

**THE DIARY OF A
GIRL IN
FRANCE IN 1821**

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The diary of a girl in France in 1821 by Mary Browne

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MARY BROWNE

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THE
ARCADE



DIRPPE FISHWOMAN

Frontispiece

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

THE DIARY OF A GIRL
IN FRANCE IN
1821

BY MARY BROWNE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HERSELF AND

AN INTRODUCTION

BY EUPHEMIA STEWART BROWNE

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION

THE child who wrote this quaintly-illustrated diary, eighty-three years ago, was the second daughter of William Browne, Esq., of Talentire Hall, in the County of Cumberland. She was born there, February 15, 1807.

Descended, on her father's side, from a race of sturdy Cumberland yeomen, and on her mother's from the Royal Stuarts and Plantagenets, she grew up, as might be expected from this childish production, an original and uncommon woman.

A keen naturalist and observer of nature, at a time when such pursuits were unusual, she delighted in long solitary country rambles round her beautiful home: an old border watch-tower, dating from 1280 A.D., in full view of the Solway to the north, and of

Skiddaw and the Cumbrian mountains to the south.

An exquisite collection of butterflies and moths is still in existence, painted by her clever fingers from specimens reared by herself. Each one is depicted upon its favourite flower, and accompanied by its caterpillar and chrysalis on the food plant. This was, alas! left unfinished at her death, on May 30, 1833, at the early age of twenty-six.

A picture poem, painted on the page of one of the albums of the period, in drawings so minute and so finely finished that, like the butterflies, they can only be adequately seen through a magnifying-glass, still shows her accuracy of observation, and the dainty and patient care of her work.

She loved flowers, and the garden may still be seen where, in the very early mornings, she planted and tended with her own loving care such fragrant, and old-world

flowers as rose de meaux, clove pinks, and gillyflowers.

But these were only the pastimes of a busy life of unselfish devotion to others. Shy, retiring, and strangely indifferent to appearance and to worldly advantages, she was little understood by the merry young circle around her. She was, as a child, even considered stupid and slow, her governess declaring that 'friend Mary does as well as she can.' But children loved her, and if there was sickness or sorrow in the village it was always 'Miss Mary' who was wanted, and who was never appealed to in vain.

At a time when rural education was viewed with suspicion, and Mrs. Hannah More was contending for the right of the poor to win knowledge, she and her clever elder sister opened the first Sunday-school in the neighbourhood. They also devoted several hours of every morning to teaching in the village dame school.