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Dresden, Dec. 21, 1841, Sarah Austin à François Guizot

Auteurs : Austin, Sarah (1793-1867)

Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

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Marie Dupond & Association François Guizot, projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle)

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Lieu de rédactionDresden (Allemagne)

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Dresden 20 Dec^r 1841.

I was revolving in my mind how or where I was to find a decent pretext for troubling my dear & honoured Monsieur Guizot with some mark of recollection, & some assurance of the delight with which I think of his society, the interest I take in his happiness & sorrow, the attachment I feel for a kind & friend & so perfect an example of all that I have seen & imagined to love & revere in abstract. I had almost given up the thought, when behold an American gentleman whose acquaintance I have made here, tells me he is going to Paris & has letters to you. And now I cannot resist. I should never have had the presumption to introduce any one to you, but since that is done I may at least profit by it, to entreat you not quite to forget us. Even this is audacious enough. Seeing what you have to think of. But you who have lived & know mankind, will not think regret as worthless an attachment in which

extended circumstances have no part
in it, alas! little likely to be able to profit
in your kindness - even in a word or a look.
But we can think of you with respect &
admiration, & pray God to increase you to
the world. It was, were, even, gifted with
the spirit of large & enlightened humanity
more abundant than now. How much we can
now, but then what we felt of better later
perhaps. I cannot remember the explosion of that
time was but an explosion. The invincible
intensity were all there. The mastery of Germany
is high, some people in France. The English
have seen, who could have predicted it so fully.
I have mentioned to you what I know of the
tension of Germany towards France to come
together. They treat it as an offense offered
to them. They treat it as an offense offered
to them. What can one do but
hold one's tongue? M. Fieré will not tell you
how some lady, she he saw & heard - how how
he was repulsed - see the innumerable her
inhibition he had to undergo. Even the account
of his interview with the R. of Prussia, which
I have read in the Revue de Paris, tho' not
certainly, is a very different version from what
I had just a badly nearly altered ^{connected with} the French
but the Prussians. The princes of Germany have
exhibited this German & anti-French enthusiasm

to the point
& see the
calmness
intense &
made in the
appeared to
by, however
concerned in the
a German
at the time
or at least
Prussia. The
never goes
Prussia. The
possible to
or that the
locality &
to some extent
Columbus to
one leaves
good spirit
But the
little yellow
Lindbergh
sours, are
gal of his own
doctrine on

of the utmost, & that was to be expected.
& add the Rhin lied ^{is} that it is become tiresome
& abused. But if the feeling had not been
intense & universal, the Primes could have
made nothing of it, & the Rhin lied would have
appeared to every body a very poor song.
by reason, ^{of} indignation, of indignation
must & give the fatal impressions left by
a government of conquerors - not worse per-
haps than any other such - but all ^{such} are bad,
as at least getting & offensive, & that, as
Prince Kheringheim said to me, is what one
never forgets - ^{that} the physical sufferings of war.
But such as the sentiments of Germany
towards France, they are not an atom more
friendly towards England. The only difference
is, that the hostility towards us, is one of
locality & class; being directed against our
commercial preponderance, it rages in the
manufacturing districts & classes. In Austria
one hears little of it - nor in what is called
good society, any where, & then the reverse.
But the journals sufficiently show the
bitter jealousy & animosity of the middle
industrial classes. They, for their misfortune
sours, are now taking up with all the
jealous discoverers or proselytes, the antichristian
doctrines on trade which the ^{majority} in England ^{are} so long opposed & acted on.

which the ruling class sits on.

All the most powerful views on the relations
of nations are put forth ^{as} a sort of religion,
& are called patriotism. The beautiful cosmopo-
litanism which so distinguished Jeremy
Bentham as national beliefs of France & England
is denied as a means & object. Every calamity
that happens in France or Eng^d is enlarged upon
with a sort of delight. Prophecies, in which the
world was evidently "gathered to the thought," of
decline & dissolution are continually put forth,
& as relates to Eng^d are mixed up with the
strenuous exaggerations of her actual power
& wealth. All this saddens the heart. The malign-
ity & evil passions are bad enough - but the hope-
less thing is to see the reason in such a state
as that ~~there~~ an accumulation of capital & while
which it must ever require ages to produce,
should be regarded as a thing ~~to be~~ which
men are interested in destroying! As if they
were not there for the world! As if the very
prosperity of a manufacturing country did not
brow the wide diffusion of productions which
all desire to have! Alas alas! My husband
is writing / to my infinite joy / an article for
the Edinburgh Review on a book by a Dr. Lest
which has made a great noise here. It is the
apostrophe of the exclusive, or what is called protec-
tive system. To be sure we can only cry, mea
culpa, mea culpa. So must we ~~say~~ ^{say}

3
is it to propagate falsehood than truth;
so much more easy to excite bad feelings than
good ones. I write to you - & that is the charm -
as if France & England were one country -
persuaded as I am that they have one interest
& that whatever your countrymen may
think, the English are the only people at the
present ~~stage of~~ time, capable of appreciating
them - & simply because they are equals, &
look neither up nor down. This constitutes
one enormous difference from all other
countries. Germany possesses a class of men
superior perhaps in mental culture, or a
given point, to all others. But not only is
the range of each man limited, the difference
of knowledge is not comparable to that
with us. Above all - (you will not laugh)
the condition of women, their intellectual
& moral station is so immeasurably low,
that it must take a long time to bring
them up to our level. Of course I used
ours, for our two countries. Imagine that
here in this country little capital, it is
the universal custom in what they call salon
for the men to go into a separate room,
or if there is none, to assemble in a corner

while the women sit round a table or in
a circle. No man thinks of talking to a
lady. I have told them that I am not accus-
tomed to be insulted in this way, & that after
such men as Monsieur Guizot have not
dissained to speak to me as if I were not quite
a fool, I will not take such an assumption
of superiority at the hands of little clamber-
ing brats. Not that I want or value their
conversation, but my English blood boils at
seeing my sex so degraded. We in England are
offended, but not contemned. I hope you have
my rebellion. The advantages attending the
small states, their intimate & really paternal
relation between prince & people, are many
striking - the harmony ^{for instance} between this good
king & his people is striking - but the great
vast & expensive life of Paris & London
is wholly wanting, with it, how much is
wanting! We, the advanced galled on the
back of civilization, have all the rough
work to do. Among us the fearful struggle
of suffering each with the world which he
thinks he can alter so as to suit it to him-
self, is going on & must go on - till the matter
is worked out by reason & experiment, & till
he finds what he can change, & what he
cannot endure. In Germany, this is to come

but it
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lots of
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& thought
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& spirit
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German
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They have
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king
blunder
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they call
the book
is ruined
attempts
nobody
movement
Bismarck

4

but it will come - to all in turn. Mean-
while, how fearful are its appearances with
lots of us. Yet even for this, I repeat, we can
better understand & appreciate each other.
Prussia & England are men of the same growth
& strength. How much of the future destiny
of the world depends on them & on their ~~union~~
amity? Here I put it. In almost all companies
of friends of Germany, I find myself her defender. Scolded &
wondered at for being so. In Berlin whether
we intend to go, I expect to find even more
of this, judging from the numerous Berliners
I know. Prussia is a new power, relatively
to us, & has the susceptibility of a phoenix.
They have a perfect right to estimate them-
selves very highly - but they let no bounds
to their pretensions, & are offensive at those
of all other nations. Their enthusiasm for their
King has sadly declined. He committed the great
blunder of talking too much - exciting vague
large hopes, & now they say he does nothing.
They call him the redoubt as opposed to his father
the bookesting. In Berlin this sort of Work
is imminent - their calumnies are poor & blunt
attempts at imitation of French mot. Which
nobody can imitate. There is an enlightened
movement which will do the King no good.
Prussia is sent to England to convert an estab-

lived, church - a library - or something like
it. It is a great pity, for every body believes this
king to be both good & plain & sprit - but not wise
nor firm. The poor Poles seem to hope something
from him. What, they hardly can tell you. But
they are in a state to catch the stream.

My wife has at least the one advantage
of compelling me to see & hear a great variety
of men & things. You must forgive my fancy
ing away of my information can be new to you.
There is one very interesting man here, Mr. Lushington
who was prime minister, but retired, only re-
taining the direction of public instruction & prison
He lives a life of entire seclusion. I was the
more obliged to him for coming twice to see me
& talk over English poor laws, schools &c.
He has the heart & wishes of a Parrot, & is a
very distinguished scholar besides.
Our visit, this week, dear Sir, it is hard to hear;
but the Americans have stripped us to the bone.
I should like to hear what you think of the worst
aspect of things there. It seems to me very
discouraging. An American brings you this. He
tells he has letters to you, & I must say he
seems to me worthy of that happiness. He is so
modest, gentle & respectable candid - & desires
to see truly & judge fairly, that I forgive him his
country. I envy him going to Paris. If we could
live in London, my next wish is to live in Paris.
but I fear that is nearly the same thing as to
expatriate. When I tell you that my dear child is to

6 suite
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him to
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too great
I hope
luck
honour

6 suite

be himself a mother in February, you
can partly conceive what it costs me
to be here. For myself, I should have in
anyway to be nearer - but my broken
frame is insuperable repugnance to attempt it,
& I cannot leave him. I sometimes ~~had~~ can-
not help admitting to myself that, considering his
vast & peculiar powers, some way of making
them useful to the public might have been
found, by a government discerning of true
& rare merit, though his health did not allow
him to keep time in the routine of official
business. These little princes whom we call
beggars, &c., are ingenious in providing
harbours of refuge where such men can
work for the world, in whose vortex they cannot
live. He would have been satisfied with the
meagre subsistence if he had been treated with
the respect & deference he deserves. But what
of these men of expedients, to whom philosophy
is ridiculous, could be expected to imagine such
a thing? What is to come, I know not - but I
think very cheap good that delivers the country
from sneering sceptics of all that is too high &
too good for them, like L^d. Chalmers & L^d. Palmerston.
I hope you have reason to be better pleased with the
present people. Lord John closed his career with
honour. He is alas - I cannot ask you to

write, but Mr. Bradford has promised
me to do so. & to tell me how you are.
Make him tell me how your children
are, & any thing else you wish to know
as to let me hear about yourself.
I have often been tempted to call on the
wife of your minister here, to see if
I could pick up a sensible bit of news
of you, but as I did not know how
she would like it. If you recommended
it, I shall immediately. I think she
is staying here, & probably does not
talk German. I know some of the
English colony here. The Germans over-
whelm me with civility, kindness &
homages. First I was to be a "Geliebte"
Frau, & as I did not correspond to that ideal
I am now settled into "liebewürdig" &
"scharmant". Poor thing! They are so absurdly
grateful that I don't seem to despise them,
or as they say "speak like a book". There are
two or three very charming women - with
excellent understandings - but their husbands don't
seem to value them the least the more that
I see my 3^d step to put a possible end to this
Geschwätz. So farewell, dear Sir. With every return
of affection & respect your's Sarah Austin.