

## Miscellaneous.

### MEMORIAL OF

**MARIA HELENA AMERICA VESPUCCI.**

*Praying a donation of public land, and that she may be admitted to the rights of citizenship.*

*Ordered,* That so much thereof as relates to public land be referred to the committee on Public Lands; that so much as relates to the rights of Citizenship be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary; and that it be printed in the original French with an English translation.

*To the Congress of the U. States:*

Maria Helena America Vespucci, a descendant of the celebrated Americus Vesputius, of an illustrious family of Florence, is now in America—In the United States. She has been obliged to quit her country on account of her political opinions. She has separated herself from her family, in order to avoid drawing upon them the displeasure of their Government. She is now alone, without country, without family, and without protection!

America Vespucci quitted Florence on the 4th of October, 1834, and has been travelling from country to country without a resting place, (*appui*), without security, sustained only by the internal conviction, of having performed a duty to her country. After many difficulties she arrived in France. There she found an asylum.—The good Queen of the French restored her to courage by granting her protection, [even] so far as to permit her to travel under the auspices of the French flag.—But this generosity does not give her a country; this protection does not bestow upon her the title of a citizen.

The details of the life of a young female, out of her country, would be too long to relate. Every person of delicate feelings may imagine her sad and painful situation.

She is now in this quarter of the globe, which has been baptised by her ancestor; by him who has bequeathed to it his imperishable name, and who may be said to have at the same time, blessed it from heaven; for this nation, though young, is already one of the first in the world. It is prosperous and rich; it is his name that it bears. And if, moreover, Americus Vesputius be regarded only as one of those old father mariners (*vieux peres marins*.) whom civilized nations take so much pleasure in rewarding for their former services in the persons of their descendants, to whom should America Vespucci apply if not to America, which now possesses superiority, and strength on the ocean?

America Vespucci will make no demand on the American Government. Those who make demands, are presumed to have rights to be established or justice to claim. She has neither. She knows that the Americans have been magnanimous towards all, who have done a noble act for their country; and that they have moreover, granted protection and even assistance to emigrants from other nations. There is none but a Vesputius who has given his name to a quarter of the globe. Will the Americans do nothing for the descendant of Americus? She desires a country, she seeks a land that will receive her as a friend. She has a name; that is all her inheritance, all her fortune. May this hospitable nation grant her a corner of that land in which it is so rich, and may the title of citizen be bestowed upon the poor emigrant!

If Americus Vesputius were now alive, the Americans would rush in crowds to offer him honors and rewards. In the 19th century, will this civilized nation forget that in the veins of his descendants flows the same blood? America Vespucci collected all her little fortune to reach this country; now she desires only to make known her position to the Congress of this great nation, feeling confident that the Americans will never abandon her. She will not ask, having no other claim than that of bearing the name of America, but she will receive a gift from the nation by which she hopes not to be regarded as a stranger. That will not humiliate her.—Such an act of generosity will console her feelings, honor her name, flatter her family, and even her country. The gifts of a nation always honor those who receive them. When the world shall know that the American nation has done an act of generosity in favor of the descendant of Vesputius, will not the approbation of all mankind be a glorious recompense? And true gratitude will remain in the heart of

AMERICA VESPUCCI.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29, 1839.