



The Nashoba plan for removing the evil of slavery: Letters of Frances and Camilla Wright, 1820-1829 (concluded)

Citation

Payne-Gaposchkin, Cecilia Helena. 1975. The Nashoba plan for removing the evil of slavery: Letters of Frances and Camilla Wright, 1820-1829 (concluded). Harvard Library Bulletin XXIII (4), October 1975: 429-461.

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The Nashoba Plan for Removing the Evil of Slavery: Letters of Frances and Camilla Wright, 1820-1829

Cecilia Helena Payne-Gaposchkin

(Concluded)

NASHOBA IN PROGRESS

The next letter, dated "Memphis West Tennessec Dec^r 1st 1825," is addressed to "Miss Julia Garnett to the care of Charles Wilkes Pres^t of the New York Bank New York"; it is signed "F W." The first portion deals with postal difficulties, regrets at separation, and the value of "some fixed and steady occupation"; the concluding portion reports on Nashoba:

I must defer to other moments my observations on this state & its citizens. I have made a small purchase of land 15 miles from this little settlement on Wolf river & about 5 from the Indian line. — It promises health, being dry & rolling & second rate only as to richness of soil — This is a point but too much neglected by American settlers, who plunge into the fat river bottom & hunt out sickness from Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico. This state is one of the most favored in the Union — Abundantly watered by navigable streams flowing in all directions & affording all varieties of soil & many of climate. — Most of the productions of the north can be raised in perfection & the southern staple of cotton finds in this western district (a late purchase from the Indians) a sun sufficiently genial & a soil peculiarly apt. — The singular drought of the summer has been protracted thro the fall. I have hired /here/ some cabins where I await my sister & friends from Harmony /by the first steamboat/. This little settlement (supported by the Indian trade) supplies one family of kind neighbors — the chief merchants of the place — But I shall describe things & people hereafter — For the present this much — Mr Flower⁴⁰ came here to aid me in the choice & purchase of land & making contracts for the building of our first houses; & is now gone to Indiana to bring down Camilla & his family together with provisions cattle &c I ride up from time to time to see progress & direct where to chop trees & where preserve them &c &c — and preserve my soul in patience until my good friends arrive. — watching the Mississippi

⁴⁰ For George Flower, see note 32 above.

most anxiously & praying for the rise of the upper waters. God bless you loves. Communicate this letter to dear Sarah⁵⁰ to whom I shall address my next

F W —

I sh^d add for your satisfac[] that I am in possession of more confirmed []n I have ever enjoyed in my life & the win[] here being moderate I think I have a fair chance of preserving it. The severe attack of the lungs (more severe than I had known for many years) w^{ch} seized me at the approach of the last spring in Washington from the unusually chill wetness of the season (always bad in that city) warned me that I c^d ill bear a too severe or moist climate & that to enjoy health in Europe I sh^d have to seek the sun & the Austrians /in Italy/ or the sun & the inquisition in Spain. — The summers here tho' longer are less intense in heat than in the North Eastern states — We are only on the verge of what may be called the southern climate of North America. — We have frost ice & even snow — tho of short duration & broken frequently by warm suns & mild airs The last three days have been severely cold — & I imagine to the North & Eastward there has been snow. —

Farewel dear friends all I press you to my heart fondly — F W

Nearly six weeks later the Wright sisters were still separated; a letter signed "Camilla" and addressed to "Mademoiselle Julia Garnett Pavillon Chardet sur la Cote au Havre," is dated "Albion Illinois Jan^{ry} 10th 1826." The portion dealing with America reads as follows:

And now dearest friends I must turn to our own affairs & first explain how I *am here* while Fanny is still at Memphis a distance of 400 miles by land — I mentioned in a letter from Harmony sent via N Orleans & in a subsequent one from this place addressed to the care of Mr Wilkes, that at F-s request I had consented to forego the fatigue of exploring with her the state of Tennessee in quest of the most eligable situation for our establishment & it is now about two months since I learnt they had selected & purchased land on the Chickasaw bluffs in the vicinity of Wolf river — Immediately after the purchase she returned to Nashville to make the necessary arrangements for commencing the clearing of the land, building cabins &c On her return to the little town of Memphis 15 miles distant from our purchase she hired a small dwelling where she describes herself as very comfortably quartered & amply supplied with all the necessaries of life while her amiable neighbours a Mr and Mrs Carr showed her that hospitable & friendly attention for w^{ch} Americans as a people are generally distinguished. You will readily believe my first impulse was to join her in her solitude, for our amiable friend Mr Flower as soon as he saw her comfortably established in her little dwelling & provided with a black girl as her attendant (—) left her to superintend workmen engaged in our service & hastened to regain his wife & family & make the necessary arrangements for

⁵⁰ Sarah Bayley: see note 40 above.

the transportation down the river of his contribution towards the establishment in the way of *live stock* corn, hay & provisions in pork & beef that are to (————) /keep us & our blacks/ for the first twelvemonth at least — But for this transportation it is requisite the waters of the Ohio sh^d rise w^h they have hitherto most perversely refused to do & owing to the continuation of the unparralleled drought for I may say with truth it has not rained for *two days* together since the month of *May last*, we & our stores are kept prisoners here for to attempt a land journey at this season of the year & on horseback is what I w^d if possible avoid especially after the experience of Mr Flower, who has been an invalid ever since his arrival in consequence of a cold caught on his journey hither & tho' now convalescent we have entertained serious apprehensions for his life — Besides now that we may look each succeeding day for the waters to rise when by taking steam boat at Harmony or its immediate vicinity we may be transported to Memphis in *36 hours* we feel it w^d be irrational to attempt any other mode of conveyance —

In the mean time Fanny sends(—) /me/ letters full of encouraging & sanguine expectations Heaven grant these may be realized! tho' I will confess to you my loved friends that I sometimes have forebodings of disappointment to come, but as Mr Wilkes⁵¹ observes in a recent letter, "I am assured you w^d not have rested in peace without making the experiment & tho' I have no belief whatever in its success I sincerely wish you all the satisfaction your ardor & enthusiasm in a good tho' hopeless cause so well deserve" — I have not his letter beside me but this is its tenor as nearly as I can recollect.

Sh^d the loss of these certificates⁵² involve the consequences I apprehend *it must of necessity* fall thro', but even that contingency w^d not approach /us/ to Europe w^h is the last place in the world in w^h I sh^d seek a *livelibood* — No — Harmony w^d in that case be our *resource & resting place* & one that I c^d look to with infinite satisfaction & really believe it w^d add some years to the life of our amiable friend Mr Owen c^d he engage Fanny's talents disseminating his system thro' the world — You will have learnt from Mr Wilkes the jeopardy in which Fanny had reason to regard her N Orleans funds; owing to the extravagant speculations & the sudden depreciation in that commodity many failures took place & amongst others (as it) was currently reported that of Mr Nolte⁵³ — Having sent him a few weeks previous a power of attorney empowering him to sell out her stock the temptation to drow/n/ing then appeared almost irresistible especially when we had reason from an occurrence respecting the opening of a *private letter of Fanny's* /w^h she had accidentally omitted to seal/ entrusted to his care (w^h w^d be a story too long to insert here) to entertain no very high opinion of his *honor* — The Bank of Louisiana was

⁵¹ For Charles Wilkes, see note 13 above.

⁵² The first part of this letter (not printed here) deals with certificates of property which had been left in France and now could not be found; there are no later references to them in this correspondence, but letters from Lafayette to the Garnetts tell of finding the documents and forwarding them to the Wrights.

⁵³ For Nolte, see note 16 above; in Frances Wright's letter of 20 June 1826 (below), she emphasizes the fact that he "behaved honorably."

moreover said to have suffered severely & a considerable depreciation in the interest has in fact ensued but we have since learnt that Nolti tho' a severe sufferer had not *absolutely failed* having been supported by a loan of money from the house of the Barings.

Our great consolation was the knowledge that your little store was safe as Mr Wilkes with his usual prudence delayed sending y^r power for sale till a more favourable moment — F^r has necessarily sent to delay the sale of her stock till the funds sh^d rise — at least to the rate at w^h she purchased. — but sh^d the loss of these certificates prevent the sale of our stock *vested* in the state of (N Orleans) /Louisiana/ she must necessarily have recourse to (her —) /those/ funds at whatever loss I think Heaven the sum there will at least suffice to clear us of all *debt* & that certainly consoles me for the worst that can befall us —

Fanny telling me she had written to you I have allowed a longer interval to elapse between my letters than I sh^d otherwise have done. — My next I trust will be dated Memphis where my soul is wearying to join that dear solitary lamb — So soon as I hear of Mr Owen's arrival at Harmony I shall ride down there & probably take up my quarters there till the waters rise —

You will doubtless hear if you have not already heard all that the ill-natured malice of a misjudging world can suggest regarding our association with Mr George & [sic] Flower & his wife for the prosecution of this plan w^h he has had for years at heart but w^h he c^d not undertake without such pecuniary aid as we can supply while on the other hand *we* c^d as little have attempted /it/ without all the appliances & means to boot w^h he has it in his power to furnish, not to speak of his personal services, w^h I esteem as *beyond price* — He is moreover one of the most amiable beings I have ever known & possesses all the qualifications that go to form an agreeable & intelligent companion — Respecting his marriage the only sin his worst enemy c^d ever bring to his charge *we are perfectly satisfied* there was no circumstance attending it that c^d shock the most scrupulous morality — if not legally separated from his first wife (an odious woman, his first cousin whom he was *entrapped* to marry at the age of nineteen) divorce being obtained according to the English law for but one cause, *adultery* & /that/ being almost the only charge he c^d not have proved against her, they were only separated *by mutual* consent she in writing & in the presence of accredited witnesses, resign(ed)/ing/ all claim over him as her husband while he settled upon her every farthing of property she had brought him on their ill starred marriage w^h secured her an *ample independence*.

Wounded in spirit & almost heartbroken he passed to America where he was soon afterwards *followed* by his intimate & esteemed friend Mr Birbeck⁶⁴ who in addition to the members of his own family brought also with him as the *friend* not the governess of his daughters, the beautiful, the gay, the attractive Eliza Andrews who hav/ing/ for some time been in indifferent health by the

⁶⁴ Morris Birbeck (1764–1825); for his settlement at Albion, Illinois, see Frances Wright, *Views of Society and Manners in America*, ed. Paul R. Baker (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 136–137.

advice of her physicians & at the earnest solicitation of *her old paternal friend* as she regarded Mr B- consented to accompany him & his daughters to Ann^a — G- Flower immediately hastened to greet his old friend &, during their long journey together to the western country (he) had ample opportunity of seeing & appreciating all the admirable qualities of his Eliza — They made known their attachment to Mr B- who raved like a madman declared he loved her himself & that he w^d never consent to see her the property of another — finding however his solicitations of no avail & his reason at length convincing him “that hearts are not won by importunity” he finally consented to their marriage, nay, more, countenanced it by his presence & gave her away in the place of a parent as there are plenty of witnesses to testify — And yet without assigning any reason whatever he soon afterwards shut his door against them, & was the first to speak of G Flower his once dear friend whom he had called & loved as his son — an immoral man with whom he c^d no longer associate with [sic], proclaimed to the settlement what otherwise in these western woods might never have been known that he had (a) another wife & appeared on the jury against him in a trial brought against him at his instigation for adultery & bigamy — the latter charge however it was beyond his malice to substantiate owing to their being legally married in this country & having in their possession the certificate to that effect /the first wife not appearing against them/ — The persecutions they have in every way endured it w^d weary you to tell, but she possessed a spirit that c^d bear up under all her enemies c^d devise, & as she has often said to me — “our domestic felicity their malice c^d never interrupt & notwithstanding all we have endured I have enjoyed years of happiness that my worst enemy mgt envy me” — I have now had ample opportunity of seeing & judging the character of this admirable woman who possesses one of the most noble, *generous, and candid minds I have ever known in life* — Her affections *are entirely centered in her husband & children & while I admire & esteem her as my friend I do not & shall never feel for her that (—) /species of/ affection w^b constitutes real friendship* — *We understand each other perfectly & I believe the person in the world next to her husband she confides in most, is myself & she is so frank, so open, so candid in her disposition & intercourse. I often tell her that come what will there can never be a misunderstanding /or/ concealment between her & me*

Thus much my loved friends as regards this slandered yet hitherto thrice happy pair, for never I believe were two hearts so united & that too with dispositions & characters in many respects opposite but each being excellent of its kind, this difference perhaps may rather /have/ tended to increase their mutual affection — This is the *guilty pair* with whom we are *mainly* associated for the trial of the experiment in the success of w^b by the way she has not the least faith, but whatever her husband wishes is her pleasure & happiness & once engaged in it she will help it forward more *than any other individual concerned in it* Her health however since a fever that followed her late confinement (as) /is/ I am pained to see far other than it was & she feels herself that she will never again be equal to the unheard of exertions she has undergone since her first

arrival in this country & well may she dread entering a second time the difficulties & hardships of a new settlement —

No my sweet Julia I will never press S- B-⁵³ to visit us on the Wolf — Is not Mrs Millar after all *in some degree* right — Is she not a woman that loves & seeks display & is too much devoted *to self* to feel a real or disinterested affection for another — but you must know her by this time far better than I do & it is perhaps unfair in me to advance this opinion — but I have always felt she was a woman I could never *love* however much I mgt admire — How different from the genuine simplicity & sweet attractive manners of our highly gifted Fanny — Ah my sweet friends I marvel not that all sh^d fall short in a comparison with her for the more I see of life & above all of woman kind the more I am persuaded her equal never can & never will be found — . . .

I have just rec^d the joyful tidings that the river is rising owing to the melting of the snow on the Alleghany & I /am/ thus on the wing to Memphis I have also this moment learnt that Mr Owen is arrived at Harmony where I shall hasten with all possible speed — Heaven bless you my sweet friends —

The next two letters in this collection are both from Fanny Wright, addressed “a Mad^{ell}e Julia Garnett.” They are printed here in full.

Nashoba near Memphis West Tennessee —
April (March) 11th 1826

I write you dear Loves from our log cabins around w^{ch} the axes are ringing & all is stirring — I wrote you shortly from Memphis of the arrival of Camilla & the Flower family in the last days of Feb^y after a tedious & hazardous navigation in a flat boat w^{ch} was *snagged* /in the Mississippi & got off with difficulty/ — a phrase you may be familiar with tho not with the thing — Thank Heaven after all our perils disasters & delays we are assembled in safety — Our (seven) /eight/ purchased negroes 5 men and 3 women arrived by steamboat the day following from Nashville — These with a family of 7 a mother & 6 daughters rec^d from S Carolina form our number at present, & with the addition of a carpenter & blacksmith whom I expect daily /& as soon as possible a shoemaker/ We shall rest for some time. — I had to cover these & all expenses already incurred with 10,000 \$ more than a third of my property. — Without assistance by subscription we must here rest until our farm & store are thriving w^{ch} from the loss of so much of this season must take 2 years from this time. The men are all good hands, the girls also used to field work but more disposed to idleness — We have the prospect however of fewer difficulties than we expected — All are cheerful & contented & a fiddle w^{ch} we procured immed^{ly} for one of the men who knows how to turn some merry tunes strikes up regularly every evening. — We have rec^d one donation from a wealthy Quaker merchant in New York⁵⁰ of goods to the amount of 550 \$ to help the outfit of our store.

⁵³ Sarah Bayley: see note 40 above.

⁵⁰ The “wealthy Quaker merchant in New York” was Jeremiah Thompson (1784–1835); see Waterman, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 101–104; also *Dictionary of American Biography*.

We are provided with an excellent assistant for the conducting of this business a gentleman of the name of Richardson ⁵⁷ originally from Scotland, who unites to the invaluable qualities of trust prudence & accurate attention to busin [] a finely cultivated mind with every liberal & generous opinion & sentiment. — We found him in Memphis on our first arrival recovering slowly from a long & painful illness w^{ch} had seized him a year & a ½ since in New Orleans — Our conversation & friendship first cheered his spirits & the prospect of assisting in our undertaking seems to have supplied him with what he wanted an object in life suited to his feelings & opinions. — Our woods at this moment are in the full beauty of spring tender verdure & fine pasture w^{ch} makes /us/ regret that our sheep & cows & cattle are still in Illinois. We shall (leave) /have/ a couple of cows brought in our next flat of provisions, w^{ch} with one I purchased in Memphis must supply our dairy until we can send for /our cattle in the autumn or next spring/ — Our land is gently undulating & hilly what is called thro'out the great western valley *rolling* — our houses are placed /within/ a ¼ of a mile from the pretty little Wolf river on the bank of w^{ch} we shall raise our washing house bathing house & dairy & where in time we shall open some beautiful wooded pastures & retired walks extending our meadows along the [] & more watery bottoms. — I must close dear loves to write as many letters of business as we can out of the budget that lies by me unanswered. Remember dear loves that we are not ladies of leisure with nothing to do but to follow up the correspondence of friendship — I wish I knew you engaged in some pursuit that c^d call forth y^r energies & prevent y^r indulging in melancholy & vain regrets. — I see how you are with S B: & regret it much — much. Mrs Millar then was, in part at least, right. Read the enclosed dear loves & add in an additional ½ sheet any thing in this not there. — Cam's love. — She will write soon & give more description of our property & people & business. — Farewel fondly. — FW Poor McGowan — He drinks & that has been induced from *emui* — He fell in love with Julia & drank the more. Poor fellow & poor human life — What is it worth unless Owen can mend it!

Votre lettre ma bonne Françoise m'a beaucoup touchée — Que je sens aise de vous savoir avec mes chères amies. Que je vous trouve auprès d'elles à mon arrivée au Havre — Car j'espère revoir le Havre bonne Françoise et mes chères amies et vous bonne Françoise. Adieu F Wright—

[Added at top of letter:] We have rec^d safe via N York & N Orleans the small trunk & the box of shoes. Cam says that the 12 dolls coming from S B. for the handkerchiefs you will receive in payment for Cam's bill of 72 francs — There will be coming to you a small sum additional w^{ch} we can settle thro Mr Wilkes when he remits to you. — Cam is much pleased with the gloves —

Nashoba near Memphis

20th June — 26

My sweet, kind generous friends I wish wealth lay with they who have hearts to use it! Dear loves use y^r money! I sh^d be half witted indeed. — No

⁵⁷ James Richardson had studied medicine at Edinburgh; see note 91 below.

dears y^r mite is of use where it is & c^d be of little here. — Some time hence, but I fear not /in/ this generation money may be done away with — (Read the Harmony gazette & procure John Gray's⁵⁸ pamphlet) in the mean time it cannot be done without. — But let me reply to your anxiety to cross the Atlantic. Dear loves I cannot advise. But I must at all events say *wait* — For you dear Julia I apprehend the climate — I know what you w^d reply to this & I am far from the cold counsel of setting (mere) a prolonged existence against a happy existence. I w^d rather see you die happy than live unhappy — so you see we shall not dispute about that. But dear loves Harmony must be fixed on sure foundation before you can come. It w^d then form a pleasant residence for y^r mother I too of necessity shall be often there for the white schools there & the black here will have but one interest — You & Harriet can then assist us here usefully. Now in all the work of clearing farming &c you c^d assist little or nothing, & where to put y^r mother? Here she c^d not be fixed with comfort to any of us — *I know this & will therefore never accede to it.* It must be yet a twelvemonth before Harmony can be so settled as to authorise your coming. That once settled I see no difficulty in disposing happily of every one. Between that place & this the arrangement will be easy.

For this last 6 months dear loves I have been on the verge of bankruptcy. I w^d not write it to you as I knew what w^d have been your anxiety. — Nolti's ruin was thought to have involved mine — (In consequence of the funds passing thro his hands at the time of the failure.) His bills were refused & in consequence I set off up the river to stop my orders there. — I preserved a strict silence on the subject, & hoped that Nolti's assurances m^t still prove true tho' neither I nor Mr Wilkes c^d conceive how. They have proved so — & Mr Wilkes has rec^d (neither) /nearly/ the whole sum — the residue will be paid in a few months. Say nothing of this — Nolti⁵⁹ has behaved honorably, & I do not wish any to think I had ever cause to apprehend being involved by him. — The Louisiana stock is now 2 or 3 p^r ct above par. It will probably rise — Nolti is going to Europe & will possibly be in Paris. If so the Gen^l (will) /can/ consult him for you about sale if you wish it. — The money m^t be safer elsewhere But I know not what to advise — When this establishment is thoroughly started on a good foundation & yielding interest w^{ch} I think it will (*good* interest) in 3 years, I will then consent to y^r investing it here *Not till then.* — Before settling any thing about the removal of your little sum you had better consult Mr Wilkes. —

I am busy — busy — busy. I wrote you the exchange of services demanded from me at Harmony. Mr McLure⁶⁰ promising to outfit my school with teachers &c if I will help them with my presence at the present time — I shall go there as soon [] I see thro' some business here — At present things

⁵⁸ John Gray, *A Lecture on Human Happiness . . . To which are added The Articles of Agreement Drawn Up and Recommended by the London Co-operative Society* (London, 1825).

⁵⁹ See notes 26 and 53 above.

⁶⁰ William Maclure (1763–1840); see *Dictionary of American Biography*.

here can go /on/ without me — Our people continue cheerful & happy & grow in industry. —

Farewel Loves — Have patience yet — Now it c^d not be. Let us see our way clear. — & not leap in the dark. —

fondly y^{rs} F W.—

Cam's love. She has opened the tavern until Hannah's ⁶¹ arrival — Our store is nearly built — The goods waiting to be put in —

The letter of 7 July 1826 is chiefly concerned with the possibility that one of the Garnett sisters may come to Nashoba, but Fanny Wright reports:

I am about to make a ride of 300 miles into the Indian nation & leave this to seek in Memphis a guide & interpreter from a body of Choctaws & Chickasaws now there trading. My business regards some negroes offered me for purchase by the American agent stationed in the nation.

Our store is open & tavern.

She also suggests that, if one of the sisters comes, she bring "a piece of *stout cambrie* muslin — *percale*," also three looking glasses, and beads, which "are an article of trade with the Indians," as well as a "few cheap neck silk han^{ds}," pincushions, bags, baskets, etc. Camilla adds a request for two "pieces of pink gingham," "two dozen cambrie handkerchiefs," and other supplies, including gloves, two dozen tooth brushes, and "a Seringe."

ILLNESS

Relevant portions of the next two letters deal for the most part with the health of the Wright sisters:

Miss Julia Garnett
care of Charles Wilkes Esq
New York
Redirected:
aux soins de M^r le Baron Hyde de Neuville
No. 73, rue du faubourg du Roule
à Paris

[Postmarked October 29, 1826]

Nashoba August 20th

Since writing to you last my loved friends my time has been most painfully engrossed in attending our dear Fanny during a severe attack of fever which for ten days kept us all in the greatest anxiety & alarm on her account — This

⁶¹ Unidentified; mentioned also in letter of 12 April 1825 above.

illness was in part brought on by the mental & bodily exertion she was (——) /called on/ to make during her visit to Harmony where her talents & influence had no small share in settling many important matters relative to the interests of the School and Society there. — On (our) /her/ return home in place of taking the rest she required she exposed herself too much to the midday sun & the nightly dews in attending several of our people who were sick while my numerous avocations as landlady of our tavern (prevented) (we having as yet recv^d no accounts from Hannah) (——) prevented me from aiding her in the arduous task, while to complete our disaster Mrs Flower was then but slowly recovering from the effects of a milk fever that followed (——) the weaning her child —

As you know the danger in all sickness with our Fanny is the tendency to the disease attacking her head, & on this occasion our terror was the fever settling on the brain where her greatest sufferings lay & but for the skill & yet more the admirable judgment of our friend Mr Richardson (who thoroughly understands the theory while he has never followed the practice of medicine) I am persuaded (—) we c^d not have saved her invaluable life — this admirable friend watched with me day & night by her side & seeing at once the nature of the case, treated it with a skill and ability that I am persuaded c^d not have been surpassed by the first practitioners of the age — We have now the comfort to see our dear invalid after ten days successive fever so far recovered as to sit her horse & take a gentle ride for half an hour & when I assure you that my mind is now perfectly relieved from all anxiety on her account you will share my /present/ joy without dwelling on the terrors past . . .

Your tenderly attached friend and sister
Camilla

I write this postscriptum dear loves to certify my Cam's statement that I am alive and travelling fast into health — I have now had since my ten days fever nearly as many of convalescence — I drink wine by the quart wth & bark since the fever was quelled have been my elixir vitae. — I shall abstain from the use of my head & eyes — This is my first attempt at writing — Cam & our excellent Mr. Richardson read or talk to me & other times I think of our meeting — I trust dear Harry will arrive this winter & that you will all join us next summer.

My love to y^r mother. A cabin in our woods if she w^d like /it/ c^d soon be ready — But let Harry see first. Be quite easy about me — Fond love

FW—

Miss H: Garnett
(to the care of Charles Wilkes Esq^r)
(New York)
aux soins de Mess^{rs} Deleport & Co
Banquiers à Paris

Nashoba Nov^{br} 12th [1826]

It is now *three months* since I have (po) written a line to my Julia & Harriet & tho' now rapidly recovering from the severe effects of the mental anxiety & bodily suffering I have endured during this dreadful interval I am yet little

equal to exertion of any kind & find my hand so unsteady that I must defer for another week the attempt at a *letter* & shall now only tell you dear loves that two days after writing to you early in August when I first made mention of Fanny's illness & of her then convalescent state, I was laid low with a ten days fever — the consequences were inevitable — Fanny in her attendance on me against w^h I in vain remonstrated incurred a relapse w^h our admirable friend & only medical attendant Mr Richardson too surely predicted w^d be far more formidable in its effects than her previous illness. — (& so it proved) for three months have I seen her (——) precious life in imminent danger while I the greater part of the time lay powerless beside her (a low & obstinate fever having succeeded my first attack) a sad spectator of (the) her sufferings w^h as before were chiefly in the head & /from/ the effects of w^h she will probably be yet some time in recovering, for tho' now able to join me in a daily ride on horseback during the delicious season, the attempt to write or even look in a book is instantly succeeded by pain in the head & a weakness of sight that obliges her to (forgo) forego the almost /the/ entire use of her eyes, nor can she ride out without a shade over them — this weakness time alone can remove . . .

Your devoted friend

Camilla

Mr & Mrs Flower are absent on a visit to Illinois & as the old gentleman talks of returning to Eng^d it is most probable his son will find himself obliged to return to his home to superintend their united property, in w^h case we shall lose them (in) as assistants (to) in our undertaking — Mr Richardson remains with us I trust for life — without his unremitting care & admirable skill *Fanny our beloved Fanny* w^d have been now quiet in her grave, & I asleep beside her —

A letter of 8 December 1826 from Camilla Wright to Julia Garnett reports further on convalescence:

. . . You will ere this reaches you have learnt from a few lines Fanny sent by last weeks post to the dear Gen^l that we continue *to progress* in our recovery & tho' she still continues to suffer from a tendency to pain in the head & eyes & cannot use the latter either for writing or reading without an immediate sensation of weakness she has from a state of emaciation such as I never before beheld, recovered a far greater portion of flesh than she had previous to her illness — While I am still threatened with occasional (——) /revisitings/ of the chill & fever in w^h my illness terminated I have for the last three weeks successfully combated the enemy by the profuse & daily use of baths & I am now making daily progress towards a complete restoration to health — Our dear Fanny from the causes above mentioned is reduced to the necessity of dictating all she is desirous of committing to paper & has in this manner recently completed a document relative to our future proceedings here, the nature of w^{ch} it were impossible to convey by letter & I must thus refer you my loved friends to the public papers (in w^{ch}) for the gratification w^{ch} I feel assured its perusal will afford you & you may rest assured that I shall not fail to send you a copy by the earliest opportunity — It will also please you

to learn that she at [*sic*] present engaged in completing the *second* part of her *Epicurus*⁶² w^h she commenced during her last winters solitude in Memphis, & so greatly pleased were our Harmony friends with its perusal & so urgent in their entreaties that she w^d continue /it/ that during her visit there (last) this summer she promised to furnish their Gazette with the future N^{os} of the work, & in order that the public may not lose the thread of the narrative & its reasoning they are present [*sic*] engaged in reprinting the first part a N^o appearing weekly — Alluding to Harmony leads me to quote /a/ passage Fanny lately dictated in (a) /my last/ letter to our dear Mother⁶³ w^h will at the same time convince you that your observation was correct as respected Mr Owen⁶⁴ when you observe in one of your late letters that however *insane* the world may think him, you will not accede to this decision till assured it is well founded —

“I must reply in person to y^r observations respecting Mr O — You are in error & I was in the same before I *knew* him — *very few do* know him — a few words explained to me at once the *Man* & his object & satisfied me he is to influence the condition of mankind than [*sic*] any individual that has ever existed — Mr McClure who possesses one of the soundest heads I have met with, knows him as I do & holds the same opinion of him & his principles — this however understand — My feelings here have in view the *principles* not the *Man*, no change in my sentiments towards the latter c^d ever affect my view of the truths with w^h his name will hereafter stand connected — My mother knows that I have seen enough of life & of men not to form a judgment lightly, when no personal feeling existed to blind me — The principles advocated by Owen are to change the face of this world as surely as the sun shines in the heavens — this is my calm opinion it does not rest upon the man but on the principles with w^{ch} that man stands connected — these principles have been mine ever since I learnt to think & in opening to you the secret projects of Owen, I shall have to open also my own mind — Not even to you did I ever disclose some opinions in w^{ch} I never expected to find sympathy, or conceived they could ever form more than a theory — Owen has discovered the means of connecting the theory with practice. one word opened to me a new world — reconciled me with life, & gave me hopes for the human race as high as my former despair had been deep — this is all I can say by letter — I know you will feel convinced I c^d not write thus seriously on a matter of doubtful importance.”

If we succeed in establishing /things here/ on the public footing at present in view & procure such assistants as will be requisite for the end proposed I *feel persuaded* Fanny will revisit Europe next Spring twelvemonth — we c^d not *both* be absent from the place for any length of time & I will confess the horrors

⁶² “Epicurus” had been published as *A Few Days in Athens; Being the Translation of a Greek Manuscript discovered in Herculaneum* (London, 1822); an edition published in New York, 1835, contains four additional chapters which first appeared in the *New Harmony Gazette*.

⁶³ “Mother” is Mrs. Craig Millar (see note 3 above).

⁶⁴ Robert Owen (1771–1858); see note 28 above.

of a sea voyage are to me of [*sic*] so serious that to recross the Atlantic with the idea of again returning w^d be almost too much for my philosophy —

Fanny requests me to leave her the ends of my sheet & I must add in reply to y^r query respecting the Flowers that he is a very amiable man & his society a great loss, for as I mentioned in my last they left this some weeks since on a visit to their home, from whence there is little probability of their return here owing to the proposed return of the father to Europe — Our anticipations with regard to his wife have not been so fully realized — she is not in any way suited to fill any situation in this establishment nor does she possess a mind calculated to enter into the views connected with it — I need not add that this observation is for y^r selves alone — Adieu my much loved friends & believe in my true & tender affection — Camilla

How slowly letters travel dear Loves! Y^r last do not acknowledge the few lines written in the first interregnum of my fever & now I fear you are suffering under anxiety from the long silence enforced by my sickness — I wish you c^d see me now! — fatter than you ever saw me & fast recovering strength — For the last week I have been entirely without fever in the head & my sight has improved so rapidly that I (——) give up my search after colored glasses & shall now I think soon use my eyes as formerly I rejoice to think of you as in Paris near the Gen^l Embrace him for me as I cannot write by this post. — I wrote to him by the last mail. — Mr Richardson waits for our letters — Farewel dear Loves. F W.—

If Harry ⁶⁵ sh^d come here in the spring I *may* be able to make my visit to Europe next summer or autumn & discuss matters with you all & sh^d you decide on it bring you back with me. Tell the dear Gen^l I will strive to the utmost to see him before another twelvemonth is out. —

CONVALESCENCE IN EUROPE

Here there is a seven-month gap in the collection, followed by nine relatively brief letters during the latter half of 1827, all of them written while Fanny Wright was absent from Nashoba. The first of these, dated 6 July, is a note from Camilla regarding the "anxious solicitude" with which she was awaiting "the tidings of our loved Fanny's safe arrival amongst you." A letter from Fanny Wright to Julia Garnett, dated "on board the New England in the British channel, 25th July 1827," reports on her journey:

. . . I come to you & come to you in health. My last letters were dated in March from /on board a steam boat on/ the river Ohio. That change from our mild to a colder climate instead of restoring my strength afflicted me with additional sickness. Nothing but a sea voyage seemed to promise a chance of

⁶⁵ Harriet Garnett.

recovery, & reviving sufficiently to return /home/ by [] there(f) finally decided that I /shd/ proceed to Orleans. I have left my Camilla with attached friends & good assistants & in a home she loves: I knew too that to remain in my then state w^d have been only to risk again her health by continued inquietude & to forfeit my own life. The eldest son of Mr Owen (Robert Dale Owen,⁶⁶ whose name you will have seen among the Nashoba trustees) accompanied me from our forest home. (& in New) We gained New Orleans by steamboat. There I found a Scotchwoman desirous of returning to her country. I hired her for the passage & most carefully & tenderly has she nursed me, until I am now out of all leading strings. I was lifted on board this vessel at Orleans on the 31st May. For the first three weeks my recovery was very gradual, but (that) since that time regular sea bathing with the sea air, & complete idleness have daily added to my strength size & color until now it w^d be hard to detect in me any trace of the invalid. . . .

A letter to Harriet Garnett from La Grange,⁶⁷ dated Wednesday (postmarked 17 Août 1827) deals only with travel plans and European friends. Two days later — dated La Grange, Friday morning (postmarked 18 Août 1827) — there is a report from America:

The enclosed reached me last night dear friends with two long letters from Cam giving me satisfactory details both as respects the health & business of Nashoba. Now that our correspondence is in train I feel some mental tranquillity — The immense distance between us seems for the moment annihilated & I see our forest home with its smiling faces of every hue almost as if I stood in our busy square. Our colored associate Charlotte Larieu⁶⁸ & her family are now domesticated, & cooperating in our views usefully actively & affectionately. The children both of slaves & free are now gathered together under the charge of Charlotte and [] Camilla; separated from the contamination of their parents, who they see only in presence of their directors, & waiting only the arrival of Mr Jennings⁶⁹ from Philadelphia (—) enter on a regular system of instruction . . .

Another note from La Grange (postmarked 30 Août 1827) refers to Julia Garnett's imminent marriage. Fanny Wright was still ill; from La Grange, dated "1st Sep^r 1827," she wrote:

. . . Let me however answer the anxiety of both — that I feel tolerably this morning & that the brightening sun and warming air with increased care as to

⁶⁶Robert Dale Owen (1801–1877); see *Dictionary of American Biography* and Richard William Leopold, *Robert Dale Owen, A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1969).

⁶⁷Lafayette's country seat, near Rosnay, Seine-et-Marne.

⁶⁸Also called M^{lle} Lolotte; for her daughter Josephine, see notes 89 and 91 below.

⁶⁹Robert L. Jennings, an experienced teacher, member of the New Harmony Community, and Trustee of Nashoba.

diet must soon hasten my convalescence. Much as I lament this separation sweet loves I feel I am better here for some days. . . .

I find my hair has not recovered as we supposed or is turning white again. I send you a hair that will prove the fact. I shall look more respectable as the founder of a society with grey locks . . .

On 7 October 1827, from Harrow, Fanny Wright addressed a letter to Julia (now Madame Pertz), though she was not sure that it would "find her in France," since "my Julia may be now on her way to Germany." Most of the letter consists of a "rough extract" of a letter that Fanny had sent on 3 October to a young man⁷⁰ in Paris. This reads:

D'après des circonstances de famille il est douteux que mon jeune confrère me retrouve avant (le moment ———) /le moment d'embarquement./ Je ne saurais donc peut-être chercher une explication que j'avais envisagé mais que toute réflexion faite pourrait n'être qu'un raffinement en amitié très superflu et peut-être ridicule. Je me demande pourquoi je n'ai point su donner une simple réponse à une simple question et je me dis que peut-être j'aurais su la faire alors comme à présent sans la crainte de trop dire dans un autre sens — dans l'embarras enfin — où nous jette presque toujours, et malgré nous, une question de cette nature. Mais vous m'avez prié de m'expliquer clairement. Je veux donc mettre toute scrupule de côté en vous demandant de prendre mes mots au net — et de ne pas y chercher ni plus ni moins que le sens simple et direct. Je suis libre de tout engagement comme de toute préférence et ne dois je pas ajouter, d'après la franchise que je vous ai promise, que c'est avec plaisir je vous le dis. Mais encore — prenez ces mots au juste — nous ne nous connaissons guère et je ne vous cacherai point que je chercherais de bien hautes qualités dans l'ami de mon choix: — une âme élevée, des principes arrêtées, une constance à toute épreuve, de la sensibilité sans faiblesse, de la douceur dans le commerce de la vie et de la fermeté dans les opinions; et encore — un caractère franc et confiant incapable de soupçon et de jalousie. Il y a til de la vanité a tant exiger? Je ne sais. Peut-être (il) y a til plutôt de la faiblesse. De toujours soutenir les autres m'a trop coûté. De tenir en frein les passions d'autrui s'il m'a aidé à maîtriser les miennes a trop usé de mes forces et de ma vie. Dans l'anéantissement de soi on jouit du calme et de l'approbation intérieure mais on n'est point heureux. Il y a des moments quand it coûte des efforts pour ne pas faillir. — quand soi même on sent le besoin de la sympathie et du soutien d'une âme forte et indulgente. Sais-je me faire entendre? Ai je assez et pas trop (dite) dit? Si vous ne mettiez à la lecture de ces lignes et du bon sens et de la délicatesse — Mais ce scrait me démêler votre caractère et m'infliger un désappointement léger aujourd'hui pour m'en épargner de plus sérieux dans l'avenir. Mais permettez encore que je vous rappelle les

⁷⁰ The unnamed friend appears from the Garnett's correspondence to have been Henri Dutrone (1796-1867); see *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, fasc. LXX (1969), 942-943.

motifs qui doivent seuls après tout vous décider. C'est la cause et la cause seule qui doit vous attirer. C'est la conviction qui doit vous déterminer à tourner le dos aux vieilles institutions aux usages établis, aux intérêts, aux luxes et commodités de l'ancienne société. Et surtout c'est le besoin d'aider le progrès des lumières, jeter les fondements d'une saine liberté et ouvrir les portes d'espérance et du bonheur à l'espèce humaine, qui pourra seul vous rendre propre à l'entreprise, et vous prêter les forces nécessaires pour lutter avec toute les difficultés. Examinez donc vos motifs, vos qualités. Pesez bien la valeur des choses que vous aurez à quitter, celle des principes auxquelles il faudra vous vouer et dévouer, et surtout pesez bien votre propre valeur. — et par cela je veux dire la force et la durée de votre persévérance. Persévérance et espérance c'est la devise qui nous est seule propre. Il se trouve beaucoup d'hommes de votre âge capable de s'élaner avec ardeur, mais peu, très peu, capable de persévère malgré les obstacles, et d'avancer vers le but sans détourner les yeux. Je ne cherche point à vous décourager. Bien loin. Je sens trop la nécessité de coopérateurs dans l'œuvre qui m'occupe et qui demande les efforts de tous les hommes de bien, pour assurer sa réussite. Seulement je voudrais prévenir des illusions pour vous et le désappointement pour moi. Que ceux aux moins qui forment notre petit bataillon soient *purs et sûrs*. J'aurai l'air de prêcher un peu trop peut-être. Mais je ne veux point faire d'apologies. L'importance des choses les circonstances — tout doit (m'assurer) me fournir des excuses et de plus je compte trop sur votre (bienveillance) estime pour craindre qu'elle me prête autre que des intentions bienveillantes. —

In a letter of Harriet Garnett on the following day ("Harrow, 8th Oc^r"), Fanny reports:

. . . I find much interest in my undertaking in London & much encouragement for the Gazette. Charles Lasteyrie⁷¹ takes (him) with /him/ the Prospectus,⁷² in french to publish & I have promised him an exposé of our principles & state of Nashoba, the requisites indispensable in members &c that he may circulate it among the french youth. I have the prospect of an excellent printer for our establishment. — I fear Sarah B:⁷³ only half liked my stay with her in London seeing that I was necessarily engrossed by a crowd of visitors from morning till night. And then — the setting at naught all the moral restraint & wealth of nations of political economy! In truth she was very

⁷¹ Charles-Philibert, Comte de Lasteyrie-Dusaillant (1759–1849), brother-in-law of Lafayette.

⁷² Waterman, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 123, refers to a "circular letter in French, for distribution among her friends," but a published version has not been located. In a letter dated from Paris, 10 June 1828, Harriet Garnett writes to Julia: "Dear Fanny has sent [] paper to Carnot & Lasteyrie but neither will publish the contents — & the gen^l told me last night Carnot sent him word that he w^d publish nothing without consulting him or me — I never would consent to the publication of my poor mistaken Fanny's opinion." This may be the paper in question.

⁷³ Sarah Bayley; see note 40 above.

good natured to bear with me. — Like me I fear she does but half. Fanny Trollope⁷⁴ says *only a quarter*. She was to set out today for Portsmouth. Emily Ronalds⁷⁵ (you may remember my mentioning her as having accompanied (us) me from Illinois during our first visit to Orleans) passed two or three days with us in London. I think it likely she may come out to us. She is clever & has I think good feelings — certainly quite liberal views. She wishes to arrange so as to accompany you next year. Robert Dale⁷⁶ is waiting his father at Lanark. W^{ch} vexes him I believe equally with myself as he m^t be of much use in London in helping me preach the faith. . . .

References to "Fanny" in the letter that follows are to Mrs. Frances Trollope, who accompanied Fanny Wright on the trip from England to Nashoba; once there, Mrs. Trollope decided immediately that "a residence at Nashoba was impossible." Her European friends would "feel dismayed at the savage aspect of the scene," though Fanny Wright appeared to be perfectly at home there.⁷⁷

M^e J Garnett Pertz

On board The Edward in the Mississippi
26th Dec^r 1827

Yesterday (Xmas) we entered the mouth of our great river my beloved Julia & are now sweetly gliding up it to the American (Bablon) Babylon w^{ch} we trust to reach by tomorrow noon or evening; & then to leave it by the first steamboat for Memphis. I wrote you from the Thames of my sudden departure with our loved Fanny & her two sweet little ones, Henry,⁷⁸ y^r acquaintance Hester,⁷⁹ who remembers you affectionately, & a young farmer for some years in the employ of Mr Trollope.⁸⁰ I wrote you also that it was settled Trollope sh^d pay us a visit next autumn twelvemonth. But of all this dear Fanny will write you more in detail. . . .

Rob^t Dale follows us from Liverpool with Professor Voelker & his wife (Germans). They were to have joined us in London. But our Capt giving us

⁷⁴ Frances (Milton) Trollope (1780–1863); for an account of her visit to Nashoba, see her *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Chapter III. Her letters to the Garnetts also contain an illuminating account of this episode.

⁷⁵ In a letter dated from Paris, 21 October 1828, Harriet Garnett writes: "The Miss Ronalds leave Paris today . . . young women from London of good fortune . . . Emily met with Fanny & Cam at Harmony while she was paying a visit to a brother settled in the back country who has married a Miss Flower." The brother was Hugh Ronalds, and "Miss Flower" was a sister of George Flower (see note 32 above).

⁷⁶ I.e., Robert Dale Owen (see note 66 above).

⁷⁷ Frances Trollope, *op. cit.* (note 74).

⁷⁸ Henry Trollope (1811–1834), second son of Mrs. Trollope.

⁷⁹ Esther Rust, Mrs. Trollope's maid.

⁸⁰ Thomas Anthony Trollope (1774–1835), husband of Fanny Trollope; see *Dictionary of National Biography*.

but one day's (of) warning, we settled it was better for Rob^t to join them in Liverpool & take their passage with his father & brothers. They must be close behind us. I expect more valuable aids during the course of next, or the following year. -- The young society for the propagation of our principles opened in Paris promises to produce the best results, Charles Lasteyrie is one of its Presidents. I sent them an exposé in french of the /object and principles of/ Nashoba — A similar one was demanded of me in London, & I have during the voyage prepared it in the form of a circular address to the friends of human improvement in all countries. It is full & explicit. I send one copy to the Paris society for translation, & the other to London. — I shall forward it to you & y^r friend as soon as I can get it printed.⁸¹ It being too long to multiply copies in Mss. You will imagine how my heart beats faster & faster as the distance between us & Nashoba lessens — My impatience becomes painful. Farewel Love. I leave to Fanny to speak of our mild & prosperous voyage. Farewel fondly. Share my love & good wishes with y^r friend. — Frances Wright.

A CHANGE IN OPERATIONS

The following letter from Fanny Wright to Harriet Garnett, which is printed here in full, evidently was not the first that she wrote to her friend after returning to Nashoba, since it refers more than once to "my last [letter]."

Nashoba. March 20th 1828. —

How welcome is your letter my loved Harriet! Anxiously had I looked for it for some weeks past. — I know not how my letters notifying my departure from London had not reached you as I sent one by the post as well as one left to go with the portrait — My reason for not writing you of it or rather of F T's sooner was that she requested me not to do it. My own was only positively settled 24 hours before I was on shipboard & her's only five days; so in fact I c^d only have written of it one post earlier than I did. She expected always something w^d prevent her voyage & wished it therefore not known or talked about. There was no want in her of confidence in you but apprehended accidents. I at first used every argument to dissuade her from an enterprise for w^{ch} I thought her unfit but during my absence in Sussex having nearly brought it to bear & she being decided I aided her of course as a friend sh^d. The night we weighed anchor with the consent of Mr. T: the young painter H⁸² came

⁸¹ "Explanatory Notes respecting the Nature and Object of the Institution at Nashoba and the Principles upon which it is founded: Addressed to the Friends of Human Improvement in all Countries and of all Nations," *New Harmony Gazette*, 30 January 1828; also published in *Memphis Advocate*, cf. Perkins and Wolfson, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 192.

⁸² Auguste Hervieu, an exhibitor at London galleries from 1819 to 1848, returned to England with the Trollopes and illustrated Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manners of*

on board leaving the picture to be forwarded by a friend. On the voyage I discovered him to be totally unsuited for anything but his art & before our arrival here told him that (I) such was my opinion. As I wrote in my last it soon ended in the party moving to Cincinnati, to w^{ch} we gave all the assistance in our power. She (alone) has /a/ heart good enough to correct her head. But enough of this in writing dear Love.

I am pleased that you are pleased with Dutrone.⁸³ The latest news I have from him is a line brought me by Rob^t Dale from London. There is some mystery in this Greek expedition w^{ch} gives me some disquiet. I sent him letters at his request previous to my leaving Eng^d for English naval Commanders in the Levant station w^{ch} I obtained thro Joseph Hume⁸⁴ & Blaguire (our old acquaintance as wildly Irish as ever) He wished his intended journey then not spoken of so that I did not even write of it to you. And whenever I do not write of any thing to you it is always either that I am not at liberty to do so, or that I cannot trust the matter to paper. Always so interpret any silence of mine /on any subject/ interesting to myself or to any one interesting to you. As I told you often when last together I am suspicious of ink & paper & hold them a poor medium of communication for subjects of any delicacy. — On y^r side dear Love much less is necessary than on mine. Once in the post office no accident inconvenient to any one can befall y^r letter. The worst can be their loss at sea or in one of our forest rivers. But sh^d mine at any time not reach y^r hand they may others. And then other accidents happen, so my loved Harry you must come to us when exchange of thought is so sweet & easy. C^d you not come with Dutrone if any thing sh^d prevent or defer the voyage of Emily Ronalds.⁸⁵ By the way dear Love I sent you from London her address & wished you to correspond with her on the subject. Her address Heath Lodge Croydon Surrey (*Miss Ronalds.*) Her sister also unmarried, & very amiable (I judge both from her appearance & all I have ever heard of her), will accompany her. Emily wished to arrange with you so as to come together & I wrote you twice to this effect from London. It will give you some insight into Emily's energy of character that she has sent 300 *ls* to the Trustees of this place & that she has formed & conducted in her neighborhood an excellent infant school & taken her stand in favor of human improvement & liberal principles in opposition to old friends & relatives. — I grieve much that my letters sh^d have missed w^{ch} spoke of her to you. — We first knew her in this country

the Americans. In her letter of 8 October 1827 (a portion not printed above), Frances Wright had written, "Hervieu is a beautiful artist — I think he will succeed. I have given him one sitting or standing rather." From the Garnett letters it appears that he was associated with Mrs. Trollope for many years. The last mention of him tells of his approaching marriage to a Swiss girl in 1848, as reported to Harriet Garnett by a friend.

⁸³ For Dutrone, see note 70 above.

⁸⁴ Joseph Hume (1777–1855), Member of Parliament, 1812 and 1818–55; see *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁸⁵ See note 75 above.

three years since when she accompanied us to New Orleans from her brother's in Illinois. I wish you c^d come together. I (ex) On turning the page I find I have written on a sheet on w^{ch} I had made notes in reading Sismondi's ⁸⁶ Political Economy.

I explained in my last the change we had found it advisable to make in our operations here. leaving cooperation in the strict sense of the word to the next generation & demanding of each of our associates to bring a small income in money. 100 \$\$ per annum to be thrown by each into a common fund for food & kitchen service. Our cook being hired from the institution. Other expenses will be left free to each individual & with us do not amount to 100\$\$ additional. 300\$\$ per annum w^d allow each individual to travel w^{ch} some of us will generally do two or three months in the summer or to indulge in any other luxury they may fancy. The property gifted to the Trustees stands henceforth /apart/ to be devoted to the formation of a school; we having renounced all personal claim upon its proceeds for support as given in my deed. I said in my last that I sh^d forward immediately the communication from the Trustees on the subject, & have delayed writing from week to week in the expectation of receiving it from the printer. But want of Types w^{ch} he daily expected to be supplied has finally obliged us to send to Harmony by Rob^t Dale from whence Cam will forward (it) you a copy. She & Whitbey ⁸⁷ will go there by steamboat in ten days from this. Whence they will probably make a journey on horseback with Rob^t into the Cumberland mountains while Whitbey will also make arrangements with a good mechanic to come down the river & bring what may be necessary for the building of our houses. He will agree for four houses or rooms with an open entry between, & broad piazza on either front, the rooms 15 by 17. The expense to each, plain furniture & finishing included will not exceed 500 doll^s. With this outlay of capital for houseroom & two hundred dollars p^r annum of income we shall here be rich, tho 100 more, m^t be acceptable for travelling.

And when shall we know dearest Harry that you are coming? My happiness under any circumstances can never be complete until you are with us. Cam & I say every day — "Our life w^d just suit dear Harriet." (I) /How/ often I shall wish you with me this summer w^{ch} I expect to pass quite alone, except occasional visitors & until Whitbey's brother ⁸⁸ arrive w^{ch} will be probably early in July — An excellent being, goodness & quietness itself. a philosopher

⁸⁶ John Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi (1773–1842). A prolific writer, he published *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique* in 1819 (2^e éd., Paris: Delaunay, 1827), which he followed by his *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge* and the even more compendious *Histoire des français*, which occupied him until his death. He married Jessie Allen, a cousin by marriage of the Garnett sisters, and there are a number of letters from him in Julia and Harriet Garnett's correspondence. There is also a copy (in Julia Garnett's handwriting) of a portion of a letter from Fanny Wright to him, apparently dating from the summer of 1827; he was an outspoken critic of her ideas.

⁸⁷ Richeson Whitbey, who married Camilla Wright, 15 December 1827.

⁸⁸ John Whitbey.

by nature & imbued with all liberal opinions. Business detains him at present in Kentucky. Our present no is thus confined to the 2 Whitbey's Robt Dale Cam & myself. Richardson as I wrote you is at Memphis. We have purchased a lot there on w^{ch} we shall (have) build as soon as possible a small house & stable. He & Josephine⁸⁰ will then occupy the premises & receive us when business takes us there, w^{ch} will make him again as it were resident among us. Unless indeed he sh^d be able to procure a lucrative situation in New-Orleans, in w^{ch} case he w^d go there with a view to lay by money until he have wherewithal to support himself & companion on our present plan. We look to establish our printing office & paper in Memphis whenever we have wherewithal to start it.

I shall send you the Harmony gazette containing the Editor's remarks on my address & copy for you those of Benj: Lundy⁸⁰ in the Baltimore Genius of emancipation who reprints (it) /the address/ from the Harmony. I send this because you have seen his former observations on poor Richardson's very foolish communication.⁸¹ Richardson now condemns himself if possible more than I have done & says that all my reprimands have been much too mild.

In case of y^r (being) making any arrangements for joining us shortly I sh^l repeat some directions. By way of New Orleans is the least expensive & troublesome. You sh^d leave the European port *not earlier* than the last days of Sept nor later than the (early) 15th of Dec^r Arrived at New Orleans you have only to put yrself & luggage on board a steamboat w^{ch} will land you at Memphis. There enquire for Marcus Winchester⁸² our good friend Mayor of the town

⁸⁰ Josephine Prevot (see Perkins and Wolfson, *op. cit.* [note 2 above], p. 187), daughter of Charlotte Lariou; see note 68 above and note 91 below.

⁸¹ Benjamin Lundy (1789-1839), editor and publisher of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, 1821-1835; see *Dictionary of American Biography*.

⁸² As reported in Waterman, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 113-118: "As the trustee in charge of the correspondence of Nashoba, he [James Richardson] sent to Benjamin Lundy, shortly after the departure of Owen and Miss Wright, extracts from the records of the society, with 'permission to give every degree of publicity to them' through the columns of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*." These extracts included a record, for 17 June 1827, reading: "Met the slaves — James Richardson informed them that, last night, Mamselle Josephine and he began to live together; and he took this occasion of repeating to them our views on color, and on the sexual relation." Josephine was a quadroon daughter of Mamselle Lolotte (i.e., Charlotte Lariou, a free colored woman who came to Nashoba as a teacher). Some ten years later (1836 or 1837), a letter from Richardson to Fanny Wright quoted in Perkins and Wolfson, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 332-333, reports that he was then a tutor in the family of a planter named McGoven near Memphis, which enabled him "to fill the measure of justice to my most amiable wife and two promising children, by their emigration to Haiti, where their foot will be on their native heath and their name no longer nigger. I shall follow them whenever the separation shall become intolerable, by which time they will have built a nest and I shall have a few feathers to soften it when I go."

⁸³ Marcus Winchester (1796-1856), Mayor of Memphis, 1827-29; see James E.

& postmaster. He will show you to our house w^{ch} will be then built & where I trust you will find Richardson & perhaps one of us. But at all events enquire for Winchester (you) /who/ will aid you with a horse or send out to us that we may ride in for you.

The D's account of Mary⁹³ does not surprise me she did not strike me as a person of sensibility & my first impression was decided disappointment I resisted & lost this, & became interested in /&/ for herself tho the interest excited by her parentage & history has always held a large share in the interest I feel in her. The D's account may be all true (& my own recalled impressions w^d rather go to confirm it) but it makes much against *them*. Not only have I seen them evince the fondest kindness for Mary, but Isabel's letters, w^{ch} I have seen, are in a strain of the fondest & most dependent friendship. Deficient sensibility is a negative quality but hypocrisy is (an) /a/ positive one of the worst char^r 'Tis a bad & hollow world my Harriet as it is now whatever /it/ (I) may be hereafter, & (every) all I hear of or from it makes me rejoice in the breadth of the wilderness that separates Nashoba from it.

I shall enclose the Harmony paper to the Gen^l in case you sh^d have left Paris. If less spirited than those of the Harmony Editor the observations of Lundy are not a little so considering that his paper depends on the favor of religious, & very high toned religious, friends of the Negro. We have had a good many visitors since the public spread of the address as well as letters. Consistent liberty has more secret friends than appears to the eye of the world. I have had some very friendly correspondence with Mr Wilkes, I have not his answer to that forwarding the address & in w^{ch} I left the conducting our future intercourse entirely to him & that whatever conduct he m^t decide upon I sh^d consider as conscientious on his part as I trusted he w^d consider mine. I have not yet written to M Sismondi but intend doing do as soon as I can enclose the /last/ communication of the Trustees along with the address it being necessary they sh^d be seen together. I am always fearful least the former sh^d bring candidates inadmissable on our present principle w^{ch} demands from all an income formerly demanded only of some.

Cam will write from Harmony. Until you come to us write frequently & give us news of our sweet Julia. My visit to you dear Harry seems like one of the dreams of my fever & all the events connected /with it/ are about as strange as fever visions. Farewell my sweet sister — Fond love to Julia. Affectionate remembrances to good M^e Dupont & compliments where you please.

Roper, "Marcus Winchester and the Earliest Years of Memphis," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XXI (1962), 326-351.

⁹³Mary is Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin) Shelley (1797-1851). Among the Garnett letters are copies (in Julia's handwriting) of a letter from Mary Shelley to Fanny Wright (12 September 1827) and of one from Fanny Wright to Mary Shelley (15 September 1827). The "D's" are the Douglasses; Isabel (mentioned subsequently in this paragraph) was Mrs. Sholto Douglas (née Isabella Robinson). They were neighbors of the Garnetts in Paris and are frequently mentioned in the correspondence.

But perhaps this will find you /beyond/ the Rhine & beyond the circle of my acquaintance restored to the arms of our fond Julia. My heart blesses her & you

The last four letters in the collection are printed below in full. With the exception of one brief postscript, they are by Camilla, who had now become Camilla Wright Whitbey.

[To] Harriet Garnett

New Harmony April 26th [1828]

I arrived here a few days ago my much loved Harriet having left our dear Fanny (at last) at Nashoba in good health & spirits, but you will believe that nothing short of the conviction that change of climate was indispensably requisite to renovate my own & my husbands health could have induced me to leave the dear lamb in her present solitude — The tidings of my union with our associate Richeson Whitbey will ere this have reached you & no doubt after the perusal of my phil(l)ippic against matrimony,⁹² will not a little have surprized you. — I shall only observe that the circumstances which induced me to conform to the legal ceremony of marriage were of a very peculiar nature & such as it were impossible to explain by letter — Should you my loved Harry persevere in your project of joining us in our forest home you shall then if you care to hear it learn all the particulars connected therewith in the mean time it will I feel assured please you to learn that I am happy in my connection with one who shares all my views & opinions & whose many admirable qualities & devoted attachment have (ende) endeared to my heart — He left me here to proceed to Louisville Kentucky to see a favourite brother & bring him here to me — In the mean time I pass my time very pleasantly in the society of the Owens & one or two other very agreeable individuals here, with whom I take long rides every day through this beautiful neighborhood & thereby daily increase in flesh & strength which were much impaired by my long illness & subsequent anxiety on Fanny's account —

You will grieve with us to learn that our admirable friend R. D. Owen is for the present prevented from joining our association at Nashoba — an unforeseen loss in his pecuniary affairs oblige [sic] him for the present to remain

⁹² Camilla's "philippic against matrimony" presumably was her letter of 13 September 1827 to Charles Wilkes, in which, defending James Richardson, she described marriage as "one of the most subtle inventions of priestcraft for poisoning the purest source of human felicity and fostering and perpetuating the sad catalogue of misery and crime which more or less darkens the records of all nations wherein the law has undertaken to interfere in a matter utterly beyond its control . . ." She added that she was sending a copy of this letter to the Garnetts. Cf. Waterman, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 118-119. Charles Wilkes's letter to Julia, commenting on Camilla's letter, is dated 15 October 1827. Camilla's letter to Julia passed through the hands of Harriet Garnett, who commented on it and on Wilkes's letter in a letter to her sister (27 November 1827). Both letters are in the collection deposited in Houghton Library by the present writer.

here, where by application to business he hopes in a short time to secure his independence —

Fanny is yet unacquainted with this unlooked for misfortune for such I know she will feel it as I & all must do who looked forward to enjoying his society — We are all fondly attached to him & he to us & we mutually deplore the necessity which must thus part us for a time yet unknown as to duration. I shall probably remain here during the summer months & shall if possible dispatch John Whitbey to Nashoba to assist Fanny. —

And now what shall I say to my loved Julia? — that I rejoice in her happiness she will not doubt, but when I think how widely our destinies are parted, I sigh, & vainly wish our lots had been together cast — with the ties that now bind me to this country there is little prospect of my revisiting Europe where she is permanently fixed — but I will not dwell on this painful reflection, but recall that great improbabilities do sometimes occur & that better hopes may yet be in store for us — sweet friend my thoughts often turn to you in your new home where I wish I could follow you in your daily pursuits & above all see & know him who has won your gentle heart & who I am assured can fully estimate the treasure —

I shall adress this letter to you dear [] under cover to the Gen^l being quite at a loss as to where it may find you — I trust with our Julia & that you will arrange with her as to your future plans which I (trust) I shall feel most anxious to know — Write to us dear love on this & all else relative to your views for the present & future — Mine as you know are fixed at Nashoba & if that fails, *here*, where I could enjoy a greater degree of liberty mental & moral than in any other spot on earth save /at/ my home — the country is *beautiful*, the land most rich & the situation perfectly healthy to those who know to take the precautions always requisite for the preservation of health in this western country — Robert Dale desires to be affectionately remembered to you both — how good! how excellent he is! — I feel towards him as though he replaced the brother we lost in early life —

Ever your fondly attached friend
Camilla Wright Whitbey

THE END OF NASHOBA

During the seven months between the preceding letter and the next in the collection, it was decided to abandon the Nashoba experiment.

[To] Miss Harriet Garnett

Nashoba Nov^r 20th 1828

It needed not your gentle reproof, dearest Harriet to remind me of my sins towards you as a correspondent, & in excuse for my long silence I have only to plead the harrassing uncertainty in which my mind was kept during my stay at Harmony as regarded /our/ future plans & prospects concerning which I

could not bring myself to write to distant friends until the mist /in/ w^{ch} /they/ appeared enveloped sh^d be in some measure dispersed — But before entering on this topic I must enquire concerning the truth of a report conveyed to me a few days since thro' the medium of your nephew C. Stone intimating the death of your Mother⁶⁵ but which he had learnt in a manner that left some doubt in his mind as to the accuracy of the statement — On referring to the letter which I received from you a few weeks since previous to my leaving Harmony I find my impression confirmed as to your projected journey into Germany having been arrested by her illness, which though you do not mention as being of an alarming nature at the time you wrote, might ultimately have proved so — How far (such) or in what manner such an event sh^d it indeed have occurred may affect your future plans in life I feel at a loss to conjecture but conclude your first impulse will be to join Julia & decide with her as to your future measures. —

There was a time sweet Harriet when I should have said come — share a sisters home at Nashoba, but that once pleasing vision is ended & I find myself again about to be launched into the world as yet uncertain whither I may turn my steps — How this marvellous change has been brought about, it were long to tell & to give you any just conception of the circumstances which have led to such a decision I must recur to the period of my arrival at Harmony last Spring when I believe I mentioned to you the sad involvement in which I found the affairs of Mr Owen, & the consequent (of) necessity of our friend R. D.⁶⁶ abandoning for an indefinite period his intention of joining our then projected association at Nashoba & devoting himself exclusively to the unravelling the tangled web which he found awaiting him at Harmony & w^h threatened not only (the) /his/ pecuniary independence, but that of his brothers, he having at once renounced all his claim & share in the Lanark property in favor of his Mother & sisters w^h in addition to that w^h they held in their own names secured to them a competency for life — feeling moreover warmly interested in the continuation of the Gazette the editorship of w^h he resumed immediately on his return to Harmony, he found with dismay that in addition to the expenses attending its publication (he) it had sunk 400 dollars the preceding year during his stay in Europe & promised a yet heavier loss for that w^h was to come — this (he knew) he knew in the existing state of his fathers affairs he could not in any way meet & in this dilemma I wrote to Fanny then alone at Nashoba, entreating her to come up to Harmony & discuss with us the measures to be pursued under such an accumulation of difficulties —

She came accordingly & at once decided that the Gazette at least for one year more sh^d not fall to the ground & immediately affixed her name to it as Editor conjointly with R. D. — She w^d not however pledge herself to carry it on at Harmony but claimed the privilege of removing it to Nashoba or any-

⁶⁵ Charles Stone was the son of Ann Maria, eldest daughter of John and Mary Garnett, who married his father (also named Charles Stone) in 1804. The report of Mrs. Garnett's death was in error; she lived until December 1848.

⁶⁶ Robert Dale Owen (see note 66 above).

where else as she sh^d deem advisable for its further & more successful promulgation — To this her co-editor offered no opposition & promised on his part to devote himself exclusively to its interests so soon as he (sh^d in union with his brother William to whom conjointly with him their father had given full powers) (to) /succeed in/ extricating his property from the hands of a set of rascals to whom he had consigned its management, either thro' the medium of law or compromise — Mr Owen in the month of June embarked for Europe leaving Rob^t to fight his battles, w^h he did most ably if not as successfully as his efforts merited, while at the sam[]e considering the unparalleled advantages of the [], the arrangements finally acceded to were quite of as favorable a nature as I had anticipated — During the four months w^h this business impended Fanny devoted herself exclusively to the superintendance of the Gazette (till) w^h by the way from the moment her name was affixed to it gained not less than two or 3 subscribers weekly —

Early in August our friend Mr Jennings⁶⁷ arrived in Harmony equally devoted in feeling to the promulgation of liberal principles as when we parted from him upwards of two years ago — R. D. immediately suggested to him the establishing a school at Harmony on the plan of instruction w^h he is so admirably qualified to conduct, & having ceded to him the necessary buildings for the purpose he published in the Gazette a prospectus of the plan of education he intended to pursue — while awaiting the result of this intimation he was under the necessity of returning to the town of Cincinnati where he had left his family & had necessarily many arrangements to make previous to a removal to Harmony — previous to his departure he suggested to Fanny as a means not (of) /only for/ promulgating & more fully explaining her views to the public but of greatly augmenting the number of subscribers to the Gazette that she accompany him to the town of Cincinnati & there give a course of public lectures —

The prejudice regarding her opinions was there as elsewhere so strong that her first lecture was but thinly crowded & scarcely one female form was to be descried — The 2nd the house was crowded to the utmost & at the 3rd upwards of five hundred individuals were obliged to (retun) return without accommodation (w^h induced) w^{ch} induced some of the leading characters in the town to request Miss W— in future to lecture in the Theatre where a much larger portion of the inhabitants w^d have it in their power to attend — The whole town was in a state of excitement men & women crowded to listen to the heretical doctrines of the "Priestess" of Infidelity as the priests style her who warned their flocks against the dangers awaiting them, but all in vain — Having delivered 4 lectures she was publicly requested to repeat them w^{ch} she did with renewed success & increased interest — I was not there to see & hear but all even her most violent opposers expressed their admiration & wonder at her transcendent talents as a public speaker & almost admitted her eloquence to be irresistible — her subject, her manner, her voice, her appearance alike called forth repeated bursts of applause from her audience & her heretical doctrines

⁶⁷ Robert L. Jennings (see note 69 above).

on religion & morals were received with feelings of the deepest interest & curiosity —

a similar success attended her in Louisville Vincennes & all other places where she lectured — upwards of two hundred additional subscribers have been the result of the short tour she made on that occasion, but w^h has been attended by results far more important to the cause she has at heart, that of the diffusion of liberal principles & the awakening the attention of the public to the necessity of establishing national schools for the rising generation & thus rescuing them from the ignorance & degradation of the larger portion of the present —

On returning to Harmony we strongly urged her not allowing the spark she had so auspiciously awakened to be extinguished, but that she sh^d devote the six ensuing months to visiting the larger cities of the Union & thereby more effectually trying the temper of the times — Our admirable our amiable friend Jennings not meeting with the encouragement he had anticipated as respected scholars, owing chiefly to the prejudice existing in the public mind respecting the possibility of any thing good proceeding from Harmony, where so many fruitless attempts had been made, proposed to accompany her during her excursion & one in every way more admirably qualified for such a task could not be found having himself for some years been in the habit of lecturing in public & being thus intimately acquainted with all the arrangements necessary on such occasions & personally known & highly esteemed by all the liberals in each city they will visit —

Before setting off on her peregrination it was necessary to attend to the situation of this property w^{ch} had been sadly neglected during our absence the man to whom we had entrusted its superintendance having completely betrayed his trust & so alarming had been the reports from our friend Mr Winchester during Fanny's absence at Cincinnati that Whitbey had some weeks previous to her return left Harmony & travelled thither on horseback — My situation rendered it impossible for me to accompany him & I awaited at Harmony Fanny's return — She immediately decided on coming first to Nashoba making such arrangements there as exigencies required & we fortunately met with a small steam boat which notwithstanding the very low state of the Mississippi (in company with Mr Jennings) in five days to Memphis. On acquainting Whitbey with her intention of passing the ensuing six months in the manner mentioned above & devoting herself exclusively to the editorship of the Gazette, she farther acquainted him with the great probability of Nashoba no longer being her residence as she sh^d place the Gazette where it []^d appear to her to promise of its becoming to [] & those concerned in it not only a source of useful but profitable employment — whether this w^d ultimately prove to be at Harmony or the Eastward she knew not nor could know till she had seen & examined for herself —

All hopes of an association at Nashoba being ended she thought it w^d be a poor appropriation of her talents to sit down & devote herself to the emancipation of a few slaves, besides its being an employment for w^h she was altogether

& in every respect incompetent — It was therefore her intention to seek an individual who w^d undertake that charge (to) /for the accomplishment of/ w^{ch} she felt herself in every way pledged, it was her earnest desire that he sh^d be that individual provided it were a task he w^d be willing to (——) engage /in/ (—) As I had from the first told him I again repeated that no circumstances & no tie that I sh^d ever form in life c^d separate me from Fanny & that wherever she resided there I sh^d be also — With this prospect before him he nevertheless decided to remain here & superintend the property at least for the space of one year from next Xmas during w^b period Fanny w^d have time to make other arrangements if required —

She left us /in/ a few days to proceed to N. York & other cities on her journey to the eastward while I in the mean time shall remain here till next spring when I shall expect to learn her decision as regards her future destination & my own — As I look to be confined in Jan^y to reconcile Fanny to leaving me alone at such a time I promised her to remove into Memphis to a most commodious little dwelling w^{ch} I had built there last summer with a view to the interests of this place — I shall have my good friend M^{lle} Lolotte^{us} with whose name you are acquainted for my next neighbour & from her I shall receive a mothers care & attention —

Adieu my sweet Hud my paper will hold no more — Sh^d this find you in Germany my loved Julia will bear in mind this is addressed equally to her as yourself — Your tenderly attached

C Wright Whitbey

[To] Mrs Pertz

New York August 1st 1829

I feel a sad delinquent towards my loved Julia & Harriet whose thoughts have I know been often winged to the friend (of) who has been apparently so forgetful (— — —) of those who have so many claims on her affection, /&/ which however appearances may disprove the assertion, time has not lessened nor absence chilled — in the midst of the engrossing cares & painful anxieties which have been my portion for some months past I felt no impulse to impart them to my distant friends, of whose tender sympathy I felt too well assured, to seek to awaken it on my behalf — Now that I am once more united to our loved Fanny & that I find her engaged in pursuits so well calculated to promote the cause of human improvement & so well suited to her taste & talents, I begin to feel as though life were not without its solace, nor its evils unmixed with good — and then I am blessed with a lovely boy, who promises to be all that a mothers heart could wish — he is thought greatly to resemble his aunt whose name he bears, & could you look on his large blue eyes beaming with sweetness & intelligence, his broad forehead, his round & dimpled cheeks you would think with me, that he is much more her child than mine — dear Julia you also are a parent & know & can sympathise with the engrossing interest these little beings kindle in their mothers heart, their very helplessness endears them yet more to

^{us} i.e., Charlotte Larieu (see note 68 above).

us, while to watch the gradual development of their powers & faculties affords a daily source of interest & pleasure — during my visit to Mrs Trollope when on my way from the west I saw in a letter from you dear Harriet an account of our Julia's loss in the death of her little girl, but was comforted to learn that the boy was a promising babe & I trust will live to be a comfort & blessing to his mother — what would I not give to see the lamb & fold him to my heart which w^d soon feel towards him as to my own — what do you call him & who is he like, you say he too /has/ blue eyes, & we might perhaps discover some other points of resemblance between him & my son, more especially if there be any truth in the opinion that the resemblance is through the imagination of the mother, for I feel assured our /thoughts/ were not unfrequently engrossed by the same image —

How strange are the events of this life, here I am addressing you from the banks of the east river where tho' the Atlantic still rolls between us, it seems as though we might yet meet again in scenes so familiar to us both — though within 5 miles of the city we feel as tranquil & secluded as in the forests of the far off west, none seeking our society save a few congenial & sufficiently adventurous spirits, who will so far hazard their popularity as to (seek) hold communion with Frances Wright — yet think not she is destitute of friends & such as are heart & soul devoted to the cause she advocates, that of the amelioration of the condition of man, to be effected by means applicable only to the rising generation whose habits & opinions may be influenced & controlled by a rational & practical system of education — in the public lectures w^{ch} have produced & continue to excite such terror & alarm among the clergy & their adherents & such excitement & admiration among her more intelligent hearers, she has sought more especially to awaken their attention & direct their efforts towards the establishing a plan of *national instruction* accessible to all classes of society from the highest to the lowest — her eloquence as a public speaker surpasses /all/ I have ever before heard in man or woman & if life remains to her will I feel persuaded be the means of effecting a great moral revolution throughout this country — subscriptions to the Free Enquirer are daily on the increase & promise eventually to secure an adequate remuneration to enable its conductors to devote their time & talents for its farther support & circulation —

August 19th — Alas! Alas! how shall I paint my bitter sorrow & anguish — my son, my lovely babe, who was playing at my feet when I wrote the above, now sleeps in the cold earth while his wretched & bereaved mother yet lives to bewail her irrecoverable loss — a sudden attack of the cholera infantum, connected with teething, terminated fatally on the 11th day during w^{ch} time every remedy suggested by my own experience in similar complaints aided by a skilful physician proved inadequate to surmount the violence of the disease — Fanny returned from her late visit to Boston in the midst of my distress but while I had still hope to see my precious lamb rescued from the impending danger — Indeed but for her presence & soothing care & tenderness, I sh^d have been bereft of reason or of life by this stroke so sudden, so severe — though

now somewhat more composed, there are moments in which grief will have its way & that my shattered nerves & frame seem to indicate a speedy termination to my sufferings— Can time ever efface from my agonized soul that last moment in which I wiped the death drops from his beautiful brow, & inhaled the parting breath of the precious being, that for seven months had sucked his nourishment from my breast— Oh never! never can I overcome this loss— Oh could you have seen him— his brilliant eye beaming with sweetness & intelligence beyond what is usual at so early an age— his finely developed forehead, which recalled to some of my friends the busts of Napoleon Buonaparte, you w^d not marvel at the hopes that I cherished for a being apparently endowed with nature's choicest gifts & placed in circumstances in every way calculated to favor their development— Forgive me my sweet friends if I harrass your feelings in seeking to alleviate my own by dwelling on recollections so dear so precious to a mother's heart— I will write again when my mind is more composed at present I must resign the pen to another hand

C Wright Whitbey

Dearest love we have been long long without news from you. The Gen^l in his last letter says that Harriet was gone to join you. I want to hear of y^r remaining babe. May you be more happy in it than has been our poor Camilla in her little creature of beauty & promise! It is sad to centre the affections too strongly & closely in beings so fragile yet how to help it! Farewel dearest. May all good be with you. Y^{rs} fondly F W.

[To] Madame Pertz

New York Nov^{br} 1st 1829

Amidst the engrossing & multiplied occupations in which Fanny was engaged previous to her departure on a long & distant voyage she sought in vain a leisure moment to acquaint her distant friends with the circumstances which have obliged her to absent herself from the scene of her exertions here, & that too at a moment when the public mind seemed awakening to a lively sense of the importance of the views to which she had for some months past been calling their attention in the public lectures (as) /she/ delivered here, in Philadelphia Boston, & some smaller towns in the vicinity of those cities—

Previous to her departure she more especially requested me dearest Julia to acquaint you with the object of her present journey & if possible to convey to you a copy of the work she has recently published here,⁹⁰ comprising her whole course of lectures— ignorant of your address I know of no other chance of its reaching you, than by sending it with my letter to Gen^l Lafayette, & I do so the more readily as I understood from E. Trollope during my visit to her this spring, that it was Harriet's intention to pass the coming winter in Paris— It has occurred to me on frequently seeing in the daily Papers, vessels advertised from this port to Hamburg, that we might thereby open a much more direct & speedy mode of communication, as the distance as appears on the map from there to Hanover must be very trifling— at present I feel al-

⁹⁰ *Her Course of Popular Lectures* (New York, 1829).

together doubtful as to my letters ever reaching you & have yet to learn whether you have rec^d one I addressed to you shortly after that sad event which has /so/ embittered each hour of my existence, that every avenue of pleasure or satisfaction in life seems closed to me forever — I allude to the death of my lovely boy, that fair child of promise with whom lies buried so many fondly cherished hopes & blighted expectations — as yet time has done but little to assuage my grief, or ease my (sorrow) sorrowing heart, nor is it surprizing that my health sh^d have suffered severely in the conflict — Often in my souls desolation have my thoughts turned to thee sweet Julia as one who could sympathise with my affliction & pour the balm of comfort into my wounded spirit, & but for the duties which for the present stay me here I had perhaps sought relief to my bereaved heart, in a change of scene, & a recurrence to ties & affections which however broken & interrupted, yet ever present in my mind & endeared to my heart by many precious & cherished recollections — sh^d circumstances lead me to recur to this thought, say, dearest Julia would it afford you pleasure to see an old friend, for *ten years* have now elapsed since we first met in this city? or is your heart so filled with engrossing objects of interest & tenderness, that the place I once held there, is mine no longer? —

but to recur the immediate object of my present communication — Having after a 4 years experiment /ascertained/ that the Slaves at Nashoba, *cannot* at the low state of agricultural produce w^h has prevailed from their first arrival there, raise a sufficiency for their food & clothing & far less lay (by) by a surplus fund for their emancipation, & are moreover a constant source of anxiety & pecuniary loss, she has finally come to the decision of freeing herself from all farther responsibility regarding them, by their removal to a free country, & after consulting with many experienced individuals as to the most eligiable location, she has resolved on (—) conveying them to Hayti, & it is with that view that she last week left this for N. Orleans in company with our excellent friend M. Piquetal¹⁰⁰ whose experience & familiar acquaintance in early life with the west India islands renders him a valuable assistant in her present undertaking. Her presence having been long desired & solicited in Albany & the principal towns in the western part of this state, she has chosen that now much frequented route in preference to the more direct one by Baltimore & Wheeling — We have already rec^d tidings from Albany & lastly [] in both which places she has lectured to crowded houses — On reaching Pittsburgh by way of the Lakes, sh^d the waters of the Ohio admit of her taking steamboat, she will easily accomplish her object of reaching N.Orleans early in Dec^{br} w^h will enable her to deliver her course of lectures in that city previous to her embarking for Hayti, the first of Jan^r when it is arranged that Mr Whitbey under whose superintendence the Slaves are at present shall convey them by steam boat from Memphis to N.Orleans.

In the mean time the Free Enquirer is continued under the superintendance of

¹⁰⁰ William Piquetal (1779–1855); his full name was Guillaume Sylvan Casimir Piquetal d'Arusmont, and he resumed the family name, D'Arusmont, upon his marriage to Frances Wright in 1831.

your acquaintance R.D.Owen & his coadjutor R.L.Jennings & to their charge & direction Mr Phiquepal has confided his pupils three very fine & promising youths who in conjunction with Dale Owen a younger brother of Robert, are the printers of the paper — I believe I mentioned in my former letter that Fanny had established her residence in the country, a beautiful situation on the east river 5 miles distant from the city — the house is large & commodious sufficiently so to comprise the printing office for the *Enquirer* — as you must imagine the household arrangements of such an establishment require an assiduous & careful superintendance, & in as far as the state of my mind & health permit I have endeavored to discharge the office, but sh^d Fanny be successful in engaging a valuable person with whom we are acquainted, & who has lately left her situation in the family of Mr Owen at Harmony, I shall be released from my present responsible situation as housekeeper & consequently at liberty to consult my own feelings as to my future destination —

Write to me dear Julia, nor hesitate a moment to give me your *free & candid* opinion as to the possibility of my taking passage from hence to Hambourg, sh^d *circumstances at some future period incline me to do so* — As I have communicated with no person save yourself on this subject you will oblige me by addressing your reply to *me*, nor allude to it in any way in yr other (lett) communications to this country. — Adieu sweet friend May every blessing attend you & yours your fondly attached

Camilla Wright Whitbey

With her slaves from Nashoba, Frances Wright left New Orleans for Port au Prince on 18 January 1830; in the *Free Enquirer* for 1 May 1830 she was able to report that they had been “advantageously and happily settled under the immediate protection of the Haitian President.”

Camilla Wright Whitbey died in Paris¹⁰¹ on 8 February 1831, little more than fifteen months after the last of the letters in this collection. Richeson Whitbey, who had remarried after her death, died in 1853.

On 22 July 1831 Frances Wright married William Phiquepal,¹⁰² “who at this time resumed the family name, D’Arusmont, at Miss

¹⁰¹ The death of Camilla was announced by Harriet Garnett to her sister Julia in a letter dated 20 March 1831.

¹⁰² See note 100. Harriet Garnett’s letters document Fanny Wright’s marriage (2 October 1831), her first child, already “a twelvemonth old” (25 November 1831), and the birth of her second child (25 April 1832). A letter from Lafayette to Harriet announces “the death of her child” (14 June 1832), and a letter from Mrs. Garnett (29 June 1832) shows that it was the younger child who died. The last meeting with Fanny Wright recorded by Harriet Garnett is described in a letter dated 16 September 1839.

Wright's desire."¹⁰³ They lived in Paris for several years, returned to the United States in 1835, and were later divorced. She died in Cincinnati on 13 December 1852.

¹⁰³ Waterman, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 182.

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ERRATA

IN THE ARTICLE by Marcel Françon, "Historical Background of French Literature in the First Part of the Sixteenth Century," XXIII:1 (January 1975), p. 50, line 27, read Charles VIII (instead of Charles VII); p. 52, line 25, read Clement VII (instead of Clement VI); and p. 59, line 26, read Louis XIII (instead of Louis XII).