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## Selected quotations from Harriet Martineau

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## **Harriet Martineau** 1802–1876

British social, economic, and political journalist

- 1 Wealth and opinion were practically worshipped before Washington opened his eyes on the sun which was to light him to his deeds; and the worship of Opinion is, at this day, the established religion of the United States.

*Society in America* 1837:Vol. 2, 153.

- 2 The grand secret of wise inquiry into Morals and Manners is to begin with the study of THINGS, using the DISCOURSE OF PERSONS as a commentary upon them.

Though the facts sought by travellers relate to Persons, they may most readily be learned from Things. The eloquence of Institutions and Records, in which the action of the nation is embodied and perpetuated, is more comprehensive and more faithful than that of any variety of individual voices. The voice of a whole people goes up in the silent workings of an institution; the condition of the masses is reflected from the surface of a record. The Institutions of a nation, — political, religious or social, — put evidence into the observer's hands as to its capabilities and wants, which the study of individuals could not yield in the course of a lifetime. The records of any society, be they what they may, whether architectural remains, epitaphs, civic registers, national music, or any other of the thousand manifestations of the common mind which may be found among every people, afford more information on Morals in a day than converse with individuals in a year.

*How to Observe* 1838:73–74.

- 2 Manners have not been treated of separately from Morals in any of the preceding divisions of the objects of the traveller's observation. The reason is, that manners are inseparable from morals, or, at least, cease to have meaning when separated. Except as manifestations of morals, they have no interest, and can have no permanent existence. A traveller who should report of them exclusively is not only no philosopher, but does not merit the name of an observer.

*How to Observe* 1838:222.

- 4 To him, and to him only, who has studied the principles of morals, and thus possessed himself of a key to the mysteries of all social weal and wo, will manners be an index answering as faithfully to the internal movements, harmonious or discordant, of society, as the human countenance to the workings of the human heart.

*How to Observe* 1838:222.