard became one of the most notable contributors to the so-called 'journals of popular progress'.[79] The journals advocated the social and intellectual improvement of the people and supported humanitarian and progressive causes, with the view that this would lead to progress in society as a whole. While endeavouring to reinforce this view through articles on various topics ranging from social, political, and economic issues to scientific, historical, geographical, and artistic matters, the journals also published fiction to illustrate how the improvements should be achieved. The linchpin of the journals was their articles on controversial questions, but they were literary in essence, and published poetry and literary notices as well as short stories.

(New York: Vintage, 1978), p. 23.

[77] Slater, *Douglas Jerrold*, pp. 208-209. Kent, p. 51.

[78] Kent, pp. 51-55.

[79] Brian Maidment, 'Magazines of Popular Progress and the Artisans', *Victorian Periodical Review,* 17 (1984), 83-94 (p. 93).

The tone of the journals reflected the gradual shift during the 1830s and 1840s from the severe Malthusianism of the early Victorian period to mid-Victorian idealism. Trygve Tholfsen argues that romanticism had begun to exert an influence upon utilitarian ideals of intellectual improvement by the 1830s.[80] The journals of popular progress clothed acute critical observation on social problems with optimistic idealism.

Victorian readers recognised the journals as a separate genre. When Charles Kingsley referred to the 'popular journals of the Howitt and Cook school' in Chapter 23 of *Alton Locke* (1850), he assumed that readers would understand the reference.[81] Helen Rogers distinguishes this genre from two other adjacent groups; 'improvement literature' and 'radical publications'. She regards it as the combination of 'the amusement and instruction' typical of the former, and 'an explicit commitment to social and political reform', found in the latter.[82] Maidment also differentiates the genre from two neighbouring groups: 'blatantly institutional weekly periodicals' including the *Penny Magazine* edited by Charles Knight and the *Saturday Magazine* of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and the Chartist and radical journals of 'ardent political orientation'.[83] The journals of popular progress shared writers with the radical publications, including Edward Youl, W. J. Linton, Thomas Cooper, William Lovett, and Meteyard.

The genre was exemplified by the *People's Journal*, its successor *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress*,[84] and *Eliza Cook's Journal*. These journals resembled one another: all were similar in size, layout and contents, and uniform in

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[80] Trygve R. Tholfsen, *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p. 132.
[81] Maidment, p. 83. Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2000), p. 131.
[82] Rogers, p. 131.
[83] Maidment, p. 83.
[84] The *People's Journal* became the *People's Journal, with Which Is Incorporated Howitts Journal* (1848-1849), and then the *People's and Howitt's Journal* (1850-1851).

price (1½d.) and frequency (weekly). Although more expensive, and different in layout, *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* (6d.) and the monthlies *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1s.) and *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* (1s.), can be included in the genre because of their commitment to the same improving causes. All of the publications sought to bridge the division between classes by promoting dialogue and cooperation, to echo Boardman, through 'cultural negotiation'.[85]

The difference in their prices indicated which side of bridge the journal could actually address. Richard Altick infers that the readership of mid-nineteenth-century shilling magazines was a 'middle-class audience of superior education but with relatively little spending money' or 'the people who disdained cheap weeklies' but 'who could not spare the two shillings or half crown' for a monthly magazine.[86] As Fryckstedt points out, this was the case with Jerrold's *Shilling Magazin*e.[87] Jerrold wished the magazine to 'appeal to the hearts of the Masses of England',[88] but its higher price excluded readers from the lower income bracket. Its price, with the difficulty of the text and its moderate reforming tone, suggests that its actual readers were mainly, to echo Stephen Frederick Roberts, the 'disgruntled middle class'.[89] On the other hand, a cheap price did not necessarily indicate working-class or lower-middle-class readers, but suggested a wider range of readers. As Judith Johnston and Lorraine Kooistra argue, the radical hue and the price of *Eliza Cook's Journal* indicate working and lower middle

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[85] Boardman, p. 53. Maidment, pp. 83, 87.
[86] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 359.
[87] Monica Fryckstedt, *'Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*', *Victorian Periodical Review,* 19 (1986), 2-27 (p. 4).
[88] [Douglas Jerrold], Preface, *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, June 1845, p. iii-iv (p. iii)
[89] Stephen Frederick Roberts, '*Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* (1845-48)', *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London: British Library, 2009), p. 177.

class readers,[90] although it addressed middle and upper class readers as well.[91] The journals of either price range were addressed to like-minded intellectuals, social reformers, and potential and existing contributors to the journals, who expected them to reproduce the gospel of popular progress.

These supposed socially mixed audiences characterized the journals of popular progress,[92] which can be called 'hybrid' publications. *The People's Journal* employed italics to emphasise that the word 'People' in the title should '*express a nation, and not a class'*.[93] *Howitt's Journal* also clarified that the journal was 'bound to no class' in its opening address.[94] Although liberal to radical, the journals of popular progress were resolute in not wanting to be involved in party politics as well as class politics. *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* clearly announced in the preface of the first volume, 'With Politics — as party politics, we meddle not'.[95] Unlike the other bordering genre of Chartist and radical journals, those of popular progress targeted a family readership of both sexes. *Eliza Cook's Journal* ran many articles on various questions directed toward women,[96] but it also published those on self-help, thrift and education, none of which

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[90] Judith E. Johnston, 'Eliza Cook's Journal', *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, pp. 197-98 (p. 198). Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture, 1855-1875* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014), p. 129

[91] As for the readership *Eliza Cook's Journal* targeted, see Johanna M. Smith 'Textual Encounters in *Eliza Cook's Journal*: Class, Gender and Sexuality', *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*, ed. By Laurel Brake and Julie F. Codell (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 50-65 (p. 51). See also Margaret Beetham, 'Women and the Consumption of Print', *Women and Literature in Britain 1800 -1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 55-77 (p. 76).

[92] Maidment, p. 87.

[93] John Saunders, 'Combining Amusement, General Literature, and Instruction, with an Earnest and Business-Like Inquiry into the Best Means of Satisfying the Claims of Industry', *People's Journal*, 3 January 1846, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

[94] [William and Mary Howitt], 'William and Mary Howitt's Address to their Friends and Readers', *Howitt's Journal,* 2 January 1847, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

[95] Jerrold, Preface, *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, p. iii.

[96] Catherine Gallagher regarded the journal as 'intended to reach working-class women' (Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, Chicago: University of

were intended only for women.[97]

A list of contributors may effectively work to identify the journals of popular progress as a genre, for writers were largely shared among them. When most periodicals held a principle of complete anonymity, the contents of the genre were published over an author's full name or pseudonym.[98] Maidment observes that the journals were unique in the Victorian press in the attempt to draw on two different social strata for their writers.[99] Many radical unitarians were among the editors and key authors, some of them on the fringes of the middle class. Their main contributions were in articles, stories and translations, while the other group of writers consisted of working class contributors mostly of verse. The first group urged self-taught working class writers to express themselves.[100]

Although the majority of contributors were predominantly middle-class, there was a more interactive relationship between middle class authors and working class readers than in the institutional magazines, where readers accepted values and knowledge merely passively. The journals of popular progress were egalitarian among classes and between the sexes, never sectarian in religion, and earnest in their endeavours to obtain a broad readership, choosing writers who would carefully avoid unnecessary confrontation and who reinforced the cause of brotherhood.

The Journals and Meteyard's Writing Career in the 1840s

Chicago Press, 1985, p. 136), and Sally Mtichell infers that many of the readers were 'like the editor, mature single women' (Mitchell, p. 28).

[97] See Pauline A. Nestor, 'A New Departure in Women's Publishing: *The English Woman's Journal* and the Victoria Magazine', *Victorian Periodicals Review,* 15 (1982), 93-106 (p. 94).

[98] Oscar Maurer Jr., 'Anonymity vs. Signature in Victorian Reviewing', *Studies in English,* 27 (1948), 1-27 (pp. 2-4). Fryckstedt, p. 3.

[99] Maidment, p. 90.

[100] Maidment, p. 89.

The views of the various intersecting radical unitarian circles were reflected in the journals of popular progress. *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, from 1834 to 1846 under Christian Isobel Johnstone's editorship, published the work of many radical unitarians and their close associates: William Bridges Adams, John Bowring, the Howitts, Leigh Hunt, R. H. Horne, Mary Leman Grimstone, Harriet Martineau, and Meteyard. All except Meteyard had contributed to the *Monthly Repository* from 1831 when Fox became its proprietor, to its demise in 1837. Other contributors to the *Monthly Repository* who moved on to the journals of popular progress included the Flower sisters, Thomas Southwood Smith and Ebenezer Elliott.

Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine was established in 1845. While looking for 'short papers to make variety' in the limited space available,[101] Jerrold desired every essay to 'breath WITH A PURPOSE'.[102] The magazine became, to borrow Jerrold's own words, 'a little too didactic'.[103] The most frequent contributors to the magazine were Henry Chorley, Angus Reach, R. H. Horne and Caroline White. Chorley and Horne were to be regular contributors to *Howitt's Journal*, and White to the *People's Journal.* William Howitt, 'J. S.', probably John Saunders,[104] and the future popular woman novelists, Geraldine Jewsbury, Eliza Lynn, and Dinah M. Mulock (later Craik), also wrote for it. The Chartist Thomas Cooper and the communitarian Goodwyn Barmby demonstrate the cross-cultural character of the journal. Other contributors included Grimstone and Henry Mayhew.

John Saunders launched the *People's Journal* in January 1846. The contributors to the first two volumes represented a period of transition between the radical unitarian

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[101] Douglas Jerrold, Letter to Henry F. Chorley, 6 December [1847], repr. in Walter Jerrold, *Douglas Jerrold: Dramatist and Wit*, 2 vols (London: Hodder and Stoughton, [1914]), II, 483. Fryckstedt, p. 5.
[102] Jerrold, Preface, *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, p. iv.
[103] Jerrold to Chorley, 6 December 1847.
[104] See Fryckstedt, pp. 5, 9.

Monthly Repository and *Howitt's Journal*. Their editors W. J. Fox and William Howitt both wrote for it. Mary Howitt, W. B. Adams, R. H. Horne, Grimstone, Harriet Martineau, and Ebenezer Elliott also contributed. While Martineau did not publish in *Howitt's,* Southwood Smith and John Bowring did not publish in the *People's Journal*, but would return to *Howitt's Journal.* The *People's Journal* enjoyed contributions from Henry Chorley, Samuel Smiles, Margaret Gillies, W. J. Linton, Goodwyn Barmby, Thomas Cooper, Henry Frank Lott, Caroline Alice White and Meteyard; all of whom later published in *Howitt's Journal.* The other contributors to the *People's Journal* included Camilla Toulmin, Joseph Mazzini, Julia Kavanagh, and Angus Reach. Most of these new contributors were closely associated with the Ashursts.

Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper commenced in July 1846, two months after Meteyard began to contribute to his *Shilling Magazine*. The first number ran her article 'The Early Closing Movement'.[105] This periodical shared topics and probably readers in common with the *Shilling Magazine*, although Jerrold's own *Newspaper*, as Monica Fryckstedt indicates, was more radical.[106] Unlike the other journals of the genre, it is difficult to identify writers for the weekly. Some contributions were signed during 1846, but few from the next year. The regular contributors were Jerrold himself, 'A. B. R.' (Angus B. Reach), 'an Eye-witness' (Thomas Cooper), Edward Search (W. H. Ashurst) and 'Silverpen'. Among those who signed their full names were James Stansfeld, the social reformer and W. H. Ashurst's son in law.

In 1846, Meteyard contributed seventeen articles and stories to the journals of popular progress: six published in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* from May, ten in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* from July, one in two instalments in the *People's Journal* in July. She had written for the *Shilling Magazine* as 'E.M.' until

[105] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 18 July 1846, p. 15.
[106] Fryckstedt, p. 3.

December 1846, when she signed her story 'Divinity from Rags' as Silverpen,[107] the pseudonym she had already employed in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper.* It can be fairly assumed that E.M. was Meteyard, as she later attached the two names together.[108] In addition, E.M.'s writings share characteristics in style and content with Silverpen's: such as the frequent use of italics, exclamation marks in conversations, and particular French words including 'chiffonniers' for rag-gatherer. Other common characteristics were a professed admiration for God's natural laws, and the comparison of a clear contrast between light and shade to a painting of Rembrandt.

William Howitt became Saunders's co-editor of the *People's Journal* in April 1846. Their quarrel seems to have begun with financial mismanagement.[109] Howitt expected to be given one-half of the proprietorship, but Saunders insisted on a one-third share for him.[110] Spencer T. Hall was later to suggest that the actual source of the quarrel was probably over leadership.[111] Not believing that he should be responsible for Saunders's debts as a joint proprietor, Howitt launched the rival *Howitt's Journal* in 1847.[112] Samuel Smiles played a crucial role in helping the Howitts shape and keep the course of the journal. 'Assisted by Samuel Smiles', Mary said in her autobiography, 'we sought . . . to urge the labouring classes, by means of temperance, self-education, and

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[107] Silverpen, 'Divinity from Rags', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, December 1846, pp. 541-57.
[108] For example, see the last instalment of 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 8 August 1849, pp. 313-17. See the Introduction for a discussion of Meteyard's signatures.
[109] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 41.
[110] Woodring, p. 128.
[111] Spencer T. Hall, *Biographical Sketches of Remarkable People: Chiefly from Personal Recollection* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1873), p. 314. See also Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 124-25.
[112] See also 'William Howitt', *Men of the Time. Biographical Sketches of Eminent Living Characters*, ed. by [Alaric Alexander Watts], (London: David Bogue, 1856), pp. 392-400 (p. 397). Watts was a future father in law of the Howitts' daughter Anna Mary.

moral conduct, to be their own benefactors'.[113]

In 1847, the Court of Chancery ordered Howitt to pay nearly 4,000 pounds to withdraw from the *People's Journal*.[114] Both the *People's Journal* and *Howitt's Journal* took up the issue, and both Saunders and Howitt sent letters and circulars to London and provincial newspapers.[115] In *Sartain's Union Magazine* in 1851, Meteyard observed that Howitt was reputed to be 'antagonistic': 'with whatever appears to his convictions evil, in things small or great, he is at war'.[116] This acrimonious dispute caused the withdrawal of the Ashursts, Jerrold, Toulmin, Knight, Mazzini and Martineau from the Howitts' circle. Most of the new participants in the *People's Journal* kept their distance from *Howitt's Journal*. On the other hand, Smiles, Chorley, Horne, W. J. Fox and Meteyard chose *Howitt's.* Their writings stopped appearing in the *People's Journal. Howitt's Journal* managed to retain the best writers even after they reduced payment to ten shillings a page due to the financial crisis following the dispute.[117] This is probably because the main contributors had close ties to the Howitts and to one another. Linton, Barmby and Grimstone continued to write for both, granting priority to more opportunities to write rather than maintaining personal relations.

The quarrel may have cast a shadow on the career of Meteyard, who was faithful to the Howitts. The name Silverpen had appeared regularly in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* until January 1847, when the paper began to run most articles unsigned.

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[113] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 42-43.

[114] 'Sale of the People's Journal', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal*, 18 December 1847, p. 399. John Saunders, 'A Few Words to the Public', *People's Journal,* 29 May 1847, p. 308. Woodring, p. 128.

[115] John Saunders, *William Howitt and the People's Journal. An Appeal to the Press and the Public*, nos. 1, 2 (London: People's Journal Office, 1847). *William Howitt's Reply to Mr. Saunders's Appeal to the Press and the Public* (London: Howitt's Journal Office, 1847). 'To the Readers of the People's and Howitt' Journals', *Howitt's Journal*, 28 August 1847, pp. 143-44 (p. 144).

[116] Silverpen, 'William and Mary Howitt', *Sartain's Union Magazine*, February 1851, pp. 100-104 (p. 100).

[117] Woodring, p. 130.

Jerrold also extended its news coverage and the size of the periodical from 26 to 32 pages,[118] giving the largest space to articles on currency issues. His son Blanchard Jerrold later attributed the failure of the paper to this transformation.[119] Moreover, Meteyard could be a difficult contributor. She kept on writing for *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* but contributed only three times in 1847, far less frequently than in 1846. In August 1847 Mary Howitt wrote to Meteyard:

> William told me that Douglas Jerold had returned your last paper. I am very very sorry for it, but if it were his sublime matter I do not wonder. The public is not yet ready for such things. My thoughts are much with you & I have many anxieties about you.[120]

The letter indicates that even the radical writer Mary Howitt constantly restrained Meteyard from going too far for public consumption,[121] although Meteyard became a prolific contributor to *Howitt's Journal*. In 1847 *Howitt's Journal* published nine titles by Silverpen, four of which had two instalments. Three were articles and the others short stories.

The year 1848 became a difficult one for the journals of popular progress and for Meteyard. Silverpen published 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' in *Howitt's Journal,* in four instalments in January,[122] and a complete short story 'Advance within the

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[118] Advertisement of four pages included in both cases. The Stamp Law accepted up to a maximum of 32 pages for a number of a newspaper.
[119] Blanchard Jerrold, pp. 246, 247-48. Slater, *Douglas Jerrold*, pp. 205, 211.
[120] Mary Howitt, Letter to Meteyard, 5 August 1847, MS, 2 vols (Houghton Library, Harvard University, fMS Eng 883.1), I.
[121] See also Gleadle, pp. 44, 97.
[122] Silverpen, 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes', *Howitt's Journal*, 8, 15, 22, 29 January 1848, pp. 20-23, 43-44, 59-61, 76-78.

Household' in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in March.[123] The latter was her only contribution to the magazine that year. The periodical closed in June. On 17 June and 25 July, Silverpen published 'The New Lord Burleigh' in *Howitt's Journal*.[124] The latter was the last number under the Howitts' proprietorship as Howitt went bankrupt.[125] Woodring ascribed its drop in circulation to the very public Saunders-Howitt quarrel. Furthermore, *Howitt's Journal* and the *People's Journal* scrambled for the same limited readership. Saunders had already gone into bankruptcy.[126] Midway through 1848, Willoughby and Company purchased the two weeklies and relaunched them as *The People's Journal into Which Is Incorporated Howitt's Journal.*[127] Meteyard disappeared from its pages, never to return.

She now struggled to find periodicals to write for. She published two articles in the short-lived periodical *The Republican: A Magazine, Advocating the Sovereignty of the People* in 1848. The date of its establishment is not recorded, but the preface to the first volume stated that 'The Political World was calm', and 'We chose this state of quietude, rather than a more exciting period' to start the journal,[128] which suggests that it was after June 1848, the high-point of the threat of O'Connor's hard-line Chartism.[129] The moderate journal advocated Chartist principles to be realised by non-violent

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[123] Silverpen, 'Advance within the Household', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* March 1848, pp. 346-56.
[124] Silverpen, 'The New Lord Burleigh', *Howitt's Journal*, 17, 24 June 1848, pp. 391-94, 403-407.
[125] About the details of the discontinuance, see William Howitt, 'Address to the Readers of Howitt's Journal', *Howitt's Journal,* 3 June 1848, p. 365.
[126] Woodring, pp. 129-30.
[127] Linda Peterson, 'Mother-Daughter Productions: Mary Howitt and Anna Mary Howitt in *Howitt's Journal*, *Household Words*, and Other Mid-Victorian Publications', *Victorian Periodical Review,* 31 (1998), 31-54 (p. 51).
[128] C. G. H., Preface, *Republican: A Magazine, Advocating the Sovereignty of the People*, 1848, p. iii-iv (p.iii).
[129] David Goodway, *London Chartism, 1838-1848*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 116-22.

means,[130] and had a feminist side as well.[131] One of the book reviews admired Mary Howitt's *The Children's Year*,[132] which suggested a connection with the Howitt's circle. It is likely that its principal writer, W. J. Linton, introduced the Howitts' close associates Meteyard and Edward Youl to the *Republican*.[133]

In this year (1848), Meteyard contributed two stories, 'The God of Labour' and 'The Wondrous Tale of Bath', each in two instalments to the *Mirror Monthly Magazine*,[134] which Richard Altick regards as the 'first long-lived cheap periodical'.[135] Henry Brougham, a leading supporter of the Mechanics' Institute movement, founder of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Whittington Club member,[136] looked upon the *Mirror* as 'containing much matter of harmless and even improving amusement, edited with very considerable taste' and presenting 'information of the most instructive kind'.[137] The editor Percy Bolingbroke St John was an active Whittington Club member. Mary and William Howitt and Jerrold wrote for the magazine, which published approving articles on the Whittington Club,[138] praising Jerrold in

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[130] For example, see W. J. Linton, 'Universal Suffrage: The Principle of the People's Charter', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 165-68, 'The Democratic Principle of the People's Charter', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 207-10, and 'Universal Suffrage: The Real Rule of the Wisest', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 221-24, [1848/49?], pp. 2-6. See also Royden Harrison, Gillian B. Woolven, and Robert Duncan comp., *The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals, 1790-1970: A Check List* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977), p. 461.

[131] For example, see Linton, 'Universal Suffrage: The Principles', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 43-44, and review of 'The Works of "George Sand", Translated by Matilda M. Hays, Author of Helen Stanley', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 58-59 (p. 59).

[132] Review of '*The Children's Year*. By Mary Howitt', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 59-60.

[133] For example, Edward Youl, 'Contrasts', *Republican*, 1848, p. 79.

[134] Silverpen, 'The God of Labour', *Mirror Monthly Magazine*, August, September 1848, pp. 83-91, 163-72. Silverpen, 'The Wondrous Tale of Bath', *Mirror Monthly Magazine*, October, November 1848, pp. 430-40, 514-22.

[135] Altick, p. 266.

[136] Richard J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 205.

[137] Lord Henry Brougham, qtd. in John Timbs, *The Year-Book of Facts 1861* (London: W. Kent, 1861), p. 7.

[138] 'Whittington Club and Metropolitan Athenaeum', 1 December 1846, pp. 407-409, January 1847, pp. 69-71; 'Whittington Club', 1 November 1846, p. 331; 'Advantages of

particular.[139] *The Republican* referred to the *Mirror*, stating 'It numbers amongst its contributors, some of the ablest of our magazine writers'.[140]

The year 1848 witnessed the failures of all the three journals of popular progress to which Meteyard had regularly contributed: *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in June,[141] *Howitt's Journal* in July, and Jerrold's *Weekly Newspaper* which Jerrold was compelled to sell, in December.[142] The *Republican* did not hold on long either. It was discontinued after only forty pages of the second volume, probably at the end of 1848 or early 1849.[143]

Eliza Cook's Journal and *Sartain's Union Magazine*

Meteyard began to write for *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1849. As mentioned earlier, Mary Howitt supported Matilda Hays in her attempt to start a new journal. Their mutual friend Charlotte Cushman, a visitor at the Elms, wrote to Meteyard in 1848, inviting her to write for the journal.[144] Although the plan of the new periodical was not realised then, Meteyard became a regular contributor to *Eliza Cook's Journal* edited by Cook, a

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the Whittington Club', 1 July 1847, pp. 44-47, all published in the *Mirror Monthly Magazine*.

[139] For example, see Douglas Jerrold, 'A Fairy Tale for One Hundred Years Ago', *Mirror Monthly Magazine*, 31 January 1846, pp. 75-79 (p. 75), and F.A.B., 'Our Tattler', *Mirror Monthly Magazine*, 1 July 1847, pp. 94-96 (p. 96).

[140] Rev. of '*The Mirror Monthly Magazine.* London: Kent and Richards', *Republican,* 1848, p. 80.

[141] Fryckstedt cites the three factors in the failure of *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*: having too many 'mediocre didactic tales' in the last three volumes, 'unhappy' choice of Horne's serial 'The Dreamer and Workers', and Jerrold's incompatibility as an editor (p. 15). Gleadle also suggested the last reason for the failure of the two publications edited by Jerrold (p. 172).

[142] Michael Slater, '*Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*', *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, p. 177. It became the *Weekly News and Financial Economist*.

[143] It is not known exactly when the *Republican* was discontinued.

[144] Mary Howitt called Cushman 'our old friend' in her letter in 1879 (Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 276). Merrill, p. 159.

frequent visitor at the Elms, and intimate with Cushman.[145] Elizabeth Gaskell chose not to contribute to Cook's journal in spite of an offer, probably through Mary Howitt.[146]

Cook regarded Samuel Smiles and Meteyard as among the principal writers for her new venture. Almost every number in the journal's first year contained a contribution by Meteyard. The signature 'Silverpen' appeared prominently below the titles of some pieces, while others were signed at the end.

Some internal evidence suggests that Meteyard employed another pseudonym, 'Dugdale the Younger', in writing for *Eliza Cook's Journal.*[147] 'Dugdale the Younger' published five historical stories as a series of 'Facts from the County Histories' from July to December 1849, in numbers where Silverpen did not appear. Meteyard reprinted three of them, 'The Heiress of the Spaldings', 'The Clerk of St. Benedict's de Holmo' and 'The Love Steps of Dorothy Vernon', with some minor modifications, signing two names together as 'Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen)', in the quarterly *Reliquary* in the early 1860s.[148] The name Dugdale was probably after Sir William Dugdale (1605-86), the famous antiquary. It was an appropriate pseudonym for Meteyard, who was to become an antiquary herself.

Samuel Smiles sometimes wrote up to half the articles in each number of *Eliza*

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[145] Lee, p. 163.
[146] Shattock, p. 79.
[147] Dugdale the Younger, 'Facts from the County Histories', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 28 July, 4 August, 29 September, 6, 27 October, 1849, pp. 198-99, 213-14, 340-42, 361-63, 408-12, 29 December 1849, pp. 138-41. Each instalment has subtitle, 'Blakeway's Sheriffs of Shropshire. Corbet of Caus', 'Blomefield's Norfolk. The Heiress of the Spaldings', 'Blomefield's Norfolk, and a Ms. Chartulary Relating the County. The Clerk of St. Benedict's de Hulmo', 'The Clerk of St. Benedict's de Hulmo', 'Rudder's Gloucestershire, and Dugdale's Warwickshire. Lodowick Greville', 'Pedigrees in the Harleian MSS. and in Nichols' History of Leicestershire. The Love Steps of Dorothy Vernon'.
[148] Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen), 'The Love Steps of Dorothy Vernon', October 1860, pp. 79-88; 'The Heiress of the Spaldings', January 1861, pp. 175-79; 'St. Benedict's in the Holme, October 1861, pp. 74-82, all published in the *Reliquary.* See also David Trutt, *Haddon Hall's Poems: Nineteenth Century Sentiments* (Los Angeles: David Trutt, 2009), pp. 39-40.

Cook's Journal,[149] but many of them were published anonymously,[150] possibly to avoid the impression that only a handful of writers wrote for the periodical. Meteyard too may have contributed more to *Eliza Cook's Journal* anonymously. Among the other names specified were Percy B. St. John, William Dalton, Julia Kavanagh, Peter Parley, C. A. White, Charles Swain, and Charlotte Yonge.

In 1849, Meteyard began to write for *Sartain's Union Magazine*, one of whose best known contributors was the American Edgar Allan Poe. John Sartain had purchased a half interest in the *Union Magazine*, and transferred it from New York City to Philadelphia, where he published it under the new title, *Sartain's Union Magazine,* from 1849 to 1852. It was likely that Mary Howitt introduced Meteyard to the magazine, as she asked Gaskell to write for it.[151] Meteyard contributed two stories, 'The Talent Misunderstood' (1849) and 'Trade and Gentility' (1850), and a biographical article 'William and Mary Howitt' (1851),[152] which was accompanied by a full page portrait. Among the other contributors were the Howitts, Gaskell, and Harriet Martineau.

It seems that Meteyard gained a considerable reputation while writing for *Eliza Cook's Journal.* Barbara Leigh Smith and Bessie Parkes both favourably commented on Meteyard's contributions to the paper.[153] Eliza Cook changed her editorial policy in 1851; now, writers rarely added their signatures, except for Percy B. St. John, Frances Deane, William Dalton, Smiles and Cook herself. Silverpen could have been among

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[149] Samuel Smiles, *The Autobiography of Samuel Smiles*, ed. by Thomas Mackay (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1905), p. 165. Alex Tyrrell, 'Samuel Smiles and the Woman Question in Early Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (2000), 185-216 (p. 189).

[150] Tim Travers, 'The Problem of Identification of Articles: Samuel Smiles and *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 1849-1854', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 20 (1973), 41-45.

[151] Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (London: Faber, 1993), pp. 173, 234-35.

[152] Silverpen, 'The Talent Misunderstood', August 1849, pp. 72-80; 'Trade and Gentility', September, October 1850, pp. 142-55, 209-14; 'William and Mary Howitt', February 1851, pp. 100-104, all published in *Sartain's Union Magazine*.

[153] Gleadle, p. 181.

them as a regular writer of some note. However, her name suddenly stopped appearing in the journal after the last instalment of her story 'The Derby Babies', published in August 1851,[154] and never appeared again. The journal was discontinued in 1854, owing to Cook's ill health.

The *Mirror Monthly Magazine* became the *London Review* in June 1850, but closed six months later. Meteyard began to write for the *Ragged School Union Magazine*, and the *Working Man's Friend and Family Instructor* in 1850. Although publishing only three articles in the former,[155] she contributed regularly to the latter. The historian Brian Harrison describes the *Working Man's Friend* as an 'improving illustrated paper for working men: the first such papers to become really popular'.[156] It was again probably the Howitts who introduced Meteyard to the editor of the journal, John Cassell, just as they introduced Edward Youl to him.[157] However, it also closed in March 1853.

Whatever the immediate causes were, the journals which regularly published Meteyard's writings were beset by difficulties and did not have long runs. Later Mary Howitt looked back to the decline of *Howitt's Journal* in her autobiography, noting:

> Unfortunately for ourselves, the magazine proved, like its predecessor, a pecuniary failure; and Ebenezer Elliott remarked to us in a shrewd, pithy letter: — 'Men engaged in a death-struggle for bread will pay for amusement when they will not for instruction. They woo laughter to unscare them, that they may forget their

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[154] Eliza Meteyard, 'The Derby Babies. Part VII and Last', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 16 August 1851, pp. 252-56.

[155] Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen), 'Cheap Literature', September 1850, pp. 219-22; Silverpen, 'The Cheap Theatres', October 1850, pp. 248-50; 'Intemperance, Pauperism, and Crime', January 1852, p. 9, all published in *Ragged School Union Magazine.*

[156] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London: Keele University Press, 1994), p. 142.

[157] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 52.

> perils, their wrongs, and their oppressors, and play at undespair. If you were able and willing to fill the journal with fun, it would pay'.[158]

As Maidment argues, the failure of the journals of popular progress was coincident with 'the rise of the "entertaining" fiction-based weekly periodical', and not only the journals of popular progress but also many improving magazines and radical publications declined between 1848 and 1856. With convincing evidence about 'artisan reading habits', Maidment calls them 'the victims of fiction as much as their political and social anachronism'.[159]

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[158] Mary Howitt, *Autobiography*, II, 43.
[159] Maidment, pp. 83-84.

Chapter 3: Social Problem Fiction, Political Economy and Time

'Time versus Malthus'

Meteyard made her debut in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in May 1846, with a story based on theories of political economy: 'Time versus Malthus; The Last Verdict'.[1] The story demonstrated her interest in social progress, political economy, and indirectly the influence of Harriet Martineau, already a well established writer and journalist, whose reputation was, as Martineau herself recognized, 'at its height'.[2]

The protagonist, called the 'moralist' in the story, believes that the population increases geometrically while the food supply grows arithmetically. He laments the tragedy that '[t]oo many creatures are born to starve, and rot, and die' (443). His philosophy of celibacy is contrasted with a cobbler named Tapps, who believes in marriage. While the moralist looks upon marriage and children as 'a curse upon the world' (443), Tapps sees it as a source of human happiness. The moralist warns Tom Kittletink, a working man who has just married:

> The happiness of a day, the misery of years, . . . the workhouse, the parish coffin, the slow-paced eleemosynary doctor, the screaming child, the destitution, the want of mere bread, and last of all, the earth, *this earth*, — you understand ? (446)

However, Tapps recommends the moralist himself to 'git married' (445, 447). A year

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[1] E[liza] M[eteyard], 'Time versus Malthus; The Last Verdict', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, May 1846, pp. 441-48.
[2] Harriet Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, 3rd edn, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder, 1877), I, 136.

passes, and the story ends with the moralist's own marriage. The Kittletinks are there with their baby. Their apparent happiness demonstrates that the moralist's dismal prediction has not come true. The narrator triumphantly brings in a 'verdict' (442): 'Malthus is dead-beat' (447).

The 'moral philosopher' (441) is obviously a caricature of common Malthusian political economists. Malthus himself regarded political economy as a system of 'moral philosophy',[3] and Martineau approved of the view.[4] Meteyard may have held ambivalent views about Martineau, or even felt a sense of rivalry. 'Time versus Malthus' could be a response to her 'Weal and Woe in Garveloch: A Tale', published as the sixth number of *Illustrations of Political Economy* in 1832.[5] Garveloch is a fictitious chain of islands in Scotland, possibly named after the actual sea loch Gareloch in Argyll and Bute. The islands are set 'around the western shore of Argyleshire' in the preceding story 'Ella of Garveloch: A Tale' also in the *Illustrations* (1832).[6] In 'Weal and Woe', Garveloch flourishes and the population grows. However, crops and a haul of herring fail at the same time. Starvation follows. Ronald wishes to marry Katie, a widow with four children, but the couple abandon the idea in view of the economic climate.

In the dialogue, Angus, Katie's friend and Ella's husband, refers to 'savages', who 'make no savings; they have no capital; and their children die off as fast as poverty and disease can drive them out of the world. There is no growth of either capital or population among savages' (44). As Ella Dzelzainis suggests,[7] Martineau made God's

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[3] Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3

[4] Winch, p. 287.

[5] Harriet Martineau, *Weal and Woe in Garveloch* (London: Charles Fox, 1832), bound together into *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 9 vols (London: Charles Fox, 1834), II.

[6] Harriet Martineau, *Ella of Garveloch. A Tale*, 2nd edn (London: Charles Fox, 1832), bound together into *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 9 vols (London: Charles Fox, 1834), II, 1.

[7] Ella Dzelzainis, 'Reason vs Revelation: Feminism, Malthus, and the New Poor Law in Narratives by Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', *19: Interdisciplinary*

words ‘Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth’ relative to ‘time and circumstances’ (44). The local magistrate Mackenzie says:

> When Noah and his little tribe stepped out of the ark into a desolated world, the great object was to increase the number of beings, who might gather and enjoy the fruits which the earth yielded, in an abundance overpowering to the few who were there to consume. (44)

Martineau regarded population growth and the necessity of self-restraint as a feature of modern civilization.

This was the very idea Meteyard attacked in ‘Time versus Malthus’. She has the moralist express Martineau’s views, to be refuted by the cobbler:

> ‘Man’s natural bad passions, or perhaps, rather some inherent principles of nature to over-populate beyond its means of subsistence; that thus only within a mark and bound, civilization shall make progress; that men shall dream futilely of a perpetual summer-time, forgetting the swarm of locusts that hover over to destroy’.
>
> ‘Well sir, I differ’, goes on the cobbler . . . . ‘For the earth is broad and fruitful, and natar’s storehouse not half laid open. *Then,* when the world’s ship *may* go free . . . when ye’ve made him [man] a feelin’ sensible creetur, knowing good from evil, he’ll marry and be given in marriage, without more fear o’ over-populating the earth than filling the sea with too many fishes. And to this time I take it the world is a-going forard too, in spite o’ Parson Malthus and his scholars. *In God’s works there is no flaw. . . .* (444-45)

Tapps persuades the moralist to write such books as will 'help poor creeturs into the light o' wisdom' (445). Tom Kittletink also asks him to give them 'a lift by yer learning' (446). The converted moralist published a book *Truths for the Time* to improve upon and diffuse the 'Truth from Tapps the cobbler' (447). He concludes the story declaring:

> Every day more and more. Cheap bread; the havens of the earth free; science, unbaring [sic] the fruitful bosom of the soil, will show men the profound wisdom of the moral the Greek sage taught, *that Nature's true laws co-exist not with Evil, for Nature is God*. (448)

Meteyard believed that education, free trade, especially the repeal of the Corn Laws, and scientific progress to increase agricultural production and productivity, were the keys to the solution of the population problem and to a utopian future for civilised society.

Not only Meteyard but Martineau also championed free trade and the education of the people.[8] Moreover, Meteyard's anti-Malthusian story champions delayed marriage just as Martineau and other Malthusians did.[9] In 'Time versus Malthus', the moralist, a target of criticism in the story, is 'against marriage, excepting only the case of the rich' (443) who can well afford to provide for children. Tapps, Meteyard's mouthpiece, also accepts that it is right to 'keep single till there's a sumfen for a wife and bits o' children' because 'want o' bread . . . makes children a sort o' thorns in the

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[8] R. K. Webb, 'Martineau, Harriet (1802–1876)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, October 2006 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18228>

[9] G. R. Searle, *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 135. Valerie Kossew Pichanick, *Harriet Martineau: The Woman and Her Work, 1802-76* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1980), pp. 64-66.

way o' poor struggling human creeturs' (444).

Meteyard noticed the confusion, and probably watched for another opportunity to clarify the issue. In her article 'Protection to Women', published in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* in the same year (1846),[10] she explained that it was not a late marriage but 'celibacy' she was attacking, in declaring that celibacy was 'a curse to the world' even though 'forced by the necessities of subsistence' (79). The phrase 'a curse to the world' is connected with the moralist's expression 'a curse upon the world', brought by 'a want of moral restraint' (443), or marriage and children, in 'Time versus Malthus'.[11]

However, Malthus's theories did not champion celibacy. Later in 1852, Martineau commented to Meteyard:[12]

> I suppose you to have read Mill & Malthus for yourself, & by no means to have taken up with the vulgar accounts of them. (How monstrous those vulgar reports still are! A benevolent & sensible & reading man, — 'the best employer in Yorkshire', told his hearers at a set lecture, some time since, that Malthus's doctrine was that a poor man ought never to marry! I wrote to him instantly, & he owned he had never <u>seen</u> his writings.)[13]

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[10] Silverpen, 'Protection to Women', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 8 August 1846, pp. 78-79.

[11] This association can bear evidence of identification of E. M. the writer of 'Time versus Malthus' with Silverpen that of 'Protection to Women', with other proofs given.

[12] It is not known when Meteyard entered into correspondence with Martineau. The earliest letter extant is dated 31 May 1852, in which Martineau said, 'I could not have believed that I shd leave your last very interesting letter so long unanswered' (*Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, ed. by Deborah Anna Logan, 5vols, London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007, III: *Letters 1845-1855*, p. 228). Meteyard's letter to Martineau mentioned here is missing.

[13] Martineau, 'To Eliza Meteyard', 31 May [1852], *Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, III, 228-29.

Martineau highlighted the similarity between Meteyard's view and her own in reflecting that 'for the sake of giving fair play to nature's laws, I shd, I believe, now take much such a view as I suppose you to hold'. She was, she reiterated, willing to 'preach as strongly as ever against the very early marriages of the poor'.[14]

It seems that Meteyard herself had realised this misunderstanding in 'Protection to Women', in which she carefully used the terms 'populationist' and 'economist' instead of 'Malthus', 'Malthusian' and 'moral philosopher'. She no longer employed the dichotomy of 'Time versus Malthus', but tried to offer a point of compromise between them, writing:

> The main difficulty of this population question, is, the reconciliation of the laws of nature, and the laws which man is said to have discovered in political science. That the arguments of the populationists have been overstated we certainly think; while, on the other hand, the laws of nature have been wickedly, miserably disregarded. (78-79)

With these modifications, Meteyard's central tenets were consistent. She continued to highlight the need for education. She argued that society would not gain 'by thriftless marriages between mere children, or a worse connexion, but through the marriages of adults', and that 'adults' should defer marriage owing to 'the wise moral restraint induced by education and example' until 'bread has been no contingency, but theirs by frugality and industry' (78), or until they had provided for a rainy day. This was exactly what Martineau advocated in 'Weal and Woe'.

The main difference between Martineau and Meteyard lay in their vision of social progress. While Martineau believed that history demonstrated a move from abundance

[14] Martineau, 'To Eliza Meteyard', 31 May [1852], p. 228.

in the age of Noah to the deficiency of civilized society, Meteyard thought in terms of the current deficiency moving to abundance in the future, considering that civilization should supply abundant provisions, and enable the people to celebrate happy marriages. Their differences correspond to the developments of the two stories. The narrative trajectory of 'Time versus Malthus' is the reverse of that of 'Weal and Woe', which begins with weal, meaning prosperity or good fortune, in which the population grows, and ends with woe in which a couple refrain from marriage. 'Time versus Malthus' opens with a self-restraining couple visiting the workhouse graveyard. Meteyard uses the word 'woe' at the beginning to describe the moralist's opinion about marriage:

> But doom! doom! woe! woe! babies' smile, children's laughter, a young heart's joy, God's sunshine bright . . . ! sorrow! sorrow! mere wiles towards the great pitfall of Pauperism and Despair. (441)

She closes the story with the weal of their happy marriage and the population growth symbolized by the Kittletinks' baby.

'Time versus Malthus' reflected the shift from the severe Malthusianism of the early Victorian period to mid-Victorian idealism, or, to quote Woodring, from the dismal science to 'sentimental Radicalism'.[15] The former is typified by Martineau, and the latter by Meteyard, although both writers were conscious of time in the stream of social progress. Both writers learned from contemporary theories of political economy, and contributed extensively to the journals of popular progress.

'Art in Spitalfields'

[15] Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 124.

In July 1846 Meteyard contributed a story 'Art in Spitalfields: A Tale' to the *People's Journal*. This story displays her journalistic talent for investigation. The fiction is based on the real history of Spitalfields in the heart of the East End of London.

The story begins in the mid-1820s:

> In the centre of Spitalfields there is a thoroughfare that leads from Crispin-street into Norton Folgate. It wears a peculiar aspect, for the houses are high, ruinous, and many-windowed, particularly near the roof; and whilst these are darkened by innumerable cages of singing-birds, the ledges outside are rarely without boxes or pots filled with such flowers as are in season, and as have thriven as far as meagre leaf and bud, in the close air of the dull city street.
>
> Here and around is essentially the district of the weaving population of London; and it is one of squalor. The broken kennels, the filthy doorways, tell where fever lurks year to year. For the type and badge of things is shown by the frowsy huckster's shop, the poor apothecary's, the unthriving butcher's with its scanty array, the tailor's with nothing in its window but threads and patches, and lastly, with something like a plethora look about it, the pawnbroker's. This last thrives. . . . (40)

This portrait of Spitalfields in the mid-1820s is accurate. At the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685, a large number of Huguenots had taken refuge in England. The French Protestants brought their silk weaving skills to Spitalfields,[16]

[16] 'Industries: Silk-Weaving', *The Victoria History of the County of Middlesex*, ed. by William Page (London: Archibald Constable, 1911), pp. 132-37 (pp. 132-33).

where the silk industry became prosperous. The master weavers lived in well-appointed terrace houses, with the windows of the uppermost floors enlarged for the weavers to have the maximum light for the looms.[17] The imaginary residents' liking for flowers in Meteyard's tale is based on the actual refugees who loved them and carried the bulbs and seeds with them to England. Flowers were the principal design motifs of Spitalfields silks.[18] The 'innumerable cages of singing-birds' in her story reflects the fame of actual Spitalfields weavers for their technique as bird-catchers. They trained songbirds to supply a large part of the home market.[19] During the latter half of the eighteenth century Spitalfields saw frequent riots, caused by the discontent of the lower paid, which led to the introduction of the Spitalfields Acts of 1773, 1792, and 1811. They fixed a uniform wage,[20] and kept the labour rates far above the market ones,[21] which compelled manufacturers to move out of Spitalfields. Consequently the area declined. In the story, the shabby conditions and the prosperous pawnshop show the urban deprivation.

The houses around the area had once had showrooms for the elaborate silk products on the ground floor, which could be easily converted into a pawnshop to display forfeited pledges. Mateyard put a window in her imaginary pawnshop to present the likely items in it:

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[17] Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's, [1921]), pp. 56, 61, 98. Millicent Rose, *The East End of London* (London: Cresset Press, 1951), pp. 44, 159-60.

[18] J. F. Flanagan, Introduction, *Spitalfields Silks of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Leigh-on-Sea, UK: F. Lewis, 1954), pp. 5-23 (p. 19).

[19] Page, p. 137.

[20] The Act of 1773 authorised the magistrates of Middlesex and the aldermen of London to fix the wages of journeyman in silk weaving. The Act of 1792 extended it to those who wove silk mixed with other materials, and the 1811 Act further extended the provisions to woman weavers (Page, pp. 135-36). The plural 'the Spitalfields Acts' tends to be employed to suggest the long term effect of the Acts.

[21] *Observations on the Ruinous Tendency of the Spitalfields Act to the Silk Manufacture of London* (London: Printed for John and Arthur Arch, 1822), p. 2.

> Bandana handkerchiefs, old French books, fragments of foreign tapestry and silk, wood carving and articles of ancient plates, such as caudle cups and spoons, mingled here and there with medals, that in their days were the prizes for rare fantail pigeons, or rarer flowers. (40)

A '[b]andana' was one of the silk specialties of Spitalfields,[22] while 'old French books' and 'fragments of foreign tapestry and silk' were characteristic possessions of the Huguenot immigrants. As for the prize 'medals' for flowers, Spitalfields frequently had won flower contest medals in the eighteenth century.[23]

After introducing Spitalfields in the mid-1820s, the story moves back to the turn of the century. The heroine Sarah sees the weavers 'struggling against low wages, and the prohibitions of their fluctuating trade' (40), which indicates the impact of the Spitalfields Acts and the change in dress fashion. Spitalfields, close to the court, had specialised in gorgeous hand woven silk fabrics with extremely complex patterns, but people came to prefer more loosely woven, softer and lighter fabrics with smaller and simpler patterns. The story involves Restieaux, a local hand loom weaver whose French name suggests that he is descended from the refugees. Sarah gets acquainted with him in the mid-1810s, when he frequents her father's pawnshop. The real weavers actually suffered severely in 1815 and 1816. The silk industry had recovered gradually, but food prices manifested a sharp increase due to the poor harvest while the unemployment rate rose suddenly as a large number of soldiers returned with the end of the Napoleonic War.[24]

The historical accuracy of the story indicates Meteyard's intensive research. The

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[22] *Observations on the Ruinous Tendency*, p. 27.
[23] To take an example, see 'Spitalfields and Its Weavers', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 9 May 1840, pp. 123-25 (p. 124).
[24] J. R. McCulloch, *A Dictionary Practical, Theoretical, and Historical of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*, new edn (London: Longman, 1839), p. 1279.

detailed, realistic portrait of Spitalfields suggests that she actually visited the area, which was not considered very safe, to cover the story. At the time of writing it she lived at 59 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, very close to the British Museum, and about a one hour walk from Spitalfields.

Fact versus Theory

By the mid-1810s, when Sarah meets Restieaux, she has become 'well acquainted with the technicalities of the Jacquard loom' (40). Within a couple of years, a German handicraftsman, Hausen, moves into Spitalfields to learn 'some process of the Jacquard loom then peculiar to Spitalfields' (40). However, in actuality Spitalfields had not introduced the loom at that point.[25] Even in 1832, a Report of the House of Commons noted that the Spitalfields weavers attached 'very little importance' to the Jacquard loom.[26]

According to Meteyard's story, in the year 1824:

> the high duties upon foreign silk, which had for a length of time trammeled and confined the silk manufactures of England, were reduced, and the prohibition on the importation of foreign manufactured silk, unless paying an exorbitant duty, withdrawn. As soon as this act came into power [sic], an immediate and great change took place in the silk trade of England. Throwing mills for the raw materials were increased tenfold, and the looms of Spitalfields could scarcely supply the large demand for woven fabrics. . . . (42)

[25] Page, p. 136.
[26] Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Select Committee on the Silk Trade, Report from Select Committee on the Silk Trade: With the Minutes of Evidence, an Appendix, and Index; 1831-32 (678) XIX. 497.

In this year, Parliament actually abolished the high duty on raw silk, and reduced the tax on silk thread almost by half. Meteyard, loyal to the radical unitarian principle of free trade, supported it in calling the tariffs 'an unjust class monopoly' (42). The Spitalfields Acts were also repealed in 1824, which caused wage cuts. Meteyard depicts Spitalfields between 1824 and 1826 which should have gained in prosperity if things had gone according to the laissez faire theory, but it was not the case.

In 1825, the silk weavers joined workers of the other trades against the re-establishment of the Combination Laws that had been repealed in 1824. The tension increased when Parliament decided to cease the prohibition of foreign silk goods in July 1826. Spitalfields weavers suffered extreme distress.[27] Parliament accepted an enormous number of petitions for the postponement of the admission of foreign silk goods. However, the Tory leader William Huskisson, president of the Board of Trade, did not pay attention to it.[28] He brought the validity of a laissez faire policy into focus, associating the silk weavers' destitution simply with a general depression of trade. John Stuart Mill fully upheld Huskisson's free trade policy in an article 'Rise and Progress of the Silk Trade in England' published in the *Westminster Review* in 1826. He argued that they should not attribute it to 'the anticipation of the effect which the admission of foreign silks may have on the market' because the silk trade was not 'the only trade to which the distress extended'.[29] Like Meteyard, Mill emphasized the prosperous silk

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[27] Iorwerth Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London: John Gast and His Times* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), p. 211.

[28] Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons Hansard, 'Silk Trade' in 'Commons Sitting of Thursday, February 23, 1826'; 1826, 2nd series, XIV. 801-03. See also Simon Hupfel, 'The Spitalfields Acts and the Classics: Ricardo, J. S. Mill, Bowring, and Senior on the London Silk Industry (1823 to 41)', *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 19 (2012), 165-95 (p. 175).

[29] [John Stuart Mill], 'Rise and Progress of the Silk Trade in England, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time', *Westminster Review*, January 1826, pp. 136-49 (p. 137). The publication of this number was significantly delayed. This is why Mill referred to

industry of 1824 and 1825. To display the similarity of their views, the two quotations are placed below.

> The silk trade, in fact, was never brisker than it was during the first year subsequent to the passing of the act of 1824. . . . Although new mills had been erected for throwing silk, the manufacturers were obliged to wait for months, before they could get silk from the throwsters: and in the year 1825, as compared with the preceding year, the importation of thrown silk was nearly trebled. Still the goods were sold as fast as they came out of the loom; and wages not only did not fall, as was predicted after the abolition of what was called the Spitalfields act, but such was the demand, that in some instances they actually rose.[30] (J. S. Mill)

> As soon as this act came into power, an immediate and great change took place in the silk trade of England. Throwing mills for the raw materials were increased tenfold, and the looms of Spitalfields could scarcely supply the large demand of woven fabrics . . . . (Meteyard, 'Art in Spitalfields', 42)

Simon Hupfel regards Mill's argument as wanting 'empirical content'. He indicates that it was a 'quite misleading way to outline the excessive wages of Spitalfields' and suggests his failure to take into account 'the qualitative gap' between London and Manchester. Spitalfields skilled workers were well paid for their exquisite items, but it did not mean regular employment. Even the most highly skilled weavers

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the debate held on 23 February in the number of January ('Editor's Note', *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. by F. E. L. Priestley, 33 vols, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-91, IV: *Essays on Economics and Society*, ed. by J. M. Robson, 1967, p. 126).

[30] [Mill], pp. 137-38.

were compelled to move to cheaper plain or figured lines, as the demand for the latter was far more constant and larger.[31] Meteyard seems to have relied on Mill's, or a similar argument to repeat the same error.[32] 'Art in Spitalfields' was published in 1846 when the Corn Laws were repealed. Advocates of the repeal employed the same rhetoric. For example the article 'The Policy of Repeal of the Corn Laws' (1841) in the *British and Foreign Review* emphasised that 'the manufacture of silks [had] been greatly improved and considerably extended' since the market was opened.[33]

Foreign Competition or Home Competition: Design versus Cost

In Meteyard's story the prosperity of Spitalfields does not last long. A reaction takes place 'in consequence of comparison of hitherto prohibited fabrics of Lyon with our own' (42). In reality, the abolition of the total prohibition of foreign silk goods came into force in July 1826. The threat of foreign competition urged manufacturers to improve their equipment, while silk became popular in high fashion with the influx of foreign goods.[34] The power loom prevailed to increase output and reduce prices, but Spitalfields failed to keep up with the times.

However, Meteyard presents the cause of Spitalfields' decline as follows:

> Superiority of design and colour [of Lyons goods] were unmistakable, though as to actual quality of fabric the looms of Spitalfields were yet unrivalled. This consideration of mere quality weighed nothing with the public; they wanted

[31] Hupfel, pp. 177, 179.
[32] Prothero offers plenty of references to primary sources to prove the sufferings of Spitalfields weavers in the period (Prothero, p. 375n4).
[33] 'The Policy of a Repeal of the Corn Laws', *British and Foreign Review*, April 1841, pp. 462-515 (p. 499).
[34] 'Parliamentary Papers. Hansard, Great Turnstile, Holborn', *Westminster Review*, July 1841, pp. 87-132 (p. 105).

> design and colour, and the Spitalfields masters saw these wants must be supplied, or a vast national trade slip gradually from their fingers into those of Lyonnese. To be aware of a growing necessity and to supply it were two different things; and uneducated in the common principles of design, few could see either causes or remedies, or judge that protection against piracy of original pattern by register, and a better and more general system of education, both as regarded artisan and consumer, were the advantages the French had against ourselves. (42)

Mill's argument was echoed again. In his opinion, the principal problem lay in the inferiority of 'taste, ingenuity, and enterprise', in which 'the French left our manufacturers far behind', although, he expected, once free trade exposed them to the foreign competition, 'the stimulus' would enable manufacturers 'to maintain a successful competition'.[35]

Meteyard attributed Spitalfields' inferior designs to 'piracy' of original patterns (42), copying from French designs, which Mill had called a 'disgrace' to England.[36] While France had admitted copyright of commercial designs by registration since 1806,[37] piracy was generally accepted in England in the 1820s. In the story, a royal duke gives an order to Restieaux's employer for a rich silk tapestry. As both design and fabric should be 'entirely English', 'the dilemma seemed insurmountable', and 'a reward was offered for designs' (42). Restieaux consults Sarah, who weaves the fabric, based on her own sketch of a mulberry tree. Meteyard presents the 'entirely English'

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[35] [Mill], p. 146.
[36] [Mill], p. 146.
[37] J. C. Lahore, 'Art and Function in the Law of Copyright and Designs', *Adelaide Law Review,* 4 (1971-72), 182-209 (p. 222). Kathy Bowrey, 'Art, Craft, Good Taste Manufacturing: The Development of Intellectual Propriety Laws', *Law in Context,* 15 (1997), 78-104.

design as a key to resolving all the national difficulties with the English silk industry:

> This pattern, so bold and yet so true to nature, procured the reward at once, and was some few days afterwards shown as a matter of evidence in the House of Commons as to the capabilities of British textile art. The fabric when woven by Restieaux sold for seven guineas a yard, and proved so good a speculation to the manufacturer, that orders flowed in from sources not wholly English; and the high wages thus earned by Restieaux . . . soon put a new face upon the artisan's humble home. (42)

The free trade advocates Mill and Meteyard supported the repeal of the prohibition of foreign silk goods to spur the English silk industry to create original designs, regarding design protection as governmental intervention irreconcilable with laissez faire principles.[38]

Neither Mill nor Meteyard noticed the fact that the manufacturers in the North smuggled textile designs, not only out of France but also from Spitalfields, to produce them on a large scale with complete impunity. Even before the admission of foreign silk goods, Spitalfields had suffered from piracy. It was observed in 1822 that even the fancy articles, always first made in Spitalfields were 'no sooner out of the loom than they [were] imitated at Manchester and other places; and when these cheaper articles reach[ed] town, the sale of those made in Spitalfields instantly stops'.[39] Moreover, the power looms enabled the Northern manufacturers to mass-produce and sell articles with Spitalfields designs at far lower prices.[40] William Edward Hickson, an assistant

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[38] Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society, 1750-1980* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), p. 59.
[39] *Observations on the Ruinous Tendency*, p. 27.
[40] [George Richardson Porter], *A Treatise on the Origin, Progressive Improvement, and*

commissioner of the House of Commons' Hand-loom Commission observed in 1841: 'This fall of wages in plain silk is, among the weavers of Spitalfields, almost universally ascribed to the loss of their book by the repeal of Spitalfields Act, and to foreign competition', but, he continued, 'the competition which the Spitalfields weavers have to dread, is not so much that of foreigners as the competition of their own countrymen in the north', who were of 'the principles of small profits and large returns'.[41] Mill's and Meteyard's overemphasis on design led to their disregard of production costs, and their emphasis on design schools as a panacea for the silk trade.

Schools of Design: Real versus Fictional

Mill believed that 'the advantage of mechanics' institutions as schools of design' would improve English design and solve the piracy question.[42] By the date of publication of 'Art in Spitalfields', Schools of Design had been already founded: The first one had been established in Somerset House in 1837, under the superintendence of the Board of Trade for the improvement of ornamental art.[43] Spitalfields School of Design opened in the early 1840s as one of its branch schools.[44] However, Meteyard criticised the Government Schools of Design:

Present State of the Silk Manufacturer (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1832), p. 201.

[41] 'Parliamentary Papers', pp. 105, 103. Hickson's report was not included in *Hand-Loom Weavers. Report of Commissioners,* of 1841 session 1, volume X of *Command Papers; Reports of Commissioners.*

[42] [Mill], p. 146.

[43] Peter Cunningham, *Hand-Book of London: Past and Present* (London: John Murray 1850), p. 441.

[44] 'No. 38 Crispin Street, Spitalfields School of Design', *Survey of London* (1900-), XXVII: *Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, ed. by F. H. W. Sheppard, (London: Athlone Press, 1957), p. 139. Henry B. Wheatley, 'School of Design (Government)', *London, Past and Present: Its History, Associations and Traditions Based upon the Handbook of London by the Late Peter Cunningham*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1891), III, 221-22 (p. 222). *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham, 2 vols (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), II: *M-Z*, p. 1370.

> Not that in principle I am for the unconditional fostering of art by either governments municipal or provisional; as lacking the vital spirit of individual enterprise, it is apt to degenerate into lifeless mannerism. But still, to raise taste to universality and maturity from an infantile state; to give means of progress to original talent; to raise that higher class of artisans — which England eventually will do in her Coventry, her Spitalfields, her Norwich, her Manchester. . . . (53)

All four manufacturing districts Meteyard cited were the places the schools of design were located. With her story set in the early 1830s, Meteyard talked about art schools as a contemporary issue in 1846. She regarded the establishment of the schools as governmental interference against the principle of laissez faire,[45] or the state obstruction to self help by the people, arguing:

> Art-schools, free to all classes, must — for them to be at first sufficiently influencing on the public mind — be either countenanced and assisted by the state, or, which is likely and nobler still, grow forth from the mighty omnipotent Combination of the People. (53)

The phrase 'Combination of the People' could be easily associated with strikes, or radical working class movements. The Select Committee of Hand-loom Weavers had been actually nervous of the possibility that the concept of such an institution as a

[45] Forty, p. 59. Hupfel points it out that John Bowring, the Howitts' close friends, took 'a curiously ambivalent attitude' towards 'the institutes that regulated the silk industry' in Lyons, as 'trying to find ways to stimulate economic activity without obstructing the development of a free market system' (p. 182).

School of Design would encourage combinations among workers.[46] Meteyard had a firm trust in the working class. Sarah's establishment of a private design school with her working class partner Restieaux was a muted criticism of Government Schools of Design. At first, she opens drawing schools, which she entrusts to Restieaux, and goes to Germany and France to learn about their textile designs. She comes back to Spitalfields in 1832 to find her schools 'prosperous' (53). She then opens two new schools of textile design, one for adults, the other for youths and artisans, early in 1838. They become successful, but Sarah dies of typhus fever in 1839. Her schools struggle on but only for a few months. In reality, Parliament passed a series of laws from 1839 to extend the coverage of design protection: the Copy Right and Design Act (1839), the Ornamental Designs Act (1842), and the Utility Designs Act (1843). As mentioned, the Spitalfields Design School was established in 1842, but living conditions in Spitalfields remained appalling. With this story, Meteyard suggested the possibility of changing the status quo by education, by a system growing 'forth from the mighty omnipotent Combination of the People' (52).

The Early Closing Movement

The Early Closing Movement was gathering momentum in England in the 1840s when Meteyard began work as a journalist. It focused on retail shops, with the aim of enforcing shorter working hours so that clerks and other workers could have longer leisure time. In 1842, the Metropolitan Early Closing Association reported that most shops stayed open until eleven o'clock or midnight in summer and ten or eleven o'clock in winter.[47] Meteyard, along with other like-minded middle-class writers, regarded

[46] Hupfel, p. 186.
[47] Wilfred B. Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shop Workers: The Struggle to*

shorter working hours, or longer leisure time, as indispensable for the people to improve themselves, and excessive working as leading to moral and social degradation as well as problems of mental and physical health.

However, as Wilfred Whitaker comments in *Victorian and Edwardian Shop Workers*, '[t]he idea that long hours of work were really beneficial, because they kept people out of temptation, was a convenient prop to the Victorian doctrine of the virtue of hard work'.[48] The early closing demonstrations needed to present the prospect that the lower middle class would spend the longer leisure time for their own improvement.

The Whittington Club was intended to give them opportunities to do just that. Christopher Kent argues that 'the founding of the Whittington club was closely connected with the Early Closing Movement'.[49] Angus Reach, an indispensable founding member of the Club, supported the Early Closing Movement.[50] Another Club member and philanthropist John Passmore Edwards was an activist for the Early Closing Association.[51] In 1847, Henry Vincent, a Chartist closely involved in the Ashurst circle, delivered a lecture titled 'The Early Closing Movement' to the Early Closing Society at Finsbury Chapel in London. He referred to the Club as useful for moral and mental advance if only members could afford the time to visit it.[52]

Meteyard also championed early closing, and published the three articles and two stories on the theme, from July 1846 to April 1847, while working as a founding and

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Obtain Better Conditions and a Half Holiday (Devon: David and Charles, 1973), p. 41.

[48] Whitaker, p. 46.

[49] Christopher Kent, 'The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform', *Victorian Studies*, 18 (1974), 31-55 (p. 39).

[50] Kent, p. 39.

[51] Kent, p. 41. A. J. A. Morris, 'Edwards, John Passmore (1823–1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2009 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/32981>

[52] 'Early Closing Movement', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal*, 6 March 1847, p. 20. Henry Vincent, *The Early Closing Movement: A Lecture Delivered on Thursday Evening, January 14, 1847, by Henry Vincent Esq., at Finsbury Chapel, Finsbury Circus* ([London]?: J. Paul, [1847]). See also Kent, p. 39.

council member of the Whittington Club. Her article 'The Early Closing Movement' appeared in the first issue of *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* in July 1846.[53] The article presents the movement in the light of social progress, announcing at the beginning:

> This question, however viewed, is one of the broadest indexes of the vital progress of the age. . . . To the philosophic mind, it seems to realize by its advance man's destined progress from labour towards rest; not rest, as exemptions from that action necessary to his well being; but, from debasing, exhausting, physical labour, that emasculates the feeble races of populated towns, and deadens as well as brutifies at the spade and the plough. (15)

Meteyard oversimplified the problem of long working hours in imputing it to the 'self-interest' of retailers and the 'petty selfishness' of purchasers. She inserted a short dialogue into the article. An anonymous character tries to persuade Thompson, a retailer who is afraid that other rival retailers may earn more after he shuts up early, in claiming: 'we want you to employ men, not slaves'. He assures him that 'as night follows day', the other retailers will, 'for very decency's sake, have to shut up, and follow your example'. When another character, Swallow, insists on shopping whenever he likes, the anonymous character reproves him: 'Swallow, you must buy your lobsters at a proper time' (15).

Meteyard was confident that closing early could never injure trade, not only for luxury articles but also daily necessities. She argued:

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[53] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 18 July 1846, p. 15.

> The public must eat, drink, and be clothed, whether shops are open ten or seventeen hours, — time has therefore no influence over the maximum or the minimum of consumption. The influence of this abridgment will beneficially, as we conceive, permeate down upon the habits of the lower classes; favouring thought and method, and necessitating the payment of wages during reasonable hours. (15)

In actuality, wages were rarely paid 'during reasonable hours' in artisan areas,[54] and it would not have been easy to change the custom.

Meteyard was still optimistic about the Early Closing Movement at this stage. Trusting that human nature was designed to become 'diviner and more spiritual', she supposed that the problem could be solved not through 'enforcement by a coercion bill in capital' but on 'manly argument of reasonable conciliation' (15).

'Messrs. Clothyard's Progress'

Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine published Meteyard's story 'Messrs. Clothyard's Progress' in October 1846.[55] In it she juxtaposed two different employers: Abel Clothyard, a linen draper, who closes his warehouse at midnight; and Bobbin, who closes early. Clothyard's house has about thirty workers living in it. It is 'a strange old dusty cavernous place, densely filled with merchandize and humanity; the former the much more precious commodity' (307). The housing conditions are poor, the diet frugal. There could be found 'only tired hands, dull hair, sunken eyes, pale faces, even the natural grace of woman in her dress forgotten' (309). These are set against 'pretty faces,

[54] See Whitaker, p. 47.
[55] E[liza] M[eteyard], 'Messrs. Clothyard's Progress', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, October 1846, pp. 305-14.

laughing eyes, trim dresses, fairy collars' and 'shining hair' at Bobbin's, where facilities and opportunity for their self-improvement are offered to the employees. There are 'pretty drawings, and books and delicate feminine work' (310) on a table, and a music concert is held there twice a week.

Old Abel Clothyard has made his nephew Abbot Clothyard a business partner, who has never paid attention to the housing conditions until Abel is absent owing to illness. Abbot notices the wretched state of the employees and decides to learn the 'Spirit of Advance' (311) from Bobbin. He makes improvements to his house: now the parlour for female employees has a piano, drawings, and books; on each side of a large gallery, there are private stalls for them, well-lit with good ventilation, with excellent sanitary conditions; in the room for young male workers, there are 'grave books', 'maps', 'drawings, and newspapers' (312); nourishing food is served.

This story illustrates the previous article on the 'The Early Closing Movement' with concrete images. In the article, Meteyard predicted that 'employers [would] exercise their social duties as men, and as men of advance'. Bobbin and Abbot Clothyard accomplish these duties in fiction. In the article Meteyard advised, 'Let the employers equalize humanity, and use, in its true sense, the virtual power which capital bestows'. In her story the two principal characters devote their power to the welfare of employees. In the article, she compared 'all good public measures' to 'an amazing large twelfth-cake', and urged readers to 'be bold enough to put the knife in first' and 'show the world what a flavour there is in it' (15). In the article, she asserted that if one employer showed an example of early closing, other employers would follow, just as Abbot follows Bobbin. However, could this be the case in reality? Meteyard oversimplified human economic activities.

Meteyard expected capitalists to assume responsibility for the care of employees, for their food, clothing, shelter, and welfare, which should, she believed, induce

employees to 'serve in a wiser better spirit', and 'to give and receive back something better than service, something better than money' (309) to their employers, and as a result, employers would obtain business success in recompense. Young Abbot Clothyard acts up to the spirit of advance, and now his business house is 'the massive granite-pointed building' (312). The story closes with the fourth wedding anniversary of Abbot. The workers make him a present of a silver tea service. Engraved on the teapot are these words: 'From the Employed to the Employers to testify that they can appreciate a spirit of beneficence and friendly thoughts for their advance'. '[A]ll his thoughts, care, and some self-sacrifice' are 'richly' (313) paid for. 'Messers. Clothyard's Progress' is advanced, not on paternalistic philanthropy, but on the virtues of reciprocity. Although the story is improbable it illustrates Meteyard's idea of social progress. Different from 'Time versus Malthus', published in the same magazine five months earlier, Meteyard's point is conveyed by the narrative, rather than as a dialogue between the characters.

'Time versus Labour'

'Time versus Labour: Mr Shuttle's Verdict' appeared in November 1846.[56] The story makes a pair with 'Time versus Malthus: The Last Verdict', published half a year earlier. 'Time versus Labour' deals with the Ten Hours' Movement, the working class version of the Early Closing Movement. In the story, workers send their spokesmen Richard Lackbread and Shuttle to Lord Honeysip. Their purpose is to persuade the local beneficent aristocrat to vote against the Bill. Referring to the need for rest, games, and religious and moral instruction, Lackbread appeals to Honeysip:

[56] E[liza] M[eteyard], 'Time versus Labour: Mr. Shuttle's Verdict', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, November 1846, pp. 395-403.

> Give us bread, my lord, first, and then all these things will follow easily. But it is no use talking to a hungry man and his starving children; I say hungry, because if by this bill you take away a sixth of our wages, and set fast a sixth of masters' capital, we shall come to the scanty loaf. . . . Then when we shall have sufficient wages to satisfy propensive [sic] necessities, and to raise us beyond grinding want, — when we can see our children fed and clothed, our hearths cheerful, then we shall work less and rest more. . . . (401-402)

Meteyard's attitude towards the Ten Hours' Bill may appear to contradict her views on the Early Closing Movement, but in her own mind she regarded them as separate issues. She supposed that factory workers were at a different stage of advance from retail shop clerks and assistants. Workers still wanted even the necessities of existence while shop assistants lacked time for self-improvement.

Above all, Meteyard considered the Ten Hours' Bill to be legislative 'interference' (398) against the principle of laissez faire. Lackbread regards Time as workers' 'only heritage' (398) or sole capital, and compares it to their 'estate' (401). Lackbread says to Honeysip, 'Now, my lord, I sincerely believe your philanthropy in this matter, but it is as impossible for a rich man to know the poor man's value of Time, as it is for the born blind to see' (402). This is what Meteyard wanted to say to supporters of the bill, such as Lord Shaftsbury, known at the time as Lord Ashley, who had been working to get the Ten Hours' Bill through Parliament.

She endorsed the repeal of the Corn Laws, and counted on free trade and mechanisation instead of the Ten Hours' Bill. In her story, Spindlegold, a capitalist sympathetic to the workers, attends an artisans' meeting and says:

> In crying for restriction, you forget our capital and machinery; a steam engine isn't like an old woman's spinning wheel, to be twirled only at the cry of every landlady and country squire. Wait, let us get cheap bread, and commerce free; let us have the market of the world for our woollens and our cottons; let us increase the mighty power of every loom by new inventions, and . . . we shall be able to give you more remunerative wages for eight hours' labour than for the twelve you work now. (400)

Lackbread also asserts:

> When we shall through better education perceive the mighty agency and worth of machinery, when we shall have newer Arkwrights, newer Hargraves, newer Lees, newer Watts, then we shall begin to see clearer the now involved question of Rest; which is that steam, and perhaps some mightier agent yet undiscovered, shall be the worker and the willing slave, — the hewer of wood, the drawer of water, — leaving man to the mightier labours of direction and progress. This is the question, but the 'Ten Hours' bill is no step towards it. (402)

Meteyard published another article, 'The Manchester Early Closing Demonstration', in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* in November 1846,[57] the same month as the publication of 'Time versus Labour'. The purport of article is generally the same as the previous article, 'The Early Closing Movement'. It concludes: 'Men and employers, in advancing this great moral question, you will promote your own interests and that of society at large, and none more fearlessly asserts this, than

[57] Silverpen, 'The Manchester Early Closing Demonstration', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 7 November 1846, p. 391.

your earnest writer SILVERPEN' (391).

Between Laissez Faire and Legal Restriction

Meteyard became aware that appeals to employers or shoppers on the grounds of social advancement were not effective in achieving early closing. In April 1847 she contributed another article, 'The Early Closing Movement', to *Howitt's Journal,*[58] this time addressing it mainly to employees:

> With respect to the Ten Hours Bill, we have regretted the necessity of an appeal to Parliament; for we cannot but consider coercion in any form only as adverse to moral and political liberty. Still this step was necessitated. If capital does not understand its moral obligations, then law must teach them; and the productions and services of man must not be held at higher price than man himself. We therefore do say, in respect to this Early Closing Movement, that much as the step would, and that rightly, be deprecated by all wise and earnest thinkers, an appeal to Parliament will grow out of the spirit of enlightenment in the employed, when once they fairly judge their own right, and the duty of employers, if the claim for shortened hours should not be received in the spirit it ought. (209)

In the previous year, Meteyard had opposed 'enforcement' by legislative interference. Compared with Martineau, who did not accept the necessity of the state's

[58] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement', *Howitt's Journal*, 10 April 1847, pp. 208-209.

intervention until the late 1850s,[59] her conversion was surprisingly early. She announced:

> Therefore, it is you, the employed, that as a body must combine, and coalesce in this great movement. . . . Recollect that in your hands much of the power of this cause lies; and no intimidation ought to prevent your combined agitation of this important question, and the calling the attention of your employers to it. (209)

Meteyard urged readers to become 'the first promoters of this agitation for the reduction of the hours of labour in retail trades', believing, too idealistically, that 'public opinion' would be led by the agitation. This was extremely radical for a middle-class writer in the mid-1840s. The word 'combination' implied a trade union, which had been illegal until the repeal of the Combination Acts of 1824, when the repeal led to an outbreak of strikes, and the new Combination Act of 1825. Meteyard ended the article promising, 'I shall return again and again to this subject, as one among those to which I have pledged my life and labour' (209). However, her articles directly advocating the movement were never again to appear in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* or in *Howitt's Journal*.

Two years later, Meteyard shifted her focus on the Early Closing Movement from shop clerks and workers to milliners, dressmakers, and seamstresses who produced commercial goods for them, publishing her fourth article on early closing, 'The Early Closing Movement. Milliners and Dressmakers' in *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1849.[60] This shift in emphasis shows that Meteyard began to consider, as a journalist and social reformer, how to make her opinion acceptable to middle class readers, especially to

[59] Webb, 'Martineau, Harriet' <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18228>
[60] Silverpen, 'The Early Closing Movement. Milliners and Dressmakers', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 7 July 1849, pp. 154-56.

women, whom *Eliza Cook's Journal* mainly targeted. Lynn Alexander argues that the seamstress had become a symbol of helpless suffering by the mid-1840s,[61] a figure whom readers would not associate with riots, the rabble, or combination. These oppressed female workers could be represented as genuine victims of long working hours. After describing their pitiable state, Meteyard ended the article in a persuasive though mild tone:

> Agreeing with Mr. Mill, that any legislative restriction, as to time, would be both indefensible and mischievous, still let the Early Closing Association, through an acting section of their body, petition the influential ladies of this country to countenance an abridgment of hours in this department, and solicit the patronage of her Most Gracious Majesty to the same. We desire no monopoly of trade, or monopoly of patronage; but justice and mercy should, and will, be countenanced by the just and merciful. (155-56)

Meteyard found a point of compromise between the principle of laissez faire and legislative intervention, with the potentiality of female solidarity and sisterhood.

Social Utopianism with a Communitarian Ideal of Co-operation

Meteyard's first article on early closing published in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* stated that the Early Closing Movement gave to the human mind 'hope of a time when equalizing, co-operative industry, shall give bread to all in plenty' (15). She regarded co-operation as a key to a future utopian society. The term 'utopian socialism'

[61] Lynn M. Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: The Seamstress in Victorian Literature', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* 18 (1999), 29-38 (pp. 32, 37).

is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'a form of socialism that advocates a society planned according to a vision of social perfection, typically founded on egalitarian principles'.[62] Utopian socialists did not regard class struggle or political revolution as necessary to realise a utopian society. The radical unitarians were utopian socialists in this sense. Those frequently referred to as utopian socialists include Henri de Saint Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen,[63] whom William Howitt regarded as standing as 'the champions of the co-operative principle' (312).[64]

The co-operative movement had developed in response to increasing industrialisation. The livelihood of workers was threatened by increasing mechanization and the transformation of society it caused. To echo the Birmingham Co-operative Society, the aim of co-operation was 'mutual protection against poverty'.[65] The radical unitarians had supported the co-operative principle since the 1830s, and it had gained broad support among intellectual leaders by the mid-1840s.[66] While the first generation intended the term 'co-operation' generally to refer to a system of small local communities, the second generation referred to a system of local common ownership of shops and enterprises as well. The system was based on a policy of fair distribution of wealth operated for the good of all.[67]

Samuel Smiles published 'What Is Doing for the People in Leeds' in the *People's*

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[62] 'Utopian Socialism', *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (2013), CD-ROM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[63] 'Utopian Socialism', *Oxford English Dictionary*, CD-ROM (2017).
[64] William Howitt, 'Letters on Labour to the Working Men of England: Letter Fourth. A Retrospective Glance at Co-operative Associations', *Howitt's Journal*, 6 June 1846, pp. 311-314 (p. 312).
[65] A Member, Rule 39 of *Address at the Opening of the Birmingham Co-operative Society*, 17 November 1828, pp.12-13, qtd. in Ronald George Garnett, *Co-operation and the Owenite Socialist Communities in Britain, 1825-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), p. 53.
[66] Woodring, p. 134. George Jacob Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 365. W. H. Brown, *A Century of London Co-operation* (London: Education Committee of the London Co-operative Society, 1928), pp. 11-62.
[67] G. D. H. Cole, *The British Co-operative Movement in a Socialist Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951), p. 15.

Journal in March 1846.[68] He looked upon co-operation among workers as their 'self-help', 'infinitely better' than the 'help of patronage', and stated:

> The great power which seems yet destined to effect the social emancipation of the working classes, is the power of co-operation. In this power they now generally recognize the means of their permanent social elevation, and the foundation of all true progress. Complete civilization, in fact, can only be the result of complete co-operation. (136)

In the next month, he contributed an article 'What Are the People Doing to Educate Themselves' to the same journal, in which he argued that it was an important mission of the press to teach people 'how to co-operate for the common good'.[69] William Howitt contributed 'Letters on Labour to the Working Men of England' a series of essays on co-operation to the *People's Journal* in the same year (1846).[70] The letters dealt with the history and principle of popular co-operation, and its application for the 'destined' (285, 339, 353) utopian future, explaining how to attain this, and what difficulties should be expected. Meteyard's writing on co-operation built on the work of both Smiles and Howitt.

'The Co-operative Band'

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[68] S. Smiles, 'What Is Doing for the People in Leed?', *People's Journal*, 7 March 1846, pp. 136-38.

[69] S. Smiles, 'What Are the People Doing to Educate Themselves?', *People's Journal*, 18, 25 April 1846, pp. 222-24, 229-30 (p. 230).

[70] William Howitt, 'Letters on Labour to the Working Men of England': 'Letter First. On the True Dignity of Labour', 11 April 1846, pp. 208-10; 'Letter Second. On the Power of Labour', 25 April 1846, pp. 236-86; 'Letter Third. On the Application of the Powers of Labour', 23 May 1846, pp. 283-86; 'Letter Fourth. A Retrospective Glance at Co-operative Associations', 6 June 1846, 311-314; 'Letter Fifth. The Work of Today', 20 June 1846, pp. 338-42; 'Letter Sixth. Difficulties to be Encountered, and Advantages to be Won', 27 June 1846, pp. 353-56, all published in the *People's Journal.*

Her story 'The Co-operative Band' appeared in *Howitt's Journal* in March 1847.[71] It illustrates the co-operative theories that Smiles and Howitt had developed in their articles. The narrator recounts a history of the origin of Horeb, 'one of the manufacturing colonies' (153). As is often the case with a utopian story, it begins with contemporary events, and develops into the future. Meteyard advanced the history of Horeb step by step to illustrate what should be done at each stage, and what kind of difficulties could be expected in each phase.

In 'Letters on Labour to the Working Men of England', Howitt encouraged the people 'first to co-operate for the accumulation of capital', even 'out of their small earnings' (340). In Meteyard's story, the suffering workers, laid off owing to 'over production' (144), gather what little money they have to rent some land. To create the fund, one donated a *Bible,* another her wedding-ring. Meteyard presents a detailed list of the donated items and their prices, to make the first step of cooperative utopia-making more realistic.

Smiles illustrated the sums wasted in recent strikes through lost wages (136). Howitt also suggested that the money wasted 'on the folly of strikes' (341) could have served their co-operative endeavours (340-41), highlighting the compatibility of the co-operative scheme with the existing government and capitalism. He considered 'envying and endeavouring to pull down those who has come off better in the struggle of life' and 'complaining of employers and master-manufacturers' (238) as 'dreadfully wrong'. In Meteyard's 'The Co-operative Band', the workers agree on their leader Bold's proposal:

[71] Silverpen, 'The Co-operative Band', *Howitt's Journal,* 13, 20 March 1847, pp. 144-46, 156-58.

> Instead of plotting turn-outs, instead of crying down capital, or fiercely denouncing the government power of the country, let us make society contrast the self-government of co-operation with the class-government legislation. (145)

Smiles advocated the 'equitable' distribution of wealth (136). Howitt also supported 'a more equal diffusion of the profits of labour', arguing that labour should be 'justly and equably paid' (355). In the story, the Co-operative Band started with 'a true end of all true government: *the distribution of wealth, according to the natural apportioning law of ability and labour*' (145). Meteyard looked upon the principle of an equal wage for every co-operative member as actually unequal, and as spoiling lazy and inefficient members while discouraging diligent and able ones. Similarly her contemporary, the Christian Socialist J. M. Ludlow regarded 'the wages of labour' as 'the encouragement of industry' which 'improves in proportion to the encouragement it receives'.[72]

Howitt claimed that 'agriculture and manufactures' should 'be carried at once' in future co-operative colonies in order to effectively abate 'the great and growing nuisance of enormous manufacturing towns' (339). In Meteyard's story, unemployed factory workers dig land on Barren Moor and sow a crop. Children collect the 'hitherto poison and refuse of their miserable lanes and fetid courtways' for manure. 'Thus pestilence [is] borne away' (146).

Howitt considered mechanisation essential to the success of co-operative colonies, where, he predicted, the 'best and most approved machinery' would be employed to 'facilitate production' (341). In Meteyard's story, when drains are formed in the morass,

[72] J. M. Ludlow, *The Master Engineers and Their Workmen: Three Lectures on the Relations of Capital and Labour, Delivered by Request of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations* (London: John James Bezer, 1852), p. 21.

and the dammed-up water is led to the dry upland under the guidance of Broadspring, once a bailiff to a scientific agriculturist, the narrator rejoices over 'power for machinery' (146).

Just as Howitt called labour 'the great root of all capital' (399) in his article, the Co-operative Band members regard labour as their 'truest capital' (145). When the demand rises for cotton fabrics and mill-owners want to employ as many hands as possible, they return to their former workplace, and out of their week's wages, subscribe some money to the Band. Howitt recommended that the people should 'first' co-operate 'for the accumulation of capital', and 'secondly' apply 'that capital to trade and manufactures for their own benefit' (340). Thus, the second phase of the Co-operatives Band begins with capital accumulated by the community.

Howitt argued: 'Where such trades as tailors, stockingers, and shoemakers, are carried on by large numbers working for masters, the wages are wretchedly low'. He attributed this inverse proportion of 'the rate of wages' to 'the number of people employed under one master' to monopolising capital (238). In the story, Jason Bold has the insight that 'the restriction of capital to any one branch of labour, or exchange to any one kind of produce, would not bear out the few great principles of equally distributed wealth' (146), and hires only two tailors and two shoemakers.

Unlike Smiles and Howitt, Meteyard introduced a consumer co-operative scheme into her story. The Co-operative Band pays the tailors and the shoemakers gainful wages, but still this system enables all the 'co-operatists' (157) to obtain high-quality goods at prices lower than market prices. This is because the Band purchased materials in quantity in the wholesale market, which was cheaper than a retail market. Meteyard may have learned the consumer co-operative idea from radical unitarians or their associates, possibly from William Lovett, who had run a shop for the London

Co-operative society in 1824,[73] or through Holyoake, a Whittington Club member, or a member of the Co-operative League of London, the latter associated with the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, an early consumer co-operative founded in 1844.[74] The idea may also have come through Lady Byron (Anne Isabella Noel), a supporter of the Brighton Co-operative Society, closely connected with William King, the pioneer of the consumer co-operative movement. Meteyard joined the first meeting of the Co-operative League of London in December 1846, which was, *Howitt's Journal* reported, attended by Lady Byron and 'various of the active members of the Whittington Club' including the Howitts, Goodwyn Barmby, and Spencer T. Hall.[75]

Meteyard built up her own consumer co-operative scheme scrupulously. G. D. H. Cole cites the following methods of consumer co-operation practiced around the 1840s: 'to sell at cost price, thus facing a risk of loss and making it difficult to build up a capital fund'; to sell 'at market price', applying 'their profits to the building up of a "community" fund, or paying 'dividends on invested capital in proportion to their trading success'; to sell 'at market price', to return 'their surplus to the members in proportion . . . to the cost of their purchase'.[76] Meteyard did not adopt any of these methods for her Co-operative Band:

> Thus when an operative or his family wanted shoes or clothing, he wrote his wants in a book kept for that purpose . . . , commenced his weekly payment into the guarantee or want fund, received his coat or shoes; and whilst these were of the best quality, as regarded material and workmanship, they were

[73] G. D. H. Cole, *The Life of Robert Owen*, 3rd edn (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p. 234.
[74] G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement 1789-1947*, new edn (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 155.
[75] 'Co-operative League', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal,* 13 March 1847, pp. 21-22 (p. 21).
[76] Cole, *Short History*, p. 155.

> procured at less cost than ordinary purchases goods. (157)

This benefited the Band members as purchasers, and their profits were applied to their community making.

Howitt regarded 'Labour and Intellect' as 'the twin-brother[s]' (210) who advance civilization. He mentioned various historical failures of the people in endeavouring to reform their society, and claimed: 'without education, moral as well as literary, that is, without the popular mind being at once enlightened and disciplined, the people possess natural and revealed rights in vain' (285). In Meteyard's story the Co-operative Band form small nightly classes, and several young promising men quit their mills to study 'the higher principles of co-operation'. Under their care, the Band opens 'the co-operative school for industry and education of a really useful kind':

> The error of most associative compacts up to the present time seems to have been this: that the mere gathering together of a body of men, irrespective of condition, training, or moral habits, and calling it social unity, has been mistaken for a true, though slow development, which, beginning as it were in one mind, widens its circle, and advances and humanizes, as imitation and education exert their true influence. (157)

The Co-operative Band planned to found their own manufactory. Howitt warned future co-operatists of the 'difficulties' caused by 'the fear of competition amongst master traders and master manufacturers' (355). In Meteyard's story, these 'unmistakable and vital signs of manufacturing rivalry' (157) alarms the masters, who fire about two hundred co-operatists. They in response establish their own co-operative colony Horeb.

The radical unitarians supported communitarianism, which encouraged the people to build up their own community under the existing social order, but never supported communism, which they saw as opposed to democratic government and capitalism. Howitt clearly distinguished the co-operative principle from the 'awful doctrine of Communism' of 'Babeuf, Proudhon, and Cabet' (312). Meteyard also endeavoured to differentiate her co-operative scheme from communist schemes. When Horeb has 'thriving villages, and a vast extent of manufactories' in twenty-two years, the narrator announced:

> To say that it is a self-supporting colony, would be neither true to the principles that are at its foundation, or that govern it; neither true to a just political power, nor a social, nor a commercial one; nor to the essential doctrines of distributive wealth, as compared to the economist doctrine of a tied-up capital. It is a colony that produces and exchanges; its colonists obey the government laws, and pay the national taxes; they speak the common language, are married and given in marriage; in these things only are they different. . . . (158)

Howitt stated: '[t]hat all the theories of the French philosophers [St. Simon and Fourier] have remained theories, and that of Robert Owen, in our country, has failed in practice, may partly result from the *want* of that religious principle' (314). It was in 1842, when Holyoake had been arrested for blasphemy because he had referred to religion in a socialist community in insisting 'the people of this Country ought not have any religion'.[77] Meteyard kept her distance from secular communitarianism. Towards

[77] George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (London, T. Fisher and Unwin, 1906), pp. 99, 142-44. See also Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791-1866* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1974), pp. 78-79.

the end of the story, the narrator mentions 'the great and mighty nature of man, progressing by the religion of labour towards God', and Horeb is, as the name suggests, presented as 'where stands a temple to the ever-living God' (158). Meteyard depicted Horeb around 1875 as a utopia: '*they are happy, flourishing, and contented; are educated, and advancing in all things with the spirit of their time; their capital is divisible, not monopolized; and crime, poverty, prostitution, and drunkenness, are unknown!*' (158).

The narrator ends the story with the words: 'Such is Horeb, one of the manufacturing colonies destined before many years to change the great industrial features of English labour' (158). Like Smiles and Howitt, Meteyard employed the term 'destined' to argue for the future of the co-operative movement. All three first fixed the utopian future as the high point of civilization, and then looked back at the contemporary co-operative movement from a vantage point in the future.

Radical Unitarians' Co-operative Writing

The radical unitarians applied the co-operative principle in developing their associated housing scheme. In this scheme housing was shared by dozens of families, each of which had its private apartment with communal facilities including a dining room, a kitchen, and domestic services such as cooking and washing. The members paid the running and managing costs, lowering the cost per member for services. Mary Leman Grimstone developed the idea in an article, 'Associated Homes' published in the *People's Journal* in 1846,[78] and another piece under the same title in *Howitt's*

[78] Mary Leman Gillies [Grimstone], 'Associated Homes', *People's Journal*, 10 January 1846, pp. 26-27. To avoid confusion with her step daughter Mary Gillies, this thesis calls her, in the text, as Grimstone, which is the family name of her first husband.

Journal in 1847.[79]

Helen Rogers compares Grimstone with Meteyard commenting that Grimstone 'tended to address political questions in a somewhat moralised and abstract form', while 'Meteyard's fiction and non-fiction were designed to illustrate the applicability of progressive social science and political economy'.[80] This is the case with the first 'Associated Home' piece by Grimstone but not the second, which presents concrete images of associated homes. It referred to the Leeds Co-operative Redemption Society and the Co-operative League of London, which had been radical unitarians' concerns.[81] Then, Grimstone switched the essay to a story about 'a *Labourers Home ten years hence*' (171). She depicted the daily life of Peter, a young bricklayer who belonged to the small community:

> No conveniences either for cooking or washing were required, as kitchens and wash-houses were in common. No steam nor smell of a 'washing day', nor cold-giving damps from wet clothes, destroying all comfort. For the three rooms here described, furnished, lighted, warmed, ventilated, and all rates and taxes paid, Peter paid the same price which he would have paid for three rooms of the ordinary description for a workman of his wages, unfurnished, and without any of the above advantages. Such is the power of combination. (172)

The rhetoric is similar to that employed by Meteyard in 'The Co-operative Band',

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[79] Mary Gillies [Grimstone], 'Associated Homes', *Howitt's Journal*, 27 March 1847, pp. 171-74.

[80] Helen Rogers, 'From "Monster Meetings" to "Fire-side Virtues"? Radical Women and "the People" in the 1840s', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 4 (1990), 52-75 (p. 62).

[81] For example, see Smiles, 'What is Doing for the People in Leeds?', *People's Journal*, pp. 137-38, 'Prosperity of the Co-operative Cause', and 'The Leeds Co-operative League', Weekly Record, *Howitt's Journal,* 9 January 1847, p. 3, and William Howitt, 'Letters' pp. 210, 341.

which had appeared only two weeks before. To convince their audience of the importance and advantages of the co-operative scheme, both writers highlighted the utopian future it would attain.

As the contributors to the journals of popular progress built up their co-operative scheme as a group, readers could put the matter into perspective only when they read all or at least most of the writings concerned, and managed to organize them into a whole picture. In other words, each piece of writing was not autonomous but part of a closely knitted text. By contrast, Elizabeth Gaskell published 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' in *Howitt's Journal*.[82] The work was later extracted from the journal to be published in a collection of her short stories, but is still accessible for modern readers. On the other hand, if a modern reader reads one piece of Meteyard's writing separately, it is not always easy to understand why she insisted upon something so strongly, or why she employed particular terms.

In 1872, a quarter century after she contributed the first article on the early closing movement (1846), Meteyard published a book, *The Nine Hours' Movement* to raise money for the Movement, which succeeded the Ten Hours' Movement as a campaign to further reduce working hours. In the preface she stated:

> I confess I believed in social and industrial communities, and I was even solicited to join and head a community in the western states of North America. But if I have given up communistic opinions, and the belief in human equality apart from social rights, I still more strongly believe in the power of individual savings, used co-operatively, as the means whereby the industrial classes of all countries will obtain the power of higher culture, individual independence,

[82] Cotton Mather Mills [Elizabeth Gaskell], 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras', *Howitt's Journal*, 5, 12, 19 June 1847, pp. 310-13, 334-36, 345-46.

> lessened amount and ameliorated forms of labour, emigration, better dwellings, clubs, and social and individual benefits of many kinds.[83]

Meteyard was to endorse the co-operative principle all her life.

Between Martineau and Gaskell

In his *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women 1827-1867* (1985), Joseph Kestner investigated the tradition of woman writers in the subgenre of social problem fiction. His study includes Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Gaskell. Fiction of this genre dealt with contemporary social problems caused by the Industrial Revolution, such as labour conflicts or urban deprivation, and its context reflected historical facts of the time. Martineau published *The Rioters: Or a Tale of Bad Times* in 1827, and *The Turn-Out: Or Patience Is the Best Policy* in 1829,[84] both set in a real place: the first in Manchester, and the second in Yorkshire. Valerie Sanders and Monica Fryckstedt regard Martineau as a predecessor of Elizabeth Gaskell,[85] whose *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* appeared in 1848. Gaskell frequently refers to the exact years and to precise places such as areas of Manchester to show where and when each historical incident happens in the story.

Meteyard wrote many social problem fictions including 'Art in Spitalfields' and 'The Co-operative Band' between the publication of *Illustrations of Political Economy*

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[83] Eliza Meteyard, *The Nine Hours' Movement. Industrial and Household Tales: John Ashmore of Birmingham. The Glass of Gin. Mrs. Dumple's Cooking School* (London: Longmans and Green, 1872), p. xi.

[84] [Harriet Martineau], *The Rioters: Or a Tale of Bad Times* (Wellington, Salop.: Houlston, 1827). [Harriet Martineau], *The Turn-Out: Or, Patience Is the Best Policy* (Wellington, Salop.: Houlston, 1829).

[85] Valerie Sanders, 'Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Gaskell', *Gaskell Society Journal*, 16 (2002), 64-75.

(1832) and *Mary Barton* (1848). Like the two Unitarian authoresses, she was conscious of the present time, and showed great concern over the current history of the area about which she was writing. Many of her stories began with a contemporary social problem, often written from a point of time in the past, involving some backdating. However, her stories gradually become more speculative in the latter half, to show how the present situation could be different if the remedy she suggested had been applied. Unlike Martineau or Gaskell, Meteyard tended to end her stories in the future,[86] as shown in 'The Co-operative Band', in order to have the freedom to illustrate what she regarded as a utopian society.

Contemporary theories and ideas of political economy were useful for social problem writers in analysing the causes of the problems, and in proposing a remedy for them. Meteyard adopted different attitudes from Martineau or Gaskell towards Malthusian population theory, the law of demand and supply, and the policy of laissez faire. In accordance with Malthusian population theory, Martineau insisted on population control to solve the food shortage caused by overpopulation. On the other hand, Meteyard's point was the necessity of increasing agricultural productivity. In 'The Co-operative Band', she pointed out that the German agricultural chemist Justus von Liebig doubted, as she herself did, 'the political economy doctrine of limits to the fertility of the soil'. She asserted: 'the more that scientific and chemical investigation is followed up — the more will the inexhaustiveness of nature be discovered to be a prime and governing law, of the most beautiful and universal kind' (156). They employ 'the steam plough, the steam scythe, the best system of chemical manuring and tile drainage' (158). The utopian land of Horeb supported the entire population even as it rapidly

[86] For other examples, see Silverpen, ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, November 1847, pp. 453-70, and Silverpen (E.M. at the end of the fifth instalment), 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 18, 25 August, 1, 8, 15 September 1849, pp. 243-47, 266-69, 284-87, 298-302, 313-17.

increased.

Martineau presented the law of supply and demand as immovable. She believed that the rate of wages, employment and prices were governed by supply and demand, and that neither labour nor capital could do anything to change them. She published *The Rioters* and *The Turn Out* to 'show the folly of the populace of Manchester, who had just been destroying machinery'.[87] For her, the workers' struggles for higher wages, including strikes and riots, were futile as wages and prices were inevitably fixed under the law.[88] Although Gaskell announced in the preface of *Mary Barton*, 'I know nothing of Political Economy, or the theories of trade',[89] when she attributed John Barton's and his fellow workers' sufferings to foreign competition, the idea included the theory that prices were governed by supply and demand. [90] However, as seen earlier, Meteyard proposed that the law of demand and supply was controllable. The Co-operative Band allowed the community of Horeb to have only a limited number of craftsman in each field, so that they could avoid the excessive competition which would lower their wages. Moreover, the Band 'had the raw materials, and the demand and the supply of the most necessary articles' in 'their own hands' (156). They purchased materials in quantity in the wholesale market, which lowered the cost.

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[87] Harriet Martineau, Letter to M. B. Maurice, 3 June 1833, printed in 'Some Autobiographical Particulars on Miss Harriet Martineau', *Monthly Repository*, August 1833, pp. 612-15 (p. 613).

[88] See *The Rioters* and *The Turn-Out*. These were not published under the name of Harriet Martineau, but the second edition of *The Rioters* was, with a newly added subtitle '*A Tale*' (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1842).

[89] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, ed. by Edgar Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. xxxv. Jenny Uglow observes that her statement places 'truth' above 'system' (Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories*, 1993; London: Faber and Faber, 1994, p. 192).

[90] Shirley Foster points out the paradox in *Mary Barton* that 'its sympathetic and admiring portrayals of the working class culture of self-help and self-improvement, while reinforcing the message of human worth, also give weight to the laissez-faire economic arguments of her opponents who believed that it was the men, not the masters, who must find the means to ameliorate conditions' (Shirley Foster, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Literary Life*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 38).

While Martineau and Gaskell presented laissez faire as an inevitable policy, Meteyard presented it as the best policy to attain a utopian future, not merely as a matter of political economy, but of the whole of human history. She adapted the principle to a wider range of questions including those of import taxes, a patent system for designs, education for the people, advance of science and the co-operative movement. Even though her disappointment with the benevolence of capitalists drove her to regard legal restriction as unavoidable, she always considered it to be undesirable. For Meteyard, who believed that history had been programmed by God to progress towards the perfection of a utopian society, any governmental intervention was an obstacle to natural laws. She employed herself in social problem fiction to show how history would go differently and better if the obstacles could be removed.

However, most of her social problem fiction including 'Art in Spitalfields' and 'The Co-operative Band' are short stories published in several instalments at most, much shorter than Martineau's novellas, and Gaskell's full length novels. Martineau and Gaskell were far more astute in matching their topics with an appropriate literary form. Meteyard's overarching arguments and her command of historical background were too ambitious for a short story. 'Art in Spitalfields' and 'The Co-operative Band' were failures, typical of much of Meteyard's work. They were undoubtedly rich in the range of economic and historical issues they explored. But confined in both instances to a two part serial, these issues were underdeveloped, and the structure in which they were encased was too limited as a means of conveying such important subjects.

Chapter 4: Gender and the Woman Question

Marriage and Employment for Women

Domestic ideology was deeply rooted in mid-Victorian society. One of its main tenets was that 'the natural duties and labours' of women lay in the roles of wife and mother.[1] On the other hand, a minority, of necessity, embraced the importance of female financial independence. Since the 1830s, the radical unitarians had repeated that female financial independence would enable women to avoid marriage solely for financial security.[2] Arguments for women to work were also based on principles of equality. An anonymous contributor to the *Monthly Repository* deplored women's position as '[s]ubordinate and helpless' in 'utter dependence', which disabled them from treating or being treated 'as independent parties, making a fair and equal contract for mutual benefit.[3]

Female financial independence was one of Meteyard's life-long themes. Her early contribution to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* suggests that she was among the many woman subscribers to this magazine,[4] which frequently published articles on the 'woman question'.[5] She may have read Sydney Smith's review, 'Mrs. Hugo Reid's Plea

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[1] William R[athbone]. Greg, 'Why are Women Redundant?', *National Review,* April 1862, pp. 433-60 (p. 436). Shirley Foster, *Victorian Women's Fiction: Marriage, Freedom, and the Individual* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 6, 36.

[2] Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the Emergence of the Women's Rights Movement, 1831-51* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 94. For example, see 'On Female Education and Occupations', *Monthly Repository*, July 1833, pp. 489-98, and M[ary] L[eman] G[illies], 'Sketches of Domestic Life. No. VII. The Insipid', *Monthly Repository*, 2 October 1835, pp. 643-53 (p. 647).

[3] 'A Political and Social Anatomy', *Monthly Repository,* September 1832, pp. 637-42 (p.641). For another example, see 'Campbell's Life of Mrs. Siddons', *Monthly Repository,* August 1834, pp. 533-50 (pp.548-49).

[4] Susan Dean, 'The 1979 RSVP Conference', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 12 (1979), 141-43 (p. 142).

[5] Gleadle, p. 43.

for Woman', published in the journal in 1844. He wrote:

> A revolution of opinion which should make female labour as profitable and honourable as that of men; the exercise of female talents, ingenuity and mechanical skill, commercial enterprise, or professional ability, a source of emolument and credit, and a recognized part of the social system, contains the only true principle of female emancipation.[6]

From the very beginning of her career, Meteyard had created various middle class working heroines. Some of them are compelled to work for money but never ashamed of it; others decide to choose a career over marriage. Meteyard maintained a basic stance as an early radical feminist throughout her writing career.

***Struggles for Fame*, 'Time versus Malthus' and 'Art in Spitalfields'**

As argued in chapter one, Barbara, the heroine of *Struggles for Fame* never gives up her career as a writer, despite all her difficulties.[7] The unlikely proposal a wealthy aristocrat makes to the orphan heroine, and Barbara's even more improbable refusal, highlight her choice of solitary 'struggles for fame' rather than a happy marriage even one based on love. Meteyard's own voice echoes in Barbara's words as she refuses the proposal:

> the pursuit of literature, and the duties of a wife, rightfully performed, are

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[6] Sydney Smith, 'Mrs. Hugo Reid's Plea for Woman', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine,* July 1844, pp. 423-28 (pp. 424-25).

[7] Eliza Meteyard, *Struggles for Fame: A Novel*, 3 vols (London: T. C. Newby, 1845). See ch.1, pp. 25-28.

> things incompatible with one another, so I firmly decline your offer. *Half* love sir, is not worth *whole ambition.* And the woman who wishes to excel in literature must be alone from the cradle to the grave. (III, 367)

Meteyard depicted the female thirst for fame in the public sphere very straightforwardly, when women's mission was usually confined to the private sphere.

She probably thought that she had gone too far, and transformed her author heroine from Barbara the writer of great resolution to Miss Byron the indecisive minor novelist in 'Time versus Malthus' (1846).[8] Miss Byron is fed up with writing silver fork romances, and cherishes a secret desire to marry the unnamed moral philosopher in the story, a confirmed bachelor. He happens to get into conversation with Tapps, a passing cobbler, who persuades him to abandon his principle of celibacy. Miss Byron's dream of marriage would not have come true without this accident. She obtains financial security in her marriage, but she chooses to continue to work, this time of her own free will. The conversation between the moralist and Tapps has also affected her. Tapps suggested the possibility of writing for the improvement of the people. At the end of the story, she says to her husband, 'I'll make novels that shall be for everyone' (448).

The heroine of 'Art in Spitalfields',[9] published two months after 'Time versus Malthus', and discussed in chapter three, has taken care of her motherless younger sister, while helping her father with his pawnshop. Now she is a spinster of forty, but soon will inherit her father's substantial wealth. Her dying father suggests her inheritance would be large enough to encourage even a gentleman to marry his plain daughter, saying, 'And now you can marry, Sarah, and be a lady!' (42). Sarah interrupts him to refuse

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[8] E[liza] M[eteyard], 'Time versus Malthus: The Last Verdict', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* May 1846, pp.441-48.

[9] Eliza Meteyard, 'Art in Spitalfields: A Tale', *People's Journal,* 18, 25 July 1846, pp. 40-42, 52-54. See also ch. 3, pp. 77-89.

flatly. Her past experience of disappointed love implies that she would marry for love, but not to gain the status of being a lady.

The year 1826 is important in 'Art in Spitalfields'. It is the year when both the silk trade and the heroine Sarah are emancipated: the former from the 'unjust class monopoly' (42), by the repeal of the prohibition of the importation of foreign silk goods; the latter from her controlling father with his 'harsh and exacting temper' (40) by his death. Meteyard associated female emancipation with the principle of free trade, considering the two forms of emancipation as an index of civilisation and of progress to a utopian future. Unlike Caroline Helstone in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849), who, assuming she will be a spinster in the future, asks herself, 'What am I to do to fill the interval of time which spreads between me and the grave?',[10] Sarah sees 'the mission of life' placed before her: the mission to 'help the knowledge seeking', 'to raise the class around her in moral feeling' and to 'prove its hearty teacher' (52). She resolves to run an industrial textile design school, believing that it would revitalise the deprived area, and raise the suffering weavers not only in standard of living but also in 'moral feeling'. She has a faith that 'beauty is a source of pleasure, and *becomes a necessity in degree with the progress of the mind*' (53).

None of Meteyard's three heroines, Barbara, Miss Byron nor Sarah, gives up a career for marriage. However, their motivation is not the same. Barbara's ambition for fame appeared too egoistic to be accepted by the public. Its fulfilment would satisfy only Barbara herself, not benefit others at all. Meteyard transformed it into Miss Byron's wish to serve the public good, and further to Sarah's 'mission of life'.

The phrase 'mission of life' and the heroine's name Sarah suggests that while writing 'Art in Spitalfields', Meteyard may have had in mind the popular conduct book,

[10] Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, ed. by Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 149.

Woman's Mission (1839) by Sarah Lewis, and probably also *The Women of England* (1838), *The Daughters of England* (1842) and *The Wives of England* (1843) all three by Sarah Ellis. These works reflected and reproduced the widely prevailing belief that women's mission should lie in motherhood and wifehood, and that their 'proper sphere' should be the home.[11] Meteyard expressed her opposition to the idea by using the phrase 'the mission of life'.

Sarah's resolution no doubt sounded like a spinster's unrealistic dream to mid-Victorian middle-class readers. As Merryn Williams observes, old maids were regarded as pitiful or even ridiculous.[12] Shirley Foster points out, 'marriage was deemed the apotheosis of womanly fulfilment, alternatives to which were regarded as pitiful or unnatural',[13] and Janet Dunbar argues that a single woman of thirty 'took her place in the family as an unsuccessful human being'.[14] In Meteyard's story, Sarah is considered 'a mad woman' (53), but proves a substantial business woman. She establishes an industrial textile design school for artisans, which becomes a great success; 'influential manufacturers' soon become interested:

> the fame of the Spitalfields' school 'got wind about'. Manufacturers and their artisans, from Manchester, Coventry, Leeds, came with something like doubting curiosity to see a room spread round with works of art, and more than forty youths and men busy under the super-intendance of one plain,

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[11] Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse argue that the conduct books for women 'reproduce' various desires accepted in the culture ('The Literature of Conduct, the Conduct of Literature, and the Politics of Desire: An Introduction', *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality,* ed. by Armstrong and Tennenhouse, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 1-24 (p. 1.)).

[12] Merryn Williams, *Women in the English Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 4.

[13] Foster, p. 6.

[14] Janet Dunbar, *The Early Victorian Woman: Some Aspects of Her Life (1837-57)* (London: George G. Harrap, 1953), p. 22.

> mean-looking woman, who had thus chosen to spend her money and her time. (54)

In 1842, the popular writer Sarah Ellis had insisted in *The Daughters of England*: 'As women, . . . the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men — inferior in mental power, in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength'.[15] However, Meteyard's heroine is never inferior to men. Sarah, 'reserved and taciturn', had 'a most acute and masculine understanding' (40). These masculine attributes may not lead to a happy marriage, but they serve to gain trust and thrive in business. Not only workers but also middle-class male manufacturers learned from Sarah. Barbara Herman observes, 'engaging in the world of business' might 'compromise a woman's reputation' in Victorian England.[16] Sarah was thus doubly stigmatized, with her pursuit of a career in business, and by her superior competence. She was so successful as to go far beyond the Victorian female role. Just like fallen woman characters doomed to die a premature death in Victorian fiction, she was not allowed to live long after the achievement. Typhus fever raged. Her colleague Restieaux's daughter was infected:

> Sarah Chapman loved this worthy, faithful girl, and for two days and nights, during the worst symptoms of the fever, never left her bed. On the third night, pressing business called Sarah into Southwark. Her thoughts and heart were with the girl, and as soon as possible she hastened back, lightly clad, and forgetful of the damp and chilling dew of the night air. The result of this

[15] Sarah Ellis, *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (New York: D. Appleton, 1842), p. 8.
[16] Barbara Leah Harman, 'In Promiscuous Company: Female Public Appearance in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South'*, *Victorian Studies*, 31 (1988), 351-74 (p. 351).

> imprudence may be imagined; shivering, sickness, and all the worst symptoms of the fever seized her upon her return. She was carried to bed, and the best medical aid procured. But mind and body had been overwrought; at twelve that night she was delirious, and never again regaining speech or reason, died next evening. . . . (54)

The story is similar to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853): a heroine loses her mother when she is young, becomes stigmatized, and nurses a person suffering from an epidemic heedless of the risk of infection and dies. The difference lies in their stigmas: Ruth as a fallen woman, Sarah as a successful business woman and therefore deemed unfeminine. Sarah metaphorically atones for her success by self-abnegation, or rather by death, but more directly and ironically, it is her motherliness that kills her. Without it, she would not have taken care of the girl whose mother was a 'slattern' (40). She is torn in two between her womanhood and her career.

'Art in Spitalfields' was the only work of Meteyard's published in the *People's Journal*. The editor John Saunders was never to publish her work again. Mary Howitt wrote to Meteyard: '*I* want you to write on the Protection of Women question — but that little sneak will be frightened out of his wits, I know.'[17] It was not to be.

Meteyard was more than two decades ahead of her time, creating middle class heroines proud of their financial independence or career in the mid 1840s. Although the Society for the Promotion of Employment for Women was established in 1859, even in 1862 the idea of female financial independence still met with opposition such as that voiced by William Rathbone Greg:

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[17] Mary Howitt, Letter to Meteyard, qtd. in Carl Ray Woodring, *Victorian Samplers: William and Mary Howitt* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 128.

> To endeavour to make women independent of men; to multiply and facilitate their employments; to enable them to earn a separate and ample subsistence by competing with the hardier sex in those careers and occupations hitherto set apart for that sex alone; to induct them generally into avocations, not only as interesting and beneficent, and therefore *appropriate*, but specially and definitely as *lucrative;* to surround single life for them with so smooth an entrance, and such a pleasant, ornamented, comfortable path, that marriage shall almost come to be regarded, not as their most honourable function and especial calling, but merely as one of many ways open to them. . . .[18]

In 1865, Eliza Warren published the conduct book *How I Managed My Children from Infancy to Marriage*, which advocated female financial independence.[19] The sale of 36,000 copies within a year of publication demonstrated the popularity of this book.[20] It was getting easier at least for lower middle-class women to go out of the domestic sphere to earn a living without stigma. However, public opinion was changing slowly. The domestic ideology of the angel in the house persisted.

'The Flint and Hart Matronship'

The Poor Law Amendment Act was enacted in 1834 with the principle of so-called 'less eligibility', which advocated that living standards in workhouses should be lower than the lowest living standard of workers outside. The harsh measures led to appalling conditions in the workhouses, followed by much adverse criticism. Dickens's

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[18] William R[athbone] Greg, 'Why are Women Redundant?', p. 454-55.
[19] Eliza Warren, *How I Managed My Children from Infancy to Marriage* (London: Houlston and Wright, 1865), p. iv.
[20] Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie-Mellon University Press, 1975), p. 13.

Oliver Twist (1837-39) is probably the most famous work that attacked the New Poor Law. Meteyard referred to the novel obliquely in her story 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' (1847) published in *Howitt's Journal*.[21] It is a story about a reform of the workhouse achieved by a woman, but at the same time it is concerned with female employment.

The heroine Mary Hart arrives at a rural parish to apply for the position of matron of a Union-house, or a workhouse. She is 'a little woman, clad in a faded silk gown'. Nevertheless, Tobit Tunn, a local brewer, 'involuntarily raise[s] his hat as a token of respect' (18) at his first sight of her. Later, when Tobit sends his man Barm to meet Hart, Barm has 'already commenced touching his hat forty yards off, or thereabouts' (37). It is her true gentility that makes them respect Mary.

Moreover, Meteyard had Nubbs, the chairman of the Board of Guardians, sarcastically refers to her upper class origin at the interview.

> 'You are by birth a gentlewoman, I understand', spoke Nubbs, elevating his voice; 'and having favoured us with your very humane notions touching the matronship, you would, of course, educate pauper children in the same humanitary [sic] style. Latin, arithmetic, and music, are your accomplishments, I dare say?'
>
> The indignant blood rose high to Mary's cheeks, but she softly answered that she understood all three, for she had been well bred and born. (20)

It was also her true gentility that calmed her down to answer gently. The narrator ironically refers to the haughty Nubbs, a retired barrister and obviously a member of the

[21] Silverpen, 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal*, 9, 16 January 1847, pp. 18-20, 36-38. For example, the narrator calls Priscilla Flint's workhouse matronship 'feminine Bumbleism' (36).

middle class, as 'aristocratic' (38).

Mary failed to obtain the job. Mr. and Mrs. Tunns, charmed by her personality, tried to persuade her to live permanently with them, but Mary was too 'independent' (37, 38) to accept the offer. Instead, she opened a school for the village children, and 'eked out its narrow income by keeping the brewery ledgers' (38). Meteyard laid stress on her gentle birth and shabby appearance so as to protest against the Victorian code of respectability, which did not allow a lady to work for money. Mary Hart may not be regarded as respectable according to the conventional gender code, but she was truly respectable because of her independence.

The other candidate, Priscilla Flint, became the matron of the workhouse. She was 'accurately-apparelled' (18), and with letters of recommendation from those of high rank, but she embezzled money from the workhouse. When the offence was discovered, Hart replaced Flint and improved the condition of the workhouse immeasurably.

' "The Works" of John Ironshaft'

Meteyard published ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft' in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in November 1847.[22] Kathryn Gleadle regards the story as 'an instance of Meteyard's more conventional work', observing that 'Meteyard, desperate for income, apparently acquiesced in penning conventional stories of married life'.[23] However, at this point she had both *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* and *Howitt's Journal* as outlets for her work. In addition, both Jerrold and the Howitts were sympathetic to feminist writings. Is the story really so 'conventional' in the first place?

The story opens with a death of a village doctor. His daughter Eleanor is left

[22] Silverpen, ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', *Douglas Jerrold Shilling Magazine*, November 1847, pp. 453-70.
[23] Gleadle, pp. 218n136, 96.

destitute with his debts, which the doctor accumulated while treating the poor voluntarily. Her cousin, a rector, criticises the deceased doctor, calling him a 'beggar' (457). Her uncle, a Lancashire squire, advises her to sell the household goods to pay the debts. While alive, the doctor encouraged John Ironshaft, a forgeman, in his writing. When John visits her, Eleanor expresses her fears of 'the heartlessness of the world', to which he replies, 'Not the world, but the convention of it, Miss Eleanor' (457).

In addition to Ironshaft's frequent bitter comments against society's conventional attitudes, Meteyard employed a solution more shocking to Victorian respectability: cross-class marriage. John proposes to Eleanor:

> 'You see what a false and hollow thing this gentility is. . . . Now, I come to you in your hours of desolation, with all a man's sympathy and tenderness, to ask, *if you can* set aside this hollow convention that tramples on your father's grave, and insults his child, to take this strong arm to labour for and defend you — this heart to love you tenderly as you deserve?'. . . .
>
> 'John', and the girl's voice faltered very much — 'with relations such as belong to me, there was a time when I should have taken this offer as an insult, and treated it with scorn. But not now, John; not either, think, because I am poor and desolate, but because I can comprehend how noble and how truly great you are. Take my hand, John Ironshaft, *I am thine*'. (457-58)

Different from the other three heroines, Barbara, Miss Byron and Sarah, Eleanor does not have a strong inclination towards a career. The rector is willing to recommend her as a 'domestic companion' (457) to Lady Crabnose, but the job is neither fruitful for her life, nor of any benefit to society. She makes her choice, not between marriage and a career, but between marriage for love and an unworthy job. Eleanor chooses a

cross-class marriage over the status of a lady, which she could retain as a companion to an upper class lady. Eleanor actually vacillates, asking John, 'But what will people say?' He answers, 'What they like; I shall be as scornful as careless' (458). On the wedding day, she is 'weeping bitterly' (460):

> For more than sorrow for her father was it? If it was, and she did John Ironshaft injustice by the merest fraction, for ever did it pass away when, John touching her hand, she looked and beheld the head-stone and the new-turfed grave. For ever did the last relic of false pride depart; and kneeling down upon the turf, she asked a blessing on this true and noble man. Then she rose and took John's arm, firmly, proudly. . . . (460)

This scene encouraged the readers to abandon 'false pride' or the convention of respectability as Eleanor does.

The cross-class couple are repeatedly exposed to insult. Eleanor's decision to become the wife of a working class man shocks people, who say, 'Pride had had a fall', and the 'Doctor's Latin and Greek and beggary had come to something in the daughter'. The parson says to her after the wedding, 'I'm sorry for you!' (460). Her cousin, the rector turns up suddenly to say:

> 'I am only come to tell you, girl, of my unutterable pity for your low taste, for your black ingratitude, for your disregard of human ties, and to tell you that every genteel relation of your father's has washed hands of you. . . . There, recollect, I'll not even pay one of your father's debts'; and with this indignant burst of eloquence he left. (461)

The story returns to the question of the code of respectability again and again. After the wedding, John brings his bride to his house, which is, to her surprise, 'a substantial cottage' (462). There he reminisces about how her father talked of her:

> 'Of me?' asked Nell.
>
> 'Of you, sweet wife. Of your tenderness, and truth, and nature. Of how you were just fitted to soften down such a stalwart savage, but that you having 'genteel notions', — and he always laughed hugely here, Nell, — he did not like to pain you by opposing them, nor broach any subject that in the end might take you from his side'. (464)

In this small sphere of their home, it was not their cross-class marriage, but the public convention of respectability that was ridiculed. Eleanor's words '*I*, not you, are honoured by this matter' (464) also presents the reversed sense of values.

John proves to be a loving husband. He pays off the debts, and secretly brings many mementos of the doctor into their house. The rector's reference to Lady Crabnose may have reminded the readers of Mr. Collins, the rector under the patronage of Lady Catherine in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The association might also prompt a question: If Eleanor's father left a large fortune, the rector might have proposed to her. In that case, could she have been a happy wife with such a 'mean and bragging heart' (461) as the rector's? When Ironshaft mentions '[m]illions' of women who 'perish in disease and celibacy for want' (460-61) of bravery and ability to overcome class prejudice, it suggests that Meteyard was recommending the nation's surplus women to marry out of their class.

In the latter half of the story John becomes extremely successful. Eleanor is proactive in understanding his nobleness and potential in spite of his social position.

She is ‘a woman true to nature — not to mere coat-colour, or height of dwelling-house’ (460). Her true gentility does not originate from her middle class social position, which becomes clear when John states that he would not make a proposal even ‘to a duchess, nor to any other living woman’ (457) than Eleanor herself.

Meteyard was not the first writer who dealt with cross-class marriage between a middle class woman and a working class man. She may have been inspired by the comic drama *The Spitalfields Weaver* (1838) by Thomas Haynes Bayly, popular for his farces.[24] The drama was frequently reprinted after it was first performed at the St. James Theatre in 1838 through to the 1880s, and at least twice in the late 1840s. As Meteyard investigated the history of Spitalfields in order to write ‘Art in Spitalfields’, it is likely that she read or possibly even saw the play, in which a cross-class couple, Brown and Adelle, love each other, but are slandered and ridiculed by genteel society. Brown, originally a Spitalfields weaver, has become a wealthy manufacturer by the time he proposes to Adelle whereas Eleanor does not even know that Ironshaft has a substantial property when he proposes. In the play the married couple tire of society’s criticism, and leave London for the country, while the Ironshafts remain in their place where John establishes a reputation.

‘ “The Works” of John Ironshaft’ anticipates Dinah Mulock Craik’s *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) by a decade. In the novel, Halifax, an orphan, determines to rise in society as a self-made man. He says to Ursula March, his future wife, who is from a genteel family, ‘[T]he world says we are not equals, and it would neither be for Miss March’s honour nor mine did I try to force upon it the truth — which I may prove openly one day — that we *are* equals’. However, John Halifax’s father was actually ‘a scholar and a gentleman’, which may have made it easier for Craik’s readers to accept

[24] Thomas Haynes Bayly, *The Spitalfields Weaver: A Comic Drama, in One Act* (London: John Dicks, 1880?).

their cross-class marriage in the Victorian era.[25]

Meteyard gave Eleanor a choice between marriage and a job. She chose marriage, but in this case it did not mean that her story was conventional. Among the three heroines, which was the most shocking for the Victorian reader, Barbara, an orphan who turned down a noble's proposal to fulfil her ambition for public fame, Sarah, an extremely successful business woman, or Eleanor, a middle-class woman happy to marry a forgeman? Mary Hart did not have the opportunity to choose between marriage and a career, but she was proactive in her readiness to work for financial independence in spite of her upper class origin. Through her heroines Meteyard challenged Victorian conventions of respectability which prevented women from earning an independent living or marrying outside their class.

Education for Women

The radical unitarians advocated vocational education for women. An anonymous writer contributed 'On Female Education and Occupations' (1833) to the *Monthly Repository*, to argue that female education should be more 'of utility' than mere 'accomplishments', asserting that more 'branches of trade and commerce' should be open to women.[26] They believed that 'one of the surest means' of improving society was to afford women 'every facility for acquiring more strength of mind and character by rendering them more independent in pecuniary matters'.[27]

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[25] Dinah Mulock Craik, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (London: Dent, 1961), pp. 143, 5. See also Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women 1827-1867* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 182-87.

[26] 'On Female Education and Occupations', *Monthly Repository*, July 1833, pp. 489-98 (pp. 489, 491-93). See also 'A Political and Social Anomaly', *Monthly Repository*, September 1832, pp. 637-42 (pp. 640-41).

[27] 'Campbell's Life of Mrs. Siddons', *Monthly Repository*, August 1834, pp. 533-50 (pp. 548-49).

As a radical unitarian, Meteyard illustrated women's potential through her heroines who obtained vocational training. As explained in the previous chapter, Sarah Chapman, the heroine of 'Art in Spitalfields' decides to open a school of textile design.[28] Her success in this venture requires knowledge obtained through hands-on training, difficult to acquire when, as Barbara Harman notes, engaging in business could be a stigma for a woman.[29] In writing the story, Meteyard had to face the problem of how to let Sarah gain experience in business, and become well educated in textile design, while minimising the risk of creating an unsympathetic heroine for the Victorian reader. Sarah is compelled to manage her father's pawnshop as an obedient daughter:

> As old Chapman had lost his wife in early life, Sarah, not only supplied the place of a mother to her sister Kitty, but managed most of the business of the shop, for her father had a harsh and exacting temper, and laid the burden of labour heavily upon all within his influence. (40)

As the pawnshop is always under her father's close watch, and located in the family home, it is both private and open to the public. Pawnbrokers had to be connoisseurs in order to evaluate articles for pawning. The job cultivates her discerning tastes especially for textile arts, as Spitalfields was famous for its elaborate silk weaving. Sarah also learns the elements of business including accounting and management.

Meteyard makes Sarah physically unattractive in order to protect her from harassment, for the job brings her into 'daily intercourse with the population of Spitalfields' (40), notorious for their volatile temperament, wild drinking and laziness. Her appearance probably exempts her from the sexual banter which embarrasses

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[28] See ch. 3, pp. 87-89.
[29] Harman, p. 351.

Margaret Hale, another fictional heroine who interacts with working people in the streets of the industrial town of Milton in Gaskell's *North and South* (1854-55). The experience of the pawnshop develops her insight into business practices; she is shrewd enough to ascertain their present condition and future potential. She sees 'the fundamental principles of art in their application to design' (40) as a key to revive the local textile industry.

Meteyard avoids making Sarah move directly into the public sphere. She receives the education and training she needs in the pawnshop through Restieaux, a weaver and 'self-taught man' with a deep knowledge of textile art, who frequents the pawnshop due to his financial difficulties. Sarah borrows his books, and then buys books for herself 'with her scanty wages', and reads them 'secretly after the labours of day' (40). This learning experience was unusual for a Victorian heroine, but typical for a Victorian working class self-made man. As David Vincent observes, it was common for the ambitious working man to learn from his own job, borrow books from like-minded workers, have discussions among workers aiming at mutual improvement, and to study after the long day's labour.[30] These factors are all found in George Lillie Craik's *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties; Illustrated by Anecdotes* (1831-32), which was the favourite book of Meteyard's lifelong friend Samuel Smiles.[31] Craik's teaching is reflected in Smiles's own *Self-Help* (1859). Although *Self-Help* was yet to be written, Smiles had delivered a lecture which conveyed its core argument to a mutual improvement society in Leeds in 1845 and contributed two articles about the lecture and the society to the *People's Journal* in the same year.[32] Meteyard was in fact applying

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[30] See David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1982).
[31] H. C. G. Matthew, 'Smiles, Samuel (1812-1904)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2009 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/36125>
[32] S. Smiles, 'What Is Doing for the People in Leeds?', *People's Journal,* 7 March 1846,

Smiles' self-help principle to Sarah, relating that she 'applied her mind to the self-help of a defective education' (40).

When Sarah was nearly thirty, her father took a German lodger, Hausen, into his house. Hausen studied in the Gewerb-Institut, worked as a handicraftsman in Lyons, and travelled through Europe, acquiring 'an enlightened knowledge of art' (41). Sarah's friendship with Restieaux leads naturally to Hausen's guidance, under which she soon acquires 'a wonderful power of delineation with the pencil' (41).

She struggles to find time for her self-education while working in her father's pawnshop and keeping house. Meteyard had to find a means of enabling her to move out of reach of her father's eye and into a public space. She introduced an old blind lady who befriended Chapman in his youth. Chapman sends Sarah to read to her daily. The lady, sympathetic to Sarah, lets her spend hours copying from the marbles in the British Museum under the cover of pretending to be reading to her. She walks to see this lady, and to and from the museum, alone and daily, although walking alone in the city streets was one of the taboos for Victorian women.[33]

Meteyard had then to solve the problem of how to send Sarah to Europe, which was at the forefront of textile design. She makes her sister Kitty elope with Hausen to Germany. After Chapman dies, Sarah goes there to hand over her share of the inheritance. There, she meets Hausen's brother, a lecturer on botany and mechanical drawing in the Gewerb-Institut. This institute actually existed in Berlin, established to produce highly trained and intelligent artisans.[34] Sarah studies 'with him during his leisure hours', and learns 'the method of tuition pursued in those branches of art that might best influence textile designs in the handlooms of Spitalfields' (52). She is then

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pp. 136-38 and 'People, What Are the People Doing to Educate Themselves', *People's Journal,* 18, 25 April 1846, pp. 222-24, 229-30.

[33] Harman, p. 351.

[34] 'Dyce's Report to the Board of Trade', *Art-Union,* September 1840, pp. 143-44 (p. 144).

introduced to one of the most enterprising manufacturers of Lyons, where she learns more about textile design.

Meteyard created in Sarah one of the most unusual heroines in mid-Victorian fiction: a successful business woman of resolute will, shrewd, decisive, brave, dynamic, independent, intelligent, trustworthy and passionate. She wished to illustrate woman's potential which would bloom if only she were well educated. However, she strove to provide Sarah with plausible opportunities for vocational training, within the limits of female delicacy. She faced difficulties in applying the spirit of self help, 'that God helps them that help themselves', in Benjamin Franklin's well known words, which opens Smiles' *Self-Help*, to a woman even in a fiction.

'The Whittington Club and the Ladies'

In 1846, *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* ran the article 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', in which Silverpen presented the decision to admit women as members of association as one made by of 'thoughtful men' who supported the education of women.[35] Because she had just begun to use the pseudonym Silverpen, few readers are likely to have identified Silverpen as a woman at this point.

The first paragraph of the article addressed her audience:

> Men of the Whittington Club, your spirit is wise, for as prejudice is as various as the condition of society, it was for you to look beyond this worst idol of the mind, and casting it rereward [sic] as far as your own mental advance would allow, not merely take a great step, but show by expressive signs that you, as

[35] Silverpen, 'The Whittington Club and the Ladies', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 24 October 1846, p. 343.

> participators, acknowledge that the grand moral *denouement* of social life, in connexion with the happiness principle, was not a fiction. Men of the London Athenaeum, you have thus recognized the vital spirit of your time! (343)

In the second paragraph, the writer of the article assumes masculinity in saying: 'We are for womanly advance. We cannot sever the unity of her progress from our own, however modified it may be by sexual difference' (343). His high-flown words sound like a dramatic monologue. Meteyard created the writer as a male character who addressed his male colleagues. The writer highlighted the benefit of woman's advance to those of his own sex in calling woman 'a moral and social agent'. He was 'perfectly convinced' that her advance would be 'co-equal' with men's own.

Meteyard brought up the concept of fair competition for literary work between the sexes. She adapted the laissez faire principle to the literary market, considering literary men to be protected with the privilege of education while 'literary ladies' were burdened with a disadvantage on this point. She went on:

> Necessity now enforces woman to earn her bread (and we think happily) by what were once considered the masculine prerogatives of the pen, the pencil, or the voice; and brings her into competition with ourselves, without our allowance of one privilege in the unequal warfare. To equalise these privileges as regards reading-rooms, libraries, and ordinaries, would confer a large benefit: more especially in this metropolis where is congregated so much necessary and influencing intellect. (343)

Although Gleadle argues that this article 'encouraged women to consider the increasing independence they might exert, pointing out that women were now able to earn their

living by pen, pencil or voice, just as men could',[36] it targeted male readers. The words 'necessity' and 'we think happily' could work to prevent Meteyard's male colleagues from complaining that female writers divested them of job opportunities that had once been exclusively theirs. If a writing woman had criticised man's unfairness in the 'warfare' of life or death, it would have sounded too aggressive. If she had humbly requested man to pity woman's suffering for survival caused by his unfairness, it would have been too humble. The gentlemen's acknowledgement of their own unfair privileges sounded noble, which may have set Victorian male readers a good example not only about literary work but about other forms of employment as well.

The essay was a semi-fiction, in which a male character spoke directly to a real Victorian audience about an actual club, although the readers who did not know Silverpen's identity regarded it as a sincere article. Angry over unfair competition from male writers, Meteyard hid her face, and under the mask of a male character, compared woman 'weak and frail' to 'the smaller and the tenderer flower' (343). These were not the genuine words of Meteyard who had created such a dynamic heroine as Sarah Chapman. She contributed ten stories to *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, while only one to the *People's Journal*, still under William Howitt's joint editorship, and seven to *Howitt's Journal*. However, a spinster heroine with education, such as Sarah or Mary Hart, never appeared in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine.* Meteyard had to be more circumspect in expressing her feminist opinions in the periodicals edited by Jerrold and his circle, than in those under the Howitts' editorship. Her visionary heroine Sarah Chapman was forgotten in the tactful pseudo-article on the Whittington Club although both pieces were written with the same purpose of championing education for women.

[36] Gleadle, p. 155.

Female 'Accomplishments'

In 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', Mary Hart, another of Meteyard's spinster heroines, works on ledgers in Tobit's brewery just as Sarah Chapman must have done in the pawnshop. She also opens a school. However, Mary's education is not part of the plot. She is 'by birth a gentlewoman' (20), and therefore possesses various accomplishments. Her knowledge of arithmetic proves practical on ledgers, and music is helpful in teaching children. Meteyard encouraged women to free themselves from convention and to take advantage of their accomplishments in order to find work.

Meteyard created another working heroine who opens a school. Her story 'The Angel of the Unfortunate' was published in *Howitt's Journal*,[37] one year after the publication of 'Art in Spitalfields'. The heroine, Innocent La Trouvée, is an orphan adopted by old Antoine, a live-in porter of the great Paris Theatre of Anatomy. His room itself is private, but open to the public as visitors, doctors and medical students regularly consult him. Innocent learns sewing and dancing from Antoine's friends. When Innocent is seven years old, Sisters of Charity visit the theatre. They take a liking to her and invite her to attend daily at their convent, to learn various accomplishments including embroidery and singing.

Meteyard negotiated Innocent's passage into the public sphere more carefully than she had done with Sarah. While Sarah was exposed to artisans of violent temperaments when gaining business experience and went secretly to the British Museum to study drawing, Innocent is welcomed into a convent and learns accomplishments which serve as her vocational training when she eventually opens a school.

[37] Silverpen, 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', *Howitt's Journal*, 18, 25 September 1847, pp. 186-89, 195-99.

Meteyard afforded further opportunities of specialist education to Innocent through Professor Retzner, a famous German anatomist, who recognises 'her extraordinary talent' for the pencil, and adopts and educates her. She improves her understanding of his scholarly books and masters the technique of realistic medical drawing enough to assist him by her pencil. With him she visits 'the beds of Magdalens and hospitals, and the recesses of prisons' (189). Thus Innocent receives on-the-job training in the public sphere.

At the age of eighteen, she begins her 'solitary struggles for bread' (197) when Retzner dies. Sally Mitchell notes that Innocent 'grows up to be an anatomist',[38] but she does not take up the occupation. However, Retzner's education still enables her to earn money by medical drawing. If she illustrated 'the *feuilletons*, or serials of the hour', it would be 'profitably rewarded', but she chooses the 'nobler' but 'weary' way by assisting Camille, Retzner's pupil and disciple, with whom she is in love, when he works as a fully-fledged anatomist. The narrator states that a woman will 'testify how earnest is her devotion, when she looks up to, and reverences an intellect more commanding than her own' (196). Meteyard adopted the conventional Evangelical ideal of woman as a good wife to justify Innocent's self-help vocational education. She opens a school for children rescued from the streets and slums in cooperation with other women. She is unrealistically successful as her school has 'some hundred miserable children' (199). She has become, so to speak, a social mother to the children by the time she marries Camille. The story is completed when she becomes an actual mother with the birth of their baby.

Although Meteyard suggested that women could exploit their accomplishments for practical usage in her fiction, she satirised the conventional idea that a young woman

[38] Sally Mitchell, *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class, and Women's Reading, 1835-1880* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981), p. 32.

should acquire accomplishments in order to become a cultured lady. *Sartain's Union Magazine* carried her allegorical story 'The Talent Misunderstood' in 1849.[39] It juxtaposes two heroines: Eleanor, born into a wealthy family, but with no musical talent and her playmate Susannah, brilliantly gifted at music but born into a destitute home. Eleanor's father is 'a stern, strong-willed man' (72), whose resolve never vacillates. Considering musical cultivation as an accomplishment which most rewards women, he determines to make Eleanor a musician. Under unrelenting parental pressure, the obedient daughter practices on the piano franticly, and becomes insane.

Meteyard again had to concoct plausible opportunities for the other heroine to gain a musical education. Little Susannah and her family, behind with the rent and evicted from their home, come to stay at a lodge where an old and kind musician is staying. Captivated by Susannah's talent, he finds 'a worthy and gratuitous master' (74) among his many musician friends. Susannah overcomes various difficulties to become a music teacher and sustain her family. Although there is a promising offer of a London debut, she chooses her 'humble way of life' over fame. She marries, and instructs her children in music as a good mother, and gives lessons to her husband's forgemen, whose regular concerts lead to 'the general improvement of the morals and habits of the entire surrounding population' (80) although it is not explained how and why they lead to these improvements. The narrator announces, 'What, therefore, is the influence of mere conventional bought genius compared to this?' and closes the story, saying:

> Let, therefore, society banish from its conventional errors and mistakes the false one, that every girl can, must, shall be, a musician. It will soon do this, when it ceases to consider bad music worthier than wise conversation. (80)

[39] Silverpen, 'The Talent Misunderstood', *Sartain's Union Magazine*, August 1849, pp. 72-80.

Women's Participation in Society

In a letter of 1850, included in her *Autobiography* Mary Howitt described Meteyard, now 'a sufficiently old friend', as follows:

> Poor dear soul! she is sitting by me at this moment with her lips compressed, a look of abstraction in her clever but singular face, and her hair pushed back from her forehead, while she is busy over a story. . . . Out of the money thus obtained, she has provided for and sent out a young brother to Australia; while for another she is striving in another way. Indeed, she is both father and mother to her family; yet she is only seven-and-twenty, and a fragile and delicate woman, who in ordinary circumstances would require brothers and friends to help her. How many instances one sees almost daily of the marvellous energy and high principle and self-sacrifice of woman! I am always thankful to see it, for it is in this way that women will emancipate themselves.[40]

Meteyard's four heroines, Sarah, Mary, Innocent and Susannah take care of others' children, most of them living in poverty, giving rudimentary classes in housework, drawing, botany or music, or rescuing orphan children. She presented Innocent as 'the angel of the unfortunate' as the title indicates, and Susannah as 'one upon an angel's mission' (78). Although Coventry Patmore was yet to publish his famous poem 'The Angel in the House', these heroines can be recognised as angels in their society who serve the people including children.

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[40] *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography*, ed. by Margaret Howitt, 2 vols (London: Wm. Isbister, 1889), II, 61-62.

Except for Mary, who has no family, the heroines financially support their present and future families: Sarah helps her father in business; Innocent sends money to her future husband; and Susannah keeps her little orphan siblings. Sarah takes a mother's place for her younger sister, and Innocent and Susannah become actual mothers. Like their creator Meteyard, they are indeed 'both father and mother to her family'. It is vocational education that enables the heroines, not only to sustain themselves, but also their families, and contribute to society. However, Meteyard could not help depending on successive lucky accidents to provide her heroines with their education. It made the stories both improbable and visionary. In sharp contrast to her own stories, Meteyard herself was impatient with the 'unequal warfare' with her male counterparts for literary jobs. Her masculine persona Silverpen indicated how strong the resistance was to the admission into the Whittington Club with its educational facilities. Meteyard vacillated between her ideal and the reality, while sustaining herself and her family 'with her lips compressed', as Mary Howitt observed.

The 'Fallen Woman' Question and Sisterhood

Judith R. Walkowitz observes that prostitution had become widely recognised as 'the Great Social Evil' by the 1850s. Various commentaries on prostitution appeared in police reports, letters to editors, bluebooks, and fiction. Evangelical writers such as Michael Ryan and William Tait, both surgeons, led the public discourse on the question, but other sectors also treated it as an issue.[41] Radical unitarians such as William Shaen, James Stansfeld and Emilie Ashurst (later Venturi), were involved in the debate in the 1840s, and were to be active again in the debates surrounding the Contagious Disease

[41] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 32-34.

Acts (1864, 1866, 1869).[42]

The Victorians did not always distinguish prostitutes from 'fallen women', once respectable women who had been seduced, usually by men of a superior social class. The fourth volume of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861-62) contained a section on 'Prostitution in London', written by Bracebridge Hemyng.[43] It identified additional categories of women to be regarded as prostitutes. These included: 'kept mistresses' of aristocrats or the rich; 'ladies of intrigue', that is, 'married women who have connection with other men than their husbands, and unmarried women who gratify their passion secretly'; and common-law wives who live with men whom they have not formally married. Hemyng stated: 'Literally every woman who yields to her passions and loses her virtue is a prostitute.[44] Vern and Bonnie Bullough observe the contemporary authorities' tendency to regard all mothers with illegitimate children as prostitutes.[45]

One of the origins of the vague distinction between fallen women and prostitutes may have been the conventional narrative that a fallen woman was destined to be outcast by her family and friends, and then by her seducer, to become a prostitute and to die a premature death.[46] Victorian literature mirrored the stereotyped image of fallen

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[42] Gleadle, p. 108. See also Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 24-26.

[43] The three volumes of the first series were published in 1859, and the second series including the fourth volume in 1816-62.

[44] Bracebridge Hemyng, 'Prostitution in London', *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopaedia of the Conditions and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Those That Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work*, ed. by Henry Mayhew, 4 vols (London: Frank Cass 1967), IV, pp. 210-72 (pp. 215, 258, 259, 215).

[45] Vern Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Women and Prostitution: A Social History* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1987), p. 199.

[46] For example, see Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York* (London: H. Bailliere, 1839), p. 174; William Tait, *Magdalenism: An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences, of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: P. Rickard, South Bridge, 1840), p. 143; Ralph Wardlaw, *Lectures on Female Prostitution: Its Nature, Extent, Effects, Guilt, Causes, and Remedy* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1842), pp. 39, 62; [William Rathbone Greg], 'Prostitution',

women or prostitutes. In fiction, to borrow Tom Winnifrith's phrase, such fictional characters as Dickens's Nancy in *Oliver Twist* (1838), Gaskell's Esther in *Mary Barton* (1848) and Ruth Hilton in *Ruth* (1853) had to 'expiat[e] their sin with death'.[47] However, in contrast to the literary convention, Meteyard did not allow her fictional fallen women to suffer long until their deaths. Instead, they were rescued to survive. Some of them became happy wives, and others served to save their wretched sisters.

'Protection to Women'

The fallen woman question was one of the major subjects with which Meteyard was concerned in the 1840s. In his book *The Great Social Evil* (1871), William Logan introduced Silverpen as 'one of our most popular and useful female writers' regarding this social issue, and made copious extracts from her article 'Protection to Women', published in *Douglas Jerrold Weekly Newspaper* in 1846.[48] He classified the article into a category titled 'Necessity for Investigating the Subject'. Meteyard began the article as follows,

> That this difficult question has at length been fairly broached, shows that moral courage is advancing in progress with freedom of public opinion. Hitherto it has been that sole blot in the sum total of public morals, which statistics hid; hitherto its denunciation has rarely extended beyond the short antithesis of the divine, and this so delicately syrupped with commonplace as to

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Westminster Review, July 1850, pp. 448-506 (pp. 451-52, 454).

[47] Tom Winnifrith, *Fallen Women in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 5.

[48] Silverpen, 'Protection to Women', *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 6 August 1848, pp. 78-79. William Logan, *The Great Social Evil: Its Causes, Extent, Results, and Remedies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871), pp. 23-25.

> suit all palates; hitherto every book that sought to expose has been denounced 'improper'. . . . But now the public mind thus shows itself sufficiently advanced, there is no reason that this question . . . should not be discussed wisefully, thoughtfully, generally; and this without one line or one opinion irreverent to true purity. At the same time we disdain false delicacy. The delicacy of particular ladies in prim caps and with clasped hands; the delicacy of narrowness and ignorance; as distinct from true purity, as is the chastity which only exists under the surveillance of the duenna, or the *custos* of the lock and key. Freedom is as essential to purity of morals as it is to the advance of the human mind. (78)

This article targeted ladies of 'false delicacy', and more generally criticised the convention of gentility for avoiding the topic as 'improper'. However, taking into consideration its date of publication, and Meteyard's reference to 'a bill against seduction' (78), it can be regarded as a direct attack on Parliament as well.

When Meteyard published 'Protection to Women', prostitution was not illegal. Neither brothel keeping nor procuration was a criminal offence unless it violated 'An Act for the preventing Thefts and Robberies, and regulating Places of Public Entertainment, and Punishment of Persons, keeping Disorderly Houses'.[49] The Associate Institution for Improving and Enforcing the Laws for the Protection of Women was founded in 1843. It lobbied Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, who brought forth 'A Bill for the Effectual Suppression of Brothels and Trading in Seduction and Prostitution' into the House of Lords in 1844. As Walkowitz observes, it did not include a clause against seduction; Phillpotts insisted that if a woman was legally

[49] Angela Leighton, ' "Because Men Made the Laws": The Fallen Woman and the Woman Poet', *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 342-60 (pp. 342-43).

permitted to sue her seducer, it would be an obstacle to her repentance.[50] The Institution reported that the bill 'was read a second time, in a very full House, without a single dissentient voice, but was withdrawn, on the third reading', with a pledge that the Government should take up the subject, but it was never carried out.[51]

The Institution then turned to Richard Spooner, a Member of Parliament for Birmingham. The principle of 'Mr. Spooner's Bill' as it was known, was almost the same as the previous one, although its form was modified. During the parliamentary session of 1846, Spooner made three distinct notices of motion for leave to introduce the Bill. However, in the first two cases, the House of Commons was adjourned. *The Observer* reported briefly about the third instance, that on 23 June, when 'Mr. Spooner was moving for leave to bring in [the] bill . . . an hon. member moved that the house be counted; and, as there were only 37 members present, the house stood adjourned',[52] although the number was reported as thirty in Hansard.[53] On the same day the Bishop of Exeter presented a petition for the adoption of 'Measures for the Suppression of Seduction and Prostitution' before the House of Lords, but the Associate Institution had to wait for the next session, as Parliament seems to have had some reason that this question should not be discussed.[54] Meteyard's words in the quotation above 'there is no reason that this question . . . should not be discussed' worked as biting irony.

Her article 'Protection to Women' suggests that she knew more of the contents of Spooner's Bill and the details of its passage through Parliament than had been reported

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[50] Walkowitz, p. 40.
[51] Associate Institution for Improving and Enforcing the Laws for the Protection of Women, *The First Report Presented to the General Meeting Held at the Hanover Square Rooms, on Tuesday, 21st July, 1846* (London: Brewster and West, 1846), p. 10.
[52] 'Imperial Parliament: House of Commons — Tuesday, June 23', *Observer*, 28 June 1846, p. 2
[53] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, June 23, 1846, House of Commons Hansard, 1846 LXXXVII. c. 909.
[54] Lords Sitting of Tuesday, June 23, 1846, House of Lords Hansard, 1846, LXXXVII. c. 869.

in the press and official publications, when women were not allowed to view the Commons in person. Although they were not barred from the Lords,[55] Meteyard had a hearing impairment. From conversation with an ear trumpet or by correspondence, she may have gained information from James Stansfeld, or his wife Caroline. James was a committee member of the Institution and belonged to the Whittington Club. Caroline, William Henry Ashurst's daughter, like Meteyard, was a member of the council of the Whittington Club.

As Gleadle observes, Meteyard was one of the minority among the radical unitarians who attached more importance to the necessity of cultural change than to legislation in regard to the woman question.[56] She considered 'a bill against seduction and its traders advisable' only as 'collateral assistance', believing it easier but less effective 'to draw forth a bill of pains and penalties against seduction and its abettors' (78) than to change the sexual double standard of society. At the same time, she noticed that the double standard prevented Parliament from taking up the subject in public. She declared: '[L]et man and woman learn . . . that conscience recognizes no difference between the secret evil [of man] and the published infamy [of woman]'. She called prostitution 'this wide spread and secret demoralization' (78). The repeated word 'secret' indicated her irritation towards the reluctant attitude of the authorities.

'Protection to Women' was one of Meteyard's most aggressive articles, arguing:

> Hitherto it has been considered one of the laxest points in both medical and civil jurisprudence, that mere money damages, left to the option of a jury, have been the only redress against the most deliberated and cruel acts of seduction; acts usually those of that very class to whom a few hundreds are no more than

[55] Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 135.
[56] Gleadle, p. 107.

> a procurer's fee. We would have this bill bring seduction under the severest penalties of the law of felony; the punishment should be a stated term of imprisonment with hard labour, apportioned to the magnitude and grossness of the offence. When once made an act of felony, there is many a gentlemanly scoundrel who would pause and put restraint upon his passions, rather than brave the tread-mill and the jail. Labour would be found a very efficient remedy against the profligacy of aristocratic of vulgar wealth. . . . The main point of the bill . . . seems directed against the traders in seduction; but why not against the seducers themselves? Without employers, such employment must fail! Did the framers fear, that it would curtail, too much, aristocratic license? If not, then let the chief clause make seduction felony. . . . (78)

Meteyard's rhetoric was similar to that employed by the Chartists and socialists, who had accused men of the upper classes of sexual exploitation of working class women since the 1830s.[57] The 1833 New Poor Law introduced the clauses regarding bastardy, which deprived single mothers of their right to claim child support from the putative father under an oath of paternity.[58] Allen Davenport, a self-educated working class radical, asserted in 1836 that the clauses covered up for 'a vile aristocracy, who seduce and ruin more young girls than all the other male population put together'.[59] Gleadle observes that middle class feminists allied themselves with working class radicals in making use of 'melodramatic' narratives of upper-class 'rakes' still in the latter half of the century.[60] Sally Mitchell observes 'an undercurrent of class

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[57] Walkowitz, pp. 34-35.
[58] Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 161. They reversed the law in 1844 (Perkin, p. 161).
[59] [Allen Davenport], *The Life, Writings and Principles of Thomas Spence* (London: Wakelin, [1836]), p. 22.
[60] Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave,

antagonism' in the fiction of 'the unchaste girl' whose social order was almost without exception lower than her seducer in the 1840s.[61] The same undercurrent can be seen in Meteyard's article, which implied that parliament was reluctant to consider the topic because it contained many 'debased' and 'miscalled gentlemen' (78) and those who would like to cover up for them. She agreed with Spooner's Bill that it should 'punish all that knowingly rent out houses, or receive rents or fees of any kind derived from such traffic', but she proposed a different punishment for cases of lower agency. They should be put in the pillory or ducking stool, or subject to 'at least ignominious public exposure' (78).

After directing her anger against seducers, Meteyard set forth three main solutions for the social evil. Firstly, she championed marriage, in place of prostitution. Secondly, she advocated 'the abridgment of the hours of labour', on the assumption that 'the strongest incitements to profligacy' existed around the current late closing time, when exhaustion made men forget their moral scruples and resort to prostitutes. Thirdly, and most importantly, she emphasized sisterhood with a firm belief that woman could 'best raise her fallen sister woman'. She asked that womanhood 'achieve its divine mission', and not to think they were 'too pure to look upon a sinner'. However, she did not explain how to do it except briefly mentioning the possibility of founding schools for their fallen sisters. Meteyard was confident that 'the press' had the power and will to aid 'her liberalized humanity', and this was what she wished to do with her pen. She closed the article by announcing that she might return to this subject 'again' (79), but she was never to write on prostitution, at least with her signature, for *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper,* one of the 'journals of popular progress', which encouraged reconciliation between the classes. Possibly she may have expressed too obvious a class

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2001), p. 165.

[61] Mitchell, p. 31.

antagonism against aristocratic seducers in her article.

Spooner's Bill was far from well known to the public at this stage. Not formally taken up by Parliament, it had not even been published. The press did not pay much attention to the matter. It is likely that only a very limited number of people understood what Meteyard referred to with the words 'this bill' (78). She was beside herself with anger, which led her to spend too much space in attacking 'gentlemanly' seducers. In consequence, she did not have enough space left to develop her argument on sisterhood, which she wanted to 'impress' (79) upon her readers.

The Survival of Fallen Women in Meteyard's Stories

Meteyard's article 'Life's Contrasts', published in the first issue of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847,[62] continued her campaign to bring the fallen woman question to the attention of a wider public. It was accompanied with a full page illustration titled 'New Year's Eve. 1847'.[63] In the centre a young well-dressed woman is dancing at a ball; this is contrasted with another woman on the right side of the engraving wandering with bare feet in a dark cold street. Meteyard inserted a short poem.

> God! What a gulph between
> Proud beauty, young and worshipp'd,
> And the suicide Magdalene! (6)

Meteyard focused the discussion on privileged women's ignorance of their suffering

[62] Silverpen, 'Life's Contrasts; Or, New Year's Eve', *Howitt's Journal*, 2 January 1847, pp. 4-7.
[63] Franklin, 'New Year's Eve. 1847', engraved by G. Measom, *Howitt's Journal*, 2 January 1847, p. 5.

sisters. While criticizing a lady whose 'experience of want and misery, and womanly temptations' was restricted to reading fashionable novels, Meteyard regarded the sin of the fallen woman as venial. She attributed it to her trusting nature, exploited by a cunning seducer: 'the frailty of trusting woman has paid the dearest price for its large sins'. It highlighted in italics that the woman could '*ameliorate and advance*' (6) his character as his wife.

The first instalment of 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' appeared in the following number of *Howitt's Journal*.[64] It raised the question of women's false pride in their purity, personified by 'the immaculate Priscilla Flint', the successful applicant for the post of matron at a workhouse. She has a 'stony heart', and darts 'a stern glance' at a pauper whose rags brush against her gown. Flint believes that such a gentlewoman as she is should be 'holy', and not to be 'touched with impurity'. A comparison of the old woman to 'a trodden worm' and her anguish of 'deep and silent sorrow' (19), suggests that she is a fallen woman. In this Meteyard criticised middle class women apparently appalled by the mere thought of their fallen sisters.

Three weeks after 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' ended, Meteyard contributed 'The Canker and the Cure', also to *Howitt's Journal*.[65] The heroine Becky is a maid of all work. She decides to train an orphan girl who has stolen a silver inkstand to become a useful maid. The magistrate agrees, suggesting that starvation would turn her into 'incipient prostitution' if she is sent back to the streets. The girl grows up to assist Becky, and when Becky becomes old and feeble she takes over all of her duties. Becky's 'simple mercy' (75) works as the antithesis of the gentlewoman Pricilla Flint's pride. This story also suggests that prostitutes are victims of circumstance, by illustrating that the girl becomes a good maid under Becky's tuition when she might have become a

[64] Silverpen, 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal*, 9, 16 January 1847, pp. 18-20, 36-38.
[65] Silverpen, 'The Canker and the Cure', *Howitt's Journal*, 6 February 1847, pp. 75-76.

prostitute if left abandoned on the streets.

In the same month as 'The Canker and the Cure' appeared in *Howitt's Journal*, Meteyard published 'The Worm towards the Sun' in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*.[66] The story begins with a comparison of a fallen woman to a worm: 'all of man or woman had said, "Worm! worm! we crush thee as we tread" ' (172). This opening accorded with Meteyard's 'My Predicate' at the end:

> *The Worm thou treadest under foot, Oh, world! if raised by thy hands, and placed towards the sun, would surely become a winged and spiritual creature; that, in itself, as in its causations, might go on progressively towards God.* (185)

Meteyard's didacticism risks damaging her story's literary value, but it is a telling indication of her determination to get her point across.

This story could be a criticism of the typical fallen woman narrative such as Thomas Hood's 'The Bridge of Sighs',[67] published in 1844, three years before 'The Worm towards the Sun'. Hood romanticised the death of a fallen woman who had drowned herself:

> The bleak wind of March
> Made her tremble and shiver;
> But not the dark arch,
> Or the black flowing river:

[66] Silverpen, 'The Worm towards the Sun', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, February 1847, pp. 172-85.
[67] Thomas Hood, 'The Bridge of Sighs', *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250-1900*, ed. by Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919), pp. 758-62.

Mad from life's history,

Glad to death's mystery,

Swift to be hurl'd —

Anywhere, anywhere

Out of the world! (63-71)

In her story Meteyard presented the conventional narrative of a homeless woman wandering by a river at night. The woman sees a 'natural invitation from pain towards rest' in a booming surge below. While Hood purified the fallen woman, saying, 'Death has left on her / Only the beautiful' (25-26), Meteyard baptised her alive in a storm. She employed the words 'the Deluge', which suggested that the rain had a religious significance. While Hood urged, 'Touch her not scornfully' (15) as death had purified her, Meteyard let 'a rough hand' (172) clutch her at the very moment when she was throwing herself into the river. The poem continued,

Think of her mournfully,

Gently and humanly;

Not of the stains of her,

All that remains of her

Now is pure womanly. (16-20)

But Meteyard had a voice 'half cant, half brutality' cry, 'What, sinner! and the Sabbath-night too! Oh! you worm of sin! No night but the Sabbath-night!' (172).

The voice of John Roartext, 'a religious man', was interrupted by the voice of 'Mercy' saying, 'He blessed, He forgave, He glorified on the Sabbath-day', when 'poor Frailty', whose real name turned out to be Magdalen, fell insensible. The voice was of

Miss Mary Fogg, 'a very needy authoress' and 'a big-nosed little woman' (173). Meteyard accorded her the same profession and features as her own.[68] This playful self-parody shows a very different style of writing from the hard-hitting prose of 'Protection to Women'.

While Hood's fallen woman was purified by death, Meteyard's Magdalen was regenerated by Mary Fogg's mercy. Fogg never 'cast even small scorn' upon her sins, and Magdalen 'wept out its true redemption on the breast of purest Mercy' (179). Meteyard used the conventional melodramatic frame of the fallen woman narrative to make a new version of the religious parable with capitalised initials of the four words 'Mercy', 'Cant', 'Frailty' and 'Purity'. There are echoes of Bunyan and of the Bible. The name 'Mary' may come from the Virgin Mary, and 'Magdalen' of course from the name of a prostitute forgiven by Christ. Mary's 'Mercy' was contrasted with Roartext's 'Cant'. Magdalen was called 'Frailty' at first, and, as seen later, regenerated to embody 'Purity'. Meteyard frequently employed the word 'Cant' to refer to the conventional code of respectability which cast out fallen women as sinners.

Meteyard did not represent her fallen woman characters as merely the objects of pity but as subjects for regeneration. Magdalen stayed with Mary and her housekeeping allowed Mary to concentrate on her writing. When recovered enough, Magdalen got needle-work and brought in earnings to the household. In an essay on Elizabeth Gaskell's shorter fiction, Shirley Foster pointed out the 'familiar trope' which Victorian writers employed: They generally emphasised 'moral redemption through suffering and self-sacrifice'.[69] Meteyard thought Magdalen had already suffered enough. The needlework at a slop maker's was a hard job for a woman who had had 'delicate

[68] Meteyard's photograph taken by John Watkins and the other by Earnest Edwards show her appearance. See the figures in Appendix.
[69] Shirley Foster, 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Shorter Pieces', *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. by Jill L. Matus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 108-130 (p. 113).

nurture', but Magdalen meekly bore it as 'a penalty' (179) for her sin, a much lighter penalty than death. Furthermore, she was represented as a woman dignified by her innate purity. Mary translated seamen's letters for money, and Magdalen frequented a lodging house for them as Mary's messenger. Among rowdy seamen in the appalling accommodation, 'Magdalen passed unscathed':

> The coarsest jest fell back upon the lips as she approached; the hardest ruffian stood abashed when her eye fell upon him; and never was a sin wept out with truer honour. (181-82)

Magdalen possessed 'a true womanly and humane nature' (182). She made herself useful for those destitute and forlorn. Magdalen nursed even Roartext, whom she had found dying in a neighbouring lodging. By assuring her readers that even if 'Purity itself' had watched her, it would have found 'no sin' (181), Meteyard challenged the conventional narrative that a fallen woman could not avoid a stigma while alive.

'The Worm towards the Sun' could be regarded as a precursor of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853). Both heroines attempted suicide. Both were supported by those who accepted their past. Both stayed with a single woman, but tried not to depend on her financially. Both were engaged in nursing, which proved their redemption. However, one important difference lies in the endings of the narratives. While Ruth has an illegitimate child, renounces her seducer and dies, Magdalen survives to marry a man who loves her despite her past and becomes a mother. Meteyard might be considered more radical than Gaskell in according her heroine such a happy ending. The conventional ending for a seduced woman who survived in mid-nineteenth century fiction was emigration, as with Emily in Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849-1850).

Meteyard had another fallen woman in her story 'The Co-operative Band',

published in *Howitt's Journal* in March 1847 and discussed in chapter three.[70] She is 'a drabish [sic], miserable woman' of 'a very vile and disreputable character'. However, even this nameless 'fallen woman' (146) does not die a miserable death. When she becomes very ill in labour, all the people pretend not to see it, except one woman. Margaret Cameron cares for her and delivers her baby. Meteyard regarded the moment of childbirth as 'an hour when all but pity is forgotten', and the baby 'from a parentage of sin and crime' as 'born with a divine spirit' (146).

Mr. Spooner's Bill, Again

In June 1847 Meteyard again took up the question of 'Mr. Spooner's Bill' in *Howitt's Journal*.[71] In contrast to the previous article 'Protection to Women', the name of the bill was clearly indicated in the essay's title 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill'. During the ten months between the two publications, Richard Spooner continued to struggle to bring in the Bill for the Suppression of Trading in Seduction and Prostitution. On 16 March 1847 in the House of Commons, he rose to move for leave to introduce the Bill, with more than 2,000 petitions. However, the motion was postponed to give priority to another 'important' subject.[72] On 30 March, Spooner again tried. At the moment when he mentioned an association in the metropolis which 'counted amongst its members, its council, and its-vice-presidents and presidents, some of the highest and noblest in the land', he was interrupted by Craven Fitzhardinge Berkeley, the Member for Cheltenham. He called Spooner's attention to the unfitness of the details for

[70] Silverpen, 'The Co-operative Band', *Howitt's Journal*, 13, 20 March 1847, pp. 144-46, 156-58. See ch. 3, pp. 101-114.
[71] Silverpen, 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill', *Howitt's Journal*, 19 June 1847, pp. 339-41.
[72] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, March 16, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCI. cc. 20-21.

publication. Strangers were withdrawn. Further debate was carried on behind closed doors. The report of the debate never appeared, but Spooner was given leave to introduce the Bill for the more effectual Suppression of Trading in Seduction and Prostitution, and for the better Protection of Females. It was read a first time.[73] When the motion was made for a second reading on 12 May, Sir George Grey, Home Secretary, indicated the bill's too 'sweeping' character. Spooner was compelled to withdraw the bill.[74] However, on the following day he moved again for leave, replying to Grey's suggestion that his measure was directed towards brothel keepers and people trading in seduction. This time he was given leave. At this moment, there were about seventy members present, but it came to fewer than forty when Spooner actually brought up the bill and moved that it should be read a first time. The small number made the House adjourn.[75] On 17 May, Spooner moved that its shorter and more succinct version should be read a first time.[76] The debate was adjourned but on 21 May, the bill was read a first time. On 9 June, they had the second reading. The bill was referred to the Select Committee, and reported with a bill as amended by the Select Committee on 16 June.

Meteyard certainly had been watching the proceedings carefully. Her article touched upon 'the advice and laughter of Mr. Hume and Colonel Sibthorp', two Members of Parliament, who were against the bill. It is true that Joseph Hume bitterly opposed the motion in the House on 13 May.[77] It is also true that Charles de Laet Waldo Sibthorp recommended Spooner to 'leave this measure in the hands of the Government'

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[73] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, March 30, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCI. cc. 616-17. 'Seduction', *The Times*, 31 March 1847, p. 2. See also Mitchell, p. 43n19.

[74] Commons Sitting of Wednesday, May 12, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCII. cc. 729-31.

[75] Commons Sitting of Thursday, May 13, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCII. cc. 788-89.

[76] Commons Sitting of Thursday, May 17, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCII. cc. 1017-19.

[77] Commons Sitting of Thursday, May 13, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCII. cc. 788-89.

on 17 May.[78] Moreover, when mentioning the first reading held on 21 May, Meteyard correctly pointed out that the noes against the second reading were only six. It is very likely that Meteyard referred to Hansard for this information. However, she knew more than what was reported in Hansard, which did not mention the 'laughter' of Hume and Sibthorp. Some London newspapers including *The Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Post*, the *Daily News*, and the *Standard*, ran parliamentary reports in their regular columns such as 'Imperial Parliament' or 'Parliamentary Intelligence', but they referred to the bill briefly as one of a number on miscellaneous topics. Meteyard probably had access to some inside information.

Continuous watching of the proceedings may have changed her attitude towards Mr. Spooner. She had come to admire 'the moral courage' and 'the tenacity' he demonstrated in spite of 'a sneer' from among his colleague Members of Parliament (399-40), although she still criticised the bill for being too lax. Meteyard was convinced that it would be only after obtaining a certain amount of education that the individual could 'estimate the full extent of a social wrong' on which he wanted to legislate (340). She wished to see parliamentary bills, such as Spooner's, 'hailed and respected throughout the land' (341), as evidence of the education acquired. Meteyard regarded 'ignorance and destitution' as true causes of prostitution, enumerating those whose ignorance was culpable: the legislators who could not see the felony of seducers, the wealth-monopolists who prevented more equitable division of wealth, and the political economists who denounced early marriages as 'crimes', and offspring as 'a misfortune' (340) based on Malthusian population theory.

This article displayed Meteyard's skill as a campaigning journalist. Both the biting aggressiveness of 'Protection to Women' and the melodramatic tone of 'The

[78] Commons Sitting of Thursday, May 17, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCII. cc. 1017-19.

Worm towards the Sun' disappeared. Instead, her argument bore the power of conviction based on reference data and statistics. To insist on a felony imposed on seducers, Meteyard referred to the 1847 edition of Elisha Powell Hurlbut's *Essays on Human Rights*.[79] To prove that ignorance and destitution were the main causes of prostitution, she employed statistics from Alexandre Parent-Duchatelet (1790-1835), the French hygienist famous for his study of prostitution in Paris in the nineteenth century:

> Out of the 4,470 prostitutes in the city of Paris, somewhere about 1835, it was found that 2,232 were unable to write; out of 828 registrations of birth, only four had any pretensions to rank; out of 2,500 provincial registrations the results were the same; and out of 3,084, only three possessed property. . . . (340)

Meteyard pointed out that an opinion prevailed that prostitution was 'an evil inseparable from a high state of civilization' (340). This idea was grounded in Malthusian population theory, which led to advice for people to delay marriage for the purpose of population control. It gave bachelors a good excuse to turn to prostitutes. Meteyard again used statistics to deny the assertion of a necessary evil. She did not cite any source, but obviously referred to Charles Bray's *The Philosophy of Necessity* (1841) in stating that agricultural improvements would make it possible for the land of Great Britain to produce wheat to maintain '120,000,000 to 180,000,000 of human beings' with 'ease and comfort' (340).[80] Such fertility could not be attained immediately. This is why Meteyard may appear inconsistent; while championing early marriage in place of

[79] E. P. Hurlbut, *Essays on Human Rights, and Their Political Guaranties* [sic], pref. and noted by George Combe (1845; Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart, 1847). Meteyard misspelled the author's name as Hurlbert and the name of a person who added a preface and notes as Coombe in the note (p. 340n1).

[80] Charles Bray, *The Philosophy of Necessity; Or, the Law of Consequences: As Applicable To Mental, Moral, and Social Science*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1841), II, 442.

prostitution, she emphasised the necessity of education which restrained marriages until means were 'sure of both raising and supporting the condition of offspring' (340). The point of her argument was that early marriage was not wrong in essence, but that human society had not yet advanced enough for it.

Meteyard emphasised this point in particular since she considered sexual desire a part of human nature as created by God. She denounced it as false to call it 'the inherent evil of man's nature' (340), and maintained that the desire should be satisfied not by prostitution but by early marriage, and deplored the current condition of society which could not allow the poor to enjoy early marriage. She argued:

> The near equality of male and female births indicates that nature intended the marriage of all unrestricted by disease and deformity; whereas, under present social regulations, thousands of human creatures perish without scarcely an affection of their nature having been brought into action; and crime and disease, both of body and mind, supplant those faculties and instincts intended by the Divine Creator of the Universe for our exaltation and our happiness. (340)

This article presents Meteyard's contradictory positions: one that of a realistic social critic; the other a romantic utopian. While analysing the status-quo with statistical data, she showed her utopian view of the future: everyone would live a happy married life with their blessed children; the fertile land would produce plenty of food, too much to be consumed; the public would sincerely admire such bills as Spooner's. However, she did not explain how to fill the gap between the present condition and the utopian future. She proposed education as a social panacea, but did not explain how and what kind of education should be provided. Meteyard herself recognised the argument as being too conceptual. She said, 'I may be smiled at for my enthusiasm; I may be smiled

at for desiring a code of public morals more abstract than real' (341). At the very end of the article, she wrote, 'I have a tale in preparation that shall exemplify the blessing of mercy and knowledge in the individual' (341). She chose writing modes in accordance with her purpose: an essay to show current problems and the goal to be attained; fiction to illustrate what each reader should do in practice to ease the problems.

Meteyard also varied her style of writing. After the publication of 'Protection to Women', she had probably become afraid that its pugnacious manner would not appeal to readers. She then strategically shifted her style from a hard hitting one to a more rational tone in 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill', where she displayed a detailed knowledge of the bill while employing statistics from authoritative sources. The article assumed a defensive posture against male criticism of women writers' ignorance in an attempt to refute the argument that they were not qualified to treat the subject.

However, Meteyard's frequent reference to Parent-Duchatelet was regarded as outrageous in the late 1840s. In 1850, three years after the publication of 'Comments on Mr. Spooner's Bill', W. R. Greg stated in the *Westminster Review*: 'It is discreditable to a woman even to be supposed to know of [prostitutes'] existence'.[81] Even in the 1870s, to argue about prostitution and sexual matters was regarded as unwomanly. To echo another article published in the *Saturday Review* in 1870, it was 'a discussion from which [women's] natural instincts would have made them recoil'.[82]

Meteyard was ahead of her time by more than two decades in discussing the subject of prostitution publicly, and in proposing the punishment of the seducer rather than his victim. Her challenge to the Victorian sexual double standard anticipated an article entitled 'Women's Protest' which the Ladies National Association for the Repeal

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[81] [William Rathbone Greg], 'Prostitution', *Westminster Review*, July 1850, pp. 448-506 (p. 450).

[82] 'The Ladies Association and the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Saturday Review*, 12 March 1870, pp. 341-42 (p. 341).

of the Contagious Diseases Acts published in the *Daily News* in 1870. It explained what was unjust about the Acts: 'it is unjust to punish the sex who are the victims of a vice, and leave unpunished the sex who are the main cause, both of the vice and its dreaded consequences'.[83] Many influential women signed this article, including Florence Nightingale and Harriet Martineau.[84] It was because neither Spooner's Bill nor Meteyard's writings were able to attract as much public attention as the Contagious Diseases Acts and the resulting protest movement that they did not cause such a great controversy as in the 1870s.

'The Angel of the Unfortunate': A Noble Prostitute

As Meteyard announced in her article 'Mr. Spooner's Bill', she contributed a story concerning prostitution to *Howitt's Journal* in September 1847. The purpose of 'The Angel of the Unfortunate' was to show her readers what they could actually do to save prostitutes. She added a note to the story to address the reader directly:

> My reader will perceive that this is the tale promised some time since in my article on Mr. Spooner's Bill. . . . Though I look upon the great social evil alluded to as mainly attributable to a vicious social condition, and consider that HUNGER and IGNORANCE are the main roots of prostitution, still there are methods of collateral reform that we may help to develop. By God's help we shall eradicate evil government. By God's help we *shall* make practical the

[83] Rpt. as 'Protest of the Ladies' National Association against the C.D. Acts', in *The Sexuality Debates*, ed. by Sheila Jeffreys (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 193-95 (p. 194).

[84] Josephine E. Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (London: Horace Marshall, 1896), p. 11. This book was dedicated to James Stansfeld, who had been Vice President of the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts since 1874.

sublime charity and mercy of our religion. (196-97n)

This story is another example of Meteyard's campaigning zeal, and her determination to get her point across, even at the expense of her story's literary value.

The story is set in Paris in order to soften the shock, as the city defied many Victorian taboos. Meteyard presented the prostitutes as 'unfortunate' victims of circumstance, by representing them through the unbiased eye of a young heroine who did not know even what they were. Innocent La Trouvée observes a group of girls, about her own age but dressed like adult women, talking 'with loud coarse voices', and drinking alcohol from a flask. She asks Camille, the anatomy student who is accompanying her, what has made the girls so 'wicked' and so 'bold'. He answers, 'Because they are unfortunate'. Innocent is an orphan, and her surname Trouvée is easily associated with the French phrase 'enfant trouvé', or abandoned child. Innocent's 'child's heart' tells her she could be like them (189). The difference between her life, brought up with care by her foster father, and theirs, depended simply on fortune.

Meteyard's knowledge of the situation in France derived from Parent-Duchatelet's *De la Prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (*On Prostitution in the City of Paris*, 1836), a book which she often quoted in her articles and stories including the piece on 'Mr Spooner's Bill' and an earlier story 'Market — Old and New'.[85] Walkowitz argues on contemporary statistical evidence that a substantial ratio of prostitutes were actually orphans.[86] However, Bracebridge Hemyng's investigations in 1861-1862 indicated that 'loose women' in London tended to 'throw a veil over their early life'.[87] His interpretation illustrates a deep-rooted Victorian idea that women

[85] Silverpen, 'The Market — Old and New', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, June 1847, pp. 519-28 (p. 528).
[86] Walkowitz, pp. 17, 261 n18.
[87] Hemyng, p. 215.

became prostitutes due to their own faults or weaknesses. Meteyard's story challenged the contemporary view.

Innocent was under ten years of age when she observed the child prostitutes.[88] The girls whom she saw were 'not older' than she was (189); they were too young to be responsible for their past in spite of the social myth that prostitutes were mature women who had been seduced, and subsequently degraded. Traditionally by English common law the age of consent had ranged from ten to twelve until 1861, when the Offences against the Person Act fixed it at twelve, and in 1875 at thirteen.[89] Child prostitutes were not the fictitious creations of sensational journalism.[90] However, the London Lock Hospital, a venereal disease clinic, reported that the proportion of girl inmates under sixteen was only 6.5 percent in 1849.[91] Moreover, the Society for the Rescue of Young Women and Children asserted in their annual report of 1883 that there were no prostitutes under sixteen in London.[92] This strong denial gives a glimpse of the taboo on the subject even in the 1880s, when Josephine Butler protested against child prostitution in her campaign to raise the age of consent.[93] In daring to take up the controversial question of child prostitution Meteyard was nearly forty years ahead of her time.

However, in creating Marie, an adult prostitute, Meteyard followed a more conventional line. Marie was a grisette, 'young and very pretty, but so vain' (188). This

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[88] Innocent had become a 'child of seven' (187) about the time she went to the slum with Camille and observed the girl prostitutes.

[89] Offences against the Person Act 1861 (24 & 25 Vict. c. 100), National Archives <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/24-25/100/section/51/enacted> [accessed 10 March 2015]. Louise A. Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 13-14.

[90] Kim Stevenson, 'Fulfilling Their Mission: The Intervention of Voluntary Societies in Cases of Sexual Assault in the Victorian Criminal Process', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 8 (2004), 93-110 <http://doi. org/10.4000/chs.519>

[91] Walkowitz, p. 17.

[92] Jackson, p. 54. The society was known also as Rescue Society of London.

[93] Duncan Crow, *The Victorian Woman* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), pp. 240, 247.

suggests that her very vanity led her to be taken advantage of by her seducer. She became a fallen woman, driven by poverty into prostitution, theft and finally to a premature death from disease.

Innocent, at the age of eighteen, is at Marie's deathbed in a 'Hospital of the Magdelonettes' (196). Marie askes Innocent to pass her crucifix to her friend, a prostitute of 'a noble character' (198). Her name is Lucrèce: the name of the Roman woman whose female virtue was repeatedly praised in literary works including Chaucer's poem *The Legend of Good Women*, and Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). Unlike this semi-legendary Roman figure who committed suicide, Meteyard's Lucrèce survives as a regenerated woman.

Lucrèce was 'a beautiful woman' (197) in her early thirties, which suggests she was an abandoned fallen woman. The repeated adjective 'noble' must have been shocking to contemporary readers, but when Marie used the term to describe the prostitute, readers were required to accept her words as Innocent did, because they were in a dying message even though from a prostitute's lips:

> you'll find Lucrèce noble, for she has fed me and others when forsaken by every human thing; she has stripped herself to clothe the naked; she has spoken when all other tongues have been tied, till I and others have sometimes asked ourselves, How can Lucrèce be sinful? (197)

Marie also said that Lucrèce had never committed a theft. This implies that she supported other prostitutes with the money she earned by prostituting herself. The comparison of two sins, prostitution and theft, made readers consider the 'degrees of vice' (197) and ask which was more sinful, Marie's theft for herself, or Lucrèce's altruistic prostitution for others?

Meteyard added a note from a contemporary French source to refute a supposed opposing argument that such a noble prostitute was improbable:

> Parent Duchatelet, and others, remark upon the singular exaltation and purity of spirit observable in an unfortunate class of women. . . . This is another testimony to the inherent good mingled up so largely with the frailties of human nature. (196n1)

Lucrèce herself 'proved a noble character, worthy of all that had been said of her by the dying unfortunate' (198). She committed suicide by jumping into the Seine, but was saved to recover under Innocent's care. She supported Innocent to rescue young girls from the 'den where children were made criminal' (199), like the boys under Fagin of *Oliver Twist*. Her experience as a prostitute enabled Lucrèce to go into the slum where Innocent could not venture.

Innocent persuaded Lucrèce's father to accept his daughter as 'penitent and pure'. The 'old man's happy tears' (199) indicated Meteyard's conviction that once regenerated, fallen women should be accepted into society. However, in reality, Flora Tristan, a French writer who published a report on London in 1840, commented on '[v]irtuous women' who had 'harsh, bitter, cruel scorn for these unhappy ones'.[94] Innocent asserted that 'it is not the province of charity and purity to utterly crush the fallen human flower' (197).

Lucrèce rescued not only girls but also adult prostitutes with 'repentant hearts' (199). Innocent opened a school for the girls, where the homeless fallen women began a

[94] Flora Tristan, 'Prostitutes', in *Promenades dans Londres* [*Promenades in London*] (London: W. Jeffs, 1840), rep. in *Flora Tristan, Utopian Feminist: Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade*, ed. and trans. by Doris Beik and Paul Harold Beik (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993), pp. 67-73 (p.73).

community life under the watchful eye of Innocent and Lucrèce. Having belonged to respectable families originally, many of the women were educated enough to teach the girls by day. Some found needle work and brought their earnings to sustain the school. The school rooms worked as their home where they stayed by night.

The home differed from existing Victorian rescue institutes. First, the funds for the home came at least partly from the earnings of the women inhabitants themselves. Secondly, fallen women were not merely objects of pity and charity, but investors and independent working members, and sometimes even managing members, all contributing to support the home. Lucrèce worked as a superintendent and Innocent's right hand person. The cooperation between Innocent and Lucrèce suggested the potential of sisterhood to solve a social problem, implying that fallen women themselves could be involved in the management of the home. Meteyard presented them as society's potential human resources.

'The New Lord Burleigh'

Meteyard published another story which dealt indirectly with the issue of prostitution, 'The New Lord Burleigh', in *Howitt's Journal* in 1848.[95] This is a love story between two individuals of very different rank: an orphan from a county union and an aristocrat. Although there is no fallen woman as such, the melodramatic story still deals with the problem, and works as a criticism of upper class seducers of working class women.

As the title word 'New' suggests, the story has an original. It was a true story: Sarah Hoggins, a daughter of local farmer, married John Jones, in Shropshire in 1790.

[95] Silverpen, 'The New Lord Burleigh', *Howitt's Journal*, 17, [24] June 1848, pp. 391-94, 403-407.

His true identity was Henry Cecil, who became Earl of Exeter in 1793, and Marquess (sic) of Exeter in 1801. The misalliance had become a widely known legend. Constance Russell and Christopher Ricks argue that it had inspired Thomas Moore to write the poem 'You Remember Ellen' in *Irish Melodies* (1820).[96] William Hazlitt mentioned the story in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1822,[97] and reprinted it in *Sketches of the Principal Picture-Galleries in England with a Criticism on 'Marriage A-la-mode'* in 1824.[98] When Alfred Tennyson was thinking of basing his 'The Lord of Burleigh' (1835, published in 1842) on the tale, he wondered if the story might be too familiar. When he published his celebrated *Poems* (1842), the *Monthly Review* took it up and quoted the entire one hundred lines of 'The Lord of Burleigh'.[99]

In Meteyard's version, the hero, a 'Mr.' John Verdun becomes seriously ill in a hotel at Piccadilly. He escapes death thanks to the devoted care of Meg, a young housemaid and falls in love with her. Although his love is pure, the landlady believes the ill-intentioned gossip that the rich gentleman is seducing her and dismisses her to avoid 'such a disgrace on this respectable family hotel' (405). Verdun searches for Meg with difficulty, but finds her. He makes a proposal of marriage, Meg accepts, and his true identity is revealed as Sir John Verdun, a Leicestershire aristocrat.

The main difference between Meteyard's story and most of its predecessors is in its happy ending. While the real Sarah Hoggins died following the birth of her youngest son,[100] Hazlitt attributed her premature death to 'the shock' she received in discovering

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[96] [Constance Charlotte Eliza] Russell, *The Rose Goddess and Other Sketches of Mystery and Romance* (London: Longmans, 1910), p. 145. Christopher Ricks, note to 'The Lord Burleigh', 229 of *The Poems of Tennyson*, by Alfred Tennyson, ed. by Ricks (London: Longmans, 1969), p. 603.

[97] [William Hazlitt], 'Table Talk. — No. IV. *Burleigh House*', *New Monthly Magazine*, January 1822, pp. 444-49 (p. 449).

[98] [William Hazlitt], *Sketches of the Principal Picture-Galleries in England with a Criticism on 'Marriage A-la-mode'* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824), pp. 159-60.

[99] 'Poetry', *Monthly Review*, July 1842, pp. 365-79 (pp. 373-75).

[100] W. O. Woodall, 'The Lord of Burleigh and Sarah Hoggins', *Notes and Queries*, 19

her husband's true identity,[101] and Tennyson to her consumption caused by 'the burthen of an honour / Unto which she was not born' (79-80). Here is the fixed idea that a socially unequal marriage will end in unhappiness, which could serve as a good reason for a gentleman to keep his lover of low birth as a mistress, and to forsake her. Meteyard challenged the idea, and wrote her story as an example to show how a gentleman should behave. In her version, when Meg was severely shocked at her husband's true identity and whispered 'something of her own unworthiness', he stated: 'If you have been humble, Meg, by chance of circumstance, it is henceforth my vowed duty to raise this humility to the height that is its own from God' (407).

While recognising that poverty could dull the conscience, Meteyard allowed Meg, who grew up in a workhouse, to keep 'a divine heart' (404) and 'womanly and most genuine nature' (403), for the purpose of showing that a woman's worth lay not so much in what she had as in what she was. Meg had watched him carefully while other hotel staff saw him merely as a burden. Their attitude changed completely when they found valuables among his belongings. Meg's disinterested devotion was contrasted with this sudden change and further with the rough nursing care of the 'Gamp sisterhood' (393) under the landlady.[102]

The Victorian reader would have easily associated 'The New Lord Burleigh' with the well known original story. Sarah Hoggins was Henry Cecil's second wife. His first wife Emma came from a genteel family and brought him a large fortune. It was said that she was a most wasteful person, made him deeply in debt, and ran away with another

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September 1991, pp. 221-23 (p. 223). Russell, p. 145.

[101] [Hazlitt], 'Table Talk', p. 449.

[102] Meteyard shared the recognition of various social problems with Dickens, and frequently referred to his novels. She may have had Urania Cottage in mind while writing the story. Dickens had dedicated *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-1844), the novel which had the nurse Sarah Gamp, to Angela Burdett-Coutts, who established the home for the redemption of prostitutes in 1847. Dickens was involved in the foundation and its administration (Donald Hawes, *Charles Dickens*, London: Continuum, 2007, pp. 67-68).

person. Cecil left his estate to live a simple and peaceful life in a Shropshire village, and there met Sarah.[103] Hazlitt argued that he had sought a woman who 'should love him for himself alone' without any knowledge of his rank.[104]

'The New Lord Burleigh' may appear to be an unrealistic Cinderella story, or the sort of silly romantic story which Miss Millicent, the landlady Mrs. Jamble's niece concocted after the sick person proved to be very rich. It was 'a pretty little romance of marriage, in which she figured as the heroine, and the sick gentleman as the hero' (393). The names of the characters were allegorical: Mrs. Jamble, Miss Dust, Mr. Shark and Miss Gloss were the people who tried to separate Meg from Verdun, while the settings were real: the hotel was placed in Piccadilly; Meg stayed at Berners Street after she was dismissed; she married at a church near Portland Place, and travelled from Euston Square station to Birmingham, and then to their new home in Leicestershire. These work as signposts to indicate that this allegorical romance was not a mere fiction, but had a basis in reality.

On 13 July 1847, one month after Meteyard published her article 'Comments on Mr Spooner's Bill', the order for the third reading of the bill was discharged. By then, it had been amended three times according to the debates held in Parliament.[105] The latter two versions of the Bill regarded trading in seduction as subject to punishment only when a seduced woman was 'unmarried' and under twenty-one years of age, 'who shall not be proved to have previously had illicit sexual intercourse'. The first version stated that the court might determine the estate or interest of such persons as were convicted of keeping brothels, but the clause disappeared from the second. Instead, it contained

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[103] Woodall, p. 222. A. P. W. Malcomson, *The Pursuit of the Heiress: Aristocratic Marriage in Ireland, 1740-1840* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2006), p. 218.
[104] [Hazlitt], 'Table Talk', p. 449.
[105] Seduction and Prostitution Suppression: A Bill for the More Effectual Suppression of Trading in Seduction and Prostitution, and for the Better Protection of Females, House of Commons, Bills, 1847 (401), IV. 23, 1847 (513), IV. 21, 1847 (550), IV. 25.

another clause to limit time for preferring indictment to within three months after the completion of the offence alleged. The earlier two versions declared that indictments should not be quashed for want of form, but this clause also disappeared from the third. Generally speaking, the bill was amended to make it more difficult to prove guilt. However, even the last version was refused.

There were mainly two reasons for the opposition to the bill. In the first place, it was believed that the proposed penalty was too heavy. Although Meteyard regarded seduction as a felony, John Arthur Roebuck, the Member for Bath, argued that imprisonment for two years at longest was almost the largest extent of imprisonment applied to any similar crime. The other problem lay in the ambiguity of the word 'seduction' under the bill. The Member for York, Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke was afraid that the bill would 'give facilities to ill-disposed persons to get up false charges' against innocent gentlemen.[106] On 28 June, 1847, a petition signed by 100,000 women of England was presented for the passage of the bill. However, the introduction of the bill was turned down on 13 July,[107] but with a prospect that 'some more effective measure would be brought forward next Session'.[108] Thus, Samuel Wilberforce, the bishop of Oxford proposed that a Bill for the Protection of Females should be read a first time on 26 May 1848. It was accepted.[109] On 5 June, he moved the second reading, and it was also accepted.[110] However, the bill was rejected on 11 June.[111] On 13 July, Lord Brougham moved another bill on the same subject. The Protection of Women Bill

[106] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, June 23, 1847, House of Commons Hansard, 1847, XCIII, cc. 811-14.
[107] 'Seduction — Petition to the Queen', *Observer*, 28 June, 1847, p. 2.
[108] Lords Sitting of Tuesday, July 13, 1847, House of Lords Hansard, 1847, XCIV, cc. 215-16.
[109] Lords Sitting of Friday, May 26, 1848, House of Lords Hansard, 1847-48, XCVIII, c. 1418.
[110] Lords Sitting of Monday, June 5, 1848, House of Lords Hansard, 1847-48, XCIX, cc. 332-35.
[111] Lords Sitting of Tuesday, June 11, 1848, House of Lords Hansard, 1847-48, C, cc. 380-84.

was read a first time. This was only four days before the first instalment of 'The New Lord Burleigh' appeared in *Howitt's Journal*. It seems that Meteyard had been thoroughly disappointed at the decision of Parliament, and wrote 'The New Lord Burleigh' to criticise gentlemen who could not behave like the new Lord Burleigh, and Members of Parliament and the House of Lords, who, concerned with their own honour, or with contemporary mores, did not pass the bill to save fallen women.

Meteyard and Modern Journalists

When moving the second reading of the bill for the protection of females in the House of Lords in 1848, the bishop of Oxford was afraid that he might 'open' a 'painful question' in bringing this subject under the notice of gentlemen.[112] Meteyard criticised such 'false' respectability for preventing 'freedom of public opinion'.[113]

She wrote the articles on Spooner's Bill responding quickly to political events, while creating several stories to protest against the more general issues behind the events. The survival and rehabilitation of her fallen women characters challenged the conventional idea that such women deserved a miserable death. The idea was embedded in contemporary Victorian stories, and Meteyard tried to refute it by her own stories. She understood all too well the issue behind the opposition to Spooner's Bill. It questioned why the law should protect irredeemable sinners at the risk of gentlemen's honour. Meteyard did not regard this controversial subject as a matter of woman's sexual morality.

Meteyard was far in advance of her time and not only in her ideas on this controversial subject. Like a modern journalist, she wrote on social and political topics

[112] Lords Sitting of Monday, June 5, 1848, House of Lords Hansard, 1847-48, XCIX, cc. 332-35 (c. 333).
[113] Silverpen, 'Protection to Women', p. 78.

up to the moment, raising controversial issues, and addressing taboo subjects like prostitution. Her resemblance to modern journalists is demonstrated also in her methods of gathering information. She kept her ear to the ground in term of parliamentary debates and the larger political climate. Even when the newspapers were reticent on these 'improper' topics, she utilised information gleaned from published parliamentary proceedings and from her colleagues, and employed statistics to support her arguments.

These peculiar traits could be regarded as admirable if found in a modern journalist. Ironically, they prevented Meteyard from achieving lasting literary fame. While in the eyes of some of her contemporaries she went too far, modern readers, although more likely to be sympathetic to her ideas, have difficulty in interpreting her stories and seeing beyond their simplistic morality. One needs to know the context of her articles and stories, the close association between her stories and contemporary political and social events, in order fully to understand their subtlety.

Chapter 5: Education for the People

Contributors to the 'journals of popular progress' advocated a wide range of education for the people. Samuel Smiles was yet to publish his *Self-Help* (1859), but as has been shown in the previous chapter, he was already active in spreading the gospel of self-help education in the second half of the 1840s.[1] The sanitary reformer Thomas Southwood Smith addressed workers on the necessity of learning the central issues surrounding the sanitary question. The critic Henry F. Chorley recommended music to them. Under the influence of these fellow writers Meteyard developed her own arguments on these topics. While the three male writers contributed articles, and Smiles biographical ones in particular, Meteyard often employed fiction to convey her ideas and to illustrate how education would serve the people. A quarter century later, in 1872, she looked back to the 1840s to declare:

> I dedicated [the years] of my youth, to the service, on graver and higher grounds, of those who need to be taught rather than flattered; and many of whom have yet to learn and practise the great essential virtues of sobriety, thrift, order, cleanliness, and those other moralities, which together constitute individual and social well-being. I believe that, even when improved national education has done all it can, the great majority of mankind will be taught little of abstract truth, unless it be, as it were, dramatised, and placed actively before their imaginations. (x-xi)[2]

Meteyard employed literature as a vehicle to convey her messages.

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[1] See ch. 4, pp. 131-32.

[2] Eliza Meteyard, *The Nine Hours' Movement: Industrial and Household Tales. John Ashmore of Birmingham. The Glass of Gin. Mrs. Dumple's Cooking School* (London: Longman, 1872).

Punishment versus Education: 'The Gibbet — Its Death and Burial'

The radical unitarians regarded criminals as victims of imperfect environments and lack of education.[3] This led to their arguments that the purpose of punishment should not be merely for removal or seclusion of criminals from society, but for educational initiatives that would be 'reformatory on the criminal and productive to the community'.[4] The radical unitarians, including Meteyard, were against capital punishment basically on three grounds:[5] First, it took away any opportunity to reform criminals; secondly, it wasted human resources, and destroyed a life, which, to quote Harriet Martineau, 'might be made useful to the community and happy to the individual'[6]; and thirdly, it was pernicious to the public. W. J. Fox, in his Finsbury Lectures delivered at South Place Chapel, called it 'an act of murder',[7] arguing that its frequent infliction familiarised the public with 'the destruction of human life',[8] and would 'brutalize the crowds' who witnessed it.[9]

Although Douglas Jerrold, in a letter in late February 1846, complained to the

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[3] For examples, see G. E. Eachus, 'On the Propriety of Totally Abolishing "Death-Punishment" ', *Monthly Repository,* January 1834, pp. 332-36.

[4] 'On the Parliamentary Pledges at the Ensuring Elections', *Monthly Repository,* July 1832, pp. 433-43 (p. 440). See also Francis E. Mineka, *The Dissidence of Dissent: The Monthly Repository, 1806-1838* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 265-66.

[5] Some radical unitarians supported only a partial abolition of the death penalty as they regarded 'the most atrocious crimes' as deserving of it ('On the Parliamentary Pledges', p. 440).

[6] [Harriet Martineau], 'Prison Discipline', *Monthly Repository,* September 1832, pp. 577-86 (p.578).

[7] W. J. Fox, *Finsbury Lecturers: Reports of Lectures Delivered at the Chapel in South Place, Finsbury,* 7 nos (London: Charles Fox, 1835-36), V: *Legal Morality* (1835), p. 27. G. E. Eachus also called it as *'legal murder*' (332) in his article 'On the Propriety of Totally Abolishing "Death-Punishment" '.

[8] Fox, p. 17.

[9] Eachus, p. 440.

Quaker abolitionist Charles Gilpin of the insufficient public attention to this subject,[10] public feeling against capital punishment had grown under the influence of prevailing humanitarian evangelicalism in the late 1840s.[11] In April 1846 the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment was established. W. J. Fox attended its first public meeting, to which Charles Dickens and his close friend Jerrold had sent letters of support.[12] It was natural for Meteyard, a campaigning journalist and novelist, to publish a story concerning this topic in 1846.

The *Daily News* ran Dickens's five letters advocating the abolition of capital punishment from 23 February to 16 March 1846, which seems to have inspired Meteyard to write her story.[13] A half year later, her 'The Gibbet — Its Death and Burial' appeared in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine.*[14] The story was set in England under the reign of a Queen, but the attitude of the characters in the story towards capital punishment was different from that of the actual English population in 1846.

Dickens mentioned a black cap, which a judge puts on to pronounce a sentence of death, twice in his *Daily News* letters as a symbol of a trial's climax of 'excitement' (*DL*, 228, 240). Meteyard's story begins with the black cap:

> My Lord Judge has just gone out of town with the black cap so smooth and unruffled in his wig-box, that it might be a seraph's wing for the mercy and

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[10] Douglas Jerrold, Letter to Charles Gilpin, 28 February 1846, qtd. in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002), VII:*1853-1855* (1993), p. 863.

[11] Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2000), p. 256. James Gregory, *Victorian against the Gallows* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p. 1.

[12] 'Abolition of the Punishment of Death', *The Times*, 30 April 1846, p. 5. See also Gregory, p. 23.

[13] Charles Dickens, 'To the Editor of the Daily News', *Daily News*, 23, 28 February 1846, 9, 13, 16 March 1846, repr. in *Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by David Paroissien (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 213-16, 217-22, 224-29, 230-36, 238-46. Hereafter page numbers are cited parenthetically with *DL* in the text.

[14] E. M., 'The Gibbet — Its Death and Burial', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* September 1846, pp. 230-40.

> gentleness that lies upon it. Yes! snug in the veritable wig-box has it lain the whole circuit through, in all probability astonished at its innocence; for it is a tough, hard, iron-souled old cap, that in its day has sat mighty and flaunting on the gorgon head of Statute Law, and crowned its judgements of blood! But now Christ's mercy hides and blots out for ever the shadows of the pale anguished features that have gazed upon it, and left graven pictures of unutterable human woe! (230)

While Dickens urged judges on the bench to 'be opposed to the Punishment of Death under any circumstances' (*DL*, 240), Meteyard's story has a judge and jurymen declare a prisoner not guilty even when guilt is evident. They believe:

> Better let us cry senility of Statute Law; better let us knowingly for once leave the unscotched slimy serpent Evil crawl forth to prey upon society again; better leave the Law of Conscience to fashion its own unerring Law of Justice, than for us to give another text for another sermon of blood. . . . (230)

In his first *Daily News* letter Dickens wrote:

> Better that hundreds of guilty persons should escape scot-free . . . than that one innocent person should suffer. Better, I will even say, that hundreds of guilty persons should escape, than that the possibility of any innocent man or woman having been sacrificed. . . . (*DL*, 215)

In Meteyard's parallel England, Dickens's basic principle is put into practice by the judge and jurymen.

Dickens referred to 'the thirsty crowd outside' the court (*DL*, 214): thirsty for 'so many live romances with a bloody ending' (*DL*, 218) with 'a dark and dreadful interest' (*DL*, 220). In contrast, Meteyard's crowd is ready to accept the judgement's 'injustice rather than blood' (231). They are free from what Dickens called the 'horrible fascination surrounding the punishment . . . too strong for resistance' (*DL*, 219). He likened the trial to a play where 'the life or death of a fellow creature' was at issue: 'the Prosecution, the Defence, the Verdict, the Black Cap, the Sentence — each of them a line in any Playbill' (*DL*, 228). Meteyard reduces the fascinating drama satirically into a mere 'jolly Farce' for a hangman, after which he could enjoy 'a week's satiety and debauch' (231) with the money paid by the job.

'The Gibbet — its Death and Burial' is depicted mostly through the eyes of the hangman 'Thugg', his name implying that the death penalty is a judicial murder. Meteyard calls it 'society's crimes', and represents Thugg as an example of the brutalising influence of public hanging. He has become so familiar with death as to be rendered inhuman. Society's crimes have taught him 'to eat the bread of blood, and relish it as the good man his honest crust' (235).

Out of work because of the reduction in executions, Thugg is starving, and tempted to snatch some bread. However, a 'scene of love and endurance' (234) stops him: a scene in which a couple, the Shaftesmans, comfort each other in poverty. Meteyard implicitly suggested that if one sight of the beautiful scene could work on such a hardened heart, a criminal could be another person under different circumstances.

Dickens frequently referred to the hangman in his *Daily News* letters, stating that he was 'universally avoided, like a pestilence' (*DL*, 232). When Shaftesman asks Thugg what his trade is, he fails to answer, knowing the reaction it would receive. Dickens asked rhetorically 'why the man who kill[ed] in the name of the law [was] shunned and fled from' (*DL*, 232), concluding that the law was wrong. In Meteyard's parallel

England Dickens's conclusion is universally perceived to be right, so that Parliament passes a bill for the abolition of capital punishment.

One reason Dickens was against capital punishment was man's 'capacity of mistake and false deduction' (*DL*, 215). Meteyard's story also deals with the question of false accusation. A passerby gives Thugg an unexpected large sum of money, which he shares with Shaftesman. The marked money proves to have been taken by violent theft. Shaftesman is charged with murder and sentenced to death. He is to be the '*last* unjust meal' of the 'Blood Law' (237) before the bill to abolish capital punishment is enforced.

Dickens deplored that the public looked upon a condemned criminal as a 'hero of the time' (*DL*, 218), pointing out an actual case in which Thomas Henry Hocker had committed a murder to seek celebrity. He criticised the death penalty for attaching 'great notoriety and interest' (*DL*, 227) to the criminals, and insisted:

> the reformation brought about by legal punishment, should be, to be satisfactory, a living, lasting, growing one: working on, in degradation and humility, from day to day; and striving, in its chains, and labour, and long-distant Hope, to make some atonement always. . . . (*DL*, 214)

In Meteyard's story, Falter, the real culprit, is exposed. There is an echo of Dickens's words in Falter's begging for a sentence of death:

> At first he plays the bully, but at once confronted with Thugg, his abject, sinking, faltering, drivelling cowardice is seen; he crawling confesses his guilt; but awed by the communing law, begs to be strapped up with the stoutest rope upon the flaring gibbet of the old, rather than to endure the silent, hopeless, friendless, long life, weary punishment of prison to the body, and conscience to

> the soul, by which the New Law is to punish the dastard crimes of blood, instead of by the outworn Halter and its Gibbet! (239)

This is a utopian story. While Dickens described the status quo in order to criticise capital punishment, Meteyard shows an ideal society in which it is abolished. Although influenced by the letters, Meteyard did not share the novelist's views. While Dickens claimed 'no spirit of sympathy' (*DL*, 213) with criminals, Meteyard appeals for the public's 'spirit of sympathy', or mercy. She regards crime as 'disease' (240) caused by an unhealthy environment, and criminals as the victims of unfortunate circumstances to be cured and reformed.

She contrasts capital punishment by 'Statute Law' with 'Christ's mercy' (230) in 'the law of God' (240). Christian symbolism is employed to further her argument. When Shaftesman gives Thugg a loaf of bread despite his own want the hangman says, 'God bless you, sir — I feel I'se a better man this night, by this very bread' (235). Shaftesman's mercy works as the bread of life, which gives eternal life to sinners while capital punishment deprives them of it. Meteyard suggests that even the murderer Falter is not incurably evil; his allegorical name indicates that he has tripped over what the Bible called a stone of stumbling.

The story has a 'Cup of Mercy' (239) as well, associated with the Chalice with which Christ instituted Holy Communion at the Last Supper, saying, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. 26:28).[15] Shaftesman is a 'craftsman-poet' (239), who writes verses against the death penalty while pursuing his profession as a silversmith. The local people have asked him to make a 'Mercy's Cup' (233). When it is completed, they drink from the cup to

[15] King James Version of *The New Layman's Parallel Bible* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), p. 2520.

‘innocence’ and ‘justice on the guilty’ (239).

At the end of the story, when Shaftesman is acquitted, the people tear down the gibbet, crying:

> Down with the gibbet, down! Down with every law that perverts the law of God! Let man learn that crime is disease; that in his own hand lies volition to good or evil; learn by juster government of self to become father to perfect children in body and mind; learn that morality is happiness; learn that infinite Progress is his. Down with the gibbet, down! and raise up the laws of Christ. (240)

Even with its Christian allegory, Meteyard’s utopian tale is less persuasive than Dickens’s vivid descriptions of the ‘horrible fascination’ surrounding capital punishment in the *Daily News* letters (*DL*, 217). The ‘Cup of Mercy’ is paid for with ‘struggling people’s pennies’ (232), but it is improbable that humble people would commission an expensive memorial cup. Moreover, the last scene, in which the mob tears down the gibbet ran the risk of alarming middle class readers by its overtones of violence. Meteyard struggled to articulate the process by which the status quo which Dickens condemned so virulently was transformed into an idealistic future.

‘The Canker and the Cure’ and Other Writings

In December 1846, three months after ‘The Gibbet — its Death and Burial’, Meteyard published ‘Divinity from Rags’ in *Douglas Jerrold’s Shilling Magazine*.[16]

[16] Silverpen, ‘Divinity from Rags’, *Douglas Jerrold’s Shilling Magazine*, December 1846, pp. 541-57.

She wrote the story possibly under the influence of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838), describing a den of juvenile thieves under an adult mastermind Mrs. Togg, and a Jew, Cripps, who deals in the stolen goods. Her message that education is more effective than punishment is introduced early on:

> the boy-thief . . . gloried in his new step to the gallows, and laughed in his very heart at the society that called him vile. He laughed rightly in the potency of that intellect the society chose to disregard, and yet call vile! Falsely and unjustly; for the society that quibbles on a dogma, and neglects to teach, breeds vice; the society that builds prisons instead of school-houses, fosters vice; the society that erects the gallows for the throne and altar of that vice it has, through its neglect, bred and fostered, falsely calls it vice, and most unjustly; and let advance cry forth this truth! (544)

The juvenile thief, Tom, steals a book from a bookshop. The absurdly high reward offered for its return makes him interested in the content. He goes to a ragged school to learn reading and spelling, which changes his life. Tom grows into 'a proper fighting dragon in the matter of crime and education', and establishes a ragged school to fight 'a glorious and triumphant battle with Ignorance and Superstition' (556).

Meteyard kept emphasising the importance of education. In her article 'Life's Contrast; Or, New-Year's Eve', published in *Howitt's Journal* in January 1847, she enumerated various scenes of social evils to be removed in the future. One of them was capital punishment:

> Here, in this dungeon, where the sullen felon sits, waiting society's senile reformatory law of death by the gibbet and the hangman; there, in that bend of

> his desolate homeward road from the leave-taking the wretched father of the felon sinks down to die, by a tenderer mercy than that destined for his son; we behold that which questions the justice of the circumstances called fate, that has cursed one hand with terrible blood, and brings death upon the winter's waste to the unhoused. (6)

This article attributed the evil to 'ignorance', and Meteyard classified ignorance into two categories, individual ignorance and social or governmental ignorance: '*Direful ignorance, which imbrutifies man below the beast; and, what is worse, ignorance chargeable upon governmental power, and for which, till now, its sole panacea has been the hulks and gibbet*' (6).

In the next month, February 1847, *Howitt's Journal* ran Meteyard's short story 'The Canker and the Cure',[17] which was reprinted in America two months later.[18] Meteyard employed the word 'canker' to refer to disease, and at the same time the influence of a harsh environment that corrupts humanity. Its theme was clearly stated: '*He who cures vice is greater than he who punishes it'* (75).

This allegorical story contrasts Baron Thrashem, a judge who embodies the stern principle of punishment, with his elderly servant Becky, an embodiment of mercy. The baron 'viewed all reformatory law for crime as twaddle', and believed that all the criminal laws should be replaced by 'the halter and the gibbet' (75). While he is away from home, his prized silver inkstand is stolen by an ignorant street urchin. The case is proved, but the magistrate advises Becky:

> I know your master would prosecute this case to the fullest extent of the law, but

[17] Silverpen, 'The Canker and the Cure', *Howitt's Journal*, 6 February 1847, pp. 75-76.
[18] Silverpen, 'The Canker and the Cure', *Anglo American*, 17 April 1847, pp. 612-13.

> to what end? Here is a child seven years old or thereabouts, without home, without one human friend, and, great God! apparently without *a name;* the scum and refuse of this city streets whilst yet a baby. If I send her to prison, she will probably come out only more confirmed in precocious wickedness. . . . (75)

As discussed in chapter four, Becky decides out of her 'mercy' (75) to train her to be a maid. In ten years, the girl, whom she named Alice, has become a useful servant.[19] Becky confesses the secret on her death bed, which lets Thrashem know 'how the pity of her heart had made her save', and convinces him that crime originates in '*ignorance*'. He has learned that '*to save and lead this ignorance towards good, is a service that approximates the human actor towards his Divine Creator*' (76), but this story is far less religious than 'The Gibbet — Its Death and Burial'. Although Thrashem employs the term 'ignorance' to refer to Alice's past state, Meteyard implies that it is his own 'ignorance' out of which he, as a judge, endorsed capital punishment. Both are cured by Becky's merciful spirit.

Howitt's Journal ran another of Meteyard's utopian stories, 'The Co-operative Band' in the following month (March 1847).[20] This tale has already been discussed in detail in chapter three.[21] It begins by juxtaposing two characters, Broadspring, a supposed criminal who although acquitted by a jury is popularly thought to be 'none the less a coward murderer and a malefactor' (145), and the protagonist Jason Bold, an intellectual leader of the people, who asserts 'a more truthful view of crime':

> Let us, by better distributed wealth, let us, by more advanced social elements,

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[19] See ch. 4, p. 149.
[20] Silverpen, 'The Co-operative Band', *Howitt's Journal*, 13, 20 March 1847, pp. 144-46, 156-58.
[21] See ch. 3, pp. 101-15. See also ch. 4, p. 153.

> surround the infancy of men and women with less disease, less evil, less poverty, and we shall proportionately diminish crime. For as humanity is governed by circumstances, and as these circumstances at present do such infinite injustice to the endowments and organism of nature, we should rather lead error towards good; and find when committed its best palliative in ignorance, that ignorance which the rights of labour, and the rights of education, shall finally and gloriously triumph over!'
>
> Is it that truth is but the voice of mercy? or an analogy of causes? But so it was that this true voice touched better than the sternest judge, or the harshest law, the latent principle of good in the heart of the criminal. . . . (145)

Once accepted by Jason, and then by the people, Broadspring, a former 'bailiff to a scientific agriculturist' (146), makes full use of his agricultural knowledge and experience for their community. When it brings a golden harvest, Jason declares:

> It is the mind of the criminal you cursed, the criminal you sought to punish instead of reform; and this is he that coming amongst you has sought humbly to redeem such sins as may be his, by toiling thus nobly and unasked for your benefit. (157)

Meteyard appealed to her readers to become free from prejudice against criminals, and to rehabilitate and place them in circumstances different from those which drove them to crime. As the allegorical name Broadspring indicates, criminals, once reformed and accepted, would develop their potential to benefit society.

The journals of popular progress continued her campaign, particularly *Howitt's Journal*, which focused seriously on the question in 1847. It ran a series of articles on

‘Capital Punishment’ by Frederick Rowton, honorary secretary to the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, beginning in July 1847.[22] It consisted of ten instalments, and was one of the journal’s longest serials. However, Meteyard shifted the focus of her stories from the issue of capital punishment to education, convinced that crime, a product of ignorance, would be reduced when education was more wide spread.

Appealing for Wider Education for the People: ‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’

Howitt’s Journal ran Meteyard’s ‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’ in 1847,[23] a story about a ‘man, with capacity for thought, with capacity for knowledge, with capacity for truth’ who ‘sink[s] with these sublime elements to earth *untaught*’ (260). Through the story, Meteyard appealed for wider education for the people.

The story appeared in the same number of the journal as her colleagues’ writing on the related topic. The issue carries a full page engraving of William Lovett, a working class self-educated writer, on the cover page, followed by an article on ‘William Lovett’ by Samuel Smiles,[24] which represents Lovett as ‘one of the most sterling specimens of the English working man’ with his ‘unceasing efforts at self-cultivation and improvement’ (254). The issue also contains a poem, ‘A Cry for National Education’, by William Cox Bennett (1820-1895), another self-made man, journalist and songwriter.[25]

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[22] Frederick Rowton, ‘The Punishment of Death’, 2 October 1847, pp. 218-29; ‘Capital Punishment’, 16, 26 October, 6, 27 November, 18 December 1847, 244-49, 299-301, 265-66, 345-48, 386-88, 8 January, 5, 12 February, 11 March 1848, pp. 24-26, 85-87, 102-103, 170-73. The title was changed from the second instalment.

[23] Silverpen, ‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’, *Howitt’s Journal*, 8 May 1847, pp. 260-62. This story was reprinted in the *Anglo American*, 3 July 1847, pp. 258-59.

[24] ‘William Lovett’, engraved by Alfred Harrel, *Howitt’s Journal*, 8 May 1847, p. 253. [Samuel Smiles], ‘William Lovett’, *Howitt’s Journal*, 8 May 1847, pp. 253-57. The article itself is unsigned, but the table of contents ascribes it to ‘Dr. Smiles’.

[25] W. C. Bennett, ‘A Cry for National Education’, *Howitt’s Journal*, 8 May 1847, p. 263.

The protagonist of 'Earth's Worst Tragedy', Joe Beech, lived an early life similar to those of Lovett and Bennett. The death of his father, a ploughman, compelled him to quit school to work and sustain his family. Joe struggled to educate himself, but, unlike the two self-made men, he died a premature death without developing his talent. Although he is a fictitious character, the similarity between Joe's life and those of Lovett and Bennett suggests that his case could be typical of thousands of working men.

At the beginning of the story, Meteyard introduced her theme by referring to Thomas' Gray's poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1751):[26]

> I have often thought . . . that the Elegy in a Country Churchyard . . . is pervaded by a philosophy, sublime and touching, because speaking great universal truth, whose harmony is only limited by the capacity of him who listens. Gray knew . . . how much of universal power flows on to waste and to decay; and how little has yet been done to conserve all the great elements fashioned and given for the exaltation and happiness of man both spiritually and materially. But the divine part of progress is, that it is and will be one grand conservation of all that is good and beautiful! (260)

The elegy was well-known,[27] and Meteyard expected her readers to associate her story with it. The earlier part of the poem was narrated by an imaginary poet, who referred to 'Some mute inglorious Milton' (59) possibly resting in an obscure graveyard. His 'lot forbade' (65) his talent to bloom. As the critic David Cecil argued, the potential Milton

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E. I. Carlyle, 'Bennett, William Cox (1820–1895)', rev. by H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn. <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2128>

[26] Thomas Gray, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250-1900*, ed. by Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919), pp. 516-20.

[27] Dustin Griffin, *Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 149.

represented those who 'would have been as famous as Milton' without 'circumstances' which 'prevented them from achieving great fame'.[28]

While Gray wrote, 'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, / And waste its sweetness on the desert air' (55-56), Bennett's poem 'A Cry for National Education', which followed 'Earth's Worst Tragedy', had a subtitle 'Ye Perfect Flowers — Why Not Perfect Men?', and Meteyard lamented 'how many flowers have drooped to earth unreverenced by the eyes of man' (260). She intended the reader to make a comparison between the late 1840s when she and Bennett were contributing to *Howitt's Journal,* and the early 1750s when Gray had written the elegy, and to find that little had been improved for over a century. The story is allegorical. Joe ploughs the estate called 'the school-gift' (169). His surname Beech is appropriate for a person sensitive to the beauties of nature, who dies without his wish to learn from books fulfilled. In Gray's elegy, the poet who had meditated on 'Some mute inglorious Milton' was buried under a beech tree. Moreover, the word 'beech' is cognate with 'book' in etymology. It is said that the sense developed from 'beech' to 'book' as ancient people wrote letters on smooth beech bark when they did not have paper.[29]

The story was set in the 1830s, and referred to a vote in the House of Commons, for what it satirically called 'the nation educating clod-hoppers' (261), or public education. In reality, Henry Brougham presented a bill for state-funded education five times in 1820, 1835, 1837, 1838 and 1839, but all in vain. Meteyard overtly criticized the present government for the current condition of education.

By illustrating Joe's financial and local handicaps, Meteyard suggested that the government should assure every child the opportunity for an education, regardless of

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[28] David Cecil, 'The Poetry of Thomas Gray', *Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. by James Lowry Clifford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 233-50 (p. 241).

[29] 'Beech', *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, ed. by J. P. Mallory and D.Q. Adams (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), p. 58.

rank, family and place of residence. Joe goes to a charity school, which charges little or nothing, but still prevents him from working, and becomes a considerable burden on his family. The remote countryside has no free Sunday school,[30] and the inhabitants are characterised by 'drunkenness and immorality' (260). The quality of education at Joe's school is described in detail. The schoolmaster is incompetent, and far from dedicated. A telling detail is the instance of a schoolmaster not correcting a student's spelling of 'g-u-s-e' for goose. Meteyard added a note to claim this episode as a 'literal and unexaggerated fact, known in a certain village of Shropshire, that must be nameless' (261n1), which suggests that the descriptions of Joe's school may have been based on her experience of helping her brother prepare his East Anglia tithe commissioner reports.

Through the story, Meteyard argues that government should be responsible for maintaining a certain level of education for the people. In the story, the school lacks responsible supervision, is operated by a parish church, and supported by a private contribution of the squire, an absentee who is indifferent to the school. Although the perfunctory schoolmaster enjoys a high salary, the schoolhouse is poorly kept. While serving the churchwardens with 'roaring' (260) drink once a year, it allows only a few buns every Easter to the children. When an exciseman expostulates with the churchwardens about the school, they respond:

> 'Why, after all . . . what do lads want with larning? They're bad enough already, maister. And it don't do to say a word agin the squire's and the college

[30] The census of 1851 shows that Sunday schools had exceeded charity schools in number to become most predominant for popular education (Great Britain, Census Office, *Education: England and Wales, Report and Tables*, Census, 1851, London: HMSO, 1854, pp. xiv-xx). See also K. D. M. Snell, 'The Sunday-School Movement in England and Wales: Child Labour, Denominational Control and Working-Class Culture', *Past & Present*, 164 (1999), 122-68 (p.139).

people's 'pininon. (261)

Their dialect suggests that they are so illiterate that they do not realise the value of education. Furthermore, the squire indicates he is willing to vote against Brougham's bill for state-funded education if he is elected a Member of Parliament.

In reality, there had been an idea popular from the time of Thomas Gray that education had harmful effects on the populace. His elegy took up the cause not only of 'Some mute inglorious Milton' (59), but also 'Some village-Hampden that with dauntless breast / The little tyrant of his fields withstood' (57-58), and 'Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood' (60). The elegy continued: 'Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone / Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined; / Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne' (65-67). To quote David Cecil again, 'if circumstances prevented them from achieving great fame, circumstances also saved them from committing great crimes'.[31] Sarah Trimmer, an educational reformer, argued of charity schools in 1792, that '[c]hildren of the poor should not be educated in such manner as to set them above the occupations of humble life, or so as to make them uncomfortable among their equals'.[32] David Robinson, a journalist and economist, commented in the 1820s on Henry Brougham's pamphlet advocating education of the people:[33] 'whenever the lower orders of any great state have obtained a smattering of knowledge, they have generally used it to produce national ruin'.[34] In 1834, Charles

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[31] Cecil, p. 241.

[32] Sarah Trimmer, *Reflections upon the Education of Children in Charity Schools: With the Outlines of a Plan of Appropriate Instruction for the Children of the Poor* (London: Longman, 1792), p. 8.

[33] H. Brougham, *Practical Observations upon the Education of the People, Addressed to the Working Classes and Their Employers* (London: R. Taylor, 1825). Within the year of the first publication, this pamphlet became so popular as to be reprinted into the twentieth edition.

[34] [David Robinson], 'Brougham on the Education of the People', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1825, pp. 534-51 (p. 534).

Wall, a contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*, asserted, 'Those boys who are the most *au fait* at their answers when in school, are always . . . those who earliest find their way to prison'.[35]

It was a time when the Chartist movement was intensifying toward the climax of 1848. In his biographical article on William Lovett, Smiles referred to a pamphlet, 'Chartism' (1840), which Lovett had written with James Collins. Smiles introduced it as 'Chartism; a Plan for the Education and Improvement of the People' (257) although its full title was actually 'Chartism: A New Organization of the People, Embracing a Plan for the Education and Improvement of the People, Politically and Socially'.[36] As Smiles omitted its political implication from the subtitle, Meteyard seems to have picked up its educational side to illustrate some of Lovett's argument in her story. Lovett insisted that children should learn to appreciate the 'beauty, grandeur and sublimity' of 'the glowing landscape, the flowing stream, the storm, the sunshine, and the fragile flowers' and that such lessons 'will teach them to soar beyond the grovelling pursuits of vice and sordid meanness'.[37] In the story, Joe obeys when the young squire threatens him with a whip, but he stands still in a thoughtful silence when alone. Then the beauty of the scenery, 'the daisy at his feet, the skylark above, the river like a silver thread winding round the landscape' (261) fills his heart and inspires him to make a poem.

When Joe is eighteen, the squire ridicules the dearest wish of Joe's heart to read books:

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[35] Charles Wall, 'Present Condition of the People', *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1834, pp. 72-87 (p. 74).
[36] William Lovett and John Collins, *Chartism: A New Organization of the People, Embracing the Plan for the Education and Improvement of the People, Politically and Socially* (London: J. Watson, 1840).
[37] Lovett and Collins, p. 90.

> ‘*And what should you know about books, my fellow?*’ asked the young squire, with a grin; ‘I should think a rasher of bacon rather more in your way, eh? Ha! Ha!’
>
> Joe moved onward and made no answer, though when he thought of all his ignorance, and this bitter scorn of it, the tears rained down upon his horny hands. (262)

Whenever humiliated by the squire, Joe strengthens his determination to educate himself, instead of carrying grudges. He is vexed, not with the squire, but with himself for ‘the want of learning’ (261).

Meteyard repeatedly emphasises how promising Joe is. He carves artistic items, which ‘outrival the fine oak corbels and spandrels in the village church’ (262). He sells one of his carvings to a dealer. The exceptional high price proves it excellent, and he buys some books with the money for his own self-education, but dies before he can read them. On his way home, Joe comes across the squire who has fallen into the river and saves his life at the cost of his own, leaving a dying message: ‘Oh, sir, . . . never despise ignorance, however lowly, for all of us have something of beauty and good within to be made better by merciful words and gentle teaching’ (262). At the end of story, Meteyard describes Joe’s grave as ‘the grave of one, who, had he been taught, would have equalled Grinling Gibbons’ (262), the famous woodcarver. He also had the potential to become a poet and songwriter, making up songs for the villagers on ceremonial occasions. After his death, village children learn his poetry by heart. In contrast to the neglected graves in Gray’s elegy, many people visit Joe’s grave. The narrator ends the story saying:

> As time goes on, and justice is done by Government in these matters, this

> ‘school-gift’, with thousand others like it in broad England, will become what it is, the heritage of the people. And when this justice is done, when all qualities of good are conserved by education, when the national elements of a great people are not allowed to waste, *then* crime shall sink into sempiternal abeyance; but till then, every capacity for truth and knowledge left untaught makes up indeed the worst of all earth’s tragedies! (262)

Meteyard was afraid that the intensifying Chartist movement would increase public suspicion that education was not only unnecessary for the lower classes but also harmful; that education contaminated naive and obedient minds, exposing those who were literate to radical politics, making them discontented with present conditions, and encouraging them to social disturbance or even revolution. ‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’ was designed to contradict this.

‘ “The Works” of John Ironshaft’

‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’ presents the seemingly incongruous combination of the current Chartist movement and Gray’s elegy, but it is characteristic of Meteyard’s approach to contemporary social issues, in which she often incorporates a literary text into the framework of her argument. ‘ “The Works” of John Ironshaft’ (1847), some aspects of which have been considered in chapter four,[38] is another example of this technique. It was published in *Douglas Jerrold’s Shilling Magazine*, in the same year (1847) as ‘Earth’s Worst Tragedy’.[39]

In the new story Joe Beech, the village ploughman is transformed into John

[38] See ch. 4, pp. 124-29.
[39] Silverpen, ‘ “The Works” of John Ironshaft’, *Douglas Jerrold’s Shilling Magazine*, November 1847, pp. 453-70.

Ironshaft, the foreman of a forge. The two characters reflected the social change caused by the Industrial Revolution, as do their symbolic surnames. In contrast to Beech, Ironshaft is a man of 'wild and savage nature' (464). He hears 'a mighty music' in the roar of the forge-blast, which sings 'the sternest will' that justice should be done in the 'unjust times' (463):

> He was a man of giant frame and stature, iron-handed, iron-limbed, with a front that might look a despot in the face, and quail the vicious power of hierarchies and kings. He could, he would, he dared: even now, rough-handed giant as he was, he was forging a mighty weapon by ink-horn and goose-quill, to thrust into the bloated side of all-bestowed power, and show the generations their might from LABOUR, and their right from Nature. . . . He stood up foremost in an unconscious democracy of black-handed labour. (454)

In reality, Feargus O'Connor, the physical force Chartist, had been advocating the use of intimidation and the threat of violence for attaining the Charter. He had become influential as a fearless leader, and his arguments were popular among Chartists.[40] In Meteyard's story Ironshaft conformed to the middle class image of an angry Chartist of the time. He is 'a stalwart savage' (464) whose 'sluggish intellect and iron will' (457) might drive him to the use of physical force. His strong build suggests the potential for violence, riots and even revolution.

However, education restrains him from becoming rebellious. Under a village doctor's guidance, he learns how to 'tame down' (463) his wild nature. After the doctor's death, his daughter supports John as his wife. This enables Ironshaft to work to

[40] Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 67-69, 164-65, 197-98, 208, 261.

reform society by ‘an iron pen’ (468).

The story begins in 1829, and as is often the case with utopian narratives, it is projected into the future, and closes in 1870, when Ironshaft refers to his current commitment to the Universal Suffrage League. This suggests that universal suffrage is yet to be achieved. Meteyard predicted that it would take more than another twenty years to attain the universal suffrage for which the Chartists were crying in the 1840s. She indicated that education should take precedence over the extension of the franchise. While taking up the current issue of Chartism, the story’s main point was the necessity of popular education.

By careful application, Ironshaft makes himself a prosperous capitalist, a Member of Parliament, and a leading member of Democratic Leagues. He is also an educator who works ‘through lectures, through schools’, and above all, through literature. He contributes to society ‘through genuine service by an iron pen’ (468). A ‘genuine literature’ by Ironshaft is contrasted with the ‘gingerbread’ (466) literature of silver fork novels such as ‘Coquette Betrothed’ and ‘Fate of a Fan’ (465). The ‘Age of gingerbread’ (466), as Meteyard describes it, does not appreciate Ironshaft’s works in 1830, but he continues to work with ‘a pen that has spread truth throughout the world’ (470).

This phrase calls up suggestions of Shelley’s lines from his ‘Ode to the West Wind’ (1847):[41]

> Scatter, as from an unextinguish’d hearth
>
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
>
> Be through my lips to unawaken’d earth

[41] Percy Bysshe Shelley, ‘Ode to the West Wind’, *The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250-1900*, pp. 707-709.

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? (66-70)

As Shelley heard 'The trumpet of a prophecy' in the roar of the west wind, Ironshaft hears the voice of 'fearless prophets' (469) of Time in the roar of the blast furnace.[42] The poet's similes for his own words, 'Ashes and sparks' from 'an unextingush'd hearth' can be easily associated with John's job as a foreman and later an owner of forges. 'The Defence of Poetry' by Shelley was first published in 1840, seven years before ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft'. In the essay Shelley attempted to prove that poetry could reform society by creating, introducing and protecting moral and civil laws. Meteyard had a similar notion to Shelley's concerning the social and thus the educational function of literature although she did not confine it to poetry. She called 'genuine literature' also 'democratic literature' (468-69), believing 'the true Exaltation of the Pen' should be obtained 'in its great democratic and political relations' (467). She asserts: 'politics can be no more separated from a genuine literature than truth from truth. *Therefore, the highest order of intellect is necessarily the priesthood, missioned to teach the sublime and ever-advancing doctrines of onward Time!*' (468). Not only Ironshaft but also his creator employs literature to teach the people the way to a better society.

Meteyard attempts to illustrate that education would produce Tennyson and Shakespeare '[o]ut of unhandselled savage nature', comparing Ironshaft to Tennyson and a potential Shakespeare, the two writers described as 'the helpful giant[s] to destroy the old [culture] or to build the new' (470). This image of the giant bore a strong likeness to Shelley's west wind, the 'Destroyer and preserver' (14). Shelley had admired

[42] The name of Ironshaft's wife Nell suggests that *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) might have inspired Meteyard to create Ironshaft. In the novel, Nell Trent saw an iron smith who spoke to the forge fire.

Shakespeare and Milton as the 'philosophers of the very loftiest power',[43] counting these two names among eight great writers without whom 'it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world'.[44] Meteyard may have deliberately replaced Milton with Tennyson who was yet to be appointed Poet Laureate, but had already established himself as a major contemporary poet. She dared not name Shelley, the controversial poet sometimes considered blasphemous.[45]

At the end of the story, in 1870, a festival is held to celebrate Ironshaft's achievements. He addresses the multitude as Meteyard's mouthpiece:

> All I want to persuade you is, of the wonderful poetry that lies hidden in the common human heart, and how, like the molten stream before your sight this moment, it may be moulded at will — by bad teachers and bad political institutions into evil — by fearless prophets, who count the signs of Time, into all the grandeur and progress that Time requires. (469)

He rephrases what Joe Beech called 'something of beauty and good' (262) within all people as 'the wonderful poetry that lies hidden in the common human heart', which education should develop. Meteyard rewrote 'Earth's Worst Tragedy' into ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft' to appeal more forcibly for the necessity of popular education. Without education Ironshaft might have become another Cromwell or Feargus O'Connor who would use his energies to attempt a revolution. Through the two stories Meteyard urged that it is not education but ignorance that is dangerous.

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[43] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'The Defence of Poetry', *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments, by Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mrs. Shelley, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), pp. 25-62 (p. 32). Shelley took Dante too, but Dante is excluded if confined to British writers.

[44] Shelley, 'Defence', p. 54.

[45] See Sylva Norman, *Flight of the Skylark: The Development of Shelley's Reputation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, [1954]), pp. 133-55.

'The Prospect of Democracy'

The Howitts' circle and the Whittington Club included many with Chartist affiliations. In April 1847 William Lovett, the printer of *Howitt's Journal*, established the People's International League for 'the right of every People to Self-government, and the maintenance of their own Nationality'.[46] Many radical unitarians and their associates, including William Howitt, Douglas Jerrold, W. J. Fox, William Shaen, James Stansfeld, Peter Alfred Taylor, Guiseppe Mazzini, Thomas Cooper, W. J. Linton, and Thornton Hunt, joined the League. The association broke up in 1848 when Mazzini departed for Italy to join the revolutionary movement, but Lovett founded a new 'People's League' for the promotion of the six points of the Charter in the same year. The founding members included Howitt, Shaen and Stansfeld.[47]

In spite of the zeal displayed by her mentors and friends, Meteyard distanced herself from Chartism, even when contributing to the *Republican: A Magazine, Advocating the Sovereignty of the People* in 1848. This short-lived journal, edited by C. G. Harding, announced the principles of republican democracy, 'Believing that all men are politically equal'.[48] Influenced by the works of Thomas Paine,[49] the magazine ran many articles which underlined the importance of universal suffrage, one of the six points of the Charter.[50] However, Meteyard avoided using the terms 'Chartism',

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[46] Peoples' International League, *Address of the Council of the Peoples' International League* (London: Palmer and Clayton, 1847), p. 3.
[47] Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 71-72.
[48] 'Views and Prospect', *Republican*, n.d. [towards the end of 1848 or early 1849?], p. 1.
[49] The Editor of the 'National' [W. J. Linton], 'Thomas Paine', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 77-79.
[50] Royden Harrison, Gillian B. Woolven, and Robert Duncan comp., *The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals, 1790-1970: A Check List* (Hassocks: Harvester

‘Charter’, ‘Chartist’ or ‘universal suffrage’ when writing for the magazine. The ‘Introductory’ of the *Republican* promised ‘due respect to the conscientious differences of opinions that are found to exist amongst honest-hearted lovers of their kind’,[51] but Meteyard’s writing was obviously of a different nature.

Her article, ‘The Prospect of Democracy’, appeared in the *Republican* in the summer or autumn in 1848.[52] Assuming that in future the ‘sublime epoch’ should enjoy ‘democracy founded on the true and great laws of labour’, Meteyard foretold that government would take such ‘a form of democracy as the world [had] not yet known’:

> obedience to laws and administration of power, will show themselves of a comparatively passive nature, as silent expressed will through duty done. For instance, of what use is a criminal code to such as you and me? Have we not already learned that to lie, to steal, to murder, is to disobey certain fixed and unalterable social and moral laws? Knowing this and obeying this truth, do you or I require such laws written above our hearth, or bed, or blazoned in the market-place? The same, then, as this tacit reverence of order is given and acknowledged by ourselves, will be given and acknowledged by all men, when the principle of true government is deduced from the laws of nature. . . . (46)

Meteyard denounced the class system and family inheritance of wealth, claiming that ‘true democracy’ would not allow any ‘possession of wealth and privilege, except as the result of some sort of labour’ (46). Her idea was revolutionary for its time, and potentially close to anarchy in considering neither authority nor the state system

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Press, 1977), p. 461

[51] ‘Introductory’, *Republican,* 1848, n.p.

[52] The season is inferred from events mentioned in the journal, as the date of publication is not recorded in any number. Silverpen, ‘The Prospect of Democracy’, *Republican,* 1848, pp. 45-47.

necessary to govern the people.

Then, how could society attain such a utopian future? The other contributors to the *Republican* would answer, 'By means of universal suffrage', or, 'Through the six points of the Charter realised', but Meteyard in contrast emphasises education, supposing that 'progress' would 'fix a certain standard of education, and consequently of morality, beneath which the intelligence of no citizen can fall'. She regarded 'monarchies, aristocracies, priestcraft, the multitude of inoperative laws, even the question of government itself' as having 'grown out of the ignorance of men'. Thus she advised her readers: 'Educate' (46).

Meteyard associated aesthetics with politics, pronouncing the 'mission' of democracy to be 'developing all that relates to the true and the beautiful'. She argued:

> For the democracy of permanent laws is neither coarse, nor hard, nor rough. . . . For true democracy contains within itself the most aristocratic of elements, if I may be allowed this term to express elevated inclination; and truth, beauty, courtesy, delicacy, order, peace, justice, refinement, make up the moral summary of excellence I call democracy. (47)

Meteyard developed her sense of the aesthetic influence on politics into her attack on the 'demagogue whose democratic theory can only be represented by coarse speech, unwashed hands, uncourteous behaviour, hard fare, but disguises brutality with a true name'. She indirectly criticised Chartists as potential demagogues, although writing for a Chartist paper. She insisted that 'no permanent type of democracy could be elaborated by uneducated masses of men'. For her, 'the true democrat' should be a 'mental self-helper' (47), not an advocate of universal suffrage. In this she was close to Samuel Smiles, who attached importance to 'helping and stimulating men to elevate and

improve themselves by their own force and independent action', not to 'altering laws and modifying institutions',[53] though she was unique in introducing aesthetics to advocate 'self-help'.

At the end of the article Meteyard supported the 'political movements throughout Europe', that is, the European revolutions of 1848. Henry Solly, pastor of a Unitarian chapel, described the strong effect of the February revolutions: 'A vast number of English Liberals and Radicals hailed it with joy, for they regarded it as an almost bloodless triumph of a struggle for constitutional freedom against bureaucratic despotism'. Although Solly had to accept that they and he himself were 'lamentably and flagrantly wrong',[54] those who 'hailed it with joy' probably included Whittington Club members. Solly, like William Howitt, was a middle class member of Lovett's People's International League, and a brother-in-law of William Shaen, one of the founding members of the Whittington Club.[55] Meteyard, a Whittington Club member, too, was also 'wrong' in regarding the revolutions as 'purely democratic' (47) at that point. However, her misunderstanding suggests that she was not opposed to democratic political movements themselves, but the timing mattered. She expected that government would 'adjust itself to the progressive nature of the governed', who would be 'the governing' (46) in the future. For her, society should advance through various phases: The progress of the people should come first, followed by gradual change in the system of government, finally attaining full democracy by the people governing. Chartism seemed premature to Meteyard although she accepted its basic tenets and the phased advancement of society.

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[53] Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character and Conduct,* rev. edn. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), p. 17.
[54] Henry Solly, *These Eighty Years: Or, the Story of an Unfinished Life*, 2 vols (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1893), II, 40.
[55] According to Solly's memoir, 'Mr. Shaen got me an engagement to give my two lectures' at the Whittington Club in 1848 (II, 62).

'The Coming Men'

In the same year (1848) Meteyard contributed a second article, 'The Coming Men', to the *Republican,*[56] in which she expressed her criticism of the Chartist movement more clearly and boldly than in the previous article. She began it by announcing:

> It is in the school-room, not in parliament, on the bench, not on the hustings, through silence, not through talk, from *within*, not from *without*, that the great battle of progress will be fought. We want equality of knowledge, more than equality of substance or condition; and it appears to me that Democracy of Progress will develop itself more through a mental, than through a material change in the condition of society. . . . Democracy will never flourish till knowledge be its sign, and its noblest prerogative. (67)

She intentionally employed the term 'the hustings', the political speeches held in the period before an election, in order to refer to the six points of the Charter. By this time Meteyard had lost her trust in contemporary government, and given up hope that it would ensure the education of the people. She claimed: 'So long . . . as the official power of government is wielded by an aristocracy, or contains within it the smallest fraction of priestcraft, the people *will not* be educated'. The other writers for this journal would have insisted that this was why they needed universal suffrage, but Meteyard advocated self-help in saying that 'the people must do this for themselves, and *they will*' (67).

[56] Silverpen, 'The Coming Men', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 67-73.

In this article, the commentary is followed by a story about a Cornish miner, Ben Lobb. He has practiced the principle of self-help. He can speak 'perfectly good English', and even German to converse on equal terms with a first-rate Swedish scientist and philosopher. The government official, accompanying the Swede, asks Ben, 'Does not all this knowledge . . . make you discontented with your lot, and anxious to be on the hustings or in the pulpit, instead of burrowing like moles'. Ben replies that '*discontent always springs from ignorance, as contentment from knowledge*' and adds, 'Never again think, sir, that true knowledge can harm any man' (71). The government official is satisfied with the answer, and tells him to take 'a marked position' (72) in a People's College financially supported by Government. This story embodies Meteyard's faith in 'self-help' by means of education. She believed that the people should be advanced through this, never by means of universal suffrage.

W. J. Linton, the principal contributor to the *Republican,* was probably the most anxious to respond to Meteyard's implied criticism of Chartism's basic tenets. He published an article 'Universal Suffrage: The Principle of the People's Charter', in the journal in the same year. The article begins with the sentence: 'There are men who question the expediency of Universal Suffrage: who allow the abstract right, but dare not reduce that right to practice, certainly not at one — for fear of consequences'.[57] Linton, seeking for 'the immediate public recognition' of Universal Suffrage, continued in a mocking tone:

> 'Let justice be done though the heavens should fall', says a brave proverb. But the heavens will not fall. It is your half-witted fool, who thinks justice 'inexpedient', 'inconvenient', and the work not quite prepared for it, who would be just

[57] W. J. Linton, 'Universal Suffrage: The Principle of the People's Charter', *Republican,* 1848, pp. 142-44 (p. 142).

> ‘gradually’, it is he who does all the mischief.[58]

His attack was not aimed at Meteyard only, but when he ironically mentioned ‘a very philosophic party’ who thought it better to ‘prescribe some certain amount of knowledge, such as reading and writing’, it may have reminded the reader of the Cornish miner who spoke perfect English, and whom Meteyard had presented as a ‘philosopher’ (72). Linton asserted that there had been ‘not a few men, unable to read a line or to write their names’ but yet ‘much more worthy of electoral trust than many a college-bred scoundrel or clerkly bribe-taker’. Linton claimed that none should be judges to test ‘an educational qualification’ of the people for Universal Suffrage, because anybody who had ‘impudence enough to think himself a judge of other men’s fitness’ lacked ‘some qualifying modesty’. He concluded, ‘I know of no scheme more likely to insure confusion and disappointment than this most philosophic test’.[59] It is very likely that Linton looked on Meteyard as too philosophical or too visionary.

In another article ‘The Democratic Principle of the People’s Charter’, Linton argued:

> Actual self-government — that every man should be sufficient law unto himself, independent of and superseding all legislative enactment, is only to be dreamed of as the blessedest condition of an age in which all men shall be well educated, honest, healthy, and in harmony with each other.[60]

What Linton regarded as a mere dream was almost identical with what Meteyard had

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[58] Linton, ‘Universal Suffrage’, p. 143.
[59] Linton, ‘Universal Suffrage’, pp. 143-44.
[60] W. J. Linton, ‘The Democratic Principle of the People’s Charter’, *Republican*, 1848, pp. 207-210 (pp. 207-208).

represented as the future society in 'The Prospects of Democracy'. Linton claimed: 'the Suffrage alone would be salvation'.[61]

Meteyard was not so aggressive as the other Chartist writers for the *Republican*. The editor employed the word 'opponents' to refer to those who lacked 'a more serious and impartial consideration of the Rights of Man'.[62] The anonymous writer of the article 'Who Are Our Opponents?' also intended the term in the sense of those against 'the equal rights of man'. He called them 'the selfish, the ignorant, the unjust, the vicious, the cowardly, the cruel, the proud', and assumed that 'these opponents must be beaten'.[63] Meteyard would never have described those against the universal suffrage as 'opponents' to be 'beaten'. Instead, she encouraged readers to practice self-help through education: 'You are denied a vote, but no legislature on earth can deny to you, if so you will, the *true vote* of intelligence and thought' (67).

A plural of the word 'men' in the title 'The Coming Men' and its sub-title 'No. I. — Ben Lobb, the Cornish Miner' indicate that her story was intended as a serial publication. 'No. I' was run early enough to be followed by No. II even in this short-lived journal, but 'No. II' was never to appear. No further articles by her were published in the *Republican*.

From 'Earth's Worst Tragedy', to ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', and 'John Ashmore of Birmingham'

Just as she transformed Joe Beech of 'Earth's Worst Tragedy' into John Ironshaft of ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', Meteyard again transformed John Ironshaft to John Ashmore, the eponymous hero of her novella 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', which

[61] Linton, 'The Democratic Principle', p. 208.
[62] C. G. H., Preface, *Republican*, 1848, pp. iii-iv (p. iv).
[63] 'Who Are Our Opponents?', *Republican*, 1848, pp. 181-82 (p. 181).

was published in *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1849.[64] Ashmore is, as Ironshaft was, a self-made man engaged in the iron industry. All the three stories endeavour to illustrate the potential of education to develop the essential goodness of humanity. Joe Beech called it 'something of beauty and good' (262) within all people, Ironshaft 'the wonderful poetry that lies hidden in the common human heart' (469), and Ashmore 'poetry' that 'wells upward from its lowest, poorest, most neglected springs' (267).

All three stories were published in the journals of popular progress, characterised by their supposedly socially mixed audience: 'Earth's Worst Tragedy' in *Howitt's Journal*, ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft' in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, and 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' in *Eliza Cook's Journal*. However, while the two earlier stories were directed to middle class readers who were alarmed at the intensifying Chartist movement, 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' was, as will be seen in this section, addressed mainly to lower middle and working class readers a year after the last outburst of Chartism in 1848.

All three stories sought to dispel the idea that educating the working class could result in political revolution. However, in 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', Meteyard likens gifted workers to potential 'Miltons', 'Hampdens' (314) and 'Shelleys' (286), the problematic names she avoided in the former two stories as they could be easily associated with revolution. Now, Meteyard dares to challenge the argument underlying the supposed menace of educated workers: the possible challenge of organised labour against capitalism.

Ashmore endeavours 'to solve the great problem between capital and labour' (298). Meteyard invokes Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to compare the labour-capital relationship to that of the Montagues and the Capulets. Her heroine Juliet, the daughter

[64] Silverpen, 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 18, 25 August 1849, pp. 243-47, 265-69; 1, 8, 15 September 1849, pp. 283-87, 297-302, 313-17.

of a capitalist who employs Ashmore, falls in love with him.[65] When Ashmore establishes a company, he fears that his employer Mr. Taverner will think '[his] own men have risen up to compete with [him] in a hostile spirit' (269). However, as Taverner foresaw, Ashmore's success leads to his own since the 'progressive undertaking' on metallic architecture develops a market for ironwork. Ashmore proves that they are 'simply traders with [their] capital, not demagogues or revolutionists', and endorse 'the truth' that 'capital and labour are *not* inimical'(269), but rather that they serve to heal 'the wound between capital and labour' (268). Unlike the fathers of Romeo and Juliet, Taverner blesses his daughter's marriage to Ashmore. The couple names one of their children, Rosalind, the heroine of *As You Like It*, and another William. They celebrate Ashmore's achievement on the Avon at the end of the story. If there is no antagonism between labour and capital, the middle and upper classes have no reason to be alarmed by the education of the people, as their talents will benefit society as a whole. Meteyard has Taverner, the character of foresight, declare: 'the virtues of the common human heart will richly repay our most enlightened care' (268).

Mathematics and Political Economy

In her book *Women and the People* Helen Rogers regards 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' as 'unashamedly didactic'.[66] When Meteyard addresses the audience directly after the last episode, she claims her 'right as a teacher' with 'no personal, no selfish gratification' (317). Indeed her narrative persona is that of teacher who has introduced 'profound and great' ideas:

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[65] Juliet's innocence is also likened to that of Imogen (287), another heroine of Shakespeare, whose marriage was adamantly opposed by her father Cymbeline.
[66] Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship, and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2000), p. 142.

> My many friends of this broad country — Coloured with some fair hues, . . . yet the essential elements, the great facts, the nerves and sinews of this industrial tale are true; its principles are amongst the profoundest of social progress. In order to show you this, I have quoted the texts of profound and great men; men whose glory it is to be true teachers, men who have prepared themselves for this hallowed service by immense study and laborious thought. . . . (317)

She begins each episode with quotations: mostly from political economists and historians, J. S. Mill, John Hill Burton, W. J. Fox, and Bentham, but also with three mathematicians Charles Babbage, Adolphe Quetelet and Pierre Simon de Laplace, and one literary figure, Milton. 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' conveys a specific message for the people: what they should do for their own future as independent beings. The story begins with a quotation from Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848): 'The poor have come out of leading strings and cannot any longer be governed or treated like children. To their own qualities must now be commended the care of their destiny' (243).

While ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft' began in 1830 and then jumped to 1870, each episode of 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' moves forward a decade, from 1849 to 1859, 1869, 1879, and then two decades to 1899. Meteyard has expanded her short story about Ironshaft into the novella about Ashmore to underline the need for slow and steady improvement, and to emphasize that education is necessary for the people in each phase. First of all, she places importance on mathematics. She has Ashmore quote from 'a great and modern Englishman': 'So far as civilization is connected with the advance and diffusion of human knowledge, civilization flourishes when the prevalent education is mathematical, and fades when philosophy is the subject more preferred'

(302).

Although not specified in the story, these words come from *On the Principles of English University Education* (1837) by William Whewell,[67] master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Meteyard's application of the principle of university education to elementary or popular education, underlines her conviction that education in mathematics is necessary for everyone. It is likely that Meteyard knew that Whewell came from a working class background, and obtained educational opportunities by means of scholarships and public subscription.[68]

Ashmore has his company open mathematics classes for their workpeople for three reasons: First, their 'industrial progress' requires mathematical knowledge; second, mathematics would cultivate the ability to think logically; Meteyard had probably read Whewell's *Thoughts on the Study of Mathematics as a Part of a Liberal Education* (1835), which argued that the subject gave a precious mental training; thirdly and most important, 'their moral and physical progress largely depends upon their comprehension of fixed and unalterable principles' (302). By 'fixed and unalterable principles' Meteyard meant those of political economy. The novella presents the 'Joint-Stock principle' as the most important of these. While Elizabeth Gaskell claimed ignorance of political economy in the preface to *Mary Barton* (1848),[69] in sharp contrast, Meteyard produces stories based on a remarkable knowledge of political economy. 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' is one of the most explicit demonstrations of her grasp of the subject.

The Bubble Act 1720 (6 Geo. I, c.18), passed in the wake of the infamous South Sea Bubble of 1720, forbade all joint stock companies unless authorised by royal

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[67] William Whewell, *On the Principles of English University Education* (London: John W. Parker; Cambridge: J. and J. J. Deighton, 1837), p. 25.

[68] Richard Yeo, 'Whewell, William (1794–1866)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2009 <http://dx.doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/29200>

[69] Elizabeth Gaskell, Preface, *Mary Barton*, ed. by Edgar Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. xxxv.

charter or private act.[70] The Joint-Stock Companies Act 1844 (7&8 Vic. c.110) allowed them to register at some cost, but there was still no limited liability. It was possible for companies to have their internal rules include a limited liability clause, but company members could still be responsible for their company's unlimited losses. Ashmore is later to look back to 1849 to note correctly that 'the law, with respect to associations of this character, was very defective'.[71] He does not want to put his small investors, mostly humble local people, at risk of unlimited liability, and manages to gain 'a special Act of the Legislature' to be legalised as a 'chartered Company' (301).

Ashmore's joint stock company is later reorganised into that of partnership in commendam. Under this system, partners are categorised into two groups: the 'managing partners', including Ashmore himself, 'responsible with their whole fortunes for the engagements of the concern'; and limited partners, 'only contributing definite sums' and 'not liable for anything beyond' (301). Meteyard proposes a model modified from the French system of société 'en commandite' (301), in which the company permits their limited partners to be involved in management, with some restrictions. Meteyard may have read Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations,*[72] which criticised the joint stock company for its separation of management and ownership:[73] directors would not watch over 'other people's money' as carefully as their own while proprietors would not take the trouble to understand anything of the business: the inevitable result should

[70] For details about the Act, see Ron Harris, 'The Bubble Act: Its Passage and Its Effects on Business Organisation', *Journal of Economic History*, 54 (1994), 610-27.
[71] Limited liability for joint stock company was to be provided for by the Joint Stock Companies Act 1856, as Meteyard claimed through this novella published in 1849.
[72] Meteyard had referred to Adam Smith as a Scotchman out of whose cap Malthus 'pluck[ed] a feather' (443) in her 'Times versus Malthus' (*Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, May 1846, pp. 441-48). This shows her interest in Adam Smith.
[73] The discussion of joint stock companies appeared for the first time in the third edition *of The Wealth of Nations* (1776; 3rd edn, 1778), under the title 'Of the Public Works and Institutions which Are Necessary for Facilitating Particular Branches of Commerce' (Gary M. Anderson and Robert D. Tollison, 'Adam Smith's Analysis of Joint-Stock Companies', *Journal of Political Economy*, 90 (1982), 1237-56 (p. 1240).

be '[n]egligence and profusion'.[74] 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' indicates the potential and supposed problems of the Joint-Stock principle, and suggests a solution.

Meteyard also emphasises importance of aesthetics in manufacturing. The key to the success of Ashmore's ironwork company lies in its development of metallic art design. To the scene in which he applies art to the science of architecture in order to build an iron house, Meteyard adds a note to say that she acquired the general idea of the iron house from William Vose Pickett's 'exceedingly original and able work on "Metallurgic Architecture" ' (284). As the lengthy subtitle of the book *New System of Architecture* (1845) suggested, Pickett expected that 'a higher order of beauty, a larger amount of utility, and various advantages' in economy and commerce would be 'practically attained' by the new system of iron architecture.[75] Meteyard regarded this work as 'well worthy' of 'thoughtful attention' of 'the intelligent operative classes, who are aware of the economic value to themselves of these advanced processes in relation to the arts and manufacturers' (284). Revitalisation of industry through manufacturing design is one of her lifelong themes, which she had already illustrated in her story 'Art in Spitalfields'.

However, this is not merely a question of manufacturing arts. When Ashmore saw old and beautiful metallic pieces such as rare bronze cups and specimens of metal tracery for the first time, they 'awakened in him . . . new ideas in metallic art' (268). At the same time, he was so overwhelmed by their beauty as to become convinced that human beings would 'carry on the improvement' of souls 'by things of this kind' (247).

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[74] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. by Roy H. Campbell and Andrew S. Skinner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 741. See also Anderson and Robert, pp. 1241-42.

[75] William Vose Pickett, *New System of Architecture, Founded on the Forms of Nature and Developing the Properties of Metal: By Which a Higher Order of Beauty, a Larger Amount of Utility, and Various Advantages in Economy, over the Pre-existent Architectures, may Be Practically Attained: Presenting Also, the Peculiar and Important Advantage of Being Commercial, Its Productions Forming Fitting Objects of Exportation* (London: Longman, 1845).

Meteyard does not explain how souls could be improved by such beautiful things in this novella, but developed the theme of moral education through arts in another story, which will be considered later.

Political Economy and Domestic Economy

Meteyard became more concerned with the domestic economy of the labouring classes while involved in *Eliza Cook's Journal,* probably because *Eliza Cook's Journal* was, as Brian Maidment notes, not only an 'artisan' magazine but also a 'family' magazine.[76] Moreover, it was, to quote Catherine Gallagher, 'intended to reach working-class women'.[77]

In 'John Ashmore of Birmingham', Meteyard introduces an attractive but feckless couple, Thomas and Caroline Madeley, by way of example. Their early marriage, celebrated with an extravagant wedding party, heralds a thriftless life, many children and poverty. Caroline dies at the hands of her husband after a drunken brawl. Ashmore's rebuke to Tom spells out Meteyard's message:

> Cary had no need to have been driven to the heading-shop, if you had been sober, and not spent twelve out of every twenty four shillings at the Cannock Arms. What hearth, or decency, or morals could you hope for, when the necessity to bring in a bit of bread to these starving, naked, shoeless children, kept your wretched wife at shop from seven in the morning till eight or nine at night; how could she sew, or cook, or be a mother, or a wife; how could she be comely or

[76] Brian Maidment, 'Essayists and Artisans: The Making of Nineteenth-Century Self-Taught Poets', *Literature and History,* 9 (1983), 74-91 (p. 77).
[77] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 136.

> have a smile? As for the seven children, whose existence you speak of as an evil, and an excuse for evil doing, whose duty was it to be sober and industrious, and care-taking, in order to support them decently, and keep your wife from the shop? Yours! you know it. As for means, look at John Field, with more children than you, and a sick old mother to support, and yet he's got £38 14s. 10d. in our 'ACCUMULATIVE FUND'; and there's Robert Allison, if you want more texts, that gets little more than half your wages, and yet *he* has saved! Shame on you, Tom Madeley, shame on you! (267)

As the reference to the exemplary John Field showed, the novella associated domestic economy with political economy. A good home was presented as a base of brisk and successful economic activities. Meteyard argued that female education in household skills was vital not only for the happiness of working class women and their families, but also for economic and social advancement of the working class as a whole.

Ashmore knows that 'bad dinners and dirty brawling firesides' (245) induce men to go drinking in pubs and that 'the severest evils of the masses' could 'grow out of woman's ignorance of domestic economy and management' (298). He later establishes a home for young working women where they are taught household duties, such as brewing, baking, washing, and cooking, not only for themselves but also for the young unmarried operatives employed by the company. They learn to be well prepared as 'serviceable' (298) wives in the future.

Meteyard also highlights the female influence on men throughout married life. The marriage between Ashmore and Juliet suggests that cross-class marriage could be beneficial in encouraging the latent talents of working class men. This reinforces a point Meteyard made earlier in ' "The Works" of John Ironshaft', and discussed in chapter

four: where John married the doctor's daughter Eleanor.[78] When Ashmore finds that Juliet loves him, he asks his future wife to understand his 'destiny to serve [his] kind', and says:

> *You* will comprehend me, Juliet; you will help me to show kindliness and not patronage to those we serve, to soften what is stern within my heart, and be gentle where my rude nature cannot. . . . (286)

When Juliet refuses her father's friend, Lord Clydesdale's proposal of marriage in favour of Ashmore, the narrator admires her choice:

> Yes! the time is coming, when the worship natural to the heart of woman, will find its most magnificent purpose here, to soothe, to lessen, to counteract these little frailties by which so often genius mars its otherwise grand humanity. But then such masculine genius *must* educate its soul up to and beyond its point of time; education, as regards woman's love for man, is a . . . sovereign and alluring motive. . . . (286)

Juliet herself also hopes to 'go hand in hand' with Ashmore 'in his service to those who so much need good teaching' (287).

Education for the People by the People

When Ashmore's Joint Stock Iron Company flourishes, a certain sum is set apart from the interest 'for the purposes of moral, religious, educational, and physical

[78] See ch. 4, pp. 124-29.

improvement' (301). The company runs various schools for the workpeople and their families including an infant school and a primary school for rudimentary education, and the Company's private School of Designs. Mathematics, reading, and music classes are held. Concerts and balls are given. A gymnasium is maintained. As Ashmore says, '[W]e have got souls as well as bodies, and the more we carry on the improvement of the one . . . , the more we shall understand how best to improve the other' (247), Meteyard considered the body and the mind inseparable. The more capital accumulates, the more educated they become, and the more improved their health and morals became. All the schools charge fees with their policy to '*permit no charity*' (301) so that they are independent enough to educate themselves for their own future, completely free from what Mill called 'leading strings' (243). Meteyard held a conviction that 'heaven ha[d] made Brindleys, and Stephensons, and Talfourds, and Chantrys, and Morlands, and Jenners, and Shelleys, and Hoods, and Jerrolds' (286) of the people, and that education should bring out their latent abilities.

The last episode of the novella is set in the future, in 1899, a half century after its publication. An International Senate House is about to be erected. Their first assembly is held in a room in Ashmore's firm. The conjoint nations are Britain, India, Hungary, Sweden, America, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia and Turkey. They will meet to discuss 'those great common objects of commerce and production, of arts and letters, of science and invention'. Meteyard believed that education in all these fields was necessary for the people to 'advance liberty of thought and speech and action, and turn the sword of power, so long wielded by kings and ministers, into the pruning-hook of a mighty, a peaceful, and a congregated people' (314). However, each country has its top priority issues: for example, the extension of the cotton trade, arteries and railways for India; their theories of commerce, or arts, or letters, of science, for America, France, Italy etc.; 'human liberty, free from the fear of autocracy or the bow-string' (314) for

Russia and Turkey. It is a matter of the stage each country has reached.

Meteyard obviously regarded 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' as one of her most important stories. She signed it as 'Silverpen' at the beginning of each instalment, and added her initials E.M. to the note written for the third, and at the end of the last one. The use of two names together reinforced her claim that she has been consistent in writing as 'a teacher' to the people since starting her writing career as E.M. At the end of the novella, she expressed her wish to 'liv[e] to place maturer and more thoughtful work' (317) to serve the advancement of the people.

'John Ashmore of Birmingham' was one of Meteyard's most successful works. The novella was republished in a collection *The Nine Hours' Movement* in 1872, in the introduction to which she recalled:

> As soon as the tale appeared, it became a favourite. Many wrote to me, others called upon me in relation to it; and though an entire stranger to him, I received an invitation from Mr. Bunning, the City Architect, to view the City Coal Exchange, then just built and opened. . . . He showed me how much he had used iron in its construction, and he was kind enough to say how much he liked my story. . . . (xiii)

She described how the serialised tale had come to be reprinted as a book. Her lengthy description suggests that she regarded this as an ideal case to show her wished-for role as a teacher:

> About four months ago, a firm of country booksellers applied to me in relation to a reprint of 'John Ashmore', as 'a gentleman to whom this particular story had been of good service wanted some copies for distribution in a factory'.

> Later this gentleman wrote direct to me. He said, 'When the story of "John Ashmore" first appeared, I read it with peculiar interest; I have since then read it two or three times, and I have lent the volume to my friends so often, that it is nearly worn out. . . . I have no doubt that the story of "John Ashmore" has had a great deal to do with my success. . . . From that age [of nine] I have earned my own living; but "John Ashmore" has helped of later years'. I need only add that this gentleman takes a thousand copies of this reprint for distribution amongst the men he governs. (ix-x)

In two years the tale was again republished with Meteyard's permission in the weekly *Forest of Dean Examiner* from January to February 1874.[79] The paper carried an advertisement for the volume every week from 27 February to 17 April, and from 29 May to 24 July, and 2 to 16 October, 1874.

Environment and Education: On the Sanitary Question

In the introduction to the first volume of *The Philosophy of the Health* (1834), Thomas Southwood Smith, a physician, sanitary reformer and radical unitarian declared: 'The mind is dependent on the body: hence an acquaintance with the physiology of the body should precede the study of the physiology of the mind'.[80] The

[79] Miss Meteyard, 'Industrial and Household Tales. Reprinted by the Special Permission of Miss Meteyard, the Author. John Ashmore of Birmingham', *Forest of Dean Examiner*, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 January, 6, 13, 20 February 1874, p. 2 of each number.
[80] Southwood Smith, *The Philosophy of Health: Or, an Exposition of the Physical and Mental Constitution of Man, with a View to the Promotion of Human Longevity and Happiness*, 2 vols (1835-37; London: C. Cox, 1847), I, 1. The book became, according to Mary Poovey, 'enormously popular' (Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 199n10).

Monthly Repository reviewed it favourably and endorsed the argument.[81] Linking moral degradation with physical disease, the sanitary question had become one of the radical unitarians' great social concerns by the time Meteyard began her writing career.

In 1842, Edwin Chadwick, one of whose closest collaborators was Southwood Smith, published his *Report on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*. It sold like wildfire.[82] In February 1846, the *People's Journal* carried a portrait of Southwood Smith,[83] followed by a biographical article on him. In the article, the writer William Howitt praised him highly and stated that 'the Sanatory [sic] Condition of the People' was a subject which 'from its importance' demanded 'the earnest considerations of all well-wishers of their country at the present time'.[84]

In the same year (1846), Meteyard contributed three articles on the sanitary question to *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*.[85] These were written in the early stages of her career, and show how she developed her argument relating cleanliness with moral education, first through her articles, and then in her stories.

She began the first article, 'Baths and Wash-Houses' by criticising the government for its slow progress in establishing 'sanatory [sic] regulations' (103). The article suggested that she regularly read Hansard.[86] A Health of Towns Bill was read a first

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[81] 'The Philosophy of Health', *Monthly Repository*, 2 March 1835, pp. 153-60 (p.155).
[82] M. W. Flinn, Introduction, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Gt. Britain, by Edwin Chadwick*, ed. by Flinn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), pp. 1-73 (p. 55).
[83] The portrait was engraved by W. J. Linton from a picture by Margaret Gillies ('The People's Protrait Gallery: Dr. Southwood Smith', *People's Journal*, 21 February 1846, p. 90).
[84] William Howitt, 'The People's Portrait Gallery: Dr. Southwood Smith', *People's Journal*, 21 February 1846, pp. 99-101 (p. 90).
[85] Silverpen, 'Baths and Wash-Houses', 15 August 1846, p. 103; Silverpen, 'Baths for the People', 5 September 1846, p. 174; Silverpen, 'Sanatory [sic] Organism', 12 December 1846, p. 506, all published in *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper.*
[86] Both of the Houses had taken the 'Health of Towns' as a subject for debate during the session of 1845. See Lords Sitting of Friday, February 14, 1845, LXXVll, cc. 449-53;

time in the House of Commons in July 1845,[87] the main purpose of which was to improve sewage and drainage to promote the public health of towns. It was ordered to be printed and circulated during the recess.[88] However, the Bill was virtually neglected during the next session of 1846.[89]

Turning from Parliament to 'individual philanthropy' (103) Meteyard introduced several cases in which common baths and wash-houses were actually operated for the people. She quoted the initial and running costs and the number of users in detail to prove that the costs were amply covered by the total fees, which implicitly suggested that readers themselves might undertake the role of 'individual philanthropy'. Although the article asserted that sanitary improvement served 'the cause' of making people 'physically and morally perfect', it did not explain how and why it did so except by emphasising 'the moral disregard of cleanliness' and '*ruin of dirt*' (103) which led to the gin shop.

The second article, 'Baths for the People' appeared in the following month. In spite of the title, the article reserved its largest space to consider the sanitary question more generally. Meteyard knew that a Health of Towns Bill was to be introduced the following year (1847),[90] declaring that 'the public mind should prepare itself' for the next session of Parliament which would take up the subject. She had probably obtained

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Commons Sitting of Tuesday, April 8, 1845, LXXIX, cc. 330-59.

[87] Commons Sitting of Thursday, July 24, 1845, LXXXII, c. 1077.

[88] Commons Sitting of Thursday, July 17, 1845, LXXXII, c. 622.

[89] During the session of 1846, Lord Duncan asked if they proceed with the Health of Town Bills, which had been brought in the last year in the current session (1846). The chairperson of the House of Commons, Sir J. Graham declined, with a reason that 'there was as much business already for the House to perform' (Commons Sitting of Monday, April 27, 1846, LXXXV, c. 1084).

[90] This was a bill to be enacted as the historic Public Health Act in 1848. In 1847, the Health of Towns Bill was introduced, but met with opposition and was withdrawn. The bill was revised into a Bill for Promoting Public Health to be introduced in 1848. As for the detailed procedure, see Hansard, Commons Sitting of 30 March 1847, 10, 11, 12 May, 18 June, 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 July, 29 November 1847, and 21 February, 5, 8, 11, 18, 19, 22, 25 May, and 30 June, 24, 27 July, and 7, 15 August 1848.

inside information from Southwood Smith, one of the core members of the Howitts' coterie and a leading member of the Health of Towns Association, which, founded in 1844, had been actively campaigning for sanitary reform, in conjunction with the Health of Towns Commission, set up by the government in 1843 and chaired by Edwin Chadwick.[91]

Despite her enthusiasm and copious research into the topic, Meteyard failed to offer a practical solution to the sanitary question. She suggested that special county rates might be levied on home owners for the cause of sanitary reform, assuming the tax payers' willingness to agree on this plan. She also proposed utilising groundwater for London's water supply, referring to William Buckland (1784-1856) and other geologists who had proved its existence, without taking into consideration the cost and risk.

In this article, Meteyard partially explained why the sanitary question should be considered in relation to the 'moral progress' of the people: The removal of filth would reduce criminal rates as 'filth of body' was 'filth of mind'; a taste for clean water would subdue the desire for drink; and taking clean water would improve 'nervous energy', which education could never 'awaken' from 'its brutalized soddened condition' (174). Meteyard referred to the French hygienist Louis-René Villermé (1782-1863), a pioneer in social epidemiology, who showed that 'this deadening inertia exists in proportion to poverty, filth, and wretchedness'. Meteyard's view was that education would work more efficiently on a healthy mind within a healthy body, than on 'the torpid understanding' (174) of those in an unclean environment.

In the third article 'Sanatory Organism', published in December 1846,[92] Meteyard

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[91] Flinn, pp. 68-69. John Ashton and Janet Ubido, 'The Healthy City and the Ecological Idea', *Social History of Medicine*, 4 (1991): 173-80 (p. 174) <https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/4.1.173>

[92] Although the article was published when the Parliament session was already over, its reference to 'the proposed Sanatory [sic] Bill of last Session' (1845) shows that Meteyard wrote it while Parliament was still in the 1846 session. She referred to the

attributed the sanitary question to ignorance, and recommended the readers to build up 'sanatory [sic] societies' for 'the diffusion of knowledge'. She regretted that the public had not appreciated the labours of Southwood Smith and Chadwick, and argued that the public intelligence should be improved to understand their claim for sanitary reform, and to 'be embodied in a petitionary voice' to drive government into the reform. She also assured readers that 'improved intelligence' in the labouring classes would remove their 'habitual love of filth' (506). Furthermore, she insisted:

> Instead of discussions on the 'five points of the charter', if working men will but turn their attention to the benefits connected with the cleanliness of their immediate dwellings and courtways, the soundest and best foundation would be laid for political rights, that of moral self-respect. (506)

Public Health and Popular Education

In January 1847 *Howitt's Journal* was launched with Southwood Smith's article, 'An Address to the Working Classes of the United Kingdom, on Their Duty in the Present State of the Sanatory [sic] Question' on the opening pages, carefully placed to draw the readers' attention.[93] Two months later, on 13 March, 1847, the first part of Meteyard's 'The Co-operative Band' appeared in the same journal. As shown in chapter three, the story mainly deals with the co-operative scheme,[94] but considers the sanitary question as well. It was published only ten days before the Health of Towns Bill was

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Health of Towns Bill as the 'Sanatory Bill'. It is not known why Douglas Jerrold, the editor, did not publish this article until December.

[93] Southwood Smith, 'An Address to the Working Classes of the United Kingdom, on their Duty in the Present State of Sanitary Question', *Howitt's Journal*, 2 January 1847, pp. 3-4.

[94] See ch. 3, pp. 101-15.

newly introduced in the House of Commons. Meteyard may have conspired with the editor William Howitt to ensure the most propitious timing for her story, which indicates that the sanitary reform could be achieved by the people themselves:

> As it would have called too much upon their poor funds to have hired a horse and cart, every man each morning carried with him a large basket of manure, the hitherto poison and refuse of their miserable lanes and fetid courtways, and which was collected each previous day by children. Thus, whilst pestilence was borne away, the reproducing and beautiful principle of nature was supplied and fed. (146)

The second and concluding part of the story describes the utopian community of the future: where the 'once disease-generating sewerage of the town' is 'diffused over the land by irrigation, and disease is 'almost unknown' thanks to 'the wisest of sanatory [sic] laws' (158) of the community itself. This ending could be construed as a criticism of government for its slow progress in enacting laws for sanitary reform.

In the same year (1847) Meteyard wrote another story relating to the current parliamentary debate on the sanitary question, which referred to the sanitary reformers Edwin Chadwick, Southwood Smith and William H. Duncan (523). 'The Market — Old and New' is set in Smithfield,[95] famous for its meat market and abattoirs, and regarded as a hotbed of vice and disease. The House of Commons had nominated 'A Select Committee to inquire into the necessity for the removal of Smithfield Market' in March 1847. Since then the House had received many petitions against or in favour of the

[95] Silverpen, 'The Market — Old and New', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* June 1847, pp. 519-28.

removal.[96] Parliament had become embroiled in a dispute over the 'impartial' nomination of committee members,[97] by the time *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* ran the story. Although incorporating the current parliamentary debate, Meteyard's story advocated a wider view of the question for two purposes: to illustrate 'the *nexus*' (527) between physical and the mental degradation, both caused by unsanitary conditions, and mutually worsened; and to present education as a remedy to break the nexus.

In the story, a celebrated anatomist and surgeon named Hall visits Smithfield to attend to a seriously ill child Meg. While guided to his dwelling by her father Hall is shocked at the horrible sanitary condition of the area. Two long passages are quoted below to show Meteyard's characteristics as an investigative journalist:

> the walls dripping with filth, and the brick floors so slippery with blood and grease that even the practised foot of the butcher swayed to and fro. . . . And from these passages, so dark that the way had to be often felt, and so narrow, that a stout man's shoulders would have touched either side, slaughter-houses opened. . . . Amongst these grim wildernesses were . . . some, where the upheaved floor of filth, like that in Heathen fable, rotted and festered and begat its dire miasma; some, where the blood made its own stagnant pools, or trickled in dire waste to the gurgling sewers low down. . . . (522)

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[96] Commons Sitting of Thursday, March 18, 1847, XCI, cc. 149-50; Commons Sitting of Tuesday, 27 April, 1847, XCII, c. 7; Commons Sitting of Tuesday, May 4, 1847, XCII, c. 374; Commons Sitting of Monday, May 31, 1847, XCII, c. 1291; Commons Sitting of Tuesday, June 8, 1847, XCIII, c. 240; Commons Sitting of Wednesday, June 9, 1847, XCIII, c. 256; Commons Sitting of Thursday, June 10, 1847, XCIII, c. 295; Commons Sitting of Friday, June 11, 1847, XCIII, c. 381; Commons Sitting of Tuesday, June 15, 1847, c. 596; Commons Sitting of Wednesday, June 16, 1847, XCIII, c. 620; Commons Sitting of Friday, June 18, 1847, XCIII, c. 701; Commons Sitting of Thursday, June 24, 1847, XCIII, c. 838; Commons Sitting of Friday, June 25, 1847, XCIII, c. 907; Commons Sitting of Wednesday, July 7, 1847, XCIV, c. 1; Commons Sitting of Friday, July 9, 1847, XCIV, c. 102.

[97] Commons Sitting of Tuesday, May 4, 1847, XCII, cc. 385-86.

The following scene of the gin-drunken mother and neglected child could be associated with the famous etching *Gin Lane* (1751) by William Hogarth, who was born in Smithfield:

> The mother, imbecile with drink, lolled in a high-back chair, deaf to the moanings of her child; three or four boys, some in the chimney-corner, and one of them seated on a pile of reeking hides, cooked their supper over the huge fire; two old women, crouched beside the cradle, sipped the gin set forth for them on the table, and chatted fiercely as they swayed the cradle to and fro, totally careless whether they increased or hushed pain; and other women and gossips there were in the back-ground, who, younger and of more doubtful vocation, tried on the spendthrift finery scattered about, or hobnobbed with cup and saucer. Scarcely able to breathe the pestiferous air, Hall's first words were to open a window — *there was none*, 'they always burnt candles'; and when at the same instant the lads, warned by Muffs [the child's father] to go, opened a door beside the fire-place, in reeked the swelter and stench of the slaughter-house, thus merely divided from the human dwelling by a thin partition. (524-25)

It was unusual even for a Victorian male writer to describe such scenes so starkly. 'The Market — Old and New' was, as Michael Slater states, 'one of the most sheerly nauseating and horrific pieces in all Victorian journalism'.[98]

In describing the mentally degraded inhabitants of the 'iniquitous dens of cruelty and filth' (523), Meteyard emphasises that rot and waste desecrate humanity. Hall sees

[98] Michael Slater, *Douglas Jerrold, 1803-1857* (London: Duckworth, 2002), p. 196.

several half-naked men and lads in an open yard:

> he [one of them] shied, with accurate aim, a short thick stick that lay on the floor at a lamb tethered to an iron ring. It had hitherto stood, though bleeding and faint . . . ; but now, its fore-leg broken, it sunk upon the reeking floor, and a shout of brutal merriment rose above its low moan of death and pain. (524)

Hall's first view of the butcher's child is equally shocking; he sees 'the insane and animal-faced idiot mad with fever', 'deformed' and 'so imbrutified and hideous' (525).

The child is the innocent victim of her environment. The surgeon cannot cure the child's mental disabilities, although he tries 'his humane and educative theories' (527) on her and other mentally retarded children at a suburban cottage, and achieves some success. However, he does succeed in educating an orphan boy, Ned, after rescuing him from his degrading existence in Smithfield. Through these two children, the story illustrates that environment is of equal importance with education.

The story ends in the future when 'national education' has been established, 'the gathered moral force of Common Sense' (527) prevails and sanitary reform has been instituted. Smithfield is inhabited by 'a healthy and flourishing population' (528):

> A large and flourishing lodging-house for Highland drovers, and country folks, is now kept by Muffs; and it is beautiful to hear old gray-headed men say, how the gentle idiot girl, when they are sick or tired, comes to tend them or sit beside them, and tells all she knows of the country and the flowers. And, what is greatest still for my argument: of true nobility, the *abattoirs* and their hospital have a wondrous nature watching over them; wondrous in knowledge, the once shamble boy — the great humanitary English Dúchâtelet'. (528)

In the late 1840s, Meteyard's essay on juvenile crime won second prize out of fifty-two entries in a competition publicised in London papers by theologians Charles John Vaughan, John Harris and James Sherman. They wanted to direct 'public attention to the fearful prevalence' of juvenile depravity.[99] Meteyard's essay itself has been lost, but Henry Worsley referred to it in his paper which won first prize and was published in 1849. As he prefixed [S], the initial of Silverpen, to the parts in which he was indebted to Meteyard's paper, it is still possible to recognise Meteyard's report-like detailed descriptions of facts and statistics.[100] She asserted characteristically: 'It is very necessary to consider the subject of sanitary evils' as acting 'remotely upon juvenile depravity and crime' (178).

While writing the three articles and the two stories concerning the sanitary question, and her prize essay, Meteyard became more convinced that public health and popular education should be advanced together, and that their advance should precede all other things including any political and legal reforms. She insisted that a beautiful home environment would improve humanity. She went on to develop her belief in education through daily arts in another story, 'Fruits from Plates and Dishes', published in *Howitt's Journal* six months later.[101]

The Movement for Art Education

In the introduction to her book *The Nine Hours' Movement* (1872), Meteyard

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[99] Charles John Vaughman, John Harris and James Sherman, 'Adjudicators' Announcement', *Juvenile Depravity: £100 Prize Essay*, by Henry Worsley (London: Charles Gilpin, 1849), pp. vii-viii (p. viii).
[100] Worsley, pp. 65, 70, 71, 130-34, 162-63, 177-79.
[101] Silverpen, 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes', *Howitt's Journal*, 8, 15, 22, 29 January 1848, pp. 20-23, 43-44, 59-61, 76-78.

looked back to the mid-nineteenth century when 'the movement in favour of art-schools and art-education had just begun' (xii). In 1835 a select committee was appointed to inquire into 'the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design' among the manufacturing population.[102] As discussed in chapter three, better industrial design was recognised as a key to making British manufacturers more competitive with their continental rivals.[103] In 1839, Samuel Carter Hall, one of Mary Howitt's 'literary friends',[104] whose wife was to edit *Sharpe's London Magazine* to which Meteyard regularly contributed from 1854, started the *Art-Union: A Monthly Journal of the Fine Arts*. It campaigned for design reform,[105] and later in 1849 changed its title to the *Art Journal: A Monthly Record of the Fine Arts, the Industrial Arts, and the Art of Design and Manufacture*. Also since 1837, the government had founded several Schools of Design, including the Spitalfields branch school, to improve ornamental art manufactures.

Meteyard had displayed a great interest in various arts from the beginning of her career: in music in her story, 'Joe Huistly's Kit; Or, the Mythos of Pan', published in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in 1846;[106] commercial design in textiles in 'Art in Spitalfields' in the *People's Journal* the same year;[107] carving in 'Earth's Worst Tragedy' in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847; and drawing and sculpture in 'The Angel of the

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[102] Report from Select Committee on Arts and Manufacturers: Together with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix, 1835 (598) V. 375, p. iii. See also Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of Its Source, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1971), pp. 15-16.
[103] See ch. 3, pp. 84-89.
[104] *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography*, ed. by Margaret Howitt, 2 vols (London: Wm. Isbister, 1889), I, 221.
[105] Naylor, p. 21.
[106] E.M., 'Joe Huistly's Kit', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, July 1846, pp. 16-26.
[107] Eliza Meteyard, 'Art in Spitalfields', *People's Journal*, 18, 25 July 1846, pp. 40-42, 52-54.

Unfortunate' also in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847.[108] While each of these stories had a character who possessed exceptional talent if not genius, in another story 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847, and discussed in the previous chapter, Meteyard highlighted that ordinary people also shared a sensibility for beauty.[109] In the story the heroine sought to teach pauper children to sing, and to enjoy wild flowers, if appointed matron of the workhouse. As a journalist who was always well informed on current topics it was not surprising that Meteyard became interested in art as applied to the daily life of the people in the mid-1840s.

Henry Cole, Vose Pickett, Josiah Wedgwood and Meteyard

Meteyard advanced the idea of beauty with utility, which was similar to that of Henry Cole, an educator, and a patron of the arts, who was an important figure in the history of industrial design. He was also a close friend of J. S. Mill,[110] who in the 1840s was associated with the Howitts' circle. When the Society of Arts provided prizes for the best example of 'objects of everyday use' in 1846, Cole won a prize with his 'Summerly's' tea-service, which he had designed to have 'as much beauty and ornament as [was] commensurate with cheapness'.[111]

It was, according to Meteyard, 'some time in 1845 or 1846' when she obtained her first ideas of 'beauty in combination with utility' (xii).[112] She claimed that she had

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[108] Silverpen, 'The Angel of the Unfortunate', *Howitt's Journal*, 18, 25 September 1847, pp. 186-89, 195-99. See also ch. 4, pp. 160-65.
[109] Silverpen, 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal*, 9, 16 January 1847, pp. 18-20, 16-38. See ch. 4, pp. 122-24.
[110] Anna J. Mill, 'Some Notes on Mill's Early Friendship with Henry Cole', *Mill News Letter*, 4.2 (1969), 2-8. See also Bruce Robertson, 'The South Kensington Museum in Contest: An Alternative History', *Museum and Society*, 2 (2004), 1-14 (p. 8).
[111] Henry Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole, K. C. B: Accounted for in His Deeds, Speeches and Writings*, 2 vols (London: George Bell, 1884), II, 179.
[112] Meteyard, *The Nine Hours' Movement.*

been inspired by a notice in the *Westminster Review* of 'a work on iron architecture, by William Vose Pickett' (xii). This was probably the *Literary Gazette*, which published a review of his *New System of Architecture* in 1845.[113] Whatever the journal was, it is most likely that she had read the book, which advocated a new system to attain beauty unified with utility in architecture.

In the same year, the *Decorator's Assistant*, a weekly journal, was established with its principal feature of 'Design as applied to the Useful and Ornamental Arts'.[114] Also in 1847 Cole launched his firm, Summerly's Art Manufactures, with the purpose of 'connecting the best art with familiar objects in daily use'. He arranged that several distinguished manufacturers would execute his group's designs, the Wedgwoods among them.[115] Meteyard may have been under Cole's influence in recognising the importance of combining art and industry.

Around the same time Meteyard had an interview with Vose Pickett to find:

> the elements of his decorative art were, if I recollect rightly, confined to metallic oxides and encaustic preparations. Of terra-cotta, or brick and tile work, of imperishable cements and concretes as applied to iron, he had no conception. . . . But many of Mr. Pickett's ideas had great originality and merit. His perforated internal walls, hanging galleries, and ornamental bracing pins, were suggestions capable of much artistic development, and I resolved to build a house on paper. (xiii)

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[113] 'New System of Architecture, Founded on the Forms of Nature, & c. By William Vose Pickett', *Literary Gazette*, 1 November 1845, p. 720. William Bridges Adams, a radical unitarian, also published a review of the book in the *Westminster Review* in 1849 ([William Bridges Adams], 'Adaptation of Iron', *Westminster Review*, April 1849, pp. 104-45). That may have caused Meteyard's confusion.

[114] Preface, *Decorator's Assistant*, 1847, pp. iii-iv (p. iv).

[115] Cole, I, 108-109. Naylor, pp. 18-19.

While working on a detailed plan for 'an Aladdin's palace' (xiii) of gorgeous iron edifice erected by an industrialist, the hero of her story 'John Ashmore of Birmingham' in 1849, Meteyard developed Pickett's theory into her own idea of 'the adaptation of utility and beauty in cheap and simple forms to working-men's houses, and a growing redemption . . . of that dead level of uniformity and ugliness' (xv). This belief was then applied to other materials, to produce a story on pottery for daily use: 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1848. It is a story about a manufacturer who realises his dream to produce household utensils in pottery beautifully designed but manufactured cheaply.

Later in 1865 she was to publish her celebrated biographical work *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood*.[116] 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' presents its hero Richard Mason, a capitalist and innovative manufacturer of pottery, as 'the new Wedgewood [sic]' (23). This shows that Meteyard was already interested in Josiah Wedgwood at this stage. Like Wedgwood, Mason manufactures not only decorative ceramics but also pottery for daily usage. Like Wedgwood, he improves the working and living conditions of his workers.[117] It is likely that in the late 1840s Meteyard shared her interest in Wedgwood with her friend Samuel Smiles, who was to take up the potter as a man of industry in his *Self Help* published in 1859.

'Fruit from Plates and Dishes'

The first paragraph of the story 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' introduces its

[116] Eliza Meteyard, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood, from His Private Correspondence and Family Papers in the Possession of Joseph Mayer, F. Wedgwood, C. Darwin, Miss Wedgwood and Other Original Sources with an Introductory Sketch of the Art of Pottery in England*, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865-1866).
[117] As for Wedgwood's factory reform, see Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline', *Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 30-55.

principal theme in italics: '*the beautiful is immortally linked unto the good*' (20). As she endeavoured to illustrate 'the *nexus*' (527) between the unsanitary conditions and the mental degradations in 'The Market — Old and New', in this story Meteyard strove to prove 'the connexion' between '*order* and *beauty*' (43), which advocated bringing something beautiful into every home. In contrast to expensive items of high art only for the rich, such items should be cheap and necessary for daily life in order to reach even the most humble families.

The story begins with the young British manufacturer, Mason, who is under the influence of a Father Pacifique in France. The canon tells him that art could work as 'the great elevator and teacher' to improve workmen in spirit as well as in aesthetic sense. He advises Mason to 'let those same forms which minister to wealth and luxury, however less costly their substance, serve their necessities and decorate their homes' as God 'made no man exempt from influence of the beautiful' (20). Mason adopts the advice to enlarge his drawing school for his workmen. He also decides to decorate their homes 'where the *eye of infancy may grow by it, and the mature mind at last recognise in it a visible, yet potent power, that can in nowise* be long the associate of coarseness and vulgarity' (23).

Meteyard illustrates how the power of the beautiful could exert a favourable influence upon the people through her story. Mason finds at a festival that children keep the tables with flowers clean during tea, but not a table without flowers. This incident makes him attempt an experiment on a dirty classroom in his school. He covers a messy table with a beautiful cloth and sets fine inkstands on it, and finds that the children stop blotting it. These episodes let the reader catch a glimpse of the 'existence of the strong connecting link between beauty and refinement, order and elevation of morals' (43).

She then turns to a workman's home, to advocate making home '*the shrine of the beautiful*' (43), believing:

> that the homes which surround children's lives, were of larger consequence to the elevation of the arts of a country, than the teachings in workshop and school and gallery, and that till the artisan was himself dignified and influenced by the product of his hands, limits were set upon the capabilities of nature, and bonds placed upon the sublime prerogative of beauty. . . .
>
> A Government School of Design was already established in the immediate vicinity of [Mason's] extensive pottery, but it was rendered useless by the ignorance and apathy of the class for whose use it had been chiefly instituted. (43)

The story describes 'some struggle of the moral and the beautiful with the ugliness and coarseness around' (59) at the home of Brown, one of Mason's best workmen. Mason provides a beautiful tea service for Brown's daughter Alice. While Mrs. Brown considers the set as unfit for her ugly hearth, and intentionally breaks some items, Alice keeps the fireside clean to accommodate it. The change induces her father to stay at home instead of going to a tavern and drinking. The contrast with the clean fireside lets the Browns see how dirty other parts of their home are, and they improve them. Another struggle occurs between Brown's drinking lodger Robert Smith and Alice's close friend Jean Marron, a talented French apprentice of Mason's. With a professional pride, Jean is determined to make a jug so beautiful as to induce the drunkard to take pure water from it rather than beer out of his ugly mug. In several years, Smith finally admires the 'Lily Water Jug' designed and made by Jean, and becomes pleased to use the beautiful jug, and stops going to the pub.

Meteyard adds a note at the end of the third instalment, speaking directly to the reader, advocating moral education of the people through beauty by focusing on daily

art in their homes:

> Never till we have a home culture of the arts, shall we be, as a nation, great in original design, or an art-loving, and, consequently, moral people. It is not manufacturing pots and pans for lords and ladies that we want, but letting them be beautiful for the common household where the hand is rough, and the eye yet rude. . . . Democrat as I am, I recognise the aristocratic element of beauty as the noblest feature in the coming democracy of the people. (61)

Mason continues to give the children of the school his company's beautiful household items as rewards for good drawings. In five years, the local youths spend their holidays communing with nature, getting some idea for design from its beauty, instead of 'the dog-fighting, public-house hunting, rioting' culture they were accustomed to (77). Meteyard concludes that 'British art is making such a great change in the whole condition of the people' (77). She closes the story with Mason's words:

> the moral life that has sprung forth, like a stream, from this true and new estimation of the beautiful, I may justly say this is indeed divine — 'FRUIT FROM PLATES AND DISHES'. (78)

Moral Education through Daily Arts

Meteyard may have feared that her ideas in 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' might not be thought original and added a note to say:

> This idea, which gives to a large master-potter, like Mason, liberality and

> culture of soul sufficient to advance his art through the home-culture of his workmen, as embodied in an early portion of this tale, is original. Since it was written an admirable article has appeared in Douglas Jerrold's Magazine for December, suggesting an 'Art Union Manufactory' for the universal people. I trust this excellent suggestion will not die out on paper. (61)

The article 'Art-Manufacture Union Proposed and Considered' was written by William Blanchard Jerrold, Douglas Jerrold's son. It dealt with an Art Union, which collected annual membership fees to spend on contemporary art, and distributed them among its members by lot. Meteyard has the lottery feature in her story. Young designers and modellers of the district, anxious to compete with Jean, now a famous artist, 'manufacture certain of the designs to supply a cheap "Art-Lottery" for the people' (77). By the time 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes' was published, about thirty Art Unions had been established in the United Kingdom and Ireland.[118] William Blanchard Jerrold expected the Unions would serve to 'spread Art-Manufacture after the fashion designed lately under the superintendence of Felix Summerly', a pseudonym of Henry Cole, throughout the country, suggesting that they should distribute not only 'fine pictures' but also 'useful household articles, designed by eminent men', to 'purify the taste of the people'. His idea was similar to Meteyard's in highlighting the moral 'influence of external objects upon the mind of the uneducated'.[119]

In 1860, about ten year after 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes', John Ruskin published the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, in which he stated:

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[118] Joy Sperling, ' "Art, Cheap and Good": The Art Union in England and the United States, 1840-60', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 1.1 (2002), 1-29 (p. 1) <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring02/196--qart-cheap-and-goodq-the-art-union-in-england-and-the-united-states-184060> [accessed 1 August 2016]

[119] W. B. J., 'Art-Manufacture Union Proposed and Considered. Addressed to the Artists, Art-Patrons, and Manufacturers of England', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, December 1847, pp. 506-13 (pp. 508-10).

> Every principle of painting which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact; and in my works on architecture the preference accorded finally to one school over another, is founded on a comparison of their influences on the life of the workman — a question by all other writers on the subject of architecture wholly forgotten or despised.[120]

In the history of art, Meteyard can be placed between Henry Cole, who recognised the importance of combining beauty with utility, and John Ruskin, who regarded the cultivation of an aesthetic sensitivity as a significant part of the moral education of the people. She was later to declare in the introduction to *The Nine Hours' Movement*: 'If the bulk of mankind is to morally, physically, and socially progress, utility must ally itself to beauty, and not, as heretofore, to what is ugly, bald, and mean' (xvi).

Recognizing the potential in mechanization for the welfare of the people, Meteyard did not express strong preferences only for hand-crafted works, but her advocacy for bringing beauty and the arts into daily life preceded the Arts and Crafts movement which began in the 1880s. As she had advocated some forty years earlier, the movement aimed to associate moral and social advancement with the qualities of design and decorative arts.

When Meteyard emphasized the importance of education, two characteristics of her work were conspicuously demonstrated: unreserved realism in depicting the wretched status quo of sanitary and educational conditions of the people; and conversely a visionary utopianism in describing the ideal future society education would achieve. These seemingly contradictory characteristics are both based on Meteyard's

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[120] John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 6 vols (London: George Allen, 1906-1913), V (1906), 220. See also Naylor, p. 25.

aesthetic sense; the more she admired beauty with a firm faith in its influence on advancement of the people, the more sternly she denounced ugly social evils.

However, realism was sacrificed to her message, and sentiment too often was employed. This is one reason why Meteyard's writings have not endured. Joe Beech's death is certainly a 'tragedy' but it was unlikely that his legacy would be of such long standing. Both Ironshaft and Ashmore become extraordinarily successful, revered by all, and without enemies or critics. Ben Lobb's self-education lets the miner acquire the profound knowledge of a first-rate scientist and philosopher. Ned, the Smithfield orphan, becomes the 'English Dúchâtelet', and Mason's little French apprentice boy grows famous for his 'Marron designs' of pottery throughout Europe. These individuals, work as a driving force to improve the whole society, although through his death in Beech's case. The improbable endings of the stories are the result of Meteyard's determination to underline the effectiveness of education. She was not so much an artist as a teacher: To echo Helen Rogers again, her stories are 'unashamedly didactic'. Indeed Meteyard chose to be so on purpose, regarding education as 'the primary thing of all'.

Conclusion

Eliza Meteyard's achievements as an investigative journalist and a writer of social problem fiction in the 1840s were remarkable, particularly given the constraints under which she wrote. In a period when women writers' access to information was severely restricted, she emerged as an early feminist, a woman immersed in politics, an advocate of social reform through education, a pioneer journalist, and a 'journalistic' fiction writer. Women's opportunities for observing social and economic conditions at first hand were seriously limited by social convention. Charles Dickens's long walks across London through the night, which enabled him to gain first hand information about the slums and the underworld, are well known. This was impossible for a middle class woman. As I have shown in chapter four, walking alone in the city streets was, even in broad daylight, and in safe areas, one of the taboos for Victorian women.[1]

It was difficult for a woman to investigate social problems when politics was regarded as unfeminine and a subject that belonged to the public world of men.[2] As I discussed in chapter two, even public reading rooms were male spaces.[3] According to Chris Baggs, reading rooms for ladies were 'not uncommon' in public libraries, but they were separated, and even in the latter half of nineteenth century frequently lacked general newspapers, and 'the heavy weight review journals and the more serious literary, social and cultural magazines' were 'almost universally missing' from them.[4] Meteyard, like many other women writers of her generation frequented the reading room of the

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[1] See ch. 4, p. 132.
[2] June Purvis, *Hard Lessons: The Lives and Education of Working-class Women in Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 118.
[3] Beth Palmer, 'Reading Langham Place Periodicals at Number 19', *Reading and the Victorians*, ed. by Matthew Bradley and Juliet John (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 47-61 (p. 60). See also ch. 2, pp. 51-52.
[4] Chris Baggs, ' "In the Separate Reading Room for Ladies Are Provided Those Publications Specially Interesting to Them": Ladies' Reading Rooms and British Public Libraries 1850-1914', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 38 (2005), 280-306 (p. 290).

British Museum, which had accepted women from its inception, and where she undertook crucial research for her articles and stories.

The most profound influence on Meteyard when she moved to London were the radical unitarians, who with their advanced political views frequently took up issues of social injustice in their contributions to the so-called 'journals of popular progress' and in other writings. Their interlocking literary circles were crucial to her as were other metropolitan networks. The radical unitarians intersected with various groups of London based radicals and liberals, among them the journalist and dramatist Douglas Jerrold and the writers William and Mary Howitt. In addition, many members of the group were early feminists.

As I emphasised in chapter two,[5] a woman could be compromised if found talking alone with a man or men. When strict social conventions prevented a woman writer from giving a private interview to a man or men, or from talking freely with male colleagues, the Whittington Club, a project promoted by Douglas Jerrold to provide opportunities for education and self improvement for the lower middle classes, was another useful network for Meteyard. The club attracted various radicals, among them feminists, Chartists, Benthamites, free traders, Owenites, co-operationists, campaigners for the abolition of the death penalty, and the radical unitarians. The club added a number of eminent writers to Meteyard's growing list of contacts, including several editors of journals for which she would later write. She utilised all of these contacts drawn from interlocking metropolitan networks to inform her writing, and to develop her political thinking.

Meteyard was unique among the radical unitarians in her versatility, tackling most of the subjects they espoused. Her subjects ranged from the reduction of hours of work, practical education for artisans, the formation of co-operative associations, Chartism,

[5] See ch. 2, p. 52.

sanitation, employment for women, to prostitution. Hers was a comprehensive view of the world that assumed that God had foreordained human perfection; that humanity would progress with time to alleviate suffering and attain a utopian future; while education, along with feminism, co-operation, and a knowledge of natural science and sanitary engineering would help to reduce society's ills. Meteyard considered it to be her mission in life to serve the cause of social advancement.

She was clearly preparing herself for a career as a social reformer when she declared in her story 'The Flint and Hart Matronship' published in 1847:

> I, who write of, and intend to write of, wrong with an iron pen, and with all the energy of my stern and fearless heart, because I consider it an error and a weakness to gloss over one social evil, or one social misery, quail as I paint the shadows of my picture.[6]

Under the elegant pseudonym 'Silverpen', she advocated social reforms with 'an iron pen'. The mismatch between the image and her pen name symbolised the contrast between her concern over the grim social evils of the day and her admiration for beauty, which she perceived both in society and in the individual. The more she saw of society's ills and of the disadvantaged and deformed individuals it contained, the more firmly she advocated reform. The more ardently she wished a utopian vision of future society to be realised, the more sternly she denounced existing social evils. There were tensions between her realism and her utopianism. She tended to sacrifice realism for her message; while endeavouring to present social miseries thoroughly and accurately, she often went too far in employing sentiment to attract the reader's sympathy. While

[6] Silverpen, 'The Flint and Hart Matronship', *Howitt's Journal*, 9, 16 January 1847, pp. 18-20, 36-38 (p. 37).

writing to educate the public, she became too visionary in highlighting the efficacy of her suggested measures. Her didacticism impaired the narrative, damaging the 'suspension of disbelief' that a good storyteller should create.

Meteyard's stories reveal occasional glimpses of a vivid imagination, as in the description of an abandoned wedding feast in her story 'Divinity from Rags' published in *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* in 1846:[7]

> The saucepans on the fire were dark with rust and soot; cinders were heaped up in the huge grate; fragments of meat and bones still clinging to the rusty spit, told they had been left there to moulder and decay; dishes once filled with delicate pastry were heaped upon the dressers, though the rats had long since feasted and left them empty; bottles still stood uncorked, flimsy spiders' webs weaving their tall dusty necks together; greenery to deck the feast lay withered around; and the very hand of the old Dutch clock seemed there to have stopped, and having made that hour, long past, its grave, had died and had no ear for the thousand after hours tolled by the voice of time. (545-46)

One can only speculate as to whether Dickens may unconsciously have recalled the story from his friend Jerrold's magazine when describing Miss Havisham's decayed wedding feast in *Great Expectations* (1861-62). Compare the scene from *Great Expectations*, Chapter 11:

> . . . every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a

[7] Silverpen, 'Divinity from Rags', *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, December 1846, pp. 541-57.

> tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckle-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstances of the greatest public importance had just transpired in the spider community.
>
> I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels, as if the same occurrence were important to their interests.[8]

Unfortunately, this vivid imaginative power remained underdeveloped in her determination to become a powerful investigative journalist.

As a female investigative journalist, Meteyard was uncontrovertibly a pioneer. Her hearing impairment and her financial circumstances prevented her from visiting the poor for charitable purposes, an activity which provided other middle-class women writers, notably Elizabeth Gaskell, with opportunities to observe social problems at first hand. Instead, she depended on her careful and extensive reading, which led her to make some impractical assumptions based on theories of political economy and imagine some of her utopian visions of the future. On the other hand, her unconventional thinking enabled her to be far ahead of her time.

Meteyard was an instinctive journalist who employed fiction to respond to the social problems of her day. In this sense, her fiction can be called ‘journalistic fiction’, in which she dealt with current controversial social and political topics, and often

[8] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, introd. by Alan Sillitoe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 90.

addressed taboo subjects. She researched her articles and the background to her stories thoroughly. Like a modern journalist, she extracted information through her network of contacts, and fortified the arguments embedded in her fiction with statistics and quotations from authoritative sources. In exploring topical issues, she kept her ear to the ground in term of parliamentary debates and the wider political climate, and swiftly adjusted her views to an ever-changing political situation, even between the instalments of a serial. Based on her investigations, she proposed specific solutions to each social evil, rather than merely creating sympathy for the victims.

To understand her arguments, it is necessary to have some familiarity with the complex social evils she tackled, the spectrum of public opinion surrounding them, which she often criticised; the current political climate; and her colleagues' arguments on the same subjects, which she sometimes referred to in her stories, often to contest them. Most of her contributions to the journals are therefore not autonomous. Rather they are interwoven inextricably with these contextual and inter-textual elements. This is another reason why her writings have not endured. By researching the background to Meteyard's fiction a light is shed on the specific genre of journalistic fiction. Although it might not be as aesthetically valuable as the social problem fiction produced by her more celebrated contemporaries, it nevertheless forces us to ask essential questions: What is fiction? What is its value? Should all kinds of fiction be evaluated by the same criteria? The genre of didactic fiction which Meteyard made her own is close to that of literary nonfiction, also known as creative nonfiction or narrative nonfiction.

Meteyard regarded the cultivation of an aesthetic sensibility as an important part of moral education. She preceded the Arts and Crafts movement, which associated moral and social advancement with the quality of design and decorative arts, by some forty years. In 'Art in Spitalfields', Meteyard criticised the existing Government Schools of Design as governmental interference against the principle of laissez faire. On

the other hand her heroine Sarah's private textile design schools awaken and cultivate an aesthetic sense in the artisans, which leads to their moral advancement. The idea of social reform through art education is further developed in 'Fruit from Plates and Dishes', which advocates the introduction of beauty into the homes of ordinary people, through cheap but well designed pottery for daily use. Meteyard crystallised her faith in the influence of beautiful objects on social and moral welfare later in her career, namely in her most celebrated work *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (1865-66).[9] Wedgwood produced pottery for daily use as well as decorative objects. In her career her interest in art was to act as a key to resolving the tension between her realism and her utopianism.

In the 1840s, she created many memorable characters, among them Sarah Chapman in 'Art in Spitalfields' and John Ironshaft in '"The Works" of John Ironshaft', both of whom were devoted to the cause of social advancement. They functioned as her representatives or spokespersons. She frequently chose a woman or a working class character for these roles, deliberately reversing the existing hegemony between the classes, and between the sexes. Ironically, in the 1850s 'Silverpen' became widely known, not as a social reformer, but as a contributor to women's magazines, for which she reluctantly wrote in order to earn a living. Throughout the decade her writing frequently appeared as a leading article on the first page of an issue of the *Ladies' Companion*, which was identical with the *Ladies' Cabinet*, the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, and the *Illustrated London Magazine.*[10]

Meteyard's desire for true recognition was not achieved until 1865 when *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood* was published,[11] a work which represented all of her strengths as a

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[9] Eliza Meteyard, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood, from His Private Correspondence and Family Papers*, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865-1866).

[10] Later in 1858, *Sharpe's London Magazine*, for which Meteyard had written since 1854, also became identical with these four journals.

[11] Eliza Meteyard, *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood, from His Private Correspondence and Family Papers in the Possession of Joseph Mayer, F. Wedgwood, C. Darwin, Miss*

writer and few of her weaknesses. In the same year, a collection of brief biographies entitled *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science and Art* referred to Meteyard as the author of the biography. The other 'men of eminence' celebrated in the book included Dickens, Thackeray, Robert Browning, the Howitts, Coventry Patmore, John Bowring, Charles Knight, Robert Owen, Bessie Parkes, George Cruikshank, Thomas Henry Huxley, Charles Lyell, and Charles Darwin.[12] Meteyard was clearly in good company and had at last begun to receive public recognition.

In 1867 the *Lady's Own Paper* published a biographical article about Meteyard which stated: 'Had Miss Meteyard produced nothing but these beautiful volumes [of the biography], her name would have secured a safe place amongst England's female writers'.[13] However, the biography drew on the same basic beliefs as her social problem narratives. In the preface Meteyard stated: 'I saw that we have to regard Wedgwood not only as a potter and an artist, but as a profound chemist in his relation to his art, a philosophic thinker, and a great industrial leader' (xiii). She saw in him the ideal embodiment of her fictional philosophic thinkers and industrial leaders, such as Sarah Chapman, John Ironshaft, John Ashmore, and Richard Mason. In other words, the tensions between Meteyard's realism and her utopianism were resolved in the biography. It dealt with an historical figure, so there was no opportunity to develop the narrative into a utopian fiction or to introduce visionary elements. All her close and extensive readings of Wedgwood's letters, and of the records of his mills and technical inventions bore fruit in her richly detailed description of her biographical subject and his

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Wedgwood and Other Original Sources with an Introductory Sketch of the Art of Pottery in England, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1865-1866).

[12] 'Eliza Meteyard', *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art, with Biographical Memoirs*, 6 vols (London: L. Reeve, 1863-64; Alfred William Bennett, 1865[-67]), IV, ed. by E. Walford with the photographs by Ernest Edwards (London, 1865), pp. 33-37 (p. 35).

[13] 'Eliza Meteyard', *Lady's Own Paper*, 20 July 1867, p. 545. It was attached with her portrait placed in the centre of the cover page.

achievements. She gave full play to her sense of aesthetics in referring to the beauty of Wedgwood's designs, the equivalents of which had been part of her vision of a utopian society in the 1840s.

By the late 1860s Meteyard had also established a reputation as a campaigner for social reform. In 1867, George Linnaeus Banks, writing on behalf of the Executive Council of a public body, perhaps the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, invited Meteyard to contribute to an anthology, the proceeds of which would go to 'elevate the home condition of the labour poor of London'. The other promised contributors included Christina Rossetti, Mrs. S. C. Hall, and Benjamin Brierley.[14]

In 1871, Emma Darwin, née Wedgwood, wife and first cousin of Charles Darwin, read the proofs of Meteyard's work *A Group of Englishmen (1795-1815) Being Records of the Younger Wedgwoods and Their Friends*,[15] and criticised it for recording some 'disgraceful' family matters relating to debt. Meteyard countered by replying that she had 'a duty' to tell the truth: 'a duty . . . to my publisher, to myself, and what is of still more account — my duty to posterity'.[16] In 1879, the National Society for Women's Suffrage published *Opinions of Women on Women's Suffrage*, to refute the idea that 'political representation for women [was] only desired by women who [had] failed to find another field for their energies'.[17] It included the following words by Meteyard, a political woman ahead of her time:

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[14] G. Linnaeus Banks, Letter to Eliza Meteyard, 21 March 1867, MS, in my possession. The full text of the letter is included in the appendix.

[15] Eliza Meteyard, *A Group of Englishmen (1795-1815) Being Records of the Younger Wedgwoods and Their Friends: Embracing the History of the Discovery of Photography and a Facsimile of the First Photograph* (London: Longmans, Green, 1871).

[16] Edna Healey, *Emma Darwin: The Inspirational Wife of a Genius* (London: Headline, 2001), pp. 284-85.

[17] National Society for Women's Suffrage, *Opinions of Women on Women's Suffrage* (London: Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 1879).

> I believe that the extension of the franchise to women householders would play an important part in leading them to a knowledge of political subjects, and to the taking a vivid interest therein. At present, generally speaking, the dormant condition of female intelligence in respect of all the great moral, social, and political questions of the time is something lamentable, and is a main cause of that narrow conservatism of ideas which stops the way to the intellectual advance of the middle class. (23)

Society was still far from the utopian one of which she had dreamed in the 1840s. Meteyard, who had endeavoured to perform her 'duty to posterity' during her lifetime, died within the year, along with her hopes for the future.

Appendices

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[18] Three books, *Wedgwood and His Works*, *Memorials of Wedgwood* and *Choice Examples of Wedgwood Art*, are reprinted in one volume.
[19] In chronological order of publication.

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[20] Meteyard often signed her real name and pen name together, as 'Eliza Meteyard (Silverpen)', or 'Silverpen (Eliza Meteyard)'. This bibliography shows her signature as added to each of her writing.

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[21] The publishing date is not attached to copies of the first edition, but several advertisements of the book appeared in the *Athenaeum* and the *Saturday Review* from October to December 1869 ('Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 16 October; 27 November 4, 11, 18 December 1869, pp. 486, 713, 751, 791, 828; 'Advertisement', *Saturday Review*, 11, 18 December 1869, pp. 791, 812). The *Athenaeum* also placed this work also on the 'List of New Books' in the issue of 16 October, 1869 (p. 497), and the *Examiner* in 'Books Received' in that of 25 December 1869, (p. 828).

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Silverpen, 'The Aldgate Slopseller', September, October 1853, pp. 129-34, 178-84

Silverpen, 'Aunt Peggy's Goose', December 1853, pp. 293-305

Silverpen, 'A Winter and Its Spring', April, May, June 1854, pp. 188-92, 230-35, 294-98

Silverpen, 'The Hatton Garden Spoon', July, August, September, October, November 1854, pp. 1-6, 57-61, 113-16, 169-74, 231-36

Silverpen, 'The Mercy of the Winter's Waves', December 1854, pp. 281-87, January 1855, pp. 6-11

Silverpen, 'The Story of an Olden Play', April, May, June 1855, pp. 169-74, 225-32, 281-87, July, August, September 1855, pp.1-7, 57-61, 113-17

Silverpen, 'The Christmas Letter', December 1855, pp. 281-89

Silverpen, 'Mary at the Bell', April 1856, pp. 169-75

Silverpen, 'Mrs. Tipperwill's Story: As Told, over Tea and Toast, on New-Year's Eve', January 1857, pp. 1-7

Silverpen, 'A Story of a Snake', November 1857, pp. 257-59

Silverpen, 'The Mistress of St. John's', January 1858, pp. 1-8

Silverpen, 'The Primroses on the Barf', May 1858, pp. 225-32

Silverpen, 'A Welsh Watering-Place', August 1858, pp. 71-75

Silverpen, 'The White Day at the Warren', December 1858, pp. 298-304

Silverpen, 'A Sketch from Wroxeter', October 1859, pp. 173-77

Silverpen, 'Through the Snow', January 1860, pp. 1-5

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[23] From 1853 to 1861, Meteyard's contributions to the *Ladies' Companion* were identical with those in the *Ladies' Cabinet,* and the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, as these periodicals had been identical with one another except their titles since 1852. It was also the case with her contributions to the *Illustrated London Magazine* from 1856, and to *Sharpe's London Magazine* from 1858.

Silverpen, ‘The Maiden’s May’, May 1860, pp. 247-53

Silverpen, ‘Sally’s Christmas’, December 1860, pp. 326-38

Silverpen, ‘A Winter’s Tears’, January 1861, pp. 18-23

Silverpen, ‘Work in the Woods’, August 1861, pp. 66-69

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Silverpen, ‘Beauty Brought Home’, August 1853, pp. 71-74

Silverpen, ‘The Aldgate Slopseller’, September, October 1853, pp. 129-34, 178-84

Silverpen, ‘Aunt Peggy’s Goose’, December 1853, pp. 293-305

Silverpen, ‘A Winter and Its Spring’, April, May, June 1854, pp. 188-92, 230-35, 294-98

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Silverpen, ‘The Story of an Olden Play’, April, May, June 1855, pp. 169-74, 225-32, 281-87, July, August, September 1855, pp. 1-7, 57-61, 113-17

Silverpen, ‘The Christmas Letter’, December 1855, pp. 281-89

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Silverpen, ‘Mrs. Tipperwill’s Story: As Told, over Tea and Toast, on New-Year’s Eve’, January 1857, pp. 1-7

Silverpen, ‘A Story of a Snake’, November 1857, pp. 257-59

Silverpen, ‘The Mistress of St. John’s’, January 1858, pp. 1-8

Silverpen, ‘The Primroses on the Barf’, May 1858, pp. 225-32

Silverpen, ‘A Welsh Watering-Place’, August 1858, pp. 71-75

Silverpen, ‘The White Day at the Warren’, December 1858, pp. 298-304

Silverpen, ‘A Sketch from Wroxeter’, October 1859, pp. 173-77

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Silverpen, ‘The Maiden’s May’, May 1860, pp. 247-53

Silverpen, ‘Sally’s Christmas’, December 1860, pp. 326-38

Silverpen, ‘A Winter’s Tears’, January 1861, pp. 18-23

Silverpen, ‘Work in the Woods’, August 1861, pp. 66-69

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Silverpen, ‘The Aldgate Slopseller’, September, October 1853, pp. 129-34, 178-84

Silverpen, ‘Aunt Peggy’s Goose’, December 1853, pp. 293-305

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Silverpen, ‘The Hatton Garden Spoon’, July, August, September, October, November 1854, pp. 1-6, 57-61, 113-16, 169-74, 231-36

Silverpen, ‘The Mercy of the Winter’s Waves’, December 1854, pp. 281-87, January 1855, pp. 6-11

Silverpen, ‘The Story of an Olden Play’, April, May, June 1855, pp. 169-74, 225-32, 281-87, July, August, September 1855, pp. 1-7, 57-61, 113-17

Silverpen, ‘The Christmas Letter’, December 1855, pp. 281-89

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Silverpen, ‘The Mistress of St. John’s’, January 1858, pp. 1-8

Silverpen, ‘The Primroses on the Barf’, May 1858, pp. 225-32

Silverpen, ‘A Welsh Watering-Place’, August 1858, pp. 71-75

Silverpen, ‘The White Day at the Warren’, December 1858, pp. 298-304

Silverpen, ‘A Sketch from Wroxeter’, October 1859, pp. 173-77

Silverpen, ‘Through the Snow’, January 1860, pp. 1-5

Silverpen, ‘The Maiden’s May’, May 1860, pp. 247-53

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Silverpen, ‘Work in the Woods’, August 1861, pp. 66-69

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Silverpen, ‘Three Junes at Chauncy Manor’, April 1855, pp. 342-52

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Eliza Meteyard, ‘Amidst the Corn’, January, April 1869, pp. 10-15, 74-80

Eliza Meteyard, ‘Market Day’, January 1870, pp. 267-72

Eliza Meteyard, ‘The Shop at Barrow-in-Furness’, April 1870, pp. 353-60

[24] The title had been *Odd-Fellows’ Magazine* until July 1867.

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Eliza Meteyard, ‘A Voice from North Wales’, April 1876, pp. 357-60

Eliza Meteyard, ‘Good Work in Birmingham’, January 1877, pp. 23-29

Eliza Meteyard, ‘Lis’s Culture. A Story in Four Chapters’, April, July, October 1877, pp. 74-80, 137-44, 215-22, January 1878, pp. 284-94

Eliza Meteyard, ‘A Rainy Day’s Drive in Cheshire’, July 1879, pp. 137-42

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Unpublished Letters and Portraits

Unpublished Letters[25]

(1) Eliza Meteyard to William Howitt, [1847][26]

Saturday Night

My dear Sir,

Mr Measom's design seems so exceedingly beautiful, that it inspired me to try a 'Silverpen' article. And I hope it will be with success. As early as possible you shall have it. And perhaps you will oblige me by seeing Mr Jerrold as soon as you can spare time. With kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Howitt. [XXX] very faithfully

Eliza Meteyard

(2) Meteyard to Sarah Stickney Ellis,

[25] These letters were obtained through the dealer John Wilson Manuscripts Ltd. Indecipherable parts are shown as [XXX].

[26] In this letter Meteyard probably refers to William Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the Most Eminent British Poets* (London: Richard Bentley,1847), illustrated by W. and G. Measom.

31 Downshire Hill

Hampstead

April 8. 1850

Dear Madam,

I fear I make but a graceless return to your kindly courtesy: but of late, in addition to several weeks' indisposition, my duties have been unusually heavy: these two truths must therefore be my apology.

As I do not finish a paper for which the printers wait, till Thursday even if the 'Cynthia of the Minute' serve, I could not oblige your publisher by the 12th insts. I will therefore reserve my force for June and July; on this you can depend if any [XXX] be useful to you — as I will commence without delays and give the story my spare attention.

But beyond this trifle, dear Madam, I cannot promise assistance as forthcoming duties restrict my hand,

Believe me,

Dear Madam,

Faithfully Yours

Eliza Meteyard

Mrs. Ellis

(3) Eliza Meteyard to John Watkins

Eliza Meteyard

Hampstead

/ Silverpen /

July 13. 1866.

Dear Mr Watkins.[27]

The portrait of my darling old soul — is as you say "delicious" and in consequence. I have been so looking, and wondering, and showing it to friends — as to find no time to thank you heartily for all your good and great pains. I have shown it to the Howitts who pronounce it excellent — and to day we have had two eminent connoisseurs here, who pronounce it to be a chef d'oeuvre and most charming treatment of an old lady. I do not know whether I was to return them to you. If so, you must let me know. Both are admirable, but of the two, the darker one is I think a degree more exquisite. Pray proceed with the coloured one.

I hope you will enjoy and be benefited by your little trip into Worcestershire. When you return let us have the [XXX] pleasure of seeing you and your sister.

I will sit to you, where I find an appropriate day. My friends say, a vignette like the "delicious" one will be best.

Thank you with all thanks for securing a dear but fleeting image of the present, for days to come, when perhaps I shall have few other "companions of my solitude." Believe me.

Most truly yours

Eliza Meteyard

The "old lady" desires compliments & thanks

(4) George Linnaeus Banks to Meteyard

2 Malvern Terrace,

Barnsbury. N.

[27] The carte-de-visite photograph of Meteyard was enclosed with the letter. It is shown in the next section of this appendix.

March 21st 1867.

Madam,

In the belief that you will not be indisposed to assist the efforts of a public body whose object is to elevate the home condition of the laboring poor of London, I am requested to invite your earnest attention to the following proposal.

A London publisher is willing to undertake the publication of a volume of the entire profits of which shall be given to the funds of this Association, provided that a sufficient number of authors of acknowledged rank in literature can be induced to grace the work with their pens.

Contributions are already promised by Mrs. S. C. Hall, Miss Marguerita Dower, Miss Christina Rossetti, Miss Dora Greenwell, Walter Thornbury, G. Oxenford, Westland Marston, Martin. F. Tupper. Edwin Waugh, Benjamin Brierley, A. J. Livington, H. J. Byron, The. and others.

The work will be elegantly got up, and published at not less than half a guinea, and special means will be employed to obtain a large sale for it.

An opportunity thus presents itself for the brain workers to assist the handworkers, in a common cause, and the Executive Council respectfully requests the honour of your very valuable co:operation.

A contribution at your earliest convenience, if disposed to aid the cause, will be esteemed a favour.

In the name of the Executive Council

I am

Madam

Yours faithful Servant

G. Linnaeus Banks

(5) Eliza Meteyard to Mrs. E. Phipson

5 Squires Mount

Hampstead

London. NW.

Nov: 1. 1873

Dear Madam

I beg to acknowledge your kind note & its enclosures of £10. I am surprised that you should think so kindly of me & offer me so great of proof of your esteem; for any small service I may have rendered to the cause of truth of beauty, has belonged to the duties of my life & is no more. Believe me gratefully obliged.

I am poor because my income is very small, & because my work — which I love & cannot, come what may, help taking pains with — pays me so ill. But it is better perhaps — that so many solitary & struggling women like myself should so shape our duties that their effects may survive our narrow day, than prosper overmuch, & so miss the divine-like culture & submission which comes out of trial & suffering, & which nothing else earthly can give.

Believe me.

Obliged & Truly Yours,

Eliza Meteyard.

Mrs E. Phipson.

(6) Eliza Meteyard to Mrs. E. Phipson

John Bragg Esqr

Hampstead Mount

Handsworth

Birmingham

August 5. 1875

Dear Mrs Phipson

I am staying with my kind friends Mr & Mrs Bragg for a few days on my way into the Potteries. As I should like to return your kind call & thank you personally for your friendship, I will venture so far as Edgbaston on Saturday, if that will be convenient to you. Perhaps you will let me know & fix the hour most suitable.

Hoping you all quite well & with best regards

Yours very truly

Eliza Meteyard

Mrs. E. Phipson

Portraits of Meteyard

(a) Carte-de-visite photograph taken by John Watkins, photographer, in 1866

(b) 'Eliza Meteyard', *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art, with Biographical Memoirs*, 6 vols (London: L. Reeve, 1863-64; Alfred William Bennett,

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(c) ‘Eliza Meteyard’, *Lady’s Own Paper*, 20 July 1867, p. 545

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