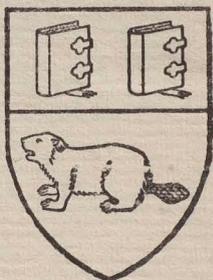


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BIOGRAPHY,

NOTES,

AND

POLITICAL LETTERS

OF

FRANCES WRIGHT D'ARUSMONT.

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BIOGRAPHY AND NOTES
OF
FRANCES WRIGHT D'ARUSMONT.

Madame d'Arusmont, better known as Miss Frances Wright, was born in Miln's Buildings, Nethergate, Dundee, on the 6th of September, 1795. Her father's family, which originally came from the Northern Highlands, appears on the Dundee records as extensive holders of city property as far back as the year 1500. The father of Frances Wright was the only son of a wealthy Dundee merchant. He, as afterwards his daughter, was left an orphan at an early age, and was consigned, by his father's will, to the guardianship of a friend and townsman, who proved his fidelity and sense by securing to his ward every educational advantage within his power to procure.

After passing his boyhood in the best academies of Perth and Edinburgh, he followed up his studies in the University of Dublin, and then devoted two years to travelling. At this early age he was the correspondent of Adam Smith, Dr Cullen, and other distinguished men of science and letters, both in England and Scotland. Scarcely had he reached his majority than he was incorporated into many of the literary and scientific associations of the two kingdoms. The British Museum in London was indebted to his active antiquarian researches, and to his donations in rare and valuable coins and medals. He had a favourite scheme of elucidating and rectifying history by means of me-

dalurgy. He had himself an extensive and valuable collection of ancient and modern coins. He also devised and cast some pieces of uncommon beauty, and made a peculiar study of the chemical admixture of metals best suited to the purpose. He was regarded and consulted as authority, in all connected with these matters, by Dr Pinkerton, Mr Planta, keeper of the medals in the British Museum, and others. Nor was he less conversant with the principles of law and government, nor less devoted to their study. The following extract is made from a MS. in his hand-writing, recently found by his daughter among the family papers. It shows a somewhat singular coincidence in views between a father and daughter, separated by death when the first had not reached the age of twenty-nine and when the latter was in infancy. The coincidence is the more remarkable, from the fact that the daughter was raised in an opposite quarter of the island, and removed from all acquaintance with her Scotch relatives.

“The spirit of law and the tenor of the conduct of governments, in order to be well adapted to the mutable and ever-varying state of human affairs, ought constantly to *change* according to existing circumstances and the progress of the age.”*

It appears from the same papers that he took a lively and deeply sympathising interest in the great events and the greater principles which agitated Europe during the French Revolution. He was instrumental in spreading thro' his own city and neighbourhood, popular translations of French treatises, political and philosophical. He circulated, also, extensively the works of Thomas Paine; and, as having promoted a cheap publication of his *Rights of Man* became an object of governmental *espionage* in 1794. His high standing as a scholar and a gentleman, and the prudence and measure which he knew to throw

* See and compare the address delivered on the 4th of July, 1828.—*Frances Wright's Popular Lectures.*

into his mode of doing every thing saved, however, himself and family from any positive annoyance. It was probably at this period that he changed the motto of somewhat singularly qualified loyalty on his family crest "*Pro rege sæpe.*"* for the more philosophic motto, "*Patria cara carior libertas*"† a motto which his daughter seems instinctly to have adopted.

The most confidential friend of Madame d'Arusmont's father was his own maternal uncle, the liberal, amiable, talented, and extensively known and respected, James Mylne, professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow. With this her paternal grand-uncle, Miss Wright became acquainted, during her visit to Scotland, at the age of eighteen. A mutually warm affection was the result of their first meeting; and, though necessarily separated by the active pursuits of the one party, and the steady professional occupations of the other, the feeling of confidential friendship then conceived knew no interruption until the death of the venerable professor some years since.

The mother of Madame d'Arusmont, issued on the father's side, from the Campbells of Argyle; and, by the mother's, from the lettered aristocracy of England. Her mother's father was a general officer in the British service. The gifted Mrs Montague was her mother's grand-aunt, who is understood to have bestowed on her niece and god-daughter the kindness of a mother, together with those graceful accomplishments, and that intellectual cultivation for which she was as much distinguished as for uncommon beauty. Baron Rokeby (Friend Robinson), Primate of all Ireland, and the most liberal prelate who ever swayed the Protestant ascendancy in that island, was her mother's uncle. Her mother's brother was the well-known, and much beloved General William Campbell; who, deeply versed in the Oriental languages, highly

* For the King sometimes.

† Our country is dear, liberty dearer.

accomplished as a man and a soldier, was the companion of Malcolm in his embassy to Persia, rose rapidly to command in India, and was killed at the close of the last battle which he won.

Madame d'Arusmont was one of three children who lost both father and mother in infancy. She was herself two years and a half old. At the wish of her maternal grandfather, General Duncan Campbell, she was taken to England, and raised, as a ward of Chancery, under the guardianship of a maternal aunt. Her brother passed his boyhood under the charge of his grand-uncle, Professor Mylne. A youth of uncommon promise, he was unfortunately sent, at the age of fifteen, to India, as a Cadet in the East India Company's service, and killed on the passage out in an encounter with a French vessel.

Madame d'Arusmont's infant sister remained some years at nurse in the neighbourhood of her native town, and was then taken by her kind foster-mother to her maternal relatives in London. She passed her life with her sister, and died in Paris, in 1831.

To the circumstances of her early life, to the heart solitude of orphanship, to the absence of all sympathy with the views and characters of those among whom her childhood was thrown, to the presence of a sister who looked to her for guidance, and leaned upon her for support, Madame d'Arusmont is disposed to attribute the chosen severity of her early studies and prematurity of her views.

Surrounded at all times by rare and extensive libraries, and commanding whatever masters she desired, she applied herself by turns to various branches of science, and to the study of ancient and modern letters and the arts. She was, at an early age, surprised at the inability of masters to answer her questions, which usually turned upon the nature, origin, and object of the subject submitted to her attention. Being checked on one occasion by a deep and shrewd mathematician

and physician, who observed that her question was dangerous, she replied—"Can Truth be dangerous?" "It is thought so," was the answer. She learned on the occasion two things: the one, that Truth had still to be found; the other, that men were afraid of it.

The same conclusion was ever more and more pressed upon her mind, when, in her solitary studies, she remarked the discrepancy of views and opinions existing in books; and again, in society, when she listened to those accounted authority in learning, letters, or morals. If no *two* are agreed, no *one* has discovered Truth; and, if so, Truth has still to be found. But where?

Such was the process of research and reflection which led to that general tone of mind which dictated, in her nineteenth year, the little unfinished treatise of "Epicurus," published under the name of "A Few Days in Athens." In evidence of the extent to which she had, at that early period, pushed enquiry, it may be stated that she had even then penned the substance of the three chapters which precede the speech of Epicurus on religion. And, in evidence, also, of the conscientiousness which has ever guided her, from the earliest period, in giving publicity to any of her ideas, it may be also stated that she withheld those chapters at that time not only from publication, but from every eye.

Her motives for withholding these from the first London edition of the work, appear in one of the letters recently addressed to the *Star*, which letters are now subjoined to this Biography. But the attention of her early years was not altogether confined to the study and the speculations of the closet. Her sympathies were powerfully drawn towards the sufferings of humanity, and thus her curiosity was vividly excited to discover their causes. She was perhaps fifteen when this question was suggested to her mind, upon witnessing the painful labour of the aged among the English peasantry; and, again, when she saw that peasantry

Northern Star

ejected, under various pretexts, from the estates of the wealthy proprietors of the soil among whom she moved : “ Has man, then, no home upon the earth ; and are age and infirmity entitled to no care or consideration ? ”

Upon one occasion, peculiarly distressing to her feelings, her soliloquy was to the effect that some strange secret—some extraordinary vice lay at the foundation of the whole of human practice. What should she devote her whole energies to its discovery ? At the close, she pronounced to herself a solemn oath, to wear ever in her heart the cause of the poor and the helpless ; and to aid in all that she could in redressing the grievous wrongs which seemed to prevail in society. She not unfrequently recalls the engagement then taken, and feels that she has done her best to fulfil it.

It was while engrossed, perplexed, and often depressed with silent and unsuccessful efforts to arrive at a satisfactory view of truth in anything ; to unravel the complications and evident contradictions existing alike in the opinions and practice of men—it was while thus occupied, that she first accidentally opened, as appears in her preface to the American edition of her Volume of Popular Lectures—the page of America’s national history, as pourtrayed by the Italian Bocca. From that moment she awoke, as it were, to a new existence. Life was full of promise ; the world a theatre of interesting observation and useful exertion. There existed a country consecrated to freedom, and in which man might awake to the full knowledge and full exercise of his powers. To see that country was now, at the age of sixteen, her fixed but secret determination ; for not to a living being did she communicate the intention until the moment of its execution, six years afterwards. Some circumstances connected with the first yearnings of her young enthusiasm towards a country whose history had kindled a new life of hope in her soul, might amuse the reader.

She had absolutely devoured the Italian Historian,

and was in the full tide of exstasy when a sudden apprehension seized her. Was the whole a romance? What had become of the country and the nation? She never heard of either. A panic terror seized upon her. She flew to examine every atlas in the library. The first was not of recent date, and showed no trace of *United States*. She opened with trembling hands another and another. At length she saw *United States* marked along the Atlantic littoral of North America. Still, after all, was the story she had read a true one? She now sought carefully among the more modern authors in the library, and found *Belsham's History of George III.* Its perusal quieted her apprehensions. Her heroes were true men, and her land of promise had a local habitation and a name.

It could not be many weeks afterwards, that, on visiting a British Admiral in whose house she was familiar, she found the veteran, who had retired blind and infirm from the service but full of zeal for it and his country, in a state of great agitation. To her enquiries, he replied, that she came like his good angel to throw oil upon the troubled waters. And that much he had need of consolation, for those wicked rebels were at their old work again. "What rebels my dear sir." "Ah my child! those impudent rebels of our American colonies. It's an old story of which you know nothing, and the less every body knows the better; but they are picking up our ships again all over the ocean;" and then came such a storm of passion and honest vexation from the worthy veteran, that her curiosity was silenced by her sympathy, and she passed some hours in diverting his attention from a subject which she burned to investigate.

From that day forward, while all around her were engrossed by the news of the day, touching the alternate reverses of the French and the Allied Powers, her thoughts dwelt with unceasing interest, frequent alarm, and unsatisfied curiosity on the fate and history

of the young nation upon whose short but gallant war of defence, the papers of the day scarcely vouchsafed an intelligible notice, and the sound of whose name never greeted her ears nor passed her lips.

It was not until the visit of Miss Wright to Scotland, at the age of eighteen, that she found it possible to procure the peculiar information which she coveted, and which had regard more especially;—First to the early colonial history and character of the primitive settlers; and, Second—to the then actual condition and point of progress of the American population. Under the last of these heads she could obtain little information; but, after some search, she was enabled, in connection with the first, to obtain the most varied and ample records in the library of the University of Glasgow. Upon explaining the nature of the documents she wished to procure to the librarian, Professor Muirhead, he led her to a remote and little frequented compartment of the gallery; and, pointing around it, filled as it was with volumes and pamphlets from floor to ceiling, observed that she would find there all that had ever appeared in print respecting the American colonies, adding that, if she was curious in the same, she might select and study the records at her leisure, as they were seldom consulted. She turned the opportunity so far to account as to familiarize herself with the character of the American nation in its origin and infancy; and thus to prepare her mind for its more accurate inspection at the present.

Miss Wright passed three years in Scotland, during which period she employed her summers in visiting its Highlands and Lowlands; and her winters in closet study. She then returned to England; and, in 1818, after having arranged her pecuniary affairs, and those of her sister, she embarked from Liverpool for New York.

Her real motives for this voyage were disguised from all but one gifted female friend and Professor Mylne. The former, who had accompanied her hus-

band to the United States, in his flight from persecution in 1794, and returned to Europe upon the death of her husband, two years afterwards, supplied the few letters she was willing to take. The latter to whom she only communicated her intended voyage at the very moment of its execution, and after her passage with that of her sister was secured in the New York packet-ship, Amity, came to meet her at Liverpool and saw her embark with her young companion for a distant country in whom she knew not a living creature.

To the gentle reproach made by her uncle on account of her singular reserve on the subject of a voyage so startling to all her friends and painful to him, her reply was to the effect that, had not her determination been the result of the most mature reflection, and had it not also been irrevocably fixed, she should long since not merely have given him her confidence but asked his counsel. As it was, she put it to his good sense whether she had not acted wisely by rendering all discussion impossible; and given the best proof in her power of her high opinion of his liberality and elevation of mind by confiding to him the real object of a voyage which she conceived few, if any but himself could appreciate. With respect to the preference she gave to America over Italy and Greece which he had recommended to her attention as more in unison with her early studies, she asked in reply, if a young country inhabited by free men was not more worthy to attract curiosity than countries in ruin, inhabited by slaves? "The sight of Italy, dear uncle, prostrated under the leaden sceptre of Austria, would break my heart." The generous and enlightened friend to whom she spoke received her explanations with sympathetic kindness, observing that she was the child of her father, and must have inherited her views and principles in the blood.

Such are the circumstances which preceded and induced the first visit of Miss Wright to the United

States, and decided her to adopt them as her country. This was at a period when they appeared, as it were, blotted from the recollection of Europe; or known to it only as a field of mercantile speculation, or as an asylum for the political exiles of its continent. The chivalrous tale of that opening Revolution, which a Franklin had represented at the bar of the British Parliament and at the Court of feudal France, had died away in the European mind, drowned and effaced by the cannon of a thousand battles, the agitation of a thousand schemes of ambition, and the unreal honours of a thousand pageants and victories. The nature of her impressions as received during a first glance at the cherished country of her young enthusiasm, appear in the volume published on her return to England in 1820.

Her visit to America had been made entirely for her own instruction, and with no immediate view to that of others. The eager enquiries addressed to her from all quarters on her return, and the general and absolute ignorance betrayed by the character of these questions, touching the past history and present condition of the country she had hastily and imperfectly inspected, led her to prepare for the press the volume of letters which, at the time, excited no small attention from the thinking portion of the European public. Their appearance changed the tone, and somewhat corrected the views, of leading British periodicals, while they revived, on the European Continent, old reminiscences of the country of Franklin and Washington, and a new ardour in the cause of religious and political liberty.

This work, published in London under the name of "Views of Society, and Manners in America," and translated without her agency into most of the continental languages, necessarily brought her into relation with the prominent Reformers of Europe. Her natural taste for retirement, and strong dislike for all fashionable or other society, unsuited to her views and feelings,

has led her, as a general rule, to shrink from letters of introduction. She delivered three only on her first visit to the United States; not one in France, and doubts if she has made use of six, unless in the way of business, in the course of her life. Experience taught her in very childhood how little was to be learned in drawing-rooms, and inspired her with a disgust for frivolous reading, conversation, and occupation. But more especial has ever been her disgust for every kind of quackery and pretension, literary, scientific, and, more than all, political and philanthropic. The all but universal and ever increasing leaning of the age in that direction, has driven her into all but seclusion, from which she has issued only, but always, when impelled by the hope of achieving any real good to the cause of human liberty and improvement.

Miss Wright made her first visit to Paris in the spring of 1821. At this period commenced her intimacy with General Lafayette, from whom a pressing invitation had previously sought her in England, as the author of a work necessarily possessing for him a peculiar interest. The heart affection which that venerable soldier of liberty retained to the last moment of existence for all connected with the American Republic, was in this case the bond of a friendship of no ordinary character. Miss Wright possessed his most intimate private, and political confidence, interrupted only by their separation at the period of the General's return to France, from his triumphal tour through the United States. That tour Miss Wright witnessed with peculiar interest, and marked it as the opening epoch of a political revival in the American nation, which, from the close of the revolutionary war until that period (with the exception, indeed, of the second struggle for independence between 1812 and 1815) had been engrossed by the indispensable preliminaries of greatness, namely, the growth of population, the conquest of the soil from savage nature, the extension of commercial

relations, and of the influences consequent thereupon, and the creation of all industries indispensable to comfortable human existence, and without which no nation (during the prolonged reign of powerful and rapacious governments, organized alike for hidden fraud and open robbery) can be really independent of foreign influences and foreign domination.

Miss Wright's residence in France was prolonged until 1824, and it is worthy of remark that during that period, though necessarily known to possess the general confidence of the revolutionary leaders throughout Europe, she was never in any way molested under the Bourbon Government of the elder branch. This was attributable, no doubt, to her unvarying prudence in writing and speaking, and to her habit of looking to principles rather than to men; a habit which has preserved her through life from party spirit or opiniative violence, and that, even when most exposed to violence from others. Her short residence in America, previous to her visit to France, had also supplied her with valuable opportunities for judging men apart from their opinions, and even from those acts, however violent, to which opinion alone impels. Opinions she had perceived to be more frequently the consequence of early impressions acting upon peculiarities of temperament, than of any consistent reasoning from substantiated premises. It was thus that while herself, republican in all her views, hopes, and affections, she had learned in the United States to appreciate the private virtues and intellectual endowments of many leading French royalists and Bonapartists. Among these she held in more especial esteem Monsieur and Madame de Neuville and General Bemard. With the former, who returned from M. de Neuville's diplomatic mission to Washington about the time of her arrival in Paris, her personal relations were naturally renewed, and although these as naturally relaxed during the frenzied re-actions of the Restoration, she continued, from time to time, and at

hours when she was not likely to encounter political characters, or to find M. de Neuville himself, her visits of respectful affection to his lady, with whose sincere and unobtrusive Christian catholicism and devoted loyalty no harsh bigotry or political violence ever blended. In connection with this subject the following anecdote may possess some interest for the reader, and may tend to illustrate Miss Wright's mode of thinking and feeling with regard to it.

She had witnessed, during three consecutive days, from the tribunes of the French Chamber of Deputies, those scenes of parliamentary violence which closed with the expulsion, by an armed soldiery, of the upright and fearless Manuel from the representative body. It happened on that evening that she was in the saloon of the witty and accomplished Count Segur. A knot of political characters, and all prominent members of the opposition gradually assembled. The event of the day was the natural topic of discussion, and the leading legitimates received, as naturally, their share of censure and vituperation—"Ce Hyde de Neuville, c'est un homme de sang ; un veritable tigre contre revolutionnaire."* Miss Wright, who had been conversing apart with Madame de Segur, here rose, and, advancing towards the circle of politicians, observed that she was doubtless about to surprise them, but that she had known M. de Neuville personally and intimately, and that she must give her testimony to his possessing a very different character — "*Forcené comme nous l'avons vu Messieurs, je le connais pour un homme doué d'une compassion sans bornes et de la candeur d'un enfant.*"† However astonished, the party could not but admit the testimony of one whose political principles were so well known, and the tone of the conver-

* This Hyde de Neuville is a man of blood,—a very tiger of counter revolution.

† Furious as we have seen him, gentlemen, I know him to possess the compassion of a woman, and the candour of a child.

sation changed to philosophical reflections on human inconsistency.

But if at all times indulgent towards intellectual or even moral aberrations, having their source in opinative error or in the passion of prejudice, Madame d'Arusmont has ever felt, and seldom disguised, an unconquerable repugnance for characters but too common in every party,—men who make their opinions ladders to their ambition and cloaks to their dishonesty. Hypocrites are not found only in the suite of theology, nor knaves in that of aristocracy. She has known men as poor in honour, and as bankrupt in rectitude among sceptics as among believers, and among democrats as among their opponents. The moment that a party arises, partisans may, and more frequently do, attach to it their selfish interests than their honour; and, trusting the defence or the concealment of their vice to the spirit of party, or the generosity of those they have injured, not unfrequently pass themselves off for paragons of virtue and martyrs of principle. In an age of peculiar demoralization, as always must be an age of transit from one order of practice to another, it is well to soften with pity our contempt for human meanness and profligacy; yet still, they who respect themselves will ever shun association with the dishonest or the dishonourable; or if, unhappily, they have been deceived in the estimation of individual character, will break, without possibility of return, from all private intimacy with those whom they have distinctly recognized to be base in their nature. Were the criterion followed of looking to the moral elevation of men rather than to their opinions, it would be possible to select from all parties, as from all sects, a chosen band of reform leaders. These are times when prejudice can hardly fail to give way, but when principles are very difficult to acquire. An honest royalist, or an honourable aristocrat may, and will, become, in the propitious hour, an honest patriot and an honourable promoter of reform.

And, in like manner, a sincere Christian, in suitable circumstances, may and will become an ardent enquirer after truth, and a devout disciple of knowledge; but a dishonest and dishonourable man, whatever be his belief or his unbelief, his political notions or associates, must, sooner or later, disgrace every cause, and the very form of humanity which he wears.

Having followed, with painful interest, the course of ill-conducted, and therefore necessarily unsuccessful, efforts at revolution, until the close of the horrible French campaign, and martyrdom of Riego in Spain, Miss Wright returned to the United States in 1824. The observations made upon men and events during that disturbed epoch, had somewhat modified and greatly matured her views. Though familiar with all the movements of the revolutionary party, and deeply interested in the fate of leading individuals, she had but seldom anticipated success to efforts of which the object appeared to her ill-defined, and those who pursued it far from agreed among themselves. The general want of political knowledge and political experience, the frequent vanity and frivolity of individuals, the confidence placed in more than suspicious characters, the absurd drawing-room intrigues and fashionable conspirators, contrasted strangely and painfully, though sometimes almost ludicrously, with the serious character of a struggle in which human lives, and those often of the young and the chivalrous, were the stakes of the game.

Her mind now fixed, singly and unalterably, on the United States, as on the country in which human progress was rendered at once safe and certain, by the nature of its institutions, and the condition and character of its people.

The essential difference between the American institutions and those of all other countries has been frequently elucidated by the subject of this memoir. It appears in her first "Views of America," and is fully

illustrated in such of her published discourses as are known in Europe. Perfect in their *theory*, of which the principle is *change, according to, and in unison with, the progress of the sovereign popular mind*,--and perfect also in *that provision of their political framework* which facilitates, at all times, *the moulding of the constitutional code of practise, so as to keep pace with that progress*,—the duration and continuous growth and improvement of the American empire appear placed above the shock of accident, even by the very nature of man, and by the nature of things as influenced by human power.

The essential difference between the character of the American population and that of all other countries she distinguished to be this:—Its moral and intellectual, no less than its physical, force; in other words, *its soul* no less than *its body*, is found in the fields of agriculture. On the European continent the labourer of the soil is still, in form, manner, and mind, a peasant. His sight and his thoughts extend no farther, as the saying is, than the steeple of his village church. Nor can the military service be said—even in France, the most advanced continental nation—to effect any wholesome exception to the rule. A soldier is but another form of the slave; and the phrase is proverbial, that one who has passed the four best years of his youthful prime in the ranks of the army is ever afterwards good for nothing.

The independent landed proprietors of France, as multiplied by the revolutionary law of inheritance, might indeed, and would—if all the wise and beneficent provisions made by the National Convention for generalizing education had been allowed to take effect—have constituted the powerful nucleus of a free and independent nation. Those provisions annihilated by the astute despot Napoleon, who—of the whole magnificent instructional system devised and launched previous to his accession to power, at the head of a victorious army—

preserved the *Polytechnic alone*,* as the nursery of military captains—those provisions annihilated, the whole agricultural force became, in the summities of its intelligence, a military force, and, in its labour, a brute force.

Since the period of the empire, every successive government has applied itself systematically to vanquish the intelligence of the agricultural force by corruption; and, where that may have been impracticable, by persecution; and, where it may have been raised beyond the reach of direct annoyance, to drive it from the field of public utility into the inactive walks of private life. But there has existed another, and a yet more powerful bar to the saving influence of the more intelligent land power in revolutionary France—the annihilation of the provincial sectionment of the country. By this means the supreme administration of all local affairs is carried up to a national centralization, in an overgrown capital, drowned in luxury, effeminacy, and vice, of which the best theories are but visionary dreamings, and of which the absolute control is now vested in cannon-crowned *bastiles, forts, and bastions!* †

The condition of things in Great Britain differs, in important particulars, from that in France, though certainly without being better. Under this head enough will be found in the letters which follow this Biography.

Fully alive to the essential differences existing between the points of progress attained by the most advanced nations of Europe and that occupied by the

* Napoleon *preserved*, and did not *create*, the Polytechnic School, as has been the impudent assertion of his panegyrists.

† This is not to say that, at the point of time when France, insurgent against the feudal power, both of the nobility and the Church, sought protection in centralization against provincial influences, that such policy was erroneous. The error has been in prolonging that policy beyond the emergency which generated it. Feodality in France is a buried corpse, which even the *majorats* of Napoleon could not galvanize, nor the frenzied efforts of the restoration resuscitate. The land power of France is no longer a tyrant, but a victim,—and a victim tied, bound, taxed, and tormented to please an army of rapacious placemen, stock-jobbers, and speculators.

American Republic, Miss Wright now returned to the latter, better able, indeed, to distinguish the defects and inconsistencies which she suspected to exist in her adopted country, but yet with increased confidence in the promise of its futurity.

Her attention, in the first instance, was more immediately attracted to the consideration of negro slavery, as existing in the Southern States. She was satisfied that the subject, to be understood, demanded serious study, and an intimate familiarity with all its bearings. The knowledge she possessed of the country in its past history led her to distinguish at least as much to admire as to anathematize in the conduct of the master race towards the subject African; and, reasoning from these premises, she inclined to expect that, if the complex difficulties which surrounded the subject could be satisfactorily met, the will to act justly would not be wanting. The historical facts which were present to her mind, and which encouraged her to push enquiry with the hope of its turning to practical account, were as follows:—

1. The negro was originally carried to colonial North America *forcibly* by the ships of the mother country, contrary to the feelings, and in despite of the resistance, of the colonists, and of the reiterated and solemn protestations of their legislative assemblies.

2. After a course of uninterrupted opposition to the slave-trade on the part of the colonies, we find the violent prosecution of the slave-trade, as countenanced and enforced by Great Britain, among the wrongs enumerated by colonial Virginia, in that solemn protestation addressed to the British Parliament which opened the Revolution. And, moreover, the same appears in the declaration of political rights of Virginia independent, and, yet farther, was inserted in the preamble of the constitution of that State.

3. The same was farther inserted among the list of grievances enumerated as authorising rupture from

metropolitan dominion in the original draft of the revolutionary Act of Independence, as drawn by the illustrious committee, Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams; and subsequently effaced from considerations of general policy, easy to appreciate under the circumstances.

4. The slave-trade was immediately abolished by the United States independent.

5. The slave-trade was afterwards assimilated to piracy, and punished with death by a law of the United States.

6. Slavery was abolished in all the American States in which the number of slaves was not sufficient to render an act of enfranchisement menacing to the major interests of public order, industry, and the general welfare of the country.

7. This abolition was full and entire from a certain date specified, and was passed without any question of indemnity to the masters. But the act so rendered, be it observed, was not an act of spoliation, made by a government distinct in interests, or removed by distance, from the population; but an act of conceived (if not altogether of real) propriety and wisdom on the part of governments making part of the population. Both the population and governments of the northern States had the good sense to distinguish that, under the circumstances of their position, the public welfare would be better promoted by recourse to free labour, while the absence of sufficient experience prevented them from distinguishing the disadvantages, more especially to the enslaved race, of sudden emancipation: disadvantages everywhere, and at all times, immense.

8. According to the laws of negro enfranchisement, passed in the northern States, a prohibition existed to enfranchise any slave, past a certain age, without the free consent of such slave, or without his master being bound to furnish him with the means of subsistence. Under the protection of this clause, many grey-headed negro servitors, of both sexes, remained with their

masters at the period of Miss Wrights return to the United States in 1824.

Such were the facts which inspired her confidence in the national character, and encouraged her to bring the whole ardour of her disposition to the practical study of a question of which she at once distinguished that the gravity was the least appreciated by those who treated it the most magisterially. From the very outset, she had but little sympathy with professed abolitionists; among whom she usually found much zeal with little knowledge; and, not unfrequently, more party violence than enlarged philanthropy. Hatred of the planter seemed oftentimes to be a stronger feeling than interest in the slave; a mode of envisaging the question more especially peculiar to foreigners and adopted citizens. These, accustomed in Europe to carry all things with struggle and violence, and to believe that their own view of every subject is precisely the right one, are apt to take little pains to investigate the views of others; and satisfied, upon arrival in the country, that they know both how every thing is, and how everything ought to be, are but too frequently more impatient to teach than to learn.

As the spirit which actuated her was the very opposite of this, Miss Wright sought information everywhere, and more especially at its source in the southern States themselves. She was satisfied that, to embrace all the difficulties — industrial, political, individual, local, states, and federal — with which the question was surrounded, she must consider it more especially on the very soil of slavery, and in the interests of the two populations there brought into juxta position. She procured in Washington extracts from the registers of all the laws of the slave states, bearing directly upon the labour and the government of the negro. She travelled through the greater part of the Union, visited familiarly the planters, and consulted them on her object and her views; seeking the aid of their experience, and discus-

sing with them the dangers for the country, the disadvantage to the master race, the pernicious example to youth, the monstrous anomaly in the institutions presented by a state of things which associated labour—the source of all that is good and great in man—with social degradation, political nullity, and brutal ignorance. On the other hand, she readily admitted the impossibility, even the absurdity, the danger to American institutions—alone fitted to guide and to regulate bodies politic endowed with intelligence, and habituated to the exercise of sovereign power—the common ruin, in short, for the two races of an act of simple enfranchisement similar to that which had been passed in the northern States. She knew from observation the evil effects produced by the mere governmental abolition of an evil which has its seat in the mind, the habits, and, through hereditary influences, in the very physical organization of a race. She had distinguished, at an early age, that human enfranchisement—which is but another name for civilization—is, in its beginnings, a slow, gradual, and complex operation; and that, to ensure its certain advancement, it must be made to move forward simultaneously in the soul of the internal man, and in the external influences which surround him. It has been this conviction which has ever more and more guided her efforts and moulded her views, as it has become ever more and more rooted and reasoned in her mind by experiment and reflection.

It was during the course of these preliminary enquiries that she visited the German colony, which had founded, and which then occupied, the village of Harmony, on the river Wabash, Indiana; the same afterwards purchased by Mr Owen, and of which the name was then altered into New Harmony. Upon inspecting all the departments of industry, and more especially the agricultural, which formed necessarily the large base of the growing wealth and prosperity of the property, she was forcibly struck—not merely with the advan-

tages of united and organized labour, which may be seen at any time in a cotton mill, or in any other public work or institution whatsoever—but with their peculiar appropriateness to the object which, at the time, engrossed her attention. Nor was there, indeed, much difference in the point of intellectual advancement between the mass of the German labourers there submitted to the spiritual and temporal control of astute leaders, and that of the southern negro. The same and a yet more startling and degrading prostration of the moral and intellectual being she subsequently witnessed in the Shaker establishments, of which some four or five then existed throughout the United States. In all, Christian fanaticism and subjection were the means employed to stultify the intelligence, and hold the physical man submitted to the will of others. As will be imagined, the physical man, thus depressed, performs his daily task without interest, and without any of the inspirations of genius. In consequence, these communities, in which labour—easy, indeed, after the first clearing of the soil, and other rude works of preparation, have been effected—is the regular and unvarying occupation of the mass, broken only by psalm-singing and other tedious, and sometimes ludicrous ceremonies. In consequence, these communities present nothing striking beyond well-cultivated farms and gardens, and well conducted manufactures. No great or beautiful works of art; no libraries; no laboratories, or scientific workshops, devoted to aid the progress of invention and the sublime conquest of matter by mind;—and no men and women beaming with intelligence and that joy of the soul, the necessary result of worldly independence, justly earned by exertions justly requited; and no rising generations trained to excellence by the spur of emulation, and promising to start a-head of their predecessors, and to be themselves vanquished in their turn by successors profiting by their example and experience, and by the ever accumulating

knowledge and capital of society! And yet such should be the result of united labour, or it fails in its object. If it centuples not the power of the individual, both for the enfranchisement of the individual, and for the greatest possible welfare, wealth, and grandeur of the body politic, it does no more than what has been ever, more or less, done to this hour. No tyranny has ever been blind to the advantages of united and organized labour; but liberty, enlightened by knowledge, can alone resort to it fearlessly and powerfully, because beneficially to man. Poor, indeed, is the benefit which feeds the body without nourishing the mind. The military despot may feed his soldiers at once liberally and economically from a common kitchen, and lodge them comfortably in clean and airy apartments, yet what free man would not prefer a crust, a draught from the spring, and a rude shelter from the weather, than such accommodations, purchased by the sacrifice of all individual nobility and independence.

Admiring the order, method, and facile result of labour as organized, although, on the whole, very imperfectly, in the German society, Miss Wright procured much valuable information from its directors. Among these she found a man of singularly enlarged and philanthropic views, and communicated to him freely her sense of what was deficient in the colony. She found him alive to its perception, and greatly desirous of seeing new moral principles of action infused into the population, and a more just mode of administration substituted for the spiritual government of its directors. He promised that, failing his success to effectuate a reform in his own society, he would join her in the undertaking she contemplated, in the southern States. Miss Wright visited a second time, in the same season, this German colony, and witnessed its departure when Mr Owen took possession of the estate. She afterwards twice visited her German acquaintances in their new settlement of Economie, below Pittsburg, on the

Ohio; and saw, as it were, a new village—with its fields, orchards, gardens, vineyards, flouring-mills, manufactures—rise out of the earth beneath the hands of some eight hundred trained labourers. A startling circumstance occurred previous to her last visit to Economie. This was the sudden and ill-explained death of the distinguished Becker. The frightful apprehensions which circumstances generated, but which she did her best to stifle in her mind, she afterwards found to have been very generally entertained both in and out of the society. He had attempted to induce an alteration in the tenure deeds of the property in favour of the mass, and to extend to the same the rights of administration. The circumstances of the case, and the various surmises which they generated, inspired Miss Wright with additional distrust and abhorrence of all associations not founded upon the broadest principles of justice, and of which the bond of association, the tenure of land and capital, and the mode of direction were not made clear to all concerned. It is self-evident, indeed, that wherever this is not the case, the whole must end in a trick of swindling, or a game of children.

It is distinctly from the inspection of the German colony of Harmonie, and afterwards of Economie, that Miss Wright dates a first conception of the mode in which might be effected the gradual abolition of negro slavery in the southern States; and, equally, the gradual reformation of civilized society. The more closely and widely she had considered the first of these questions, the more closely she distinguished its connection with the second, until she soon perceived that the positive enslavement of the labourer is but another, and a more primitive, form of that universally existing curse of the earth—the enslavement of labour. A necessity in the earlier stages of civilization, it becomes ever more and more discordant with the nature of man and the nature of things, as mutually improved and improving with the

advance of knowledge, productive art, and mechanical power. In the course of its progress towards annihilation, as followed until this hour, the evil has undergone various modifications ; while, in the southern section of the American United States, it has remained in *statu quo*. This has proceeded from three causes. First, the character of the American institutions. Second, the difference of race existing between the subject and the master population. Third, the immensity of distance in the point of advancement between the two races thrown into juxtaposition without possibility of moral and intellectual contact.

Neither the red savage nor the negro slave can be converted into American citizens, by acts of legislation ; and this not because the one is black, nor the other red, but because *the one is a savage, and the other a slave*. As civilization, at this hour, is an impossibility for the Indian, so is political sovereignty at this hour an impossibility for the African. The former, when unhappily immersed in white civilization, as he was while resident in the bosom of the American States, became, and could only become, degraded, imitating the vices, without acquiring the industry, of the white population ; and so the latter, if legally installed in citizenship, would degrade the institutions to the level of his own moral and mental state, long before the institutions could elevate him to their own standard. In both cases, the circumstances of colour and feature increase, though they do not constitute, the difficulty, which has until now barred the progress of either race, while placed in juxtaposition with one, their superior in knowledge, and therefore necessarily the sovereign disposer of their destinies.

It was evident to Miss Wright that to effectuate the emancipation of the negro with safety to the material interests of the country, and with mutual advantage to himself and to the master race, he must be made to go through a real moral, intellectual, and industrial

apprenticeship. This apprenticeship would evidently have to embrace the improvement of negro labour, and the gradual preparation of the negro himself to direct it, to estimate its value and, in general, to administer his own affairs. From the first generation little comparatively could be expected, but the enabling them to clear the expenses of purchase and outfit by executing the first rude labour of a settlement on the southern frontier; to familiarize them with the order and method of organization; to keep their own accounts; to encourage them to the earning of their enfranchisement and removal to a free colony, on the African coast or elsewhere; and, generally, to improve their habits, and inspire them with ambition for the farther improvement of their children. The children, brought up distinct from their parents in schools of agriculture and industry, might evidently be expected to effect more. The clearing of the forest and first breaking up of the soil effected, their labour, would present the advancement of agriculture, the general sanification and improvement of the country—by the draining of swamps, opening of roads, clearing of navigable streams, and other works difficult for the white race in a southern latitude. In the rising, and, better, in all successive generations, the advancement of the negro race itself in the scale of being might be presented, and its preparation for independence and civilization secured by its acquisition of all the useful arts, and of a familiarity with mechanical power—that mighty humanizer of man, and conqueror of nature and the elements.

It will be understood that, to prepare for the realization of a perspective so vast, an individual could only propose to furnish a limited experiment, capable of supplying to the bodies politic of the Southern States, some first data upon which to ground a general plan of procedure. That plan, when once undertaken by the States themselves, would necessarily ensure to the southern section of the Republic, a futurity of ever in-

creasing power and grandeur. The African race, trained and civilised by its American guardian, and leaving behind it a country prepared for facile cultivation by the white race, would necessarily supply to tropical climates, colonists fitted by organization no less than experience, to vanquish their dangers and sanctify the richest, though now the most deleterious, regions of the globe. The boundless regions open to colonization—round the Mexican gulf, through the Panama isthmus, into the tropical belt, where now flooded by the Amazons and Oronoco—may employ the African during the generations of his training, when the southern section of the United States may have no further demand for his labour. And in that extensive region of the globe, it may be the proud destiny of the trained African, and of the Indian—won by a more benign civilization than that which now tames man but to degrade him—it may be the destiny of these two races—the one redeemed from servitude and the other from ferocity—to found an empire of wealth, beauty, and freedom, where now stretches, through degrees of latitude and longitude, the deleterious swamp, peopled by the savage, the reptile, and the beast of prey.

It will be understood also, that, in the general view embraced by Miss Wright, one half had reference to the master race. If the slave was to be prepared for independence and civilization, the master had equally to be prepared for that highest order of independence and civilization when man is to exchange dominion over his fellow man for dominion over nature; when the power of inert matter, rendered instinct with life by human genius, shall replace the weak energies and abject servitude of the human labourer; and when political science, breaking for ever the rod of tyranny, shall weigh in the balance of justice all human interests, and surround the individual from birth to death with guidance, protection, and care.

It is not necessary to enter into details touching the

first labours of an agricultural establishment in the bosom of the forests. Having remarked the fatal dependence of the planter, at that period, on upper country supplies for all articles of food, and his so frequently ruinous reliance on the high price of a staple produce, the object of Miss Wright was rather a good farm than a cotton plantation. The position she selected, therefore, was on the edge of the cotton region, in the 35th degree of latitude, and bordering upon a then Indian country. She purchased here two thousand acres of good and pleasant woodland, traversed by a clear and lovely river, communicating, thirteen miles below, with the Mississippi, at the old Indian trading station of the Chickasaw Bluffs.* She then purchased several negro families, comprising, at the outset, fifteen able hands. She found, in her new occupation, intense and ever increasing interest, but of which it would be too long here to present the details: suffice it, under this head, to say that the worst was accomplished, when, seized by severe and reiterated sickness, she was forced to make a voyage to Europe for the recovery of health, which, entirely prostrated at that period, was never afterwards such as to permit to her free exposure to the sun, and bodily and mental activity through all seasons and at all hours. During her absence, too, an intriguing individual had disorganized everything on the estate, and effected the removal of persons of confidence. Increased, instead of diminished, exertions were now called for, until she could find an intelligent superintendent of the farming operations. It should be added here that all her serious difficulties proceeded from her white assistants, and not from the blacks. The habits of dependence implanted in this race, by the servitude of ages, renders them readily obedient, and

* This appropriate name is now changed for the rather absurd one of Memphis. This rising city occupies the most beautiful and commanding position in the whole south western quarter of the United States.

easily attached to their owner, so that he learns to unite kindness with unflinching firmness.

The American character, as being peculiarly fitted for command—presenting an admirable admixture of energy, composure, patience, and rigid adherence to the rule laid down, until altered upon a conviction of its inefficiency or error—must be found, over all others, fitted for one of the greatest works which humanity has to accomplish, namely, the moulding and guiding the African in the conquest of savage nature in the tropical world. The work I am persuaded will present, under his direction, few difficulties. But for this he must act collectively, as making part of a sovereign body politic, and having at command the capital of the same body politic.

Such were the solemn reflections of Miss Wright when she awoke, between the lassitude and the feverish pulsations of a shattered constitution, to the consciousness of human weakness when considered in the individual. For the first time she bowed her spirit in humility before the omnipotence of collective humanity. “MAN SPECIES is alone capable of effecting what I, weak existence of an hour! have thought myself equal to attempt.” After much and repeated solitary reflection, she distinguished that, by an obstinate prosecution of her enterprise, she endangered, with life itself, all chance of rendering any real service to her fellow-creatures; and this at a time when she felt herself to have acquired no ordinary amount of varied experience, and of familiarity with questions upon which hinge the welfare of populations, and the grandeur and duration of empires. She had acquired, also, an intimate acquaintance with American institutions, the American people, and the American territory. She was now aware that, in her practical efforts at reform, she had begun at the wrong end, although—with a view to the accurate comprehension of the vital interests of the country, and of the world at large—she was satisfied that she had

begun at the *right* end. She distinguished, also, that if she had envisaged a practical experiment when she might have been more usefully employed in preparing the popular mind for the exercise, with knowledge, of popular power, *without* that practical experiment, and without the extended and varied observation which had preceded it, she could never have acquired the information and the experience at all times requisite to guide the efforts of a really efficient leader of the popular mind.

During the three years and a half which she devoted to the slave question, Madame d'Arusmont is conscious that she learned more than during any other period of her life. It was in the cotton field, and while watching the extraordinary fluctuations in the cotton market, and the fearful catastrophes in the mercantile and industrial world consequent thereupon, that she seized the clue of the banking system, which she gradually followed up, through its ramifications of State Banks, and United States Bank, and commercial credits, and commercial failures, until it landed her in the Bank of England and the omnipotent Parliament of Great Britain, as the great source of that financial power, stronger than thrones or republics, which convulsed the world at pleasure, and robbed all the fortunes and the industry of the earth under pretence of aiding them.

Once satisfied as to the course to be adopted with a view of forwarding the one object of her life—the advancement of human knowledge and happiness—she abandoned, though not without a struggle, the peaceful shades of Nashoba, leaving the property in the charge of an individual who was to hold the negroes ready for removal to Hayti the year following. In relinquishing her experiment in favour of the race, she held herself equally pledged to the coloured families under her charge, to the southern State of which she had been a resident citizen, and to the American community at large, to remove her dependents to a country free to

their colour. This she executed a year afterwards.

On leaving Tennessee, she went first to New Harmony, Indiana, in order to assume the proprietorship of a periodical which had hitherto been there published, under the patronage of Mr Robert Owen, and which had been conducted for two years by different editors with varying ability and fluctuating objects, but of which the tenor had been invariably liberal. This publication, constituting at the moment the only one removed from party or sectarian influences, appeared important to sustain at a moment when the whole social and political horizon throughout the United States appeared charged with clouds.

It was in this year, 1828, that the standard of "the Christian Party in Politics" was openly unfurled. Of this party, which had been long secretly at work, Miss Wright had previously detected the manœuvres in all sections of the country. This was an evident attempt, through the influence of the clergy over the female mind—until this hour lamentably neglected in the United States—to effect a union of Church and State, and with it a lasting union of Bank and State; and thus effectually to prostrate the independence of the people, and the institutions of the country. Clearly distinguishing the nature of the move, Miss Wright determined to arouse the whole American people to meet it, at whatever cost to herself.

It is here necessary to explain that, during her residence in the south, she had visited New Harmony several times. She was there when the German colony left it, and when Mr Owen took possession. She subsequently visited the village twice after one-half of it had become, by purchase, the property of her friend Mr William Maclure, whose life and fortune had been devoted to the cause of education. This benevolent and estimable man was a native of Scotland; of large fortune, which he employed in travelling, and in visiting every institution of interest in every country; in making ex-

tensive mineralogical and geological collections, and furnishing with the same the cabinets of public institutions. He took an active interest in the educational experiments of Pestalozzi, aided him with funds, and supplied his school with many scholars, whose expenses he paid. In the United States, of which he was an adopted citizen, he favoured every liberal opinion and every attempt at reform, and was the founder and President of the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia.

In France, previous to his final return to the United States, he had—with the aid of his scientific friend and associate, Piquet d'Arusmont—undertaken in his own house in Paris, to prepare for the foundation of a normal school, by the efficient, moral, intellectual, physical, and industrial education of a limited number of youths. The novel specimen of comprehensive education and synthetic instruction there presented, fixed the attention of the most remarkable men of the epoch. Among these it will suffice to enumerate: Among the dead;—Lebrun (Duc de Plaisance); the philosophic and truly philanthropic member of the opening triumvirate Consulate of France—soon driven into retirement by his colleague, the military Cæsar, Napoleon. The Hypocrates of modern France—the enlightened, benignant, modest and yet chivalrous Pinel; in his youth a besieger of the Bastille, and, in his maturity, the reformer of the treatment of the insane, and at all times the generous encourager and mild preceptor of youth. The distinguished and amiable philosopher and naturalist M. Turpin. And among the living; the celebrated Magendie, Villermè, Ferus, Rostan, and other distinguished members of science, physic, and the bar. This interesting private institution—although conducted with the greatest prudence, and visited with the utmost caution by the enlightened individuals above quoted—could not escape a formal domiciliary visit from the Police of the Bourbon Government. This event, and the consequent hasty return of Mr Maclure with his

friend, Mr Piquepal d'Arusmont, to the United States, led to their first acquaintance with Miss Wright; to whose counsel and assistance they applied to facilitate the quiet transfer of their undertaking to the United States. *

* It is truly difficult in this age to know what to believe. It is not two years since there appeared in the *Gazette des Tribunaux* (the organ of the French law courts) a civil case, in which M. Piquepal d'Arusmont was made (himself absent and confined by sickness) to plead his own cause, in the sense of his adversary, by the mouth of an attorney speaking in his name; in consequence of which M. Piquepal lost his suit. And yet this again, not in consequence of any argument or any evidence, however foreign to the truth, which appeared in the official account of the trial, but upon the strength of a violent tirade from the Advocate for the Crown, against the public course pursued by his wife in the United States; which tirade, astounding to those who heard it, was not even alluded to in the published record. The sentence of the Bench—as given in consequence of this (to say the least of it) irrelevant attack upon a person entirely foreign to the case,—not content with refusal of justice to M. Piquepal d'Arusmont, pronounced, in addition, a stigma upon his honour. At a second hearing of the cause, when M. Marie, the head of the French bar, appeared as the duly appointed counsel of M. Piquepal d'Arusmont, and appeared with credentials in hand from the most distinguished characters of France, substantiating, at one and the same time, the justice of his claim and the disinterested, as well as enlightened, nature of his unremitting exertions in the cause of juvenile education.—At this second hearing of a most interesting cause, M. Marie was interrupted, silenced, and seated by the Presiding Judge at the opening of his speech, and before he had concluded the perusal of the following letter, from the Duc de Plaisance to Baron Cuvier:—

“MONSIEUR LE BARON,—

J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser un homme que j'aime, que j'honore, que je respecte—M. Piquepal; qui s'est voué avec le plus noble désintéressement à la plus noble des fonctions. Entendez le avec bonté; il vous expliquera lui même le bien qu'il fait, et de quelle manière il le fait. Je vous demanderai de lui faciliter l'entrée du jardin des plantes et du cabinet d'histoire naturelle. Je vous prie de seconder ses vues, d'encourager la bonne œuvre qu'il poursuit avec tout l'intérêt que vous donnez à toute ce qui tient au bien public.

“J'ai l'honneur d'être avec le plus sincère attachement et la plus grande considération, Monsieur le Baron, votre très humble et très odesant serviteur.

“LE DUC DE PLAISANCE.

“Paris, le 22 Janvier, 1822.”

Upon their arrival in Philadelphia, and previous to their removal to New Harmony, they had opened a most interesting institution for youth in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Miss Wright had visited it with intense interest; and received with regret, in Tennessee, the news of Mr Maclure's removal and that of his friends, at the urgent entreaties of Mr Owen, to New Harmony. She regretted the interruption of labours already so successfully opened, and feared the new position and circumstances would prove less favourable to the object. Upon her second visit to New Harmony, however, and after the opening of Mr Maclure's Educational Society, distinct from the operations of Mr Owen, she experienced true delight upon inspecting the school of industry there in full operation, and fully adequate to its own support at the expiration of the first six months. This really wonderful creation was the only successful

Copy of the letter of M. Lebrun, Duc of Plaisance, to Baron Cuvier:—

“ I have the honour of recommending to Baron Cuvier a man whom I love, honour, and respect, M. Phiquepal, who has devoted himself with the noblest disinterestedness, to the noblest of functions. Listen to him with kindness. He will explain himself the good he is doing, and in what manner he does it. He will ask you to facilitate for him the entrance of the garden of plants, and of the cabinet of natural history. I pray you to second his views, and to encourage the good work which he pursues with all that interest which I know you to bestow upon every thing tending to advance the public weal.

“ I have the honour to be, with the most sincere attachment and the highest consideration, &c.,

“ LE DUC DE PLAISANCE.

“ Paris, 22 January, 1822.”

Let not the public accuse those who shrink from rendering it disinterested service. At the time present, there is no prudence that can ward off vengeance from those who bear the reputation of serving humanity for herself. M. and Madame Phiquepal d'Arusmont thus outraged in a case which presented in itself no one political feature, were residing in all but absolute seclusion from a world with which, in its present state, they have no sympathy. They have never, either of them, had any direct or indirect relation with the reigning government of France, nor, indeed, with any government in any country.

experiment, and, indeed, the only real experiment of any kind, made in New Harmony.*

The institution here adverted to satisfactorily solved one of the most important problems in human economy—to wit, *whether the correct education of youth, i. e., an education judiciously calculated so as to develop simultaneously the moral, intellectual, physical, and industrial faculties of the human being—may not be*

* Community of property—which, to mean anything, should mean the consolidation of capital, and the collective tenure of land for the common advantage of the population—there never was, nor any attempt towards it, at New Harmony; and as the population had been assembled together under that pretext, the consequence of a practice in discordance with the profession necessarily generated dissatisfaction and confusion. The character of the persons who generously answered what they conceived a generous call, to make an experiment of new principles, was of the first order, presenting among them every useful branch of industry, and many persons of high standing and wealth, from various quarters of the American Union, and also from Great Britain. Among the latter was a very remarkable young Scotchman, an accomplished officer in the British army, Captain Macdonald; who had resigned his commission to accompany Mr Owen to America. Ardent, generous, intelligent, and of the mildest disposition, he won universal affection and confidence. When he suddenly and irrevocably withdrew from the village, all hope of any satisfactory result disappeared. After the departure, in disappointment, of this first population, the estate was indeed besieged, and the proprietor entangled, with intriguing lawyers and desperate speculators.

Such is a short and true reading of the much vexed and much distorted history of New Harmony. In an age like the present, it is little astonishing that a thousand romances should be connected with it which never had existence. Among these Madame d'Arusmont herself was once led to give credit, and even circulation through the *Free Enquirer*, to a well-conducted and successful experiment of *labour exchange*. It proved, upon investigation, to have been neither more nor less than the pattern experiment of what was afterwards practised in London, and which closed very little to the satisfaction of any of the honest interests involved. It is time now to distinguish that all individual experiments neither have been nor can be, of any practical account beyond the enquiry they may elicit, the ideas they may generate, and perhaps the warning they may teach. Reform, to be effective, must be rightly understood *in its principles* by a collective body politic, and carried forward wisely, consistently, with due regard to the interests of all concerned, by that body politic.

made to cover all its own expenses, together with those of the preceding state of infancy. Although the duration of this institution did not extend over a year, and from the modesty of its creator and conductor, Piquepal d'Arusmont, its existence has been scarcely heard of, its influences have been powerfully felt in the United States from that hour to this. Many youths who there received the first elements of industrial knowledge have since risen to useful stations, exhibiting a fearlessness of enquiry and experiment which has quickened the popular ranks with intelligence and invention. It is thus that the silent labours of the good and the wise, though they may pass unheeded in their generation, sink, in their effects, deep into the bosom of society, and prepare for that great advent of human redemption when ignorance, error, and, their consequent, misrule shall disappear from the earth.

It is proper under this head to state that the juvenile schools, and instruction of the whole village of New Harmony, were founded and conducted in Mr Maclure's half of the village at his entire expense, and under the direction of his friends—Piquepal d'Arusmont before mentioned; the distinguished naturalist and botanist (since deceased) Thomas Say of Philadelphia; Dr Troost, professor of natural philosophy and chemistry, in the University of Nashville, Tennessee; the distinguished artist and naturalist M. le Sueur, of the *jardin des plantes*, Paris, and the companion of the famous French voyager, du Perron, the first explorer of New Zealand; and Joseph Neef, one of the most distinguished disciples of Pestalozzi.

To return from these digressions to the subject of this memoir. Miss Wright found in New Harmony no trace of the School of Industry which a year previous was so full of interest and promise. The parents, as resident in Mr Owen's section of the village, had withdrawn; the children, as resident in that of Mr Maclure, were scattered, with their parents, to the four

winds of heaven. Of her scientific friends, some had withdrawn to the cities and universities of the different States, and some were following, in the seclusion of the neighbouring woods, their favourite pursuits. The talented and energetic conductor of the School of Industry was struggling with the depression of his disappointment, and applying himself in retirement to the instruction of three youths who had accompanied him from France. Miss Wright, touched with a disappointment which she knew from experience how to appreciate, observed that he, like herself, had erred in counting for too much the power of the individual; and for too little, the counteracting influences existing in the very motive principle of society in which the individual moves. That both, in this manner, had mistaken the road most directly leading to their object—the public good. What we are insufficient to effect let us engage the mass to do for themselves. Here the people are sovereign. Here too free speech, written and spoken, is secured by the law of the land. All that is wanting is to start the American public in the true path of enquiry and political reform, until it shall finally distinguish that the care of infancy, the just training of youth, the useful direction of adult strength, the protection of age, and, in general, the whole administration of the collective interests of the population regard the population itself. Their views meeting on this ground, Mr Phiquepal d'Arusmont volunteered in a month's time to acquire and to communicate to his three French pupils, a thorough knowledge of the printing business, asking, only for that period, free accession to the printing office in which the *Harmony Gazette*, now issued on Miss Wright's responsibility, was executed. If it be stated that she knew the friend who made this offer to possess, at the time, no more acquaintance with the printing business than she possessed herself, the confidence she had in his ability, to seize at once upon the

details of any branch of science and its appropriate art, may be estimated. So entire was her confidence, that she made arrangements for the whole printing establishment to be placed in Mr Phiquepal d'Arusmont's hands on that day month. She then appointed Mr Robert Dale Owen, Mr Owen's eldest son, as her assistant editor, and leaving editorial matter in his hands and forwarding other regularly by Post, she proceeded to Cincinnati, and woke up the city, at the time depressed and alarmed by the machinations of the Clergy of the different sects, united under the name of "the Christian Party in Politics." At the close of the first meeting in the Court House, she announced the Paper for the day agreed on with its new publisher, and which was to present the Prospectus of Principles that was to guide its course. While engaged in delivering in the city and neighbourhood stirring addresses to the population, the Paper arrived on the day announced, and was universally noticed for its general appearance and correctness of typography. It is proper here to explain that the reliance of Miss Wright on a promise which to many appeared impossible of realization, arose from her having watched minutely the operations of her distinguished friend in the wonderful, but only too short lived institution created by him on the property of Mr Maclure, in new Harmony. For she had there seen him master himself—by watching, analyzing, and simplifying the operations of different workmen—and then communicate to his pupils, the process peculiar to almost all the leading trades—such as, carpentering, turning, coopering, blacksmithing, tinning, weaving, tailoring, shoe-making, hat-making, broom and brush-making. All of these she had seen going on under his direction at one time, and all of these were studied and practised by the same youths who changed their occupations in rotation.

On leaving Cincinnati she made a tour as far west as St Louis; and then, crossing the Alleghany in the

opening of the winter, addressed the people of Baltimore.

Arriving in that city in December 1828, she found a Committee organized to receive her. Various were the proposals as to the place of meeting. A large and fashionable saloon, with tickets at a dollar, was strongly urged. The money, as she took none, it was suggested might be devoted to a popular library. Her reply was to the effect, that the object was not to raise money, but to give knowledge; and that her opinion would be for a theatre, and to throw it open to the public. It was urged by some that Baltimore was a populous city; a sea port; that the clergy were rabid; that they had fanatics at command; that her life might be endangered. She replied that she knew the American people, and to one riotous fanatic who could be found, there were many hundred citizens of good sense and right feeling. And that, if a theatre could be procured, she would engage to address the public, and, with the aid of the Committee, to keep the peace. It so happened that a theatre was immediately placed at her disposal by a public spirited proprietor. The only regulation adopted, and one she invariably followed, was to have the committee distributed at the door and through the House, so as to distinguish on the instant any ill disposed individual. On her part, at the opening of the meeting it was her custom to request the audience, in the event of any attempt at disturbance, to keep silent and keep their seats. In this manner the detection of bad subjects could be instantly distinguished. And, so it was, that in a seaport and a populous city, armed only with the sacred character of her sex, with confidence in the cause she advocated, and in the people she addressed—a young woman, raised in the circles of European aristocracy, and whose habits were those of a student and a quiet observer of men and things,—encountered a mixed multitude of both sexes, of every class and profession, in an open

theatre crammed from pit and stage to ceiling, without experiencing, and without apprehending, anything but silent respect and enthusiastic sympathy. Such, in general, were the American cities when inhabited by an American population—that is, by a population raised under free institutions. As those cities have become gradually, and of late rapidly, occupied by a mixed populace raised under the institutions of all the kingdoms of Europe, their character has completely changed. The native population of the United States, born to, and raised in, the exercise of Sovereignty, is now altogether engaged in agriculture, and occupies the soil as independent proprietors; while the manufacturing and commercial cities are generally occupied by the European population; of which an immense number are not citizens, many altogether without instruction, and others ignorant of the very language of the country. It matters not certainly where men are born, but it matters every thing where and how they are raised. The late disgraceful scenes in Philadelphia, others of a similar character on various points of the American Union, and the generally disorderly state of the cities sufficiently show that the rule of *laissez faire* and *laissez passer*,* excellent in its day, requires at the present some modification.

From Baltimore she proceeded to Philadelphia, and addressed a vast multitude, pressed in and around the old State House. From thence to New York, the head seat at once of popular energy, sectarian, and clerical, wealth and power, and financial and political corruption.

On the clear and fiercely cold night, the last in the year, when a north-western gale detained her in the steam-boat, on the contrary side of the bay from the city, she passed an hour or two on the deck, gazing on that which was to be the chief seat of her exertions, and, as she foresaw, of painful and complicated sacrifice and persecution. In that city were some heart af-

* *Leave alone and let pass.*

fections, which dated from her first landing in the country. These, the course prescribed to her by duty, was perhaps about to sever. Friends in official situations or political standing, whom considerations of propriety would oblige her in appearance to forget. Houses in which she had been as a daughter, and which she must now pass with the regardless eye of a stranger. Some she knew would understand her course and in silence appreciate her motives. Others might feel embarrassed. Among the latter her heart recalled the amiable, kind, polished and cultivated Charles Wilkes, late president of the New York Bank, a native of England, and nephew of the John Wilkes of opposition and parliamentary celebrity, the same friend to whom she had dedicated her first volume on America. Imbued, as by inheritance from a fond and aristocratic mother, with other political views from herself, this difference of opinion and even feeling had never been allowed to check their intimacy, or to chill their friendship. Her first care, upon arrival in the city, was to address to him a few lines, leaving it to himself to regulate their future relations. That whatever might be his decision she should never do injustice to what she knew would be always his secret sentiments of respect for a devotion whose object he would probably regret, and for exertions the nature of which he would condemn. On her side the remembrance of past years would ever live in her heart, together with those sentiments of affection for himself and family, which she had cherished for years, and which would remain unaltered through life. In a few lines, couched in the same strain, he accepted, as she thought wisely, her suggestion of dissolved or suspended intimacy. He resigned, moreover, the charge of her worldly interests, and (what she much regretted) those of her sister; which last had been more especially and entirely in his hands from the time of their first arrival in the United States. This circumstance afterwards involved serious and painful losses.

Again, she would observe that the public has no right to sit in judgment upon those who shrink from rendering it service; or even who fail to that service when undertaken. The injury and inconvenience of every kind and every hour to which, in these days, a really consistent reformer stands exposed, none can conceive but he who may experience them. Such becomes, as it were, excommunicated, after the fashion of the old catholic mother church; removed even from the protection of law, such as it is, and from the sympathy of society, for whose sake they consent to be crucified.

The course of events which followed her arrival in New York would probably present more interest to the reader than any which she has here recounted. But pressed with business at the moment of departure from the country, and having to hasten to Liverpool to take the steamer of the coming 17th for New York, she is obliged here to interrupt her narrative.

DUNDEE, 13th August, 1844.

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER.

Before the departure of Madame d'Arusmont from Dundee, she revised hastily with her own hand the proof-sheets of the biography here presented. In the belief that the circumstances which called for this production from her pen will possess some interest for the public, I subjoin the following letters, which appeared two months since in the *Northern Star*:—

MISS FRANCES WRIGHT.

I believe it may be safely asserted that less is known with respect to the personal history, origin, and family connections of Miss Frances Wright, or Madame d'Arusmont, than of any other character of existing notoriety. This has doubtless been caused by the fact, that when not impelled by the hope of achieving some great public good, she has lived in retirement, bordering on absolute seclusion. Many and various surmises have consequently run current relative to the life and character of that distinguished and eloquent lady; and, singular to relate, few, if any, of these surmises have had any foundation in fact.

As the reader may be curious to know by what means I arrived at that knowledge which her numerous admirers in this country seem altogether destitute of, I may briefly state that Madame d'Arusmont lately visited Dundee for the settlement of important business connected with property she has inherited from a cousin of her father—the last of the name. The news of her arrival soon spread through the town. Feeling anxious to see a woman whose eloquence has gone so far to effect a revolution in the mind of America, I embraced the earliest opportunity of soliciting an interview; I was received with the greatest kindness.

Madame d'Arusmont is among the tallest of women; being about 5 feet 10 inches high; she walks erect, and is remarkably handsome. Her brow is broad, and, phrenologically speaking, magnificent; her eyes are large, her face is masculine, but well formed.

In the course of our conversation, I mentioned to her that certainly little was known of her life, as I had seen it stated in an *Edinburgh Magazine* that she belonged to Glasgow.

She replied, that was not surprising; she had seen biographical notices of herself which did not contain a single fact. Adding, "The reason is obvious. I have always avoided speaking about myself; and, of course, no one knows where I belong to, or anything about me."

After a desultory conversation, and a promise from her to call at my abode, we separated.

After waiting a few days, and finding that Madame d'Arusmont did not call, I wrote to her, stating that my views in calling upon her were to obtain from her such facts of her life as she might think proper to favour me with, to be published in some liberal newspaper or magazine, for the information and gratification of her numerous admirers in this country.

On the same day this was posted, Madame d'Arusmont called at my residence, with the following note, remarking that she intended to leave it if she had not found me at home:—

"DEAR SIR,—Should I not find you at home, let this line, which I shall leave in that case, in token of ready sympathy with your wishes, satisfy you that I did not, that I could not, misinterpret your only too flattering enthusiasm. So far as this may have been inspired by those principles of truth and liberty which it has ever been the effort of my mind to interpret correctly, and the object of my life to advance—that enthusiasm can only meet with an echo in my own breast. So far again as in the ardour of youthful feeling, you may have apotheosized the advocate of those principles, instead of purely and entirely those principles themselves, my censure cannot and will not be too severe, since I can recal the time when I was prone to err in the same manner and in equal excess.

"I beg that you will dismiss all fears of intrusion, and call on me as frequently and freely as inclination may dictate. I look for my husband and daughter by the next London steam-packet.

"Yours, dear Sir, with much respect,

"F. W. D'ARUSMONT."

The reader will now perceive that my opportunities of ascertaining the information so much wished for were of the best description. In my next article, I will endeavour to give a lucid and succinct biography of a woman who is unquestionably the most intellectual female defender of liberty in the present age.

J. MYLES.

Dundee, May, 1844.

The *Northern Star* of the week following presented a biographical notice of Madame d'Arusmont, drawn, from my best recollections, of the information with

which she had favoured me. The following criticism of the same then appeared from her pen; and, subsequently, the political Letters now in the Press, and which will appear in the same form as the Biography.

MADAME D'ARUSMONT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN STAR.

SIR,—In your columns of 18th ult. and the 1st inst., I have seen some biographical notes respecting myself from a gentleman of this, my native city. With every intention on his part to render them correct, I find them somewhat erroneous in several particulars, not otherwise important, it is true, than that fidelity even in trifles is important, if trifles occupy us at all.

Having swerved from the rule, strictly followed to this time, of withholding all information regarding myself, not only as of no real importance to the public, but as calculated to divert its attention from the principles I have endeavoured to advocate, and the truths it has been my effort to expound; having swerved from this rule, it seems befitting that, if I meet the curiosity of the public at all, I should meet it to the best of my ability. And in truth, at this point of time, and in this my native country and city, to decline doing so, might expose me, not unreasonably, to the suspicion of moreseness or affectation.

When my townsman, Mr Myles, called on me in the manner he has related, and solicited the information which I readily promised, my answers to his inquiries were short, and strictly to the points enquired after. To string these afterwards into a narrative would doubtless be difficult; and as he again applies to me for corrected and fuller information, in the view of supplying a biographical notice, as a preface or appendix to such of my works as are current in this country, it appears to me the better way to take the pen in hand myself. I do therefore furnish him with a sketch of my parentage, family connections and early years, fully sufficient I imagine to satisfy any curiosity with which the public may honour me. In doing this, it seems but fair that I should secure to a young bookseller of my native city, and one too (if report speaks true), somewhat persecuted for opinion's sake, any little advantage that may arise from its publication. The publishers of my works in London will doubtless appreciate my motives, and obtain from him permission of affixing the same to any future editions they may issue.

But, sir, after the appearance in your columns of the somewhat imaginative and far too eulogistic notice already alluded to, not merely of myself as a consistent and untiring advocate of truth and liberty, but also of such of my works as are known in this country, I feel called upon to express my dissent from the unqualified appreciation passed upon the latter.

It is seldom that an honest enquirer after truth,—and such I feel myself to have ever been,—has not to correct and to modify his views more than once, before he can hope to present such as are unmixed with error. But whenever he discovers himself to have been mistaken, imperative is the duty for him to correct his reading of the book of nature, or of the human mind. Such has ever been my practice in my adopted country, where, in subsequent lessons, I have always endeavoured to amend the preceding. I look, Sir, to your liberality to be permitted to explain, through your columns, an admixture of error, existing in the volume of my lectures known in this country, and, yet more, in my “Epicurus” or “Few days in Athens.” The explanations necessitated by the subject may be somewhat long; but I trust, considering their importance with a view to the *safe and virtuous progress of reform*, will not be found tedious.

I shall forward the first, of what may occupy a series, of letters, so soon as some occupations of a varied and conflicting nature may permit to me the leisure.

I beg to subjoin, sir, the assurance of my respectful consideration,
F. W. D'ARSMONT.

Dundee, June 9th, 1844.

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