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The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo) with Remarks on its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population

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PREFACE

The Author has prepared this work for the press somewhat hastily, and under many circumstances which heavily oppressed him; he hopes therefore that the want of arrangement, and the dearth of matter which may be observed in his narrative, will not subject it to a severe condemnation. In presenting it to the public, he is not actuated by any personal considerations, his object being to convey some information respecting the resources of a country, and the character of a people, which have been so variously represented. The short delineation here attempted will, in all probability, suffice to shew that the accounts which have been given at different times of Hayti and its inhabitants

have been much too highly coloured by the zealous advocates of negro independence; and he is ready to confess that at one time he was somewhat dazzled by the description, and was almost made a convert to their opinions. It having been his lot however, at a subsequent period, to hold considerable intercourse with the country, he has been enabled to form what he considers a more correct estimate of its present condition. Experience has convinced him that the representations so generally received of the improvement which it has made are greatly exaggerated, and he is not without the hope that the following sheets will convey more correct information on the subject, and thus prove useful to the merchant, if not interesting to the general reader.

He readily admits that in the historical part he has touched upon matters which have been already handled by other and much abler writers; this could not be very well avoided, the annals of Hayti affording but few events, and those having been often detailed. He conceived that such a summary of the history of the country would be necessary to illustrate the cause of the revolution, to shew the decline which ensued in agriculture and commerce, the decay of knowledge, and the progress of vice and immorality among the inhabitants.

Actuated therefore by the desire of throwing some light on the state of Hayti, and giving a faithful representation of the condition of its population, he ventures to solicit the attention of the public to the facts which have fallen under his own personal observation.

INTRODUCTION

An account of the present state of Hayti I believe has not yet been submitted to the public; to offer one likely to meet with a favourable reception is, I am aware, an undertaking of considerable difficulty: it requires, no doubt, that the author should be well skilled in the various branches of knowledge, in order to render it in every respect satisfactory and interesting to the public. Ignorant as I acknowledge myself to be in the higher walks of philosophy, and educated solely for the more humble avocations of a mercantile life, I can lay no claim to such acquirements: I must therefore rest my hope of commanding any degree of attention, on the truth and correctness of the statements which I shall produce, founded as they are on actual observation. I am conscious that I am standing on delicate ground, and touching on a subject likely to excite angry feelings in those who have long been the eulogists of the republic, who have been its advocates when assailed, and who have held it forth to the world as a country in which wealth abounds, virtue flourishes, and freedom reigns triumphant, instead of the oppression, the vice, and the poverty which once prevailed there; but I will not shrink from the undertaking, though powerful obstacles may present themselves, and formidable opponents be arrayed against me. My object in the following sheets is, to endeavour to dissipate this delusion, and to shew that there is nothing to warrant the

unqualified panegyrics poured forth by those individuals who have been the most conspicuous for their zeal and enthusiasm, in holding up Hayti as a “land flowing with milk and honey”. In the performance of this, I have no other aim than that of benefiting the merchant and capitalist, the manufacturer, and the trader, who have had no opportunity of visiting a country to which their speculations in commerce may lead them, by guarding them against the shoals and quicksands upon which adventurers, destitute of information, are so frequently wrecked.

The admirers of Hayti have been very industrious in circulating the most deceptive accounts of the state of its commerce, by garbled and exaggerated specifications. They have led many to believe that its imports and exports are daily on the increase, and that the resources of the people for the purchase of the products and manufactures of other states receive a gradual and steady augmentation. I am much deceived if I shall not succeed in convincing the reader that this representation is a perfect delusion, and that from the diminished means of the people, the commerce of Hayti, instead of increasing, annually sustains a considerable diminution; and that while the present state of things continues to exist – while its rulers are weak and imbecile, and the mass of the population are kept in a state of the grossest ignorance – there does not appear a ray of hope that any improvement may take place in the circumstances of the country, or that any change will be effected, likely to prove advantageous to foreigners disposed to embark in an intercourse with Hayti.

Several visits to Hayti – in two of which I had, from the nature of my mission, occasion to remain there a considerable time – gave me opportunities of seeing the actual state of it, in all its different branches of agriculture, commerce, finances, and the moral and religious condition of its people, together with the state of its government and the views of its chief. I am therefore encouraged to hope that my details may be productive of some benefit to the commercial part of the community, and not be altogether unacceptable to others, whose avocations are different, but who may be desirous of correct information respecting those parts of the globe of which they may know but little except the name.

An historical account of Hayti would be a superfluous undertaking; I see nothing to add to what has already been written by Charlevoix, Raynal, Edwards, Walton, and others, in their elaborate and voluminous works, and who have omitted nothing interesting, or worthy of being recorded, from its first discovery by the illustrious Columbus down to a very recent period. Every event connected with its history seems to have been most faithfully detailed by these writers, and their works are entitled to the highest credit and consideration, as containing the best and most authentic account of this very extensive island.

Impelled, no doubt, as they were with a desire to afford to the world every possible information relative to the resources of the country, and of the character and general habits of the people, they have left little to be performed by their successors, except

to notice the changes and events which may have taken place since the date of their latest productions. Besides a copious and a faithful historical sketch, they have given a correct statistical view of its agriculture, its commerce, and public revenue; they have also pointed out the slow advances made by the people in industry, in morality, and in general knowledge: but little, therefore, remains to be said on these subjects, except to call the attention of the reader to the striking contrast which the present situation of the republic exhibits, when compared with that which it displayed before the revolution; to give a brief sketch of Hayti as it is, with an occasional reference to Hayti as it was. I must beg leave to assure my readers, that in executing this task, I am actuated by no unfair nor unjust motives; I am only anxious that the highly coloured statements which have been published respecting its present wealth and prosperity should be submitted to the test of candid and impartial scrutiny. For a series of years Hayti has been made the theme of constant praise, and has excited no little share of the public attention, on account of the unexampled efforts which its slave population made to throw off the fetters by which they had been previously bound, and on account of their having, as their eulogists declare, made the most rapid and extraordinary strides in civilization and social improvement. It must be admitted that the revolution effected in Hayti, was an event almost unparalleled in history; and that a people just emerging from a state of barbarism should have so successfully combated and defeated the finest troops of

France, is no doubt a circumstance calculated to call forth no trifling portion of astonishment and admiration: but when the partial eulogists of the Haytians go to the length of asserting that they have arrived at a high degree of moral improvement, that they have reached a state of refinement little inferior to that which generally prevails in Europe, the limits of truth are overstepped: such overstrained assertions are totally destitute even of the semblance of truth, and my personal experience enables me to declare, in the most explicit and unqualified terms, that at this very moment, the people of Hayti are in a worse state of ignorance than the slave population in the British colonies. There are some cases, it is true, in which instances of intelligence have been discovered in the Haytian citizen, but this never occurs except where individuals have had the advantages of an European education, or who, being the descendants of persons who previously to the revolution were possessed of wealth, had the means of travelling, for the purpose of acquiring the manners and customs of more enlightened nations. But taking the people in the aggregate, they are far from having made any advances in knowledge.

It has also been commonly asserted by the friends of Hayti, and I believe very generally credited in Europe, that it preserves its agricultural pre-eminence solely by free labour; now I think I shall be able to prove to a demonstration that this is not the case, and that it is too evident, from every document that has yet appeared on the subject, that agriculture has been long on the

wane, and has sunk to the lowest possible ebb in every district of the republic; that the true art and principles of the culture of the soil, are not understood, or if in the least known, they are not practically applied. There is nothing to be seen having the least resemblance to a colony, flourishing in the wealth derived from a properly regulated system of agriculture.

On the subject of free labour I shall have occasion to offer a few remarks, and I trust that in doing so, I shall not be considered as inimical to it, where-ever it may be found practicable to obtain it; on the contrary, no man would be more happy to see that our own colonies could be cultivated by free labour, provided a full compensation should be honourably made to those whose interests might be endangered by the experiment, if unsuccessful; but I shall, I think, be able to shew that this is *absolutely impracticable*, and that the system of labour so pursued in Hayti, instead of affording us a proof of what may be accomplished by it, is illustrative of the fact, that it is by coercion, and coercion only, that any return can be expected from the employment of capital in the cultivation of soil in our West India islands. I shall also be able to shew that Hayti presents no instance in which the cultivation of the soil is successfully carried on without the application of force to constrain the labourer: on the estates of every individual connected with the government, all the labourers employed work under the superintendence of a military police, and it is on these properties alone that any thing resembling successful agriculture exists in Hayti. I am

aware that this will excite the astonishment of persons who have been accustomed to think otherwise; but I shall state facts which cannot be controverted, even by President Boyer himself – nay, I shall produce circumstances which I have seen with the utmost surprise on his own estate; circumstances that must shew his warmest advocates, that all his boasted productions have not been obtained without the application of that system against which they loudly exclaim.

Instead of holding out an example of what might be accomplished by a people released from bondage, without first having been prepared for freedom by moral and religious instruction, I think Hayti rather forms a beacon to warn us against the dangers and difficulties by which that unhappy country has been overtaken. The present condition of Hayti, arising from the events which have taken place since the revolution, should render us exceedingly cautious how we plunge our own colonies into the same misery and calamity; by conferring on a rude and untaught people, without qualification, or without the least restraint, an uncontrolled command over themselves. However acutely we may feel for the miseries to which the West Indian slave was at one period subjected, yet I cannot conceive it possible that any one can be so destitute of correct information on the subject as not to know, that at this moment the slave is in a condition far more happy, that he possesses infinitely greater comforts and enjoyments, than any class of labourers in Hayti, and that, from the judicious measures which have been already adopted by the

colonial legislatures, and from others which are in contemplation, for improving the condition of the slave, it is very rational to conclude that before long slavery will only be considered as a name; and that were it to receive any other designation it would furnish no peg on which the European philanthropist might hang his declamations against slavery.

To place the slaves in the British colonies upon a footing with the free labourers in Hayti, or with the largest proportion of the people in that country, would be a work of easy accomplishment; but the effect would be, to cause them to exchange a state of comparative plenty and comfort, for one in which every species of tyranny and oppression, with their concomitants, disease and want, are most lamentably conspicuous. Whatever may be the views of the British Cabinet relative to their colonies, I should warn it to steer clear of the erroneous policy which has proved so fatal to Hayti, and should it be determined that a change should be introduced into the policy hitherto pursued with so much success, and with so much advantage in our colonial possessions, I trust it will not be by emancipating the slave, before he is prepared for freedom by a proper moral and religious education. Let the system of slavery be gradually improved, and the slave will glide imperceptibly into a state of freedom.

It is not my intention, in this early stage of my remarks, to enter into any lengthened detail of the disunion or want of cordiality subsisting between the two classes of people in Hayti: this I shall reserve for its proper place; where it will be seen, that a

very strong dissatisfaction prevails amongst the black population, which manifests itself upon almost every occasion of celebrating public events, and festivities. This acrimonious feeling evidently arises from the jealousy excited by the predominant influence of the coloured people in the government. This influence, detrimental as it may be to the good order and repose of the country, is courted and nurtured by the president, to the great danger of overthrowing the whole establishment. One or two attempts at revolt have been made by the people of the north, who were the subjects of the late Christophe, and from these efforts, although abortive, it may be inferred, that the spirit for a more extensive commotion still lurks in their minds, and that the least possible irritation would so agitate and inflame them, that the whole would be thrown into a scene of disorder, tumult, and irremediable confusion. The combinations are numerous and powerful, but such was the extraordinary apathy of the government, that until a communication was made by an individual to Boyer, neither he nor any one of his officers had the least intimation that such proceedings were in contemplation. The want of energy visible in the government makes it obnoxious to the people, and no country like Hayti can be expected to remain long in repose and tranquillity, unless its governors possess both talent and resolution to command.

That the government of Hayti is the most inefficient and enervated of any of the modern republics cannot be denied, and I cannot see the least hope of an improvement, unless there be

a complete revision of its constitution, and a new one framed, better suited to the tastes of the people, and more adapted to their present very rude state of knowledge. From the present rulers it would be vain to expect any effort which might prove beneficial to the country; any attempt to cultivate or improve the habits and morals of the people, or to promote agriculture. The members composing the present government, seem to consider the poverty and ignorance of the people, as the best safeguards of the security and permanence of their own property and power.

A recognition of the independence of Hayti by Great Britain may give some strength to the measures of its government, because the people have called out loudly for the protection of that power, whilst they have as loudly exclaimed against the policy pursued towards France. No event in its history has excited in the republic greater abhorrence or more general murmuring, than the act of purchasing from France that which it had de facto possessed for twenty-one years unmolested and undisturbed; thereby at once admitting the sovereignty of that power over the island, and which sovereignty France will, at some convenient period, unquestionably assert, and that without the least fear of any inconvenient consequences arising from it; for what power can give aid to the Haytians against France, when the former have openly and formally admitted themselves to be a colony dependent upon the French crown. Whatever intercourse Englishmen may be disposed to maintain with Hayti, it is indispensable that they should use the most vigilant precaution,

and exact a rigid adherence to such treaties as may have been entered into, if they would avoid certain loss; for the Haytian character, taken generally, will be found, so far from being entitled either to credit or confidence, not even to possess common honesty. Compacts with them are easily made; but a faithful adherence to agreements must not be expected; – their maxim is to break them, whenever they find it can be accomplished with advantage.

CHAPTER I

Situation and general description of the French and Spanish divisions, previously to the Revolution in the former country

The island of St. Domingo, once the abode of fertility, and the scene of extraordinary political changes and events, lies in latitude $18^{\circ} 20'$ north and in longitude $68^{\circ} 40'$ west from Greenwich, having on its west the islands of Cuba and Jamaica, on its east Porto Rico, the Bahamas on its north, and bounded southerly by the Carribean Sea. Its extent has been variously stated; but Edwards, who describes it to be about 390 miles in length from east to west, seems the most correct; and it appears from late surveys to be nearly 150 miles in breadth from north to south. The Abbé Raynal has represented it at 200 leagues in length, and from 60 to 80 in breadth, but it is evident that his estimation is erroneous. Rainsford also states it to be about 450 miles in length, but from every information which I could obtain, its length does not appear to exceed 400 miles, nor its breadth 140. The reader, therefore, must look into these discrepancies, and judge between them. As it is not easy to survey a country intersected by wilds and impenetrable

mountains, much is necessarily left to conjecture.

It is the most extensive, and was at one period of its history the most productive of the Antilles, and was called by the aborigines Haiti, or Highland, and by which ancient designation it is now generally known, that of St. Domingo having been abolished at the revolution. To convey an adequate idea of what this once delightful island was, is not the object of the present work; on this head it is sufficient to observe that in the richness and extent of its productions, and in its local beauties, it exceeded every other island in the western hemisphere, and that the two divisions of the east and the west, when under the respective governments of Spain and France, were considered and indeed known to be the most splendid and most important appendages to those crowns. Its plains and valleys presented the most inviting scenes from the richness of the pastures and the verdure with which they eternally abounded. Its mountains were also said to contain ores of the most valuable kind, and produce timber admirably adapted for every useful or ornamental purpose. Nothing could exceed the extreme salubrity of the whole country, nor could it be surpassed in the vast exuberance of its luscious fruits, and in those productions of the soil which became the general articles of export, and from which all the wealth and all commerce of this colony flowed.

The French division, though infinitely less extensive than the Spanish part, and not containing a third of the whole island, has been considered the most valuable spot in the western world.

The Spanish division however has greater natural resources, and affords greater facilities for agricultural operations: but the very extraordinary exertions of the French planter in the culture of the soil, compensated for the want of those advantages possessed by their Spanish neighbours, who, more indolently disposed, relied on the produce of their mines, which afforded, as they imagined, greater local riches than those which could be obtained from either agriculture or commerce, forgetting that these alone furnish the wealth which can render any country really and permanently prosperous and great.

It appears from every authority, that the first colony established here by the French, was settled in the sixteenth century, having been attracted thither by the Buccaneers, who had previously obtained a footing in the island from excursions which they often made from Tortuga, for the purpose of hunting the bulls of the Spaniards. These hardy and predatory warriors attracted the French, who supplied them with such necessaries as they required, and even sent them many settlers, with arms and implements for defence and labour. The extreme fertility of the country invited them to make some efforts to gain a permanent footing in it, and by means of intrigue coupled with a little force, they succeeded in obtaining possession of the whole of the west end, the line of which seems to have run in an oblique direction, from about Cape François on the north to Cape Rosa on the south. Having surmounted all the obstacles that presented themselves, and having overcome those difficulties

which generally accompany the first attempts at colonization, or are met with in a newly discovered land, they pursued with incredible ardour and industry the culture of the soil, and the improvement of their valuable acquisition.

The Spanish court, jealous of and unable to contend with their rival colonists, submitted to France, when the two cabinets at home came to a mutual understanding and adjustment, respecting these foreign possessions. An arrangement was entered into, under which commissioners were appointed for settling the boundaries, and fixing the rights which had formed the ground of disputes between the settlers of these rival nations. The line of demarcation finally agreed upon commenced at the bay of Mansenillo on the north, dividing in its course the river Massacre; thence taking rather a westerly course, it reached an acute point at Dondon, and afterwards proceeded southerly to the river Pedernales.

This tract of country, as conceded to the French, contained about 1000 square leagues, exceedingly irregular in its character, intersected with mountains, and having plains confined and difficult of approach, so as to make it altogether much inferior in point of natural value to even a single district of the Spanish division; having also two extreme points or capes, Cape Nicolas Mole on the north, and Cape Tiburon on the south-west extremity, in both of which the soil is less valuable, from its being so very mountainous, and from its not possessing those facilities of communication which can be obtained in other districts.

Notwithstanding the disadvantages against which the first settlers had to contend, and in defiance of every local obstacle, they seemed to have been impressed with the conviction, that if a spirit of perseverance and labour could be diffused amongst them, they would ultimately be richly rewarded for all their toil, and all that anxiety and deprivation to which it appears, at their first setting out, they were unquestionably subjected. Their conclusions were just, and time shewed the correctness of the principles on which they reasoned and acted, for their colony gradually rose in estimation; and at so early a period as the year 1703, under the government of M. Auger, a native of America, and who in early life had been in a state of slavery, it had become of so much consideration to France, that the greatest possible efforts were made to extend their system of cultivation to the whole of their colonial territory. That officer was indefatigable, it is said, in his exertions in encouraging and in stimulating the colonists in the culture of the lands, and as he had been previously governor of Guadaloupe, it is to be inferred that he possessed no ordinary skill in the business of preparing the ground for the production of those exotic and indigenous plants which became the main articles of export to the mother-country. That he was a most efficient governor all writers admit, for he had brought the state of his colony to a very high pitch of prosperity, when he died, lamented by all who had lived under his command. The plantations at this period had increased in every part, particularly in the valleys, where the soil was more

congenial, and where the labour could be performed without being attended with those difficulties which impeded it in the more mountainous districts. In the western parts the cocoa-tree had begun to produce most luxuriantly, yielding great wealth to individuals, and a large revenue to the state. The sugar-cane had also arrived at great perfection, and the art of manufacturing the sugar from it had been for some time carried on with astonishing success. Coffee plantations were establishing, and the planters in every direction were vying with each other in bringing their properties into the highest possible state of cultivation.

In the year 1715, however, the island suffered a very severe calamity, and in the succeeding year another followed, in both of which almost all the cocoa-trees perished, and considerable damage was done to every vegetable production; and the planters, who had by this time acquired an easy, if not a competent fortune, sustained losses that only time and continued exertion could possibly repair. It will be seen, however, that a great improvement gradually followed, and that agriculture had not been neglected, for in the year 1754 the colony had advanced to a wonderful pitch of prosperity, and seems to have satisfied the wishes of the proprietors of the soil, as well as the most sanguine expectations of the government. It is said by an anonymous writer, that “the various commodities exported from the island amounted to a million and a quarter sterling, and the imports to one million seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand five hundred and nine pounds. There were fourteen thousand

white inhabitants, nearly four thousand free mulattoes, and one hundred and seventy-two thousand negroes; five hundred and ninety-nine sugar plantations, three thousand three hundred and seventy-nine of indigo, ninety-eight thousand nine hundred and forty-six cocoa-trees, six million three hundred thousand three hundred and sixty-seven cotton plants, and about twenty-two millions of cassia-trees, sixty-three thousand horses and mules, ninety-three thousand head of horned cattle, six millions of banana trees, upwards of one million plots of potatoes, two hundred and twenty-six thousand of yams, and nearly three million trenches of marrioc.”

From this period up to the French revolution the colony advanced still further in prosperity, every year adding to the wealth of the planters, and to the revenue of the crown. Nothing could exceed the condition into which the plantations had been brought by their owners; a steady and enlightened system of agriculture had been established, which had been productive of the most beneficial results. Every plantation, laid out with the greatest care and neatness, was so arranged as to bring every part of the soil into use in its proper order of succession – not the least particle appears to have escaped the eye of the owner, for what could not be rendered fit for the production of the cane, served either for cotton, coffee, indigo, or other plants. In the valleys surrounded by mountains, the access to which for carriages was attended with some danger, and consequently were chiefly in pasture, the verdure was astonishing. These valleys having

small rivulets or streams running through them, and shaded by occasional groups of trees and shrubs, which grew spontaneously on the margins of a spring, or round any body of water that might occasionally be collected from the mountain falls, became extremely valuable for the raising of cattle for the consumption of the planters, and on this account extremely profitable to their owners; for here the animals could graze undisturbed and cool under a meridian sun, and range unmolested, indulging in the richness of the surrounding herbage. The culture of the land for the sugar-cane at this period seems to have engaged the greatest attention of the planter, for at no time had such amazing crops been produced as in the year preceding the revolution; the soil in the plains of the north, Artibanite and the Cul de Sac, being peculiarly adapted for it, from its extreme strength and excellent quality, and from its situation, which enabled it to receive the aid of irrigation in seasons when drought prevails. The estates also appropriated to the production of sugar exhibited a degree of uniformity and order, in all the departments of plantation labour, which can scarcely be exceeded even at the present period, when the system is supposed to have become more mature, and its true principles better understood.

The coffee plantations had at this time arrived at great perfection – they were extensive, and exceedingly fruitful; for the genius and industry of the proprietors were exerted to their utmost limits in this branch of agriculture. Every property was divided and subdivided into small fields, in which the trees were

planted with all that nicety and regularity which is often seen in a well regulated nursery. The pruning-knife and the hoe were regularly applied to the trees requiring to be dismembered of their superfluous branches, and wanting nurture at their half expiring roots. The cotton and indigo plantations had also arrived at the height of excellence in planting, and it was not possible that greater abundance could have been obtained from them, than that which was usually returned at or a few years previously to the convulsion which took place. The cocoa tree was also at this time exceedingly flourishing, and much care and attention were bestowed upon its cultivation; its produce being found an article of no inconsiderable demand, and extremely profitable in the returns which it yielded the cultivator.

A better or clearer proof cannot be given of the highly improved state of agriculture at this time, than by a reference to the number of plantations which had been established, and to the quantity of produce which had been exported to France, with the value of the whole, as estimated by persons whose authority may be relied on, and who were doubtless competent judges, from having in the island filled situations which gave them opportunities of fairly estimating everything connected with the country.

Moreau St. Mery, a writer of great credit, and a native of St. Domingo, states, "that in the year 1791 there were, in the French division alone, seven hundred and ninety-three sugar estates, seven hundred and eighty-nine cotton plantations, three thousand

one hundred and seventeen of coffee, three thousand one hundred and fifty of indigo, fifty-four cocoa manufactories, and six hundred and twenty-three smaller settlements, on which were produced large quantities of Indian corn, rice, pulse, and almost every description of vegetables required for the consumption of the people. There were also forty thousand horses, fifty thousand mules, and two hundred and fifty thousand cattle and sheep; and that the quantity of land actually in cultivation was about two million two hundred and eighty-nine thousand four hundred and eighty acres.”

The quantity of produce exported from the island to France appears, by various accounts, to have been very large indeed, furnishing a very strong corroboration of the flourishing state of the colony, and of the extent to which agriculture had been carried. It would appear that not much regard was paid to other means by which the prosperity of the country might have been enhanced, the inhabitants resting solely on the culture of the soil to exalt the island in the eyes of the parent state, and to make it an appendage worthy to be cherished and protected. Mr. Edwards and others have stated the amount of exports as follows: that is to say, about one hundred and sixty-three millions four hundred thousand pounds of sugar, sixty-eight millions one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of coffee, six millions two hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds of cotton, nine hundred and thirty thousand pounds of indigo, twenty-nine thousand hogsheads of molasses, and three hundred puncheons of rum.

Walton, in his Appendix, enumerates many other articles of export besides those which I have named, and he states the quantity of each much larger, and values the whole at about six millions and ninety-four thousand two hundred and thirty pounds, English money. The same writer observes, that the value of the imports into the country about that time from France was four millions one hundred and twenty-five thousand six hundred and ten pounds sterling. At this period, also, it appears from authority, that the population amounted to about forty thousand white people, twenty-eight thousand free persons of colour, and about four hundred and fifty-five thousand slaves; and that the valuation of the whole of the plantations in culture, with the buildings, slaves, cattle, and every implement for the use of agriculture, was estimated at fourteen hundred and ninety millions of livres, or somewhat about seventy millions English money.

The Spanish division of Hayti is said to contain two-thirds of the whole, and is estimated at about three thousand one hundred and fifty square leagues, an extent of country capable of affording the means of subsistence to a population of at least seven millions of souls. In local advantages this part certainly exceeds the western division, from its soil being almost in a virgin state, and a very large proportion of its valleys and elevations never having been tilled. The indolence and inactivity inherent in the Spanish character have been displayed in all their colours in this part of St. Domingo; for although their district possessed

all the natural means required to raise them to an equal pitch of splendour with their French neighbours, yet so powerful were their propensities for pleasure, and every species of amusement, that they devoted but little of their time to the improvement of their properties, and they obtained from them but little beyond a scanty supply for their own immediate wants. From every source of information that can be consulted, it appears that the Spaniards, from their earliest settlement down to the period when they finally quitted the country, depended more on their mines than on anything that possibly could be derived from either agriculture or commerce; consequently agriculture was in a backward state, and the culture of the soil made but a very slow progress: indeed, but a very small proportion of the country was in a state of tillage; the inhabitants merely paid a little attention to the natural pastures which abounded in all the plains of the east, and whose luxuriance and verdure continued throughout the whole year. In these they raised large herds of cattle, for which they found a market, not only among their neighbours the French, who required a considerable supply for their estates, but they exported very large quantities to Jamaica and Cuba. To the raising of cattle, therefore, and to the occasional cutting of wood – mahogany, cedar, and a variety of other timbers for ornamental work, as well as dye-woods, – did the Spaniards devote their time, and hence did they contrive to satisfy their moderate and contracted wants, without having recourse to tillage.

It has been observed, and I think very truly, that the most

important obstacle to the advancement of this part of Hayti, was the policy pursued by Spain towards her colonies. The system of government under which she ruled her transatlantic settlements seems to have been one of extreme oppression, and of unexampled rigour, and, from the earliest period of her sway, this system was most rigidly enforced in Hispañeola. There does not appear upon record any circumstance previously to the year 1700, which evinced a disposition on the part of Spain to promote the welfare of the colony, by calling forth its local resources, and by encouraging and tolerating settlers from others of their unprofitable and barren islands, in which all their energies and efforts had been fruitless and unavailing. The high state of the west end, under their prudent and more assiduous neighbours the French, whose industry and perseverance had astonished the world, and whose judicious and highly commendable system for promoting the cultivation of their country had become the theme of much praise and admiration, seemed about this time to have produced among the Spaniards some disposition to adopt measures for insuring to the parent state a more lucrative trade from their colonies. The force of example was too powerful to be resisted, and even the Court of Madrid began about this time to devise measures which might improve, and which might call into play all those resources which this highly fertile and most congenial soil was known to possess. Governors of known prudence and patriotic zeal for the interest of their nation were selected, and sent out,

with injunctions to promote the interests of agriculture, and to give a spur to commerce, by opening an intercourse with their neighbours. The wants of the French in cattle, mules, and horses, were exceedingly extensive, and offered to the Spaniards an opportunity of improving their properties, by providing a vent for the sale of their stock. It gave an impulse to industry, and the once inert and unconcerned Spanish planter became in time an active and enterprising agriculturist, shaking off that languor by which he had been previously characterized, and at length assuming a degree of animation and spirit, which enabled him to take advantage of those resources which nature had placed within his reach.

A mutual interchange and good understanding between the two powers of France and Spain having taken place, this intercourse, become more frequent and reciprocally beneficial, continued for a series of years. In 1790, however, this most important branch of their commerce was cut off by the convulsion into which the neighbouring province was thrown. All that part of the population who dwelt on the frontiers withdrew themselves into the interior, leaving behind them their cattle, which fell into the hands of their rapacious neighbours, whose inroads caused much consternation amongst the proprietors; but their slaves, from habit or from some other powerful cause, remained unmoved and attached to them, although they had before them such strong incentives to revolt. Every appeal made by these people (and it is said, that they made innumerable ones)

to the cabinet of Spain for protection against the fatal example of the French division, met with a very cold reception, if not a positive rejection. In this state of suspense and continued fear and alarm the people remained, until the disgraceful treaty of Basle gave Hispaniola to the republican government of France; and this event I cannot better describe than in the language of one of the most correct writers on this country¹, whom I shall here quote as an authority which has been hitherto deemed unquestionable. Speaking of this event, which occurred in the year 1795, and of the designs of the French rulers, he says, “though busied in the plans of universal dominion on their own continent, their cabinet did not lose sight or cease to entertain a hope of again possessing colonies abroad, and they were well aware which were the most desirable. Perhaps no system of invasion had been longer or more deeply premeditated, and digested with more mysterious secrecy, than the entire subjugation of Spain and her American settlements, in which, besides the common views of aggrandizement, their constitutional enmity to the reigning family acted as a powerful stimulus. This policy was coeval with that ambition which marked the first career of the present ruler of France and the specious veil under which the hidden, but continued advances were regularly made towards the end in view, adds to the guilt of duplicity and ingratitude, when we consider that Spain has scrupulously maintained her treaty of alliance and has fulfilled the stipulations entered into in

¹ Walton.

1795, notwithstanding all the three changes that have given other names to the French government, without altering its entity, or revolutionary or destructive system; that the cabinets of Madrid have bended to a degree of abject condescension, rather than be precipitated into a war; that they have sacrificed the interests and inclinations of their people, and have been driven at length into a state of non-reprisal, rather than risk a warfare with a nation they respected, and though an ally, furnishing both men and money under promises to share in the conquests made, they have been treated rather as a faithless neutral without claim, representation, or character, and thus their country has been impoverished and laid waste, and the supports of national union and energy undermined.”

Further, in continuation of this disgraceful treaty, by which Spain so abjectly submitted to surrender her colony to France, he says, “by this instrument of diplomatic intrigue and subtlety Hispaniola was made over unreservedly to France; the oldest subjects of the Spanish crown in the western world were thus bartered like so many sheep, and an island, not the capture of an enemy during war, and given up at its termination, but one that had descended to them as a primitive right, and had formed the glory of the preceding monarchs, who saw it discovered and settled. When possession was given in further aggravation of the Spanish natives, the transfer was received by Toussaint at the head of the intrusive settlers of one division of the island, with whom the former had previously and generously shared their

territory; in short by a horde of emancipated slaves to whom the French republic had given equality, consistence, and power, and who now came to erect a new standard on the spot consecrated by the labours and ashes of Columbus, and long revered as an object of national pride.”

“In justice to the Dominican people it may be said, that none of the Spanish settlements possess more of the *amor patriæ* which ought to distinguish loyal subjects: they received the news as a thunder-bolt, and the country presented an universal scene of lamentation. They appealed to the humanity of their sovereign, but without effect, and then had recourse to remonstrances.”

Receiving no answer to their prayers or to their remonstrances, the people were left in a state bordering on despondency, with the only alternative of leaving their native land, or of swearing allegiance to a power in whom they could not confide, and which they had been taught to detest. Emigration therefore was determined on, and all orders – nuns, friars, clergy, and men of property and influence – with their families and their slaves, embarked for Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Spanish main, leaving behind them their possessions, to seek a shelter, and to find homes and occupations, in a country in which they might be protected by laws to which they had been accustomed, and submit to a government which they had been taught to respect. The extent of this emigration was considerable, and is said to have amounted to one third of the population; and it is evident from a subsequent census that this was not an exaggeration,

and that so large a proportion of the people absolutely left the country, abandoning their abodes and much wealth rather than submit to a people whom they hated as the usurpers of their possessions.

In the years 1789 and 1790, about which time the first disturbances among the slaves in the French part of the island commenced, it appears the Spanish division contained about one hundred and fifty thousand souls or upwards; but by a subsequent census taken immediately after the cession to the French, and after the spirit for emigration had in some measure subsided, there remained only about one hundred thousand of all descriptions, a very strong proof of the detestation in which the Spaniards held this treaty, which assigned them over as subjects of the republican government of France. It is very evident, however, whatever impressions this arrangement might have made on the Spanish colonists, that it was one dictated by the rulers in France, and therefore accepted from necessity, and not from choice. The infamous Godoy, Prince of Peace (which high sounding title was confirmed by this treaty) was the leading personage in its negotiation, and being secretly leagued with the French ministry, became a willing instrument in consigning this bright and valuable appendage of the Spanish crown to the more designing and crafty schemes of the French cabinet, which had been from the beginning of their ambitious aim at universal dominion, not unmindful of the advantages that were to be derived from colonial possessions. When it is seen

that the mistaken and weak policy, as well as the pusillanimity of the Spanish cabinet, caused so great a sacrifice as the dismemberment of their most valuable colony, it becomes a matter of no astonishment that the people should relax in their efforts to aid the means and resources of their parent state, by any exertions, in the cultivation of their lands, beyond what might be requisite for their own support. As this neglect and heedless inattention to their prosperity had been for a series of years observable, and as every incentive to industry was checked by the measures of the crown, it is not to be wondered at that this division of the island did not advance at the same rate as that which was under the dominion of France. However manifest the declension of the colony was to Spain, she never made any movements, nor adopted any means indicating a desire to revive the drooping energies of the colonists, and reinstate them in their former easy circumstances and affluence. If the cabinet of Madrid had had recourse to those wise plans which would have promoted the cause of agriculture and commerce, instead of becoming a calm and unconcerned spectator of the decline of both, this colony might still have remained the most brilliant gem in the Spanish crown. A people who had, from the example of their neighbours, and by an impulse the most surprising, been roused from a state of lethargy and inactivity to great exertions in the culture of the soil, in the breeding of cattle, and in commercial enterprise, might have exalted their country to the highest possible state of prosperity, had their

efforts been seconded by the regulations of a wise government, and had that protection been given to them to which they were surely entitled; but instead of such support and protection, instead of being watched over and guarded by their parent state, their prayers, their petitions, and entreaties, were unattended to, and they were given up as a prey to their rebellious and uncivilized neighbours, who used every exertion to throw their country into a state of anarchy and confusion. The individual and unsupported energies of the colonists, however, were roused by the alarming predicament into which they had been thrown, through the apathy and supineness of the cabinet of Spain, and they effectually stopped the incursions of the pillagers for a time, prevented the destruction of their towns and plantations, and finally, by their firmness and perseverance, saved their properties from the devastations which had destroyed those of the western division.

To the astonishment of the world, the slaves, as I have before remarked, adhered with extraordinary fidelity to the cause of their masters, and evinced no disposition to become participators in the work of rebellion, nor to enrich themselves by the spoils obtained by plunder, rapine, and every kind of predatory warfare. Although the example to throw off the yoke of slavery was constantly before them, few were the instances in which a slave joined the insurgents. Such an attachment on the part of the slave towards his master, however, is not to be wondered at, when it is known, that the Spaniards were kind, indulgent, and

liberal owners, always attentive to their wants, and alive to their comforts; seldom inflicting punishment, except for flagrant acts of insubordination and theft, but treating them with a leniency and humanity which softened the rigours of slavery, and left it to be known only by name.

Notwithstanding the enmity which always existed between the two colonies, a smuggling trade was carried on, which, although not very extensive, was exceedingly productive to the Spaniards, as it took off part of their horned cattle, mules, horses, &c., and in return for which they received the products and manufactures of Europe, and slaves, which they could not obtain by the regular course of importation, on any thing like the same moderate or favourable terms. It is stated, that the French purchased annually upwards of twenty-five thousand head of horned cattle and about two thousand five hundred mules and horses; and that the Spaniards also transmitted upwards of half a million of dollars in specie during the year, for the purchase of goods, implements of agriculture, and negroes. Large shipments of mahogany and dye-woods found their way to Spain and different parts of Europe, and the United States, and indirectly to England: and a considerable intercourse existed with the islands of Porto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica, to which latter two islands cattle were exported, and mahogany and dye-woods found a market in Jamaica more advantageous than any that could be found in Europe, owing to their being able to procure their returns in a more direct way than through the mother-country or any of the

European states.

The commerce with Porto Rico and the Spanish main was also productive of some profit to the people of St. Domingo. The advantages accruing to the former arose from the facilities of smuggling, by which the enormous duties on foreign European goods of thirty-four per cent. in most cases were saved; and these goods could be purchased in St. Domingo on more moderate terms, from having been illicitly obtained from the French part of the island.

The trade to the United States was also of no little importance; for the vessels of that country took large quantities of mahogany, hides, some coffee, and a little dye-wood, in return for the cargoes which they brought thither, consisting of flour, beef, pork, butter, salted herrings, and dried cod-fish, with some East India goods, and various descriptions of lumber of America, more useful and easy in working for buildings than the hard wood of the country. The aggregate value of the exports and imports of this part of the island I have seen nowhere correctly stated: it is very evident, however, from the various accounts which I have seen, that it was infinitely less than the aggregate of the French part; and this may be safely confided in from the extremely fertile state of the one, when compared with the uncultivated condition of the other; from the industrious, the assiduous, and enterprising spirit, so characteristic of the French colonist, aided by the judicious measures of the cabinet of France, which sought to protect and encourage the agriculture and commerce of her

colonies, whilst the Spaniards of the eastern division were left to pursue both their agricultural and commercial avocations under every species of discouragement and restraint. The energy displayed by one government, and the very relaxed system pursued by the other, accounts for the flourishing state of one part of this rich colony, whilst its rival was steeped in poverty: nothing, therefore, is left for conjecture as to the cause of so great a contrast; and both having subsequently been shaken by the effects of those pernicious doctrines so generally propagated at the Revolution, little is to be seen of the antecedent state of either, and chaos, ignorance, and indolence have superseded order, light, and industry.

Such was the state of the island at and during the two or three succeeding years of the revolution, as related by several writers, and confirmed by information obtained from individuals now residing in the country, who were present during the troubles which agitated and destroyed it, and reduced them from the height of affluence and peace into misery, and oftentimes into want – from them, much, of course, was to be elicited; and although I thought it a matter of prudence and a necessary caution, not to rely too implicitly on their communications, yet I always found them justly entitled to my confidence, on the fullest investigation. I never had a cause to question their veracity. Their account of the scenes which took place during the early stages and progress of the revolution, accords with the statements of others who have described them, and I have not been able to

discover any discrepancies between them.

CHAPTER II

Cause of the revolution in the colony. – People of colour in France. – Their proceedings. – League with the society of Amis des Noirs. – Ogé's rebellion. – His defeat and death. – Conduct of the proprietors and planters. – Consequences of it

It has been very erroneously thought by some persons, who feel interested in the fate of the slave population of the West Indies, or at all events they have, with no little industry, propagated the impression, that the revolution in Hayti begun with the revolt of the blacks, when it is evident, from the very best authors and from the testimony of people now living, who were present during its opening scenes, that such was not the fact, and that the slaves remained perfectly tranquil for two years after the celebrated "Declaration of Rights" was promulgated in France. Such persons give themselves but little trouble in searching the history of the island – they are satisfied with the report of others, who may be equally uninformed with themselves; and thus it is that they imbibe ideas and notions of the wonderful capacities of the negro population, who could have commenced, and so effectually carried themselves through a struggle for freedom,

without, as they allege, the aid of any other more enlightened or more powerful auxiliary. It requires no observation of mine to shew that the first symptom of disorder shewed itself among that class of people in the colony denominated, at the time, Sang-mêlées, or Gens de Couleur, or, as termed in the British colonies, mulattoes, who from their numbers formed a very powerful body, and not being countenanced by the whites, became in time inveterately opposed to them: many of them, natives of the colony and of the other French islands, were residing in France at the time of the Revolution, and these consisted of persons who had been sent thither in early life for their education, together with others who possessed considerable property, as well as some talent and intelligence. At this period also, from an extraordinary prejudice that prevailed in France against the inhabitants of the colonies, arising from an aversion to the principles of slavery, and which was much encouraged by the denunciation against everything having the least appearance of despotism, a society was established, denominated “Amis des Noirs” (Friends of the Blacks), which aimed at the subversion of the government, and called for an immediate abolition of the slave-trade, as well as a general emancipation of all those who were at the time living in a state of slavery.

“With these people” (meaning the men of colour in France), says a writer on this subject, “the society of Amis des Noirs formed an intimate connection. Their personal appearance excited pity, and, cooperating with the spirit of the times and the

representations of those who deeply sympathized upon principles of humanity with their condition, all ranks of people became clamorous against the white colonists, and their total annihilation was threatened." Not long after the formation of this union of feeling and sentiment between the friends of the blacks and the men of colour in France, the national assembly promulgated their famous declaration of rights, an act certainly contemplating the destruction of all order, and having an evident tendency to excite the lower classes of the people into every species of insubordination and general ferment; one of its leading and most important clauses being, that "*all men are born and continue free and equal as to their rights.*"

The society of Amis des Noirs, aided by a corresponding institution in London, together with the united body of the coloured people in France, lost no time in sending out this very celebrated declaration, and in disseminating its principles throughout the whole island; their efforts were not unavailing, for the mulattoes, conscious that the French nation were favourable towards their designs of demanding a restitution of their rights, and the full and unqualified enjoyment of those privileges hitherto confined to the white colonists, had recourse to arms, and appeared in bodies for the purpose of awing the provincial assemblies into concession; but their number not being great, they were in the onset easily subdued. It is said, however, that notwithstanding this check to their progress, the assemblies were much disposed to concede to the demands of the mulattoes;

but in no instance could they think of permitting those white inhabitants to participate in these privileges, who had in any way cooperated with them. Several of the civil officers of the colony and magistrates declaimed against slavery, and openly avowed themselves supporters of the declaration of the national assembly of the mother-country; they were arrested by the provincial assemblies, and committed to prison, and such was the irritation and fury of the mob, that Mons. Beaudierre, a respectable magistrate at Petit Goane, was taken out by force, and, in spite of the municipality and other powers, put to death. In some cases the governor successfully interposed, and those who were most obnoxious to the people were conveyed out of the colony by secret means. During all these outrages, there is no account upon record of the negroes taking any part, and the fact seems to be established, that at this period they were quite tranquil and unmoved, although their several proprietors were concerned either for or against the measures from which the agitations sprung.

It appears that the governor of the colony had lost a great deal of his popularity, and consequently of his power, by his interposition; for a general colonial assembly, convoked in January 1790 by order from the king, determined that his instructions were imperfect and inapplicable, and the people therefore proceeded on a plan of their own, and changed both the time and the place at which the assembly should be held. Nothing could have emanated from the deliberations of

the body convoked by this determination of the people, for the discontented and confused state of the colony being soon known in the mother-country, and an apprehension having arisen that the island was likely soon to be declared independent, the national assembly, in March 1790, came to the following decision: "That it never was the intention of the assembly to comprehend the interior government of the colonies in the constitution which they had framed for the mother-country, or to subject them to laws which were incompatible with their local establishments; they therefore authorize the inhabitants of each colony to signify to the national assembly their sentiments and wishes concerning the plan of interior legislation and commercial arrangement which would be most conducive to their prosperity." Then followed a resolution, "That the national assembly would not cause any innovation to be made, directly or indirectly, in any system of commerce in which the colonies were already concerned."²

The people of colour and the society of Amis des Noirs were, as it might have been anticipated, thrown into considerable alarm by the promulgation of a decree of so ambiguous a character, and no little surprise and consternation followed its appearance in the island. It was construed into an acquiescence in the further continuance of the slave-trade; it was also conceived to confer upon the colonists the power of settling and affixing their colonial constitutions, and to absolve them from their allegiance

² Anonymous.

to the French crown.

The first general assembly of the island which was convoked after these decrees had been received, and had excited the astonishment of the people, was held at St. Marc on the 16th of April 1790. Their deliberative functions commenced with a discussion upon the hardships to which the people of colour were subjected under the military system of the colony, and it was determined, that on no subsequent occasion should they be required to perform more duty than was usually exacted from the whites.

An inquiry into the abuses alleged to prevail in the colonial courts of judicature, and the discussion of a new plan of colonial government, were the principal subjects which occupied the attention of the assembly until the end of May, when it was adjourned or prorogued.

M. Paynier was at this time governor-general of St. Domingo: he had neither the capacity nor the disposition required for administering the affairs of the colony at such a period. Instead of being actuated with the desire of conciliating the parties opposed to each other, he secretly gave every possible aid and encouragement to the supporters of ancient despotism. The appearance of Colonel Mauduit, however, a man of some talent and energy, effected a change; for he soon acquired much influence over the governor-general, and prevented the coalition which was about to take place between the assembly and the mulattoes; and declaring himself the protector of the latter, he

speedily gained over to his interest the greater part of that class of people. The planters at this time, too, were in an undecided state, wavering in their opinions, and fixed to no measures likely to preserve the tranquillity of the island, and there was not one of their body capable of impressing them with a due sense of the condition into which they were likely to be precipitated by their want of energy and decision. Forming as they did a numerous class of the inhabitants, had they been unanimous in their opinions, and united in their views, the repose of the colony would in all probability have been preserved. Such not being the case, however, and some of the provincial assemblies making efforts to counteract the measures of the general one, a civil war seemed likely to be the result of so much diversity of sentiment. The decree of the general colonial assembly of the 28th of May was indicative of an approaching convulsion, which before long might be expected to burst forth; the preamble to this decree exhibited sentiments which seemed to breathe a spirit hostile to the peace of the people. The articles themselves assume it as a branch of the prerogative of the crown to confirm or annul the acts of the colonial legislature at pleasure. These articles are important, and I shall detail them as they have been given by others.

“First. The legislative authority, in every thing which relates to the internal concerns of the colony (*régime interieur*), is vested in the assembly of its representatives, which shall be called ‘The General Assembly of the French Part of St. Domingo.’

“Secondly. No act of the legislative body, in what relates to the internal concerns of the colony, shall be considered *as a law definitive*, unless it may be made by the representatives of the French part of St. Domingo, freely and legally chosen, and confirmed by the king.

“Thirdly. In cases of urgent necessity, a legislative decree of the general assembly, in what relates to the internal concerns of the colony, shall be considered as a law provisional. In all such cases the decree shall be notified forthwith to the governor-general, who, within ten days after such notification, shall cause it to be published and enforced, or transmit to the general assembly his observations thereon.

“Fourthly. The necessity of the case, on which the execution of such provisional decree is to depend, shall be a separate question, and be carried in the affirmative by a majority of two-thirds of the general assembly; the names and numbers being taken down (*prises par l’appel nominal*).

“Fifthly. If the governor-general shall send down his observations on any such decree, the same shall be entered in the journals of the general assembly, who shall then proceed to revise the decree, and consider the observations thereon, in three several sittings. The votes for confirming or annulling the decree shall be given in the words Yes or No, and a minute of the proceedings shall be signed by the members present, in which shall be enumerated the votes on each side of the question, and if there appears a majority of two-thirds for confirming the decree,

it shall be immediately enforced by the governor-general.

“Sixthly. As every law ought to be founded on the consent of those who are to be bound by it, the French part of St. Domingo shall be allowed to propose regulations concerning commercial arrangements, and the system of mutual connexion (*rappports commerciaux, et autres rappports communs*), and the decrees which the national assembly shall make in all such cases, *shall not be enforced in the colony, until the general assembly shall have consented thereto.*

“Seventhly. In cases of pressing necessity, the importation of articles for the support of the inhabitants shall not be considered as any breach of the system of commercial regulations between St. Domingo and France; provided that the decrees to be made in such cases by the general assembly shall be submitted to the revision of the governor-general, under the same conditions and modifications as are prescribed in articles three and five.

“Eighthly. Provided also, that every legislative act of the general assembly executed provisionally, in cases of urgent necessity, shall be transmitted forthwith for the royal sanction. And if the king shall refuse his consent to any such act, its execution shall be suspended as soon as the king’s refusal shall be legally notified to the general assembly.

“Ninthly. A new general assembly shall be chosen every two years, and none of the members who have served in the former assembly shall be eligible in the new one.

“Tenthly. The general assembly decree that the preceding

articles, as forming part of the constitution of the French colony in St. Domingo, shall be immediately transmitted to France for the acceptance of the national assembly and the king. They shall likewise be transmitted to all the parishes and districts of the colony, and be notified to the governor-general.”

It was not likely that a decree, the articles of which were thus opposed to the maintenance of order, could exact the acquiescence and submission of the people, and lead them to an approval of that which seemed to aim at the destruction of all subordination. Serious apprehensions arose as to the measures which would be adopted and pursued at this juncture, to avert the impending storm which was expected at no distant period to burst forth.

It was imagined, and was a received opinion, that the “declaring of the colony an independent state, in imitation of the English American provinces”, was certain, and every effort was made to avert such a proceeding. No obedience to the general assembly could be enforced. The inhabitants of Cape François were the first to set the example of renouncing all respect for that body, and of calling upon the governor-general to dissolve them. With this request he instantly complied, charging the general assembly with a design of undermining the peace of the colony, by forming projects of independency, contrary to the voice of the colonists; he even charged them with having been accessories or instigators of the mutiny of the crew of one of the king’s ships, and pronouncing them traitors to their king and country,

he declared that he should take the most prompt and effective measures for bringing them to that punishment for which their treachery so loudly called.

An attempt was made to arrest the committee of the western provincial assembly, and a force under M. Mauduit was sent for that purpose, but he failed in effecting his object, for the members, hearing of his approach, collected about four hundred of the national guard for their defence, and M. Mauduit retired after a skirmish or two, without any other advantage than the capture of the national colours.

The general assembly being apprised of this attack, immediately summoned the people to the support and protection of their representatives. The northern provincial assembly adhered to the governor-general, and, to oppose the progress of his opponents, they sent him all the troops stationed in that quarter, together with an additional force of about two hundred mulattoes. The western province collected a much greater force, and everything seemed to indicate a sanguinary civil war, when an event occurred which for a time averted all those unhappy results that would inevitably have taken place, had the opposing parties come in contact.

Most unexpectedly, at this momentous juncture, for the purpose of trying the effect of a personal appeal to the national assembly of France, the general assembly of the island determined on a voyage to Europe. About one hundred members, all that remained of their body, from the effects of sickness

and desertion, embarked on board the Leopard (that very ship, the crew of which had declared themselves in their interest a very short time previously) on the 8th of August, and took their departure, hailed with the warmest acclamations of the populace, who could not restrain their admiration at so extraordinary an act of devotion to the good of their country. It is said, that “tears of sensibility and affection were shed at their departure by all classes of people, and the parties in arms appeared mutually disposed to submit their differences to the king and the national assembly.”

Immediately after this storm had subsided, every effort was made by the governor-general, Paynier, to restore confidence and tranquillity amongst the people, and for some time, there was a strong indication of the peace of the colony being once more established; but the designs of the people of colour in France, abetted by the society of Amis des Noirs, at the head of which were some of the most violent of the revolutionary characters of France, destroyed all their hopes, and every species of anarchy and confusion was anticipated from the proceedings of these disseminators of the pernicious doctrine of equality and the rights of man.

It was at this period that the first mulatto rebellion took place, at the head of which was the famous Ogé, the protégé and disciple of La Fayette and Robespierre, a young man about thirty years of age, and a native of the northern part of St. Domingo. He had been educated in France at the expense of his mother, a woman of property living near Cape François; having been

admitted to the meetings of the society of Amis des Noirs, he had imbibed all their principles, and had become enthusiastic in demanding an equality of rights and privileges for his coloured brethren. Encouraged by the society, and the revolutionary leaders, he left France for the purpose of instigating his fellow colonists of colour to take up arms in the assertion of their claims. To give him something like an appearance of military command, the society purchased for him the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the army of one of the German states. To conceal his designs from the king and the national assembly, he made a circuitous voyage by North America; but his object was known before he left France, and intimation was sent out to the governor-general that he had embarked for St. Domingo, and that his scheme was to excite his coloured brethren to arms. A description of his person, and I believe a portrait also, were transmitted for the better discovery of him on his arrival; but notwithstanding every precaution, he landed secretly, and the circumstance remained unknown, until some weeks afterwards he wrote to the governor, reviling him for his proceedings, and in the name of all the mulattoes, of which he declared himself to be the protector, demanding in the most contumelious language the immediate execution of all the statutes of the Code Noir, and that in all times to come there should be no distinction, as to rights and privileges, between the whites and the other inhabitants of the island. To give a greater force as he thought to his demand, he vauntingly stated, that unless the governor-general acceded to his

propositions, he should assert them by the force of arms. Ogé, however, was somewhat premature in his calculations of support and aid in the carrying into effect the object of his voyage; for although some considerable time had elapsed from his landing, and he had the assistance of his brothers, who were tainted with the same love of insubordination and tumult, he never could collect at any one time more than from two to three hundred to join him in his cause. He encamped his followers near the Grand Rivière, and it is said, that his brothers and another chief, Chevane, instigated their people to commit many excesses, and at times murdered the unoffending inhabitants in the vicinity, with the most shocking cruelty, whenever they declined to join in their proceedings. Instances were many, in which whole families were murdered, from the circumstance of a father, or even a brother, refusing to take up arms to favour their cause.

Supported by so small a body, and no simultaneous movement taking place in any other part of the colony, the career of Ogé and his associates was not likely to be of any long duration. Steps were immediately taken by the governor to suppress the revolt, and to bring the leaders to trial, if it were found practicable to apprehend them. Troops and the Cape militia were sent to oppose them, when a skirmish ensued in which many of the rebels fell, and some were taken prisoners. Ogé escaped with Chevane; but as it was known that they had fled into the Spanish territory, they were demanded by the successor of Peynier, M. Blanchelande (the former having resigned his command, and

embarked for Europe,) who brought them to trial in March 1791, and they were condemned: Ogé and Chevane to be broken on the wheel, and his brother and some of his followers to be hanged. The fortitude of Chevane never forsook him to the last, and he met his fate with extraordinary resolution and courage; but Ogé exhibited the greatest pusillanimity, supplicating in the most abject manner that mercy might be extended to him. It appears that a respite was granted to him, in consideration of his promise to make the most important discoveries were his life spared. He made a full confession before commissioners appointed for that purpose, and in that confession was detailed the whole plan which the coloured people had devised to excite the negro population to open rebellion.

It seemed a case of peculiar hardship, if not of great injustice, and breach of all faith and honour, that after the unfortunate and deluded man had made such important disclosures, and had informed the governor of the whole of their designs, by which their further progress might be defeated, his life should be sacrificed; mercy having been held out as the price of his confession, it should have been extended to him, for this he had unquestionably, upon every principle of justice, a right to expect and to demand. Why it should not have been granted to him, no reason has been assigned. He was executed immediately after, and at the fatal spot he shewed neither the firmness, fortitude, nor the mind of a brave man suffering in that cause of which he had been the leader.

The proceedings of the government with respect to the revolt of Ogé, and the very unjust execution of the latter, excited great animosity between the whites and the people of colour, the latter of whom had collected in large bodies in various parts. In the western and southern districts they formed encampments, and displayed a determination to resist the oppression and the unjust decrees of the governor. At Jeremie, and at Aux Cayes in particular, a most formidable body had collected, well armed and accoutred, and shewed a great desire to come in contact with the government troops. It has been generally admitted that Mauduit, who commanded the troops of the government, was in secret conference with their leaders, and that on several occasions he appeared among them singly, and consulted with them, advising them not to desist from their purpose, but to move forward with energy and perseverance. That he did this traitorously, is evident, for having obtained intelligence of the whole of their plans through this ruse, he availed himself of it for the purpose of defeating them, and as it afterwards turned out, the mulattoes were dispersed and obliged to seek refuge in any place where it was not likely that they could be known or discovered.

The members of the colonial assembly who had gone to France for the purpose of laying their complaints at the foot of the throne, were not received with much favour; on the contrary, having appeared at the bar of the national assembly they were dismissed with considerable disappointment and chagrin. The report of the committee appointed to examine their claims,

displays no little disapprobation of the proceedings of the general colonial assembly. It concludes by saying, "that all the pretended decrees and acts of the said colonial assembly should be reversed and pronounced utterly null and of no effect; that the said assembly should be declared dissolved, and its members rendered ineligible and incapable of being delegated in future to the colonial assembly of St. Domingo; that testimonies of approbation should be transmitted to the northern provincial assembly, to Colonel Mauduit and the regiment of Port-au-Prince, for resisting the proceedings at St. Marc's; that the king should be requested to give orders for the forming a new colonial assembly on the principles of the national decree of the 8th of March 1790, and instructions of the 28th of the same month; finally, that the cidevant members, then in France, should continue in a state of arrest, until the national assembly might find time to signify its further pleasure concerning them."

Nothing could exceed the consternation which this decree excited throughout the colony, and the indignation of the people was manifest from one extremity of it to the other. To have called another general colonial assembly would have been an act of impossibility, for the people in many districts absolutely refused to return other representatives, declaring those that were under arrest in France to be the only legal ones, and that they would not proceed to another election.

The national guards, who had for some time felt, with no little mortification, the insult offered them by Mauduit, who

had previously carried off their colours, evinced a disposition to resent the affront, and to refuse all further adherence to the cause in which they had enlisted; and they were soon after joined in their revolt by the very regiment of which Mauduit was the commander, tearing the white cockade from their hats, and indignantly refusing obedience to him. Discovering the error into which he had fallen, he offered to restore the national colours, and appealed to them for protection against insult, which these faithless wretches pledged. But because he would not *stoop to the humiliation of begging pardon of the national guards on his knees*, he was, notwithstanding this pledge, on the day appointed for the ceremony of restoring the colours, suddenly pierced by the bayonets of those very soldiers whom on innumerable occasions he had so kindly and so liberally treated. The other troops who happened to be present at this most dastardly and inhuman act, could not witness it without an attempt to revenge themselves on the perpetrators; they were however restrained from effecting their intention, and only compelled them to lay down their arms, when they were sent off prisoners to France, there to receive that punishment which such an enormity most justly deserved.

About this period the accounts of the fatal end of Ogé had arrived in Paris, an event that caused an amazing sensation amongst the advocates of the people of colour and the society of Amis des Noirs; it brought forward the Abbe Gregoire, the staunch friend of the former, who, with extraordinary eloquence and great warmth, claimed the benefit which the instructions

of March 1790 gave to them. After a violent address from Robespierre, who said, "Perish the colonies rather than sacrifice one iota of our principles", the national assembly confirmed the decree of the 15th of May, 1791, which enacted, "that the people of colour resident in the French colonies should be allowed the privileges of French citizens, and, among others, those of having votes in the choice of representatives, and of being eligible to seats both in the parochial and colonial assemblies."

This decree, on being received in the colony, excited no little sensation; the greatest indignation was manifested by the white people in every quarter, but still they refrained from acts of hostility to the measures of the mother-country, under the hope that when the new colonial assembly, which was to meet at Leogane on the 9th of August, entered upon its legislative functions, it would without doubt afford them that redress which they so anxiously desired.

The mulattoes, no doubt, expected that a most serious opposition would be given to this decree, as the governor, M. Blanchelande, had assured the provincial assembly of the north, "that he would suspend the execution of this obnoxious decree whenever it should come to him properly authenticated"; they accordingly assembled in large bodies throughout the whole colony, and displayed a determination to enforce by arms the concession of those privileges to which, under the decree of the national assembly, they asserted they were entitled.

Here, it will be perceived, the first serious symptoms of tumult

and insubordination appeared, not from any revolt of the slave population, but from the unhappy interference of the national assembly of France, influenced by the supporters and advocates of the people of colour, and the society of Amis des Noirs. Had this interference been declined by the mother-country, and had the colonial assembly been invested with the sole legislative power of framing regulations for the internal government of the island, all those lamentable scenes which subsequently followed would have been averted, and the colony would have preserved its peace and repose, and have proceeded on, in its highly rich and cultivated condition, to the great advantage of the proprietors, to the enhancement of the revenues of the parent state, and without, in any way, oppressing the slave cultivators or increasing the burthens under which they were said to labour.

At the period of this narrative to which we have now arrived, the effects of the Revolution in France had made a very sensible impression on the whites, as well as on the people of colour; and it has been a matter of no little astonishment, that during the disputes which so unhappily existed, and whilst the adherents of one party were committing acts of hostility against the other, the slave population should have remained passive observers of the contest between their respective masters, and in no instance, I believe, did they fly to their succour and support. The proprietors and planters of all denominations had arrived at a very high state of affluence, their plantations were extensive, in a high state of cultivation; thus possessing a soil rich and productive in a climate

particularly favourable for cultivation, their wealth scarcely knew any limits. But unfortunately their manners and habits became relaxed and depraved in proportion as they advanced in affluence and prosperity. Proud, austere, and voluptuous, they often committed acts which humanity must condemn; and in the season of agitation and disappointment, when the contending factions at home and abroad were endeavouring to undermine them, they perhaps were led to the infliction of excessive punishments, and to practise an unusual degree of severity in exacting labour from their slaves. Sensual pleasures had also, at this time, become so prevalent as to excite very general disgust.

The mass of society had become so depraved, that vice in every shape was gloried in, whilst virtue was scarcely known; it cannot therefore be a matter of much surprise, that the rude, untaught, and unlettered slave, just emerging from his savage customs, should be led by example to imbibe the vicious habits, and indulge the loose and ungovernable propensities which characterized his master. Upon the creole slave example made an instant impression, whilst the newly imported African, slow to observe, was only led into excesses by the craft and persuasion of his creole fellow bondsman. Example, therefore, most unquestionably suggested the extraordinary cruelties which in the spirit of revenge were inflicted by these infuriated people, instigated by the mulattoes in the first instance for the more certain enforcing of their claims to the privileges which the decree of the 15th of May, 1791, conferred upon them.

In all these disputes the females of the colony also bore a conspicuous part; entering into all the views and feelings of their male companions, they displayed an unparalleled degree of enthusiasm for the cause in which their husbands, fathers and brothers had respectively engaged: forgetting their sex, and lost to the softer feelings of female nature, they furiously flew to the standards of their party, and by gesture and menace shewed that they were ready to meet the fate which seemed likely to fall on their friends.

I cannot better illustrate the characters of the planters and the slave population at this period, than by the description given of them by Rainsford in his History of St. Domingo, who must have been conversant with them from having been a sojourner in the colony under circumstances of great danger, and whose experience, arising from general intercourse, must enable him to be a very competent judge. He says of them: "Flushed with opulence and dissipation, the majority of the planters in St. Domingo had arrived at a state of sentiment the most vitiated, and manners equally depraved; while injured by an example so contagious, the slaves had become more dissolute than those of any British island. If the master was proud, voluptuous, and crafty, the slave was equally vicious, and often riotous; the punishment of one was but the consequent of his own excesses, but that of the other was often cruel and unnatural. The proprietor would bear no rival in his parish, and would not bend even to the ordinances of justice. The creole slaves looked

upon the newly imported Africans with scorn, and sustained in turn that of the mulattoes, whose complexion was browner, while all were kept at a distance from an intercourse with the whites; nor did the boundaries of sex, it is painful to observe, keep their wonted distinction from the stern impulses which affect men. The European ladies too often participated in the austerity and arrogance of their male kindred, while the jet black beauty among slaves, though scarcely a native of the island, refused all commerce with those who could not boast the same distinction with herself.”

CHAPTER III

First revolt of the slaves in 1791. – Their ravages. – Decree of the national assembly 4th of April 1792. – Santhonax and Polverel. – Their secret agency. – Encourage the slaves. – Their declaration of freedom to the slaves. – Consequences arising from it. – Character of the slaves. – Disabilities of the coloured people

In the preceding chapter I have sought to discover if the first cause of the revolt of the slaves in Hayti proceeded from any hatred towards their proprietors, or if it were excited by the intrigues of the contending parties, who were each attempting to gain over that class in favour of their cause; and I find that the result of my investigation of the subject is in favour of the latter supposition. From facts that appear to me undeniable I have come to the conclusion, that unless the national assembly of France had made an attempt to destroy that principle of governing the colony which had previously been adopted, and which before the Revolution had been sanctioned by every person connected with it, the slave population would have remained until this day peaceable and tranquil observers of passing events, unmindful of

their being in bondage, because under that bondage they had no wants, and in that state, whatever may be the opinion of mankind, they had no care beyond that of their daily labour, to which they felt it was no hardship to submit; for there does not appear an instance in which it exceeded the ordinary work of any labourer within the tropics.

The revolt of the slaves, therefore, I take leave to say, did not proceed from any severity or great oppression on the part of their proprietors, but from the proceedings of the parties who at different periods were striving for a preponderating power in the colony: – of the whites who aimed at the preservation of their privileges, and resisted all innovation; and of the people of colour, who made every possible effort to be admitted into the same sphere, and to the enjoyment of those rights which Gregoire and his revolutionary colleagues were willing to concede to them. To these causes, and to these alone, as it will appear to every unbiassed reader, are to be attributed all those lamentable scenes which subsequently ensued, and to which the human mind cannot turn its attention without experiencing those painful sensations which are excited by the ravages of civil warfare and rebellion.

The first act of open rebellion among the slaves appears to have occurred in the vicinity of the Cape on or about the 23d of August 1791, on the plantation Noé, situated in the parish of Acul. The principal ringleaders murdered the white inhabitants, whilst the other slaves finished the work of devastation, by demolishing the works and setting fire to the dwellings, huts, and

other places contiguous to them.

They were joined by the negroes from other estates in the neighbourhood, upon all of which similar tragedies were performed, and desolation seemed likely to spread through the whole plains of the north. The barbarity which marked their progress exceeded description; an indiscriminate slaughter of the whites ensued, except in instances where some of the females were reserved for a more wretched doom, being made to submit to the brutal lusts of the most sanguinary wretches that ever disgraced humanity. Cases are upon record, where the most amiable of the female sex were first brought forth to see their parents inhumanly butchered, and were afterwards compelled to submit to the embraces of the very villain who acted as their executioner. The distinction of age had no effect on these ruthless savages, for even girls of twelve and fourteen years were made the objects of satiating their lust and revenge. Nothing could exceed the consternation of the white people; and the lamentations of the unhappy women struck every one with horror. Such a scene of massacre has scarcely been heard of, as that which accompanied the commencement of the rebellion in the north.

Some opposition was made to their progress by a few militia and troops of the line, which M. De Tonzard collected for the purpose; not indeed, with the expectation of effectually dispersing them, but of enabling the inhabitants of the city of Cape François to put themselves in such a state of defence as might save them from that destruction which seemed to await

them. The citizens flew to arms, and the national guards, with the seamen from the ships, were mustered, and ready to receive the rebels should they make an attempt upon the city.

There was in the city at the time, a large body of free mulattoes, on whom the lower order of whites looked with a suspicious eye, as being in some way the authors or fomenters of the revolt; these were also enrolled in the militia, the governor and the colonial assembly confiding in them, and relying on their fidelity. The report of the revolt was soon known throughout the whole colony, but more particularly in the northern districts, the white inhabitants of which, being speedily collected together, established two strong posts at Grand Rivière and at Dondon, for the purpose of checking the advance of the revolters, until such time as a force could be concentrated, sufficiently powerful to disperse them: but in this they were disappointed, for the negroes had increased their own numbers by the revolt of the slaves on many other estates, and they had also been joined by a large body of mulattoes. With this united force, they successfully attacked the two positions which were occupied by the whites, who were completely routed. Success put the rebels in possession of the extensive plain with all its surrounding mountains, abounding with every production of which they stood in need for their sustenance.

The defeat of the whites was followed by a scene of cruelties and butcheries which exceeds imagination; almost every individual who fell into the hands of the revolters met with a

wretched end, tortures of the most shocking description being resorted to by these blood-thirsty savages: blacks and mulattoes seemed eager to rival each other in the extent of their enormities.

The union of the mulattoes with the revolted slaves, was not an event unlocked for; as I have before remarked, they were strongly suspected of being the instigators of the rebellion. This junction caused serious apprehensions, that those mulattoes who had joined the whites in the city, and had marched for the purpose of cooperating with the inhabitants of the plains, would desert their posts and go over to the revolters; and it is probable that such an event might have ensued, had not the governor, before he permitted them to be enrolled, and before he could implicitly confide in them, demanded from them their wives and children, as hostages for their adherence to the cause which they had engaged to support.

In this northern insurrection, the destruction of the white inhabitants, it is said, was considerable, exceeding, of all ages, two thousand; besides the demolition of the buildings of a great many plantations, and the total ruin of many families, who from a condition of ease and affluence were reduced to the lowest state of misery and despair, being driven to the melancholy necessity of supplicating charity, to relieve the heart-rending calls of their hungry and naked offspring. The loss of the insurgents was however infinitely greater; being ignorant of the effects of cannon they were consequently cut down in masses, while the sword was also effectually used. It appears that upwards of

10,000 of these sanguinary wretches fell in the field, besides a very large number who perished by famine, and by the hands of the executioner; a very just retribution for their savage and inhuman proceedings. There is every reason to believe that the loss sustained by them in all their engagements must have been immense, as they seemed to have imbibed a most extraordinary idea of the effect of artillery: it is said of them by a writer of repute, that "The blacks suffered greatly in the beginning of the revolution by their ignorance of the dreadful effects of the guns, and by a superstitious belief, very generally prevailing at that time, that by a few mysterious words, they could prevent the cannon doing them any harm, which belief induced them to face the most imminent dangers."

Whilst these ravages were going on in the north, the western district was menaced by a body of men of colour, who had collected at Mirebalais, sanguinely expecting to be joined by a large party of slaves from the surrounding parishes. Their aim was the possession of Port au Prince and the whole plain of Cul de Sac; but being joined by only about six or seven hundred of the slaves of the neighbourhood, they did not succeed in their object; and after having set fire to the coffee plantations in the mountains, and done some injury amongst the estates in the valley, they began to deliberate on their condition, and to devise some plan, by which they might be able to rescue themselves from the dilemma into which they were thrown by their own rash and improvident proceedings. Some of the most powerful

of the mulattoes, who found it impossible to gain the negroes over to their cause, deemed it advisable to propose an adjustment of their disputes, and attempt to bring about a reconciliation with the whites. One of the planters, a man of some power and address, and having been always very highly esteemed by the people of colour, as well as the negroes through the whole of the Cul de Sac, interposed, and a treaty was concluded on the 11th of September, between the people of colour on the one part, and the white inhabitants of Port au Prince on the other.

This treaty was called the *Concordat*: it had for its basis the oblivion of past differences and the full recognition of the decree of the national assembly of the 15th of May. The treaty was subsequently ratified by the general assembly of the colony, and a proclamation was issued, in which it was held out that further concessions were contemplated for the purpose of cementing a good understanding between both classes, and these concessions, it was supposed, alluded to the admission of those persons of colour to the privileges of the whole who were born of enslaved parents. Mulattoes also were voted to be eligible to hold commissions in the companies formed of persons of their own colour, and some other privileges of minor consideration conceded to them. This, it was hoped, would restore order, and enable the people once more to enjoy peace and repose. But a circumstance occurred which blasted these hopes, and the flame, which appears only to have been partially subdued, was rekindled, and burst forth again with an astonishing rapidity,

devouring all within its overwhelming reach.

Immediately after the ratification of the *Concordat* by the colonial assembly had been announced, and when it was admitted by all parties that its several provisions, amongst them the decree of the 15th of May, were judicious and highly commendable, tending to preserve order and tranquillity through the island, intelligence was received of the repeal of that very decree by the national assembly in France, and of its having been voted by a very large majority. This was followed too by an intimation that the national assembly had determined on sending out commissioners to enforce the decree of the 24th of September 1791, which annulled the decree of the 15th of May, and to endeavour to restore order and subordination. Such unaccountable, and, as they may be justly characterized, deceptive proceedings on the part of the national assembly excited the indignation of the people of colour, who immediately accused the whites of being privy to these transactions, and declared that all further amity and good understanding must be broken off, and that either one party or the other must be annihilated. All the coloured people in the western and southern parts flew eagerly to the standard of revolt, and having collected a strong force, they appeared in a few days before Port au Prince, on which they made an attempt, but as that city had been strengthened by an additional force from France, it was enabled to receive the attack of the insurgents, and ultimately to repel them with no inconsiderable loss. The city however sustained

considerable injury, and the revolvers were successful in several attempts to set fire to it, by which a very large part of it was burnt down, or otherwise injured.

In the plains of the Cul de Sac the negroes joined the mulattoes, allured by the charm of plunder and the pledge of freedom, and the expectation of satiating their lust on the defenceless and unoffending white females who should fall into their hands. In these plains some sanguinary battles were fought, remarkable however for nothing except the unrelenting cruelties with which the prisoners of the respective combatants were visited, and the barbarous and inhuman executions which followed them.

In these engagements it is recorded that the whites had the advantage, but they were unable to follow up their success, being destitute of a force of cavalry for the pursuit, a circumstance which made it quite impossible for them to improve on any decisive movement which they had effected. It appears, that in every skirmish or engagement the whites were in all cases most forward and bold in their attacks, and few only were the instances in which the contest was commenced by the mulattoes; whenever they were brought in contact with their opponents they exhibited no individual or collective displays of courage and heroism, but, on the contrary, there seemed a tincture of cowardice in all their proceedings, for they arranged the negroes in front of their position, and in all cases of advance these deluded creatures bore the first attack of their adversaries, whilst their coloured

allies, leaders, and deluders, often remained inactive during the moment of trial and slaughter.

In December the commissioners Mirbeck, Roosne, and St. Leger arrived. Their reception was respectful, and there was a peculiar degree of submission shewn to them; but when they proclaimed a general amnesty and pardon to all who should submit and desist from further acts of insubordination, and subscribe the articles of the new constitution, a general murmur was excited, and marks of disapprobation were shewn towards them, not only by the colonial assembly, but by every individual of the contending parties. They remained in the island but a short time; and as an opinion prevailed that they were the mere instruments or organ of the national assembly, they obtained no attention or respect. Without any display of talent, they aspired to the government of a people, who were not to be commanded without being first taught that their commission was of a pacific tendency, and that their instructions were to appease, and not to excite. Instead of this, they declined to give any explanation of the object of their appointment beyond that which had been previously known, the enforcing of the decree of the 24th of September 1791. Finding all their efforts unavailing, and that they were unsupported by either party, finding that their authority was disputed and their representations despised, and, above all, left without any troops by which they might attempt to enforce obedience to their power, and submission to the decrees of the mother-country, they took their departure

from the island by separate conveyances, after having made many most ineffectual attempts to obtain the confidence and the good opinion of the people over whom they were sent to preside, and from whom they were sent to exact an accordance with such measures as the national assembly might think it expedient to adopt.

About this time, also, there were some changes in France which indicated further arrangements with respect to the administration of the colonies, which could only tend to widen the breach, and inflame the parties to that degree of violence which would preclude the expectation of any amicable adjustment at a future period. The society of Amis des Noirs had now gained a considerable influence in the national assembly, and there seemed to exist an union of feeling in favour of the mulattoes, and also of the slave population, whom it was designed at no distant period to emancipate, however unprepared they might be, by moral improvement, to receive such a boon. It was suggested that instructions should be sent out to the colonial assemblies, conveying to them such intentions, as well as their opinion of the means by which "slavery might be abolished in toto", without in the least affecting the interest of the people, or in any way putting their property in jeopardy. This design, however, of the anti-slavery party in France met with some momentary opposition, although the advocates of the measure uttered loud invectives against the planters in general; but whatever influence the former might have collected and

brought against the latter, it is very clear it failed in its desired aim, for in less than two months this assembly passed another decree, which abrogated that of the 24th of September. This decree is of the 4th of April 1792, and it is the first step towards an emancipation of slavery, although it does not declare such an intention. It is important, and I shall therefore insert it from a translation in another work, to the writer of which I am much indebted.

“The national assembly acknowledges and declares, that the people of colour and free negroes in the colonies ought to enjoy an equality of political rights with the whites; in consequence of which it decrees as follows: —

“Article 1st. Immediately after the publication of the present decree, the inhabitants of each of the French colonies in the windward and leeward islands shall proceed to the re-election of colonial and parochial assemblies, after the mode prescribed by the decree of the 8th of March 1790, and the instructions of the national assembly of the 28th of the same month.

“2d. The people of colour and free negroes shall be admitted to vote in all the primary and electoral assemblies, and shall be eligible to the legislature and all places of trust, provided they possess the qualifications prescribed by the fourth article of the aforesaid instructions.

“3d. Three civil commissioners shall be named for the colony of St. Domingo, and four for the islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, St. Lucia, and Tobago, to see this decree enforced.

“4th. The said commissioners shall be authorized to dissolve the present colonial assemblies; to take every measure necessary for accelerating the convocation of the primary and electoral assemblies, and therein to establish union, order, and peace, as well as to determine provisionally (reserving the power of appeal to the national assembly) upon every question which may arise concerning the regularity of convocations, the holding of assemblies, the form of elections, and the eligibility of citizens.

“5th. They are authorized to procure every information possible, in order to discover the authors of the troubles in St. Domingo, and the continuance thereof, if they still continue; to secure the persons of the guilty, and to send them over to France, there to be put in a state of accusation, &c.

“6th. The said civil commissioners shall be directed, for this purpose, to transmit to the national assembly minutes of their proceedings, and of the evidence they may have collected concerning the persons accused as aforesaid.

“7th. The national assembly authorizes the civil commissioners to call forth the public force whenever they may think it necessary, either for their own protection, or for the execution of such orders as they may issue by virtue of the preceding articles.

“8th. The executive power is directed to send a sufficient force to the colonies, to be composed chiefly of national guards.

“9th. The colonial assemblies immediately after their formation shall signify, in the name of each colony respectively,

their sentiments respecting that constitution, those laws, and the administration of them, which will best promote the prosperity and happiness of the people, conforming themselves nevertheless to those general principles by which the colonies and the mother-country are connected together, and by which their respective interests are best secured, agreeably to the decree of the 8th of March 1790 and instructions of the 28th of the same month.

“10th. The colonial assemblies are authorized to send home delegates for the purposes mentioned in the preceding article, in numbers proportionate to the population of each colony, which proportion shall be forthwith determined by the national assembly, according to the report which its colonial committee is directed to make.

“11th. Former decrees respecting the colonies shall be in force in every thing not contrary to the present decree.”

The carrying of this decree into effect was entrusted to Messrs. Santhonax, Polverel, and Ailhaud, the executive in France sending out a body comprising eight thousand men of the national guards, for the purpose of compelling the colonists to submit to their authority. Having arrived on the 13th of September, their first act was to dissolve the colonial assembly, and their next, to send the governor, Blanchelande, to France, where, after an examination into his administration, he was sentenced to death, and suffered on the guillotine in the April following. M. Desparbes, who was invested with chief command in his stead, having disagreed with the commissioners, was also

suspended, and, like his predecessor, he was sent to France to undergo a similar fate.

The greatest consternation everywhere prevailed on the announcement of this decree, and, as I have before observed, a pretty general feeling existed, that this was only a prelude to a general emancipation of the slave population, and which afterwards was actually realised. The white inhabitants, in particular, suspected the candour of the commissioners, who were anxious to have it believed that the object of their mission was nothing more than to carry into operation the provisions of this decree, and to settle all those disputes between the one class and the other, which had been fomented to the great destruction of persons and property. These agents of the national assembly seem to have been well skilled in the art of dissimulation, more particularly the leader, M. Santhonax, who, whilst professing to the whites the warmest solicitude and anxiety for the preservation of peace and the promotion of the prosperity of the colony, was secretly intriguing with the mulattoes, and holding clandestine meetings with their chiefs; and in the end, in conjunction with his coadjutors, he openly declared that they, with the free negroes, should enjoy their privileges, receive the protection of the national guards, and that he would espouse their cause in every possible way in which it could be effectually promoted.

The properties of the white inhabitants, as well as their lives, seemed at this juncture in the greatest jeopardy, and they possessed no means of averting the fate which seemed to await

them. Some little hope, however, was raised in their minds by the appointment of a new governor, M. Galbaud, who arrived to take the command in May 1793, and to place the island in the strongest state of defence, it being apprehended by the French government that the British might interpose in the existing disputes, as war had been declared between the two powers. His arrival was hailed by the authorities and the inhabitants of the Cape with the strongest manifestations of joy, and from his having property in the island, they had the highest confidence in his character for probity, and anticipated that the most decisive measures would be adopted for the restoration of their property, and for the security of their lives. But how vain were their anticipations, and how fleeting their hope! The national assembly of France, the great mover of all the evils which afflicted this unhappy country, again interposed with new instructions, and suspended the new governor from his command, decreeing that any one holding property in the colonies should be ineligible to fill any office of trust in the colony in which his estate was situate.

Galbaud did not, however, resign his appointment without a struggle; and aided by his brother, a man of some spirit and great enterprise, he collected a force composed of militia, seamen from the ships in the harbour of the Cape, and a strong body of volunteers, and without delay advanced against the commissioners, whom he found ready to receive him at the head of the regular troops. A conflict severe and bloody ensued, and considerable resolution was displayed by the rival parties, each

supporting their cause with unshaken firmness and determined bravery; but the sailors, who composed the greatest body of Galbaud's force, having become disorderly, he was obliged to retire, which he did without being in the least interrupted or opposed by the force of the commissioners.

The next day various skirmishes took place, in which the success was in some degree mutual; and whilst the brother of Galbaud fell into the hands of the commissioners' troops, the son of Polverel was captured by the seamen attached to Galbaud's force. The commissioners finding, however, that their force diminished, and that their opponents were resolute and fought with unexampled bravery, had recourse to a measure which in the sequel caused much slaughter, although it succeeded in the destruction of Galbaud's force; they called in the aid of the revolted slaves, offering them their freedom, and promising that the city of the Cape should be given up for plunder. Some of the rebel chiefs rejected a proposition which could only produce the sacrifice of lives and the spilling of human blood, without in any way promoting their own cause, but Macaya, a negro possessing some power over his adherents, and being of a savage and brutal disposition, with an insatiable thirst for the blood of the whites, accepted the proposal of the commissioners, and with three or four thousand of his negro brethren joined their standard, when a scene of horror and of carnage ensued, the recital of which would shock the hardest and most unfeeling heart. Men, women, and children were without distinction unmercifully slaughtered

by these barbarians, and those who had escaped the first rush into the city, and had reached the water-side, for the purpose of getting on board the ships in the harbour, were intercepted and their retreat cut off by these merciless wretches, just at the moment when arrangements had been accomplished for their embarkation. Here the mulattoes had an opportunity of gratifying their revenge; here they had arrived at the summit of their greatest ambition and glory; here it was that these cowardly and infamous parricides, gorged with human blood, sacrificed their own parents, and afterwards subjected their bodies to every species of insult and indignity; here it was that these disciples of Robespierre – this injured and oppressed race – the theme of Gregoire's praise, and the subject of his appeal and harangue, shewed themselves worthy disciples of such masters! If any thing were wanted to establish the fact of these scenes being unexampled, and without a parallel, one thing, I am sure, will alone be sufficient, and that is, that the commissioners, these amiable representatives of the national assembly, the *immaculate* Santhonax, and the equally *humane* and *virtuous* Polverel, these vicegerents of the society of Amis des Noirs, these protectors of the mulattoes, were struck with horror at the scene which was presented to them, and repaired to the ships, there to become spectators of the effects of their own crimes, and of a splendid and opulent city devoured by the flames which had been lighted by the torch of anarchy and rebellion.

In this destruction of the Cape, some instances of the most

extraordinary brutality were exhibited, and others of devotedness and heroism were displayed; one or two it will be as well to mention, as illustrative of the generosity and humanity of the one party, and of the ferocity and cruelty of the other. When the revolvers first entered the city, every man, woman, and child were bayoneted or cut down with such instruments as they could muster, but the young females were in most cases spared, for the momentary gratification of the lust of those into whose hands they fell. One case of the most singular enormity took place: – a leader of the revolted slaves, named Gautier, had entered the house of a respectable merchant in the square, in which were the proprietor, his wife, his two sons, and three daughters; the sons were young, not exceeding the age of ten, but the daughters were elegant young women, the eldest about eighteen, and the youngest not exceeding fourteen. Gautier, assisted by one or two wretches equally inhuman, promised to spare the family, on account of his having received many acts of kindness and generosity from the father, to whom he was often sent by his master on business, he being a domestic slave. These poor creatures, who were at first half-expiring from the terror of the scene around them, and from the idea of being the captives of barbarians, recovered somewhat from the alarm into which they had been thrown, through the promises of security thus unconditionally pledged to them; and although not permitted to go out of the sight of their captors, they did not apprehend that any mischief was in embryo, and that their lives were to be

sacrificed. Impressed with the idea of safety, they proceeded to prepare a repast for their supposed guardians, and set it before them in the same splendour as they were wont to do when receiving their best and dearest friends. Gautier drank freely, and his compeers did no little justice to the rich repast. Night coming on, and apprehensive of the consequences of a surprise from the governor's force, they began to deliberate upon what plan they should adopt to secure their unhappy captives from flight, when, not being able to devise any thing likely to be effectual, they came to the savage resolution of murdering them all. The daughters were locked up in a room, under the watch of two of the revolvers, whilst the remainder of them commenced the bloody task by bayoneting the two sons. The mother, on her knees, imploring mercy with pitiful cries, met with the same fate, whilst the husband, who was bound hand and foot, was barbarously mangled, by having first his arms and then his legs cut off, and afterwards run through the body. During this blood-thirsty scene, the daughters, ignorant of the tragic end of their parents, were in a state of alarm and terror not to be described, yet hoping that their lives were safe. But, alas! how deceitful that hope! for their destiny was fixed, and their time but short. Gautier and his diabolical associates went into their room, stripped them naked, and committed on their defenceless persons the most brutal enormities, when with the dead bodies of their parents they were thrown into the flames which were then surrounding them, where they all perished.

I shall mention another case of an opposite character, and in which a degree of heroism was exhibited that deserves to be recorded with every praise. A M. Tardiffe, a planter, and a young man of considerable property and of great courage and presence of mind, had joined the force of the governor, and had consequently become an object of great hatred, particularly on the part of some of the mulattoes who resided in the vicinity of his estate. Awakened one night about twelve o'clock by the cries of females, he jumped up, and rushed to the room in which his sisters, two amiable young ladies, were reposing, where he found armed men attempting to get through the window. He instantly flew for his sabre and pistols, which were loaded, his sisters following him, and then returned to the room to oppose the assassins. He found one had accomplished his purpose of getting into the room, whom he in an instant ran through the body; when, turning to the window, he shot another fellow just entering, and afterwards one or two others who made similar attempts. About this time his domestics had all come up stairs, and they shewed themselves most faithful in adhering to their master; for, not contented with merely opposing the entry of the assassins into the house, they sallied forth to meet them at the front of it, and although their numbers were inferior to that of their unprincipled and lawless invaders, they successfully attacked them, killing seven, and driving away the rest, with the exception of one, who was captured, who happened to be the illegitimate brother of M. Tardiffe, to whom he had shewed the

warmest affection and whom he had cherished as the dearest relation. In return for such ingratitude and villainy, how did M. Tardiffe act? Did he give him up for public justice? No. Did he permit his faithful and enraged domestics, who were witnesses of his crimes, to execute momentary vengeance upon him? No. But he took him by the hand, mildly remonstrated with him, and afterwards furnished him with the means of leaving the colony for America, lest the searching hand of justice might before long stay his career. I have thought it adviseable to relate these two cases, from the extraordinary enormity of the first, and from the singular circumstances attending the last, having received the detail of them from an individual who was engaged in most of the events which occurred at that period.

After this first revolt of the slaves in the north, emigrations commenced in almost all parts of the colony, some going to the United States, many to the neighbouring islands; and some of the most opulent and powerful of the planters to England, under the impression that the British government would be disposed to turn its attention to their cause. The war between France and England having commenced, some regard was paid to their solicitations, and through the instance of M. Charmilly (the M. Charmilly of Spanish notoriety) the government of England sent out directions to the governor of Jamaica to afford to those inhabitants of St. Domingo who were desirous to place themselves under British protection every possible support, and to send without delay a competent force, and to take possession of such places as the

people might be disposed to surrender to them.

The intentions of the British government being known by the means of secret agents, the commissioners, Santhonax and Polverel, had recourse to every possible means of strengthening the force in the colony, and of being prepared for the reception of the British troops whenever they should make their contemplated descent. They collected the regular troops, militia, and such of the whites as were in their interest, together with the free negroes and mulattoes who had hitherto followed their cause. But this was not deemed by them a sufficient body when united, to oppose British soldiers led on by experienced commanders. They therefore at once “proclaimed the abolition of every species of slavery, declaring that the negroes were thenceforth to be considered as free citizens”; and thereby assigned over to a lawless banditti the fee simple of every property in the French part of the island of St. Domingo, placing every white inhabitant within almost the grasp of a set of people insensible to every feeling of humanity, rude and ruthless as in their native wilds.

A description of these untutored people cannot be better given than in the language of Mr. Edwards, who says, “The Charaibs of St. Vincent, and the Maroons of Jamaica, were originally enslaved Africans; and what they now are, the freed negroes of St. Domingo will be hereafter, – savages in the midst of society, without peace, security, agriculture, or property; ignorant of the duties of life, and unacquainted with all the soft endearing relations which rendered it desirable; averse

to labour, though frequently perishing for want; suspicious of each other, and towards the rest of mankind revengeful and faithless, remorseless and bloody-minded; pretending to be free while groaning beneath the capricious despotism of their chiefs, and feeling all the miseries of servitude without the benefits of subordination." The prediction of this elegant author has certainly been realized in all its parts, and subsequent events have fully confirmed the opinion which he had formed of the negro character, when left to his own uncontrolled will and unrestrained in his propensities. Sloth, lust, and every species of wantonness and cruelty marked the progress of the enfranchised slaves in the first moment of their freedom; and until leaders of decisive and resolute powers for command undertook to preserve some degree of order and submission, they wandered in parties through the different parishes, inflicting the most unheard-of cruelties on the innocent and unoffending, without regard to sex or colour. To the will and command of their chief they were generally obedient, although they were subjected to duties of the most dangerous and laborious description; but when the least relaxation of discipline was permitted, they again resorted to plunder and destruction, and to every other species of insubordination, gratifying their insatiable thirst for the blood of the whites, as well as of that of the mulattoes, who were averse to the measure of emancipation. In these predatory excursions they committed the most shocking excesses, and more real and afflicting accounts have been received of the enormities

practised by them when wandering in detached parties, than have been known to follow the most sanguinary battle in which they had been engaged.

I see nothing through the whole career of the rebellion to induce me to alter my opinion of the cause whence all these lamentable effects sprung; and I must again repeat, that it was not misconduct on the part of the proprietors which excited the first revolt, and induced the slaves to take up arms against those from whom, in innumerable instances, they had experienced kindness and indulgence. It was natural to expect that in a colony, the operations in which are entirely performed by slaves, some cases of oppression would occur which would justly deserve reprobation; but the rebellion became general, although I am not aware that any successful attempt has been made to shew that the conduct of the planters towards their slaves was generally harsh and oppressive.

De Vastey, in his remarks, would wish it to be inferred that the brute creation received infinitely more kindness and indulgence from their master than was shewn towards the slave: but De Vastey being a negro, it is natural that he should exhibit the worst side of the picture, without noticing its better one. He adduces no instances of that oppression which he wishes to prevail upon mankind to believe to have been inflicted: we have nothing from him but allegations and assertions, without proof to support them. It is true, that he puts forward some statements of cruelties inflicted on his negro brethren, but those were subsequent, even

by his own account, to the revolt and to the emancipation; but he has forgotten that the first atrocities, the first acts of cruelty and indiscriminate murder, were committed by his very brethren (for whom he claims the pity of mankind for their sufferings and for their unmerited bondage) on the plantation Noé, and others in the vicinity. De Vastey, it is plain, is no authority on which the charge of cruelty on the part of the planter *before* the rebellion can be supported.

With regard to the mulattoes, or free men of colour, who were doubtless the chief instigators of the rebellion and of the first revolt of the slaves, although they cannot escape the condemnation justly due to them for their perfidy, yet the extreme disabilities under which they laboured in some measure might be adduced in mitigation of the censure which their faithless conduct so truly deserved. If they had not commenced the work of revolt, but had remained quiet observers of the proceedings of the national and colonial assemblies, and delayed their operations until the result of the deliberations and arrangements of those bodies had been promulgated, they would have called forth spontaneous expressions of approbation from all classes of people: but the eagerness which they manifested for civil feuds and for a preponderancy of power in the colony, without any conditions and without the least possible reservation, has called down upon them, and I think justly too, very severe reprobation. It has been observed, that this class of people were, from their education and from their general demeanour,

as eligible members of society as the whites, and as such ought to have been admitted into all its rights and advantages. This, I believe, no one undertakes to deny; but it is no more than fair and equitable towards the white population to observe, that prior to every concession being made to them, something like a line of demarcation should have been drawn as to the limits to which those concessions should be carried, otherwise from their number and power the mulattoes might have obtained an overwhelming preponderancy in the colony, rendering the white colonists mere cyphers.

The decrees against the people of colour, as they appear on the records of the colony, are extremely harsh and impolitic, and a relaxation, if not a repeal of them, would have been only an act of justice. The government held them in no repute, but considered them as it were national property, and gave the public a right in them. They were subjected by the governors, when they had arrived at a particular age, to a military servitude of the most degrading kind, and for a time to labour on the public roads, the severity of which was almost too great to be borne. They were not permitted to hold any office of power or trust in the state, nor could they even follow the humble calling of a schoolmaster. The least possible taint in the blood excluded them, and the distinction of colour had no termination. Not so in the British colonies, where it is lost in the third generation. It is said also, that "the courts of criminal jurisdiction adopting the popular prejudices against them gave effect and permanency

to the system. A man of colour, being a prosecutor, must have made out a strong case indeed, if at any time he obtained the conviction of a white person. On the other hand, the whites never failed to procure prompt and speedy justice against mulattoes. To mark more strongly the distinction between the two classes, the law declared that if a free man of colour presumed to strike a white person, of whatever condition, his right hand should be cut off; while a white man for a similar assault on a free mulatto was dismissed on the payment of an insignificant fine.”³

It is, I conceive, impossible for any one to be informed of the existence of such a system without exclaiming, that whatever might have been the proceedings of the people of colour in the work of rebellion, their grievances offered considerable extenuation of their conduct. This presents the most disgraceful and indefensible page in the colonial records of criminal jurisprudence. True it is that its severity, that its flagrant injustice, precluded the possibility of putting it in force; the abhorrence which it so generally excited among all orders of people, made it a dead letter; but it was notwithstanding a law in force, and might have been acted upon by an arbitrary and unmerciful judge.

The only circumstance that contributed towards affording the coloured people some degree of security and protection under their disabilities was the power which they indirectly derived from the possession of property in the colony. They consequently

³ Anonymous.

had influence, because under a corrupt government money bought it, and many were the venal officers of the state who had stooped to be their pensioners. Many of these mulattoes held large estates, and possessed besides extensive available funds; these men in most cases evaded those exclusions from society, to which their brethren of less influence were obliged to submit. They were secure enough both in their persons and property, whilst the less wealthy among their coloured brethren had to submit to every species of insecurity and mortification.

I have now said as much as may be deemed necessary on the subject of the situation of the coloured people at the time of the first disturbances in St. Domingo, and I trust I have made it appear conclusive, that the cause of those disturbances did not proceed from the oppression and the tyranny practised over the slaves, but from the measures of the national assembly, the colonial assemblies, aided by that specious and intriguing body, the society of Amis des Noirs, and the coloured people then residing in France, who had been tainted with the pernicious doctrines then prevailing in that country.

CHAPTER IV

Effects of emancipating the slaves. – Arrival of the British forces. – Their subsequent operations. – Evacuation by General Maitland. – M. Charmilly negotiates with the English. – Views of the English cabinet. – Parties in the contest. – And insincerity of the French planters

Having, in the last chapter, arrived at the period when Santhonax and Polverel conferred freedom upon the slave population, and at the time also when the planters of the colony had solicited the aid of the British government to their cause, I shall now proceed in my detail of the effects produced by the former, and, in as succinct a manner as possible, notice a few of the operations of the latter, as well as the consequences arising from them.

No sooner had the abolition of slavery been promulgated, than it spread through the whole colony with remarkable rapidity, and the work of insubordination and destruction commenced. In the different parishes the slaves rose simultaneously, formed into bodies, took possession of the mountains, and secured themselves within those fastnesses which everywhere abound

through the island. They then sallied forth into the plains, spreading devastation around them, setting fire to the cane fields, and demolishing every description of habitation within their range, murdering the unoffending white inhabitants wherever they met with them. In one part of the colony the insurgents amounted to nearly one hundred thousand, without any leader who had the least possible command over them. In the north their force in the first instance only amounted from about twenty to twenty-five thousand, but they quickly increased to forty thousand of a most desperate and sanguinary character.

The British force under Colonel Whitelocke made its appearance before Jeremie on the 19th of September 1793; it consisted only of about eight hundred and seventy rank and file. As this place was to be given up to the British force by stipulation, the town was taken possession of the next day, and the inhabitants all took the oath of allegiance with much eagerness. Cape St. Nicolas next followed; but here the inhabitants displayed some hostility, and most of them joined the standard of republicanism, although they had before strenuously adhered to the royal cause, and kept the white flag always hoisted. Tiburon was next tried, but here, notwithstanding the strongest pledges of cooperation on the part of the planters, their infidelity was so manifest, and the force of the enemy had become so formidable, that the troops were obliged to retreat with some loss, and this object of the expedition therefore unfortunately failed. From fatigue and from sickness, from the exposure to which they had been

subjected, both in the sun and the noxious dews of night, the troops became much dispirited and discouraged, and further operations were suspended until a force from England arrived of sufficient magnitude to prosecute further offensive measures. This did not take place until the February following, when a British squadron arrived with troops, which were immediately landed, with Major (now Sir Brent) Spencer at their head, who most gallantly attacked the enemy, drove them back with considerable loss, and thereby retrieved that which before ended in a failure. The whole bight of Leogane was now commanded by the British squadron, and a further force being expected from England, it was anticipated that Port au Prince would fall an easy conquest, from the supposition that the people were mostly in favour of their cause. A considerable time elapsed before the reinforcements from England made their appearance; in the interim, many skirmishes took place in the vicinity of Leogane, as well as at Tiburon, and in the neighbourhood of Cape Nicolas Mole; in some instances the British were successful, and in others the enemy obtained advantages.

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