

Samuel G. Perkins

*“On the Margin of Vesuvius”
Sketches of St. Domingo
1785 - 1793*



**Institute of Haitian Studies
University of Kansas**

Occasional Paper N° 7

Bryant C. Freeman, Ph.D.
General Editor

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- N° 1 - **Konstitisyon Repiblik Ayiti, 29 mas 1987.** September 1994. Pp. vi-106. Haitian-language version (official orthography) of the present Constitution, as translated by Paul Déjean with the collaboration of Yves Déjean. Introduction in English.
- N° 2 - **Toussaint's Constitution (1801), with Introduction.** October 1994. Pp. ix-20. In French. Introduction (in English) places Constitution in its historic context and analyzes salient features.
- N° 3 - **Bryant C. Freeman, Selected Critical Bibliography of English-Language Books on Haiti.** February 1995 (Updated). Pp. 21. More than 150 entries, with brief description of each; special list of "Top Ten." Introduction and text in English. Updated periodically.
- N° 4 - **Strategy of Aristide Government for Social and Economic Reconstruction (August 1994).** December 1994. Pp. iv-9. Official document setting forth recovery plan for Haiti. Introduction and text in English.
- N° 5 - **Robert Earl Maguire, Bottom-Up Development in Haiti.** January 1995. Pp. iv-63. Keynote: develop people rather than things, with case study as carried out in Le Borgne. Introduction and text in English.
- N° 6 - **Robert Earl Maguire, Devlopman Ki Soti nan Baz nan Peyi Dayiti.** February 1995. Pp. v-71. Haitian-language version of N° 5, in Pressoir-Faublas orthography. Introduction in English.
- N° 7 - **Samuel G. Perkins, "On the Margin of Vesuvius": Sketches of St. Domingo, 1785-1793.** March 1995. Pp. vi-75. First-hand account by an American merchant living in Saint-Domingue during onset of the Haitian Revolution. Introduction analyzes strong and weak points of narrative. Index of Proper Names.
- N° 8 - **Official Spelling System for the Haitian Language.** April 1995. Pp. 27. Text of official Haitian government edict of 28 September 1979, in Haitian. Editor's remarks in English on subsequent contemporary usage and brief pronunciation guide. Eleven pages chosen to illustrate good usage of official system, plus brief examples of the three major preceding orthographies. Introduction traces development of the four major systems.
- N° 9 - **Organization Charts of the Haitian Judiciary and Military.** May 1995. Pp. 10. Two charts of Haitian judicial system - one in French and English, other in French only. Three charts in French of Armed Forces of Haiti (1993) and one of Port-au-Prince police; officer and enlisted ranks with insignia (in French and English). Introduction in English.
- N° 10 - **Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan Ayisyen, Dosye Chèf Seksyon: Chèf Seksyon - Yon Sistèm Ki Merite Elimine.** June 1995. Pp. vi-52. Detailed, scathing account of the institution of section chiefs as of March 1991, compiled by a leading Haitian peasant group. Much exact information. Introduction in English, text in Haitian (official orthography).

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"ON THE MARGIN OF VESUVIUS" - SKETCHES OF ST. DOMINGO, 1785-1793

This is the seventh in a series of documents concerning Haiti to be made more readily available through the University of Kansas Institute of Haitian Studies. Samuel G. Perkins (1767-1847) presents us with one of the better and more dramatic eye-witness accounts of the onset of the Haitian Revolution. The events related are those as witnessed by a vigorous young American between the ages of 18 and 26, living and working for nine years in Saint-Domingue as part of an evidently prosperous trading firm run by his elder brother and a partner. Perkins accords us two special perspectives concerning some of the most turbulent years in the history of Saint-Domingue. First, he is able to contrast - even if from a biased point of view - the Saint-Domingue immediately preceding the Revolution, with that of the first three years of the Revolution. Secondly, instead of the usual account by a French observer, he relates events from the viewpoint of an American. His style, typical of the Romantic period, is highly engaging, and certain passages bring vividly to life details of the time which only an eye-witness can provide.

The original manuscript, written more than forty years after the events described, was first edited by a great-nephew, Charles C. Perkins, and published in the **Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society**, Vol. II, Second Series (April 1886), pp. 305-374, with a separate printing the same year entitled **Reminiscences of the Insurrection in Santo Domingo** (Cambridge, Mass.: J. Wilson and Son University Press). Since the original manuscript of 1835 was destroyed by fire in 1871, the text is based solely on a copy made by a great-niece in 1837. As noted below, we have made certain minor corrections, and have compiled an "Index of Proper Names."

Perkins first arrived in Saint-Domingue in late January 1785, landing at Cape François (Cap-Haïtien) where he was to live for all nine years. He obviously learned to speak fluent French, and was integrated into local society, having friends especially among the wealthy plantation owners. He was present when the startling news of the French Revolution first reached the island, and gives us some idea of the immediately differing attitudes and the ensuing minor clashes which could only escalate as events in Paris came to affect the colony more and more directly. Even though a foreigner, he was called upon to take part in suppressing the Ogé-Chavannes Mulatto uprising in 1790, but happened to be in the United States when the full-blown slave revolt broke out in August 1791. Never lacking in courage, he hurried back to Saint-Domingue, providing us with some of the most gripping parts of his narrative, as witnessed either by himself or by his brother, James. Equally dramatic is his first-hand account of the immediate effects for the White and Mulatto populations of Cape François brought about by Sonthonax' freeing of the slaves in August 1793. That Perkins was first and foremost a trader, heedless of personal danger when money was owed his firm, is obvious at this time especially, as he goes from Cape François to St. Mark's (Saint-Marc), where he is briefly imprisoned, to Port-au-Prince, to Cape François again, and then back to Port-au-Prince in order

to collect his bill - all this while his life is being personally threatened. Finally, given the protracted political insecurity - and the prospect of a wealthy Boston bride whose father would provide him with an excellent position - Perkins left Saint-Domingue in late 1793.

In the introduction by his great-nephew, Samuel Perkins is reported to have remained in Saint-Domingue until 1794. However at the end of the **Sketches**, the author states categorically that he "left that island at the close of 1793" (p. 70). It is true that Perkins did not reach Boston until 1794, after a hazardous, prolonged encounter with privateers and pirates, which is related in a detailed 17-page account. However, since this addendum to his narrative has no bearing on Saint-Domingois/Haitian history, it is not included here.

Written at the age of 68, more than 42 years after the events described, one wonders about certain very precise details. He claims to "state... but simple facts, all of which were well known to myself, as many of them passed under my own eye... They are as fresh and as visible... now as they were then" (p. 7), "as if they had occurred but yesterday" (p. 43). Nevertheless, some of the accounts are so detailed that one strongly suspects Perkins was able to consult either notes or a diary (e.g., "in the early part of the morning of Monday the 16th of June, 1793," p. 31), or was reconstructing as best he could certain particulars. That Perkins' memory is not always exact is evidenced by the discrepancy between his main text relating the murder of Cagnon, which he places "previous to the insurrection of the slaves" (p. 24), while his letter to his brother James, dated 26 October, 1792, makes it evident that Cagnon's murder had just occurred (p. 24, Note 1, second paragraph), some 14 months after the slave rebellion had begun. This is not typical of his narrative, however, and on the whole he appears to have rendered a faithful account of events.

Perkins chronicles not only aspects such as the "despair and distrust" (p. 30) rampant among the Whites even after the slave insurrection would have called for a certain racial unity, but mentions lesser-known aspects of Saint-Domingois society, such as the apparently rather numerous class of professional gamblers (p. 4) and the "notorious... practice of duelling... an every-day sport among the young and dissipated, [but] who were satisfied by a scratch or slight wound" (p. 5). Interestingly, the name of Toussaint Louverture occurs just twice, but only in the footnotes of his first editor and never in Perkins' own text - nor do we find the names of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henry Christophe, or Alexandre Pétion. Evidently at this early stage of the Revolution, they had yet to receive public attention. Biassou is mentioned only once by Perkins, and that in a footnote. However Jean François, mentioned no less than eight times, is presented as the nemesis of the Whites, although in one instance he is shown as a cruel but nonetheless just arbiter (p. 67, Note 1). The fate of Leclerc's expedition of 1802 could well have been forecast by what Perkins relates as occurring in the early 1790's: "the European forces were dying by hundreds on the burning plains without even the consolation of having signalized themselves by one deed of daring. They had no enemy to contend with but the climate, no effort to make but against disease" (p. 28). "Such was the mortality among them that one half the whole army perished without seeing an enemy" (p. 29, Note 1).

Annoyingly, some of the most striking passages are relegated to the author's footnotes, printed in extremely small characters in the original 1886 edition. Among these is the account of the narrow escape from the de Rouvry plantation near the start of the insurrection (p. 16, Note 1, continued on p. 17), an incident doubtlessly typical of many during those dramatic times. Other tales of exceptional bravery and daring are also recounted only in footnotes, such as that of Colonel Touzard and Mr. Burling (p. 15, Note 1, continued on p. 16), and that of the elder Madame Duplessis who risks her life to save her grandson (p. 20, Note 2, continued on p. 21).

The full gravity of the situation at Cape Français in 1791-93 is evident from the fact that "Every white inhabitant was a soldier attached to some corps, and even the Americans were obliged to do duty *whether they were residents or not*" (p. 29, Note 1). Perkins reports that he "had to perform the duties of a common soldier during this dreadful and alarming crisis" (p. 26), that "The Americans had a guard-house assigned to them, where they were obliged to keep a regular watch every night" (p. 27, Note 1), and that they were even required to billet soldiers in their house. "We had four of them at different times in our family, although we were foreigners" (p. 29, Note 1). The reason why American traders remained in such a troubled spot is apparent from the huge profits involved. For example, the American Board of Commerce at Cape Français was able to provide "between eight and nine hundred thousand livres" (p. 30), with Perkins and associates alone supplying 180 thousand livres.

Obviously, the principal interest for us today of Perkins' **Sketches** is as an eye-witness account of history's only successful slave revolt and the inception of the Haitian nation. However, one can well ask just why Perkins, in 1835, so long after the events described, took the trouble to set them down. He is quite categorical: "the exclusive object of these **Sketches** is to show the effects and consequences of the revolt and insurrection of the blacks of St. Domingo" (p. 22). In other words, it appears his main intent was to pen an anti-abolitionist tract, stressing the virtues of slavery, the contentment of the slave, and the unmitigated horrors of abolition. Although a Northerner, he was firmly against the emancipation of slaves in the United States - which he was never to see, dying more than 15 years before Lincoln's famous Proclamation. He presents an utopian portrait of pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue, where all was ideal, where the masters were almost without exception kind and caring toward their slaves, and where the slaves blessed the very name of their masters. His intent is evidently to draw an even greater contrast between the universal happiness and prosperity which characterized Saint-Domingue before the Revolution, and the mayhem and destruction which fell upon the colony after the onset of the Revolution. He speaks of "these unhappy people [the slaves], who, but for the ruthless pretenders to a philanthropic spirit, might have remained in peace and contentment to the end of their days" (p. 19). He stresses the "mistaken philanthropy" resulting in "misery not only to the innocent whites, but misery and tenfold wretchedness to the slaves themselves" (p. 44). "The black slaves lost as much in proportion to their wants and habits of life by their emancipation in St. Domingo, as the whites did. Instead of being raised in the scale of humanity, they were doubly degraded; for they became the slaves of their own black or mulatto chiefs, a cruel race whom they detested, in lieu of being the slaves and servants of the comparatively humane whites, by whom they were always well fed and well clothed and generally well treated" (p. 68). He directly defends the cause of the Southern states, "their only

patrimony the slaves that their fathers had inherited from their parents" and "the compact that gives the Southern States the right by law to hold this property undisturbed" (p. 44). His blatant pro-White bias is evident in statements such as "never were the rights, the properties, and the lives of a people more wantonly sported with than were those of the whites of St. Domingo" (p. 7). No consideration whatsoever is given to the rights, properties or lives of Blacks kidnapped from Africa for a lifetime of slavery. Nevertheless, in spite of his racial bias, Perkins' account accords us another valuable perspective on one of history's most meaningful events.

N. B. Vagaries of hand-writing in the original manuscript, or in the only surviving copy, may well account for a few minor incorrections concerning proper names in the printed text of 1886, and thus we have made the following corrections. We have changed Béasson to the accepted spelling of Biassou, Charlevois to Charlevoix, Limbè to Limbé, Moussa (p. 37) to Mousse, Odeluc (p. 68) to Obeluc, Polverel/Polvorel to Polvérel, Rochambaud (p. 29) to Rochambeau, Roome to Roume, St. Leger to St-Léger, and Santhonax to Sonthonax. French terms have been changed from epaulets to épaulets (sic), maréchaussé to maréchaussée, memoire to mémoire, le poudre to la poudre, and sureté to sûreté. We have also corrected Perkins' confusion between Jacques Ogé and his elder brother, the Mulatto revolutionary leader Vincent Ogé, and rectified the name of Ogé's even more fiery associate, Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, rather than Marc Chavanne.

Bryant Freeman

Mr. CHARLES C. PERKINS communicated to the Society a manuscript which he had annotated, containing a narrative of the events which happened during the insurrection in St. Domingo, from January, 1785, to December, 1794, written by his great-uncle Samuel G. Perkins, Esq., of whom he gave the following biographical sketch:—

Samuel G. Perkins, third son of James and Elizabeth Perkins, was born in Boston, May 24, 1767. At the age of fourteen, his father being dead, and his mother having a large family to educate and support, he was sent to sea, as was the fashion in those days, to make his own way in the world. After many trying experiences of which no record is preserved, as the account which he wrote of them was burned in the great Boston fire of 1871, together with the original manu-

script of the Sketches and other papers belonging to his son Stephen, he went to St. Domingo in 1785, and assisted in carrying on the business of the house of Perkins, Burling, & Co., which, after his elder brother James's return to Boston in 1793, devolved upon Mr. Burling and himself. The Sketches, now first printed from a copy made by his great-niece Miss Sarah Paine Perkins in 1837,¹ give an interesting account of the writer's residence at the Cape, and bear abundant witness to his courage, resolution, and strength of character. In the account of his homeward voyage, after the destruction of Cape Français, — here printed after the Sketches, — Mr. Perkins says that one of his reasons for embarking "on the slow and heavily laden brig William for Boston" was his engagement to be married. "The attractive power which lay East," as he quaintly puts it, was Miss Barbara C. Higginson, to whom he was united on the 19th of March, 1795. Later he became a partner in the house of Higginson & Co., and after he retired from business was the president of an insurance company.

During the winter he lived in High Street, Boston, and in the summer at Brookline, where about 1803 he bought several acres of land from Mr. George Cabot, and built the house recently occupied by the late eminent architect Mr. H. H. Richardson. Here he made his reputation as a successful pomologist and horticulturalist, and spent many happy years in cultivating his garden, whose espalier pear-trees were famed for their delicious fruit. In importing them from France Mr. Perkins underwent many difficulties which he was fond of recounting. The first importation was lost at sea; and the second, which arrived off the port of Boston during the British embargo, was seized and destroyed. The third reached him safely, and became the first espalier trees grown in New England, if not in the United States. After the death of their owner they were sold at large prices, and transported to the gardens of Dr. J. C. Warren and other neighbors. In the latter part of his life Mr. Perkins lost his eyesight; but his knowledge of pear texture was so accurate that he would instantly recognize any species of pear by the touch, and as he picked a Bon Chrétien, a Duchesse, or a Seckel, would give it its correct name without hesitation.

¹ This copy was presented to the Library of the Historical Society by Mr. Stephen Perkins. N. B. The notes within quotation marks are the author's; the others are the editor's.

He died on his birthday, May 24, 1847, at the age of eighty. Knowing it to be his birthday, he frequently asked during the day, "Is it still the 24th?" and having repeated the question for the last time shortly before midnight he peacefully expired, leaving behind him the goodly record of a well-spent life, whose years of trial and adversity, no less than those of prosperity and happiness, had proved his strength of character, intelligence, and never-failing kindness of heart.

BOSTON, December, 1835.

TO FRANKLIN DEXTER, Esq.

DEAR SIR, — Agreeably to your request I have committed to paper a rough sketch of the events of the insurrection and subsequent emancipation of the slaves of St. Domingo, with an account of the destruction of Cape Français and the massacre of its inhabitants, to which I have added some account of the state of the planters, and of society generally prior to that period.

I have introduced some private anecdotes which, although strictly conformable to fact, may not possess much interest to those who were not actors in the scenes described; but as they are in some measure connected with the general events of the revolt, and form a part of the general machinery of the revolution, I have mentioned them as coming within the reminiscences of those days. As these papers have been written from time to time, when I could find leisure to attend to them, and as they now appear in the undressed and simple garb in which they were first attired, they are defective in many respects. Such as they are, however, I send them to you as a true representation of the *facts* that came within my knowledge.

Very truly and respectfully your humble servant,

S. G. PERKINS.

Sketches of St. Domingo from January, 1785, to December, 1794, written by a Resident Merchant at the Request of a Friend, December, 1835.

CHAPTER I.

At the time I arrived in St. Domingo in January, 1785, and for four or five years subsequent, the flourishing state of trade and the prosperity of its inhabitants were without a parallel perhaps in the world; for here there were no poor, I may say, either white or black, — for even among the latter those who were slaves were taken care of, fed and clothed, and well sheltered by their masters, and those that were free were able to get a living without excessive labor. If they were too old

to work or otherwise incapacitated, they were provided for by their friends and relations. This was shown by the fact that there were no beggars in the streets and no poor houses in the cities; and I do not recollect that I ever saw a free negro or mulatto above the age of ten years that was not decently and comfortably clad, until after the revolution or insurrection of the blacks. As respected the whites, the only poor were the unfortunate gamblers; and they were not in a state of suffering, for when penniless they had free quarters at the gambling-houses, where they could get plenty of good food and good wine to carry them through the day. Indeed it may truly be said that everything and everybody bore the marks of comfort and prosperity; there were no taxes on the inhabitants of any sort, and every one was free to seek his bread in his own way.

The harbors of Port-au-Prince and Cape Français, which were the two principal ports of entry, were always filled with ships either loading or unloading their cargoes, and the sound of the negroes' labor song while at the tackle-fall was always cheering and pleasant. These ports were on the north and west, and Aux Cayes, the other port of entry, was on the south side of the island. The town or city of Cape Français contained about thirty thousand inhabitants — white, colored, and black — of which three quarters were slaves.¹ This town was the capital of the Northern Department, with a governor appointed by the mother country. One regiment of French troops of the line of infantry and one of artillery, besides a well-armed and well-organized body of national guards or militia, made up of the white inhabitants and a few mulattoes, composed the military force of the north. The seat of government was Port-au-Prince² on the west, where the governor-general and intendant-general resided; here also was a military force of the same nature as that at the Cape. The mulattoes, formed into separate regiments, commanded by white officers, were in

¹ Bryan Edwards (*Historical Survey of St. Domingo*, p. 159) says that there were 8,000 free inhabitants of all colors, exclusive of the king's troops and seafaring people, and 12,000 domestic slaves. He describes Cape Français as a well-built town, containing between eight and nine hundred houses of stone and brick, besides shops and warehouses; two fine squares with fountains, a church, government house, barrack for troops, a royal arsenal or prison, a play-house, and two hospitals. The town owed its prosperity to the excellence of its harbor, and the extreme fertility of the plain adjoining it to the east. This plain, fifty miles long and twelve broad, was exclusively devoted to the cultivation of sugar-canes. "It yielded greater returns than perhaps any other spot of the same extent in the habitable globe."

² Port-au-Prince, the metropolis of the colony, contained in 1790 about 2,754 whites, 4,000 mulattoes, and 8,000 slaves. In the plain to the east, called Cul-de-Sac, which was from thirty to forty miles in length by nine in breadth, there were one hundred and fifty sugar plantations. (*Historical Survey of St. Domingo*, p. 162.)

general very fine troops ; handsome, tall, straight, and beautiful men. But as the country was in a perfect state of peace from one end of the French settlement to the other, the services of these troops were never called for, except at processions and public reviews, until after the news of the French revolution reached St. Domingo. The spirit of the revolution which was going on in France had, however, gained ground in the colonies, and insubordination among the troops of the line had been manifested at an early period at Port-au-Prince, where the colouel of the regiment — a Mr. Mauduit,¹ I think — was murdered on the parade by his troops. Until that period the most perfect harmony, good feeling, and social intercourse existed among the inhabitants, and the most perfect good-will and mutual confidence was evident between the whites and their slaves. The only notorious and open violation of the law was the practice of duelling, which was not only an every-day sport among the young and dissipated, who were satisfied by a scratch or slight wound on either side, but the combatants, having shown their prowess in the morning, supped together in the evening in closer friendship than ever.

The events of the latter part of the year 1789 and the year 1790 were confined to the disorderly conduct of some of the militia, the revolt of the free mulattoes under the famous Ogé,² and their final dispersion, with the capture and execution of their leaders, a detailed account of which will appear in the course of these Sketches.

But it may be proper to explain the origin and leading causes of this spirit of revolt, as it has been little known in this country and little attended to in France, where it originated, and whence it was transplanted to the colonies by the revolutionary assemblies of that country through the agency of the free educated mulattoes who were in France at the commencement of the revolution. These men, sons of planters of fortune, had received the best instruction that France could afford, and were daily witnesses of the violent and injudicious measures adopted by the National Assembly. They knew and felt that although born free men, protected in their property and in the enjoyment of personal security, they possessed no political rights whatever, and were denied even the privilege of defending themselves against the whites unless their lives were endangered. They could, to be sure, prosecute

¹ M. le Chevalier de Mauduit came to St. Domingo in 1790, and sided with the mulattoes against the Government. His death is thus described in the appendix to Bryan Edwards' Historical Survey, p. 254: "Urged by his troops to ask pardon of the national guard on his knees, and persistently refusing to do so, he was knocked down by a sabre cut in the face. His head was then cut off and carried on the end of a bayonet, while his body was dragged through the streets to his house by the soldiers and sailors, who gutted it completely and destroyed its contents."

² See note 2, p. 12.

and recover damages for injuries received ; but if any one of them returned blow for blow, he knew that he would be condemned to have his right hand cut off by the common executioner.¹ I never heard of but one instance during my residence of this law being carried into effect. Such disabilities were of course a galling and never-ceasing causer in the minds of the free colored people ; and when they heard it declared by the leaders of the French people that all men are born free and equal, their active minds soon matured a plan by which they expected to compel the whites in the colonies to acknowledge their political rights as well as their birthright to freedom. Ogé was then in France, and being a man of talent and consideration among them he was despatched, *viâ* the United States, to St. Domingo, for the purpose of accomplishing this desired object. How he succeeded will be seen hereafter.

Thus the causes of the insurrection and final revolution of the free mulattoes and slaves of St. Domingo must be sought in the National Assembly of France. The precipitate measures and rash and untried schemes adopted without due consideration or competent knowledge of the subject in the mother country, were well calculated to produce the results which followed. They were foreseen by the famous Barnave, who was at one time President of that Assembly, and were denounced by that distinguished leader as involving the fortunes of the colonists.

“ The declaration of the rights of man, without any distinction of country or color, by a nation holding extensive colonies, cultivated by slaves, while it still determined to hold them with the full intention of reaping all customary advantages from them, without providing any substitutes for the slaves, or making any indemnity to their owners, must be deemed a rash and hasty as well as an improvident measure ; but neither these considerations nor the eloquence and warning of Barnave could resist the democratic rage for liberty and equality which then prevailed.”

Such is the language of the writers of that period.

There was then in France a society under the title of “ Les Amis des Noirs,”² or “ The Friends of the Negroes,” which issued publications in

¹ The penalty exacted from a white man who struck a mulatto was an considerable fine. The French mulattoes were liable to three years' service in the so-called *maréchaussée* after which they had to serve in the militia without pay, providing arms and ammunition at their own expense. They were not allowed to hold any public office or to exercise any liberal profession. The privileges of the whites were not allowed in the French colonies to the descendants of an African, however far removed, whereas in the British colonies they were acquired after the third generation.

² Brissot, Lafayette, and Robespierre were the leaders of this society, which demanded the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade, whereas the English abolitionists limited their demands to any further introduction of slaves into the British

favor of the *oppressed Africans*, and caused them to be circulated in the West Indies. The planters had complained to the king of the dangers to which they were exposed through the proceedings of this society; and although he did not favor their application, his ministers did; and Necker in particular laid it down as an incontrovertible axiom, "*That the nation which sets the example of abolishing the slave-trade will become the dupe of its own generosity.*" "The effects of the promulgation of the doctrines of universal liberty and equality among the colonists," says a contemporary writer, "were first felt in the beautiful island of St. Domingo, the finest parts of which were inhabited by a number of the most flourishing, rich, and happy colonists perhaps in the world; and she became the greatest, the most lasting, and the most deplorable victim to the ensuing calamities." To these causes we may look for the claims made by the free mulattoes, who, though by birth free men with respect to person and property, were not allowed by law to share in the civil government.

"In the process of time," says the same author, "commissioners were repeatedly sent from France; but these carrying out with them the violent political prejudices which they had imbibed at home, and being generally men devoid of principle, if not of abilities, instead of attempting to heal differences on their arrival, trusted to the chances which length of time, distance, and the uncertain state of government in the mother country might produce in their favor, and looked only to procure immediate power and consequence by placing themselves at the head of some of the contending factions. Thus, rushing at once as principals into all the rage and fury of civil discord, they increased to its utmost pitch that confusion and mischief which they were intended to remedy."

Never was there a truer paragraph penned than this, and never were the rights, the properties, and the lives of a people more wantonly sported with than were those of the whites of St. Domingo under the reign of the last commissioners.

But to begin at the beginning, I must go back to the time when I first took up my residence in this island, and give a short account of the general situation of its inhabitants, and of the relations of the planters and slaves to each other. I state no fictions for the purpose of making an impression, but simple facts, all of which were well known to myself, as many of them passed under my own eye, and those that did not were matters of notoriety throughout the country. Indeed, such was their nature and such were the effects they produced on me at the time, that they are as fresh and as visible to my mind's eye now as they were then to my natural and unimpaired vision.

West Indian Colonies. Bryan Edwards (*op. cit.* p. 87, note) says that Lafayette sold his plantation at Cayenne in 1789, with seventy negro slaves, without making any stipulations concerning them.

As early as the latter part of the month of January, 1785, I arrived at Cape François, where, as already stated, I became a resident. The state of the colony (I speak of the French part of the island) of St. Domingo at this time was, as I have before said, the most flourishing, peaceful, and happy that can be imagined. Everything and everybody prospered. There were few or no criminals; no complaints that reached the public ear, and no apparent distress (except such as our nature is liable to everywhere) existed throughout the French settlements in the island. The security of person and property was as perfect as it is in New England, and much more so in fact, for street or highway robberies, shoplifting, and house-breaking were crimes unknown throughout the island. Any man might travel, night or day, alone and unprotected from one end of the French settlements to the other, without fear of interruption or insult of any kind.

There were no public houses on the high-roads, and the traveller who was transported in the carriages of the planters from one estate to the other was everywhere received with the greatest hospitality and kindness, and entertained, without ceremony, in the most friendly and sumptuous manner until he wished to go his way. A carriage was then immediately brought to the door, and he was conveyed by a black driver to the next estate, at a suitable distance on the road. In this way he arrived at the end of his journey, free of expense, free of trouble, and delighted with everything he saw. He was charmed with the humanity, kind-heartedness, and paternal care which he everywhere observed in the masters towards their slaves, and with the good order, cleanly habitations, well-cultivated gardens, domestic comforts, and contented faces of the blacks. In this island, as in every other country on the face of the earth, brutes in human form were occasionally to be met with; but on the French estates this was seldom the case, and if such existed they were principally among the free colored people, many of whom were proprietors of plantations.

To confine myself, however, to what I have myself seen on plantations where I have resided for several days together. I beg leave to mention certain facts which show that the most perfect harmony, mutual confidence, and kindly feelings may exist between the master and his slaves.

Having become acquainted with some of the most distinguished planters in the neighborhood of the Cape, I had occasionally an opportunity of visiting their plantations, and otherwise making myself acquainted with the feelings that mutually existed between them and their slaves. I am not going to speak of my opinions, but of facts within my knowledge, having remained in the island many years and for many months after the general emancipation of the slaves in the Northern Departments and the final destruction of the Cape. My object is to show

how the slaves were treated by their owners, so far as I was acquainted with them ; and I have reason to believe that the proprietors in general were equally indulgent and kind. Where this was not the case, public opinion frowned on the delinquents, of whom there were but few.

The Chevalier Dupérier, the Comte d'Hautval, the Chevalier Dugrés, the Comte de Corbier, Monsieur Duplessis, and others with whom I was acquainted, resided on their plantations, and were the objects of the most devoted affection on the part of their slaves.

Being unwell or slightly indisposed, the first of these gentlemen had the goodness to invite me to pass a few days with him on his estate. While I was there, I was struck with the perfect order and regular system with which everything was done both indoors and out. The hospital was kept in the most cleanly state, and attended by the most experienced nurses. Warm or tepid baths were provided for the sick, on whom a physician attended once a day, or as often in the day as the case required.

The master himself often visited the patients several times in the course of twenty-four hours to see that they were kept clean, and treated kindly. The convalescents were supplied from his own table with the most delicate and nutritious food, morning, noon, and night. If there was a disobedient or a sluggish slave to be punished, a complaint was made by the negro driver, or superintendent of the field-work, to the overseer, and by the overseer to the attorney or proprietor. The delinquent was brought to the hall, and there the facts and circumstances were inquired into by the master, and the punishment, if any, was proportioned to the degree of crime. One of these examinations happened to be going on when I arrived at the plantation ; it was not interrupted by my presence, and I had an opportunity of witnessing the strict justice and merciful judgment of this amiable man.

Nothing could be more interesting than the morning and evening regulations for the children on one of these plantations. An old black woman, dressed as cleanly as a good New England housewife, seated herself in the gallery with a basket of bread cut into large thick slices. The children under working age were then marched in, in single file. When the leader of the file arrived at the place where the old nurse sat, she examined it from head to foot to see that it was clean and in good condition. The child then received a slice of bread, and was marched on to give place to the next, until all the children had been examined and fed. If any one seemed particularly careful of itself, it was caressed by the good dame, or received special marks of her approbation ; if, on the contrary, there was evident neglect, she manifested her displeasure, or threatened punishment if the offence was repeated. The houses or huts of the negroes were so arranged as to give to those who had families a separate house with a garden attached

to it. These gardens were cultivated by the occupants at hours allotted for that purpose, and the product was carried to the market town on Sundays by the slave who had raised it, and there sold for his own benefit.

The planters were seldom without company ; and as they were always obliged to provide enough daily for the hospital as well as for the family, any one arriving at the hour of dinner found a splendid repast. The house servants were always kept in the most cleanly state, well dressed and well mannered, and were treated with the utmost kindness. This was the life of a planter of St. Domingo from 1784 to 1791. His slaves were well fed and clad, and as contented and happy, so far as I could judge, as any class of laboring people in Europe.¹ But the destroyer came among them ; first to render them discontented with their lot, and then to urge them to revolt. This took place in the summer of ninety-one (1791), through the instrumentality of white and mulatto commissions sent out from France, and aided by the free mulattoes of the island, who had revolted the preceding year. But the history of this revolt, and the horrible consequences which followed, both to the whites and to the blacks, must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

In which the Reminiscences of an Old Inhabitant of St. Domingo are continued.

THE French revolution took place in 1789. When the news of this event was received at St. Domingo, there was great commotion among the inhabitants. Some rejoiced and others lamented at the news. Cockades (red and blue) were distributed everywhere and to everybody who had a white face, and whether they liked it or not they were

¹ Our author paints the condition of men of all colors and grades at St. Domingo, before society had been disintegrated by French republican doctrines, as absolutely felicitous. That of the masters, who lived luxuriously in a delicious climate, taking no thought for the morrow and untroubled by conscientious scruples as to their right to hold slave property, was exceptionally so ; but life must have worn a very different aspect to the mulattoes, who were hated and oppressed by the so-called *petits blancs*, overseers, tradesmen, and shopkeepers, and to the negroes who were always liable to be sold to cruel and brutal masters, against whose absolute power they had no hope of redress. Their condition in 1790 had, however, greatly improved within the past fifty years, if the Père Xavier de Charlevoix is to be trusted. In his History of St. Domingo, published in 1733, he describes them as mere beasts of burden, living in huts no better than the dens of wild animals, unpaid for their labor, and liable to receive twenty blows of the whip for the least fault. "To this condition," he adds, "have men who are not without intelligence, and who are not unaware that they are absolutely necessary to those who treat them so brutally, been reduced."

forced to wear them when they went abroad. I mention this fact as connected with an event that took place at the theatre on the first evening after the excitement began, and to show that it is because the first violation of the law is suffered to pass without rebuke or punishment that the greatest crimes are frequently licensed and established in society.

I have mentioned that highway robbery was unknown in the colony, and that everything and every person passed without fear of interruption throughout the country. This was true until the French revolution sanctioned all crimes, and brought upon this island the disgrace of having the mail stopped on its way from Port-au-Prince to the Cape. News had been received during the day that the mail had been robbed. Such an event was so novel and unexpected that everybody in the city was astounded. The perpetrator, whoever he might be, was considered as the boldest villain that had shown himself in the island since the days of the buccaneers, and the execration of the people was roused against him. In the evening, in the middle of the play, a shout was raised, and the delinquent having been brought on to the stage, surrounded by some of the hot-headed young men of the place, was pronounced the *first* patriot of the colony. He announced to the public that he had stopped the mail to examine the despatches from the governor-general at Port-au-Prince to the governor of the Northern Department, that he had found important communications which interested the welfare of the inhabitants, and justified the violence he had committed. Shouts from every part of the house encouraged him, and he went on to make some unimportant disclosures that were received with enthusiasm. Everybody, soldiers as well as citizens, who had not mounted the national cockade, were compelled to do it at the moment, and tumult and disorder prevailed throughout the night.¹

¹ "Our family had all repaired to the theatre without cockades, not choosing to make ourselves a party to the political disputes of the town, and my partner (Mr. Burling) and myself had taken our seats in what was called the amphitheatre, where the young men of family usually sat. After the fellow who had stopped the mail had told his story and was being applauded throughout the house, a cry was raised to mount the national cockade. A young man full of enthusiasm, seeing that Burling had no cockade in his hat, asked him the reason in a tone that did not suit Burling's pride, and he accordingly answered tartly that it was because he did not choose to assume it. To this the Frenchman, who was one of the young Creoles of family and a high blood, made an insolent reply, and Burling immediately struck him with his fist full on the breast. This was death by the laws of *honor*, and Burling invited the other party to follow him, and immediately left the amphitheatre. As I was not near when this fray took place, I knew nothing of it until Burling called to me to go out with him; and when the whole thing was explained, and a Mr. Paigot, a gentleman well known to us, came up and told Burling that the person he had struck was a friend of his, and he begged that time and place might be named for a meeting

This was the beginning of a disorganization which led to mistrust and jealousy between the Government and the citizens, and ended in revolt and massacre among the whites themselves.

Hitherto the people of color had remained quiet; nor was there any manifestation of revolt until the next year, 1790, when a young man, a free mulatto of education, arrived in the island from France, *via* Charleston, South Carolina. His name was Ogé. This person soon collected a body of free colored people, to the number of twelve or fifteen hundred, with arms, at a place called La Grande Rivière.¹

The Government troops, aided by the National Guards, or militia of the town, after great loss of men by sickness, dispersed the rebels, and drove their leaders into the Spanish territory, where they were arrested and sent to the Cape by water. They were, I think, twenty-one in number, — a white priest, the commander Ogé, his lieutenant Marc Chavannes and eighteen others. The two chiefs were broken on the wheel, and the priest and the rest were hung in the Church Square.² I shall

in the morning, Burling referred him to me and went home, and I agreed to meet Paigot the next morning at five o'clock in his lodgings, as all was now noise and bustle, to settle these points. Accordingly at five I was at Mr. Paigot's house; but he was not up, and on being called by his servant he came into the hall in his dressing-gown, and said he had been up all night with the mail-robber carousing and playing the fool, and had forgotten his engagement, but he would send for his friend and consult with him, although he wished the affair could be made up, as the young man would be a loss to his friends, and he knew Burling would shoot him. This gave me an opportunity to say that the whole thing lay with them, — they had given the challenge, and if they chose to withdraw it we were satisfied, as the saddle was on their shoulders. 'My friend,' said Mr. Paigot, '*est brave comme la poudre à canon*; but as every one was excited last evening the affair had better be dropped.'

¹ "At the time this insurrection broke out I belonged to a corps of young men, called the Volunteers, under the command of the Comte de Grasse. This corps was ordered into the country to join the army at La Grande Rivière, and the members who had horses were allowed to go on horseback to avoid the fatigue of marching on foot to headquarters, which was of itself enough to break down one half the company. The rendezvous in town was announced to the members, and they were ordered to be on the ground at nine o'clock in the evening. It rained with a violence seldom seen even in that climate, and after supping I filled my canteen with some old rum, took leave of my friends, whom I never expected to see again, and mounting my horse started for the place of meeting. I had not proceeded a hundred yards when I was addressed by a negro who inquired my residence. On asking his errand, he gave me a letter, which I read by the aid of a lamp, countermanding the order. You may be sure my heart leaped for joy; for had we proceeded, not one third of us would have returned alive."

² Vincent Ogé, son of a white planter and a mulatto woman, returned from France, where he had been sent to be educated, filled with the hope of avenging the wrongs of his class. Landing secretly at the Cape, he was joined by two or three hundred mulattoes, who, as related in the text, were defeated in their first encounter with the Government troops. Ogé and his lieutenant v. Chavannes, *Jean-Baptiste*

not here attempt to give any detailed description of this appalling spectacle, because it would be disgusting, although it was rendered imposing in the highest degree, and most awful by the preparations, the circumstances, and the forms which preceded the execution. Two regiments of free colored troops were drawn up on one side the square with their arms loaded; on the other three sides were the militia and Government troops. Intimations had been circulated that the free mulattoes would attempt a rescue; but as the Government did not choose to show any distrust of them, they were ordered on duty. The troops, assembled at eight o'clock in the morning, were obliged to remain in a burning sun until twelve at noon before the prisoners were brought out. The battalion was now called to order, and a proclamation was read by the assistant general declaring that if any person should attempt to signify a wish that the culprit should be pardoned, or that the execution should be suspended, whether such manifestation was made by word, act, or gesture, he should be instantly shot dead on the spot without form of trial.

The suffering of the troops was great from thirst and exhaustion, and great murmuring had arisen among them on account of the length of time they had already been kept on the ground in a line, before the prisoners arrived. A glass of water was not to be obtained at any cost or by any means, and a faintness prevailed throughout the whole line of the militia, which was greatly increased by the sight of so many fellow-beings brought before them for execution. The expectation that the corps of mulattoes, composed of about twelve hundred men, would revolt, did not diminish their sufferings or strengthen their sinews; but the moment the proclamation was finished, every man throughout the line on the four sides of the square was as fixed as if he had been bound to a bar of iron.

The first step on the part of the colored people to produce a general insurrection having failed, and peace being restored for a while, the whites became supine, and confident of their own power to control

a quadroon like himself, fled to the Spanish territory, where they were seized and given up to their enemies. Early in March, 1791, they were tried, and condemned to do penance, kneeling in their shirts, bareheaded, with heavy waxen torches in their hands, before the door of the church at the Cape; to confess and ask pardon of God, the king, and justice; to be broken on the wheel in the Place d'Armes, and to have their heads cut off and exposed on stakes. Although Ogé made a full confession of the plot in which he had been engaged, he was put to death with Chavannes on the 9th of March in the cruel manner prescribed. Two days later, Jacques Ogé, Vincent's brother, shared his fate; twenty-one of their followers were hanged, and thirteen were condemned to the galleys for life. The barbarous treatment of these unhappy men excited a storm of indignation in France, and led to the decree of the General Assembly, on May 15, which gave the privileges of French citizens to all men of color in her West Indian colonies.

them.¹ But they were not aware that the ease with which they suppressed the first insurrection was one of the causes of the complete success of those who were preparing a second. The Abbé Grégoire had published in France an inflammatory pamphlet on the emancipation of the slaves in the French colonies,² which had been brought out to St. Domingo and circulated among the free mulattoes, and its contents discussed with great vehemence by the planters and slaveholders generally, at their own tables and elsewhere, in the presence of their house servants, who could not long remain ignorant of the fears and weakness of their masters. However well they were treated, their imagination soon became excited, and that real or imaginary love of liberty which is inherent in our nature broke loose, and was fanned into a flame by their masters, who, while they were cursing the Abbé Grégoire for writing on the subject of negro emancipation, were wearing the cap of liberty themselves, talking of the *rights of man* before their own slaves, and by their republican opposition to the old Government encouraging their slaves to rise against them.

However culpable the Abbé Grégoire may have been in attempting to rouse the slave against his master, the planters and slaveholders generally were not less so in vaunting their own success in destroying the ancient government of France. Their own freedom was the daily subject discussed at dinner, and the violent means by which it was obtained was justified and applauded. How could slaves who had any perceptions stand by and hear such conversations between their masters and not feel that the arguments were as good for *them* as they were for those who, claiming the right *as men* to be free, insisted on enslaving others?³

It *was* then the publication of tracts on emancipation, aided and enforced by the imprudence of the planters and other white inhabitants

¹ They supposed that all danger had ceased in consequence of Ogé's barbarous punishment; but, to use the expression of Mirabeau, "they were sleeping on the margin of Vesuvius, and the first jets of the volcano were not sufficient to awaken them."

² Letter of the Abbé Grégoire, Bishop of the Department of Loire at Cher, Deputy of the National Assembly, to the Citizens of Color in the French West Indies, concerning the Decree of the 15th of May, 1791.

³ A writer in the "Quarterly Review," vol. xxi., 1819, speaks of the frenzy which seized on the minds of the more wealthy part of the colonists at this time: "With a population of slaves outnumbering the rest of the inhabitants in the proportion of seven to one (Edwards says sixteen to one; see preface to *op. cit.*), they planted the tree of liberty, pulled down the legitimate authorities, and set up the pernicious doctrine of equality and the rights of man. Their madness moved the negroes but little; but the free people of color, equal to the whites in number, set up their claim to an equality of rights." According to Edwards, chap. 1, pp. 26 and 36, the French part of the island contained thirty thousand whites, twenty-four thousand mulattoes, and four hundred and eighty thousand negroes.

of the island, joined to the secret arts of the free mulattoes, which brought about the insurrection of 1791.

When this insurrection broke out (middle of August) I was in the United States, but embarked immediately on hearing the news, as a part of my immediate family as well as my partners in business remained at the Cape, one of whom, Mr. Burling, had been already severely wounded in the first severe conflict that took place between the whites and the insurgents.¹

¹ "When the insurrection first broke out the Government sent a small party of regular soldiers to put it down, but they were repulsed by numbers and returned to town. The Government then sent Colonel Touzard with some regular troops and a body of cavalry formed of the citizens of the town. My partner, Mr. Burling, belonged to this corps and went out with them. There was also a Mr. Selles (a friend of ours who was a sub-officer of the company), a man six feet two, and of great muscular power, from whom I had the following account of the attack and overthrow of the blacks at that time. Colonel Touzard had lost his right arm at Rhode Island during the Revolutionary War under Rochambeau, and was at this time lieutenant-colonel of the Cape, commanded by Colonel the Baron de Champford. 'As the cavalry came to a turn in the road,' said Selles, 'we met our scouts riding back with great haste to inform us that there was a large body of eight or nine hundred blacks and mulattoes on the road, with three pieces of cannon which they had planted in front of them, one of which was a very large piece placed in the middle of the highway and pointed directly towards us. They added that a great part of these people were well mounted, and that their matches were lighted to fire the cannon, should we approach them, by those who had charge of the guns, the shot of which must, from the dense mass of our corps confined in a narrow road, mow down half the company, when the mounted mulattoes would charge the flying remnant and cut them to pieces, and therefore recommended immediate retreat until the infantry came to their aid. Colonel Touzard, however, chose to see the enemy himself, and ordered the corps to advance. One of the soldiers or citizens who was in the first rank at this juncture found out that he was not in his proper place, and said it was not, and fell back into the third or fourth rank. Burling saw this movement, and immediately clapped spurs to his horse and took the place the other had left, which brought him within two or three of the file leader in the front rank and near to Colonel Touzard. When the corps, which was composed of about forty or fifty men at most, came in full view of the enemy, Touzard ordered a halt, and made a short address to the little troop, exhorting them to be firm and steady in their charge, which was now their only chance of escape, as retreat was inevitable death. "Close your ranks firmly, draw your swords, and move forward on a quick trot; and when I give the word to *charge*, give spur to your horses and dash into the cannon's mouth." When the troop had arrived so near that they could see the preparation made to fire off the three pieces of cannon at once, the colonel cried, "*Attention! Charge!*" As soon as the word to *charge* was given, Touzard clapped his reins in his mouth, and with his left hand plucked out his sword with such sleight of hand that Mr. Burling, who had his eye upon him, could hardly see the motion. The moment the blacks saw the horse charge they fired the three pieces which had been loaded with all sort of implements that they could pick up or extract from the copper boilers, among which the broad-headed copper spikes were the most abundant. About a dozen of the troop fell from their horses, and the rest dashed past the cannon and into the thickest of the insur-

On my arrival I found Mr. Burling still confined with his wound, and the Cape in a state of siege.¹ The insurgents or revolted slaves,

gents' horsemen, who were waiting for the smoke to clear off that they might see the effect of their fire, and take advantage of the discomfiture and flight of the whites. I saw Burling,' said Selles, 'make at a mulatto whose head was covered with plumes, and who was doubtless one of their chiefs, as he was remarkably well mounted; but no sooner had he approached him than another mulatto chief rode up, and was in the act of cutting him down when Burling saw him, and received his blow on the back of his broadsword, and at the same moment plunged the blade into the fellow's body, and he fell down from his horse to the ground. Burling now turned to look for his first assailant; but he had turned to fly with his troops, who were broken and scampering in all directions. Burling followed, but the mulatto was better mounted; and Burling, seeing he could not overtake him, drew his pistol, and laying his reins on his horse's neck shot the man dead. The mulatto fell forward over his horse's head, and Burling, who was close behind at full speed, leaped over his body in pursuit of others. The bugle had sounded the repeal to prevent the whites getting too far away from each other, and Selles was in pursuit to rally them when he overtook Burling and called to him to stop.' 'Well, what do you want?' said Burling. 'The men are recalled,' said Selles, 'and you must go back.' 'When I have knocked that fellow off his horse I'll go back,' said Burling. 'Why, man, are you wounded?' said Selles. 'Not I,' said Burling, and he put spurs to his horse; but the moment of inaction he had had, showed him Selles was right, for one of his legs was stiff, and on looking down he found his boot was full of blood. He accordingly returned with Selles, and was with the other wounded men put on board a boat to be sent to the Cape. There was one poor fellow by the name of Le Sage who had received a copper spike in his knee from which he suffered excessive pain. When they were landed, the surgeon, Valentine, a friend of ours, came to Burling first; but he would not let the doctor touch him till he had relieved Le Sage, who, poor fellow! died that night."

¹ "At the time the insurrection broke out my brother James was on a visit with his wife and child to the Marquis de Rouvry on his plantation near Fort Dauphin. The following account, taken from his widow lady, who is still living, may be depended on as fact:—

"We had been passing a fortnight with the Comte d'Hautval on his plantation, and on our way home had engaged to dine with the Marchioness de Rouvry, and then go on to the house of M. Obeluc, the procurator of the Plantation Galifet, where the insurrection first broke out. On our arrival at the De Rouvry plantation shortly before the dinner-hour in company with M. Baurry de Bellerive and his lady and child, who also came from the Comte d'Hautval's, we were told that Madame had gone to a neighboring plantation, but that she expected us, and would be home in season for dinner. On her return she informed us that she had ascertained on inquiry that the whole country was in a state of insurrection; that as yet her slaves were ignorant of the fact, though it was to be feared they would know it soon, as there was a general alarm, and people began to fly in all directions. We then held a council to decide what course we had best pursue, and determined to leave the plantation that night at twelve o'clock for Fort Dauphin. In the evening a slave passed through the estate, and informed the negroes that their fellows were burning and destroying everything. We soon discovered what had happened by the changed manners of the slaves,—their insolence and bravado, their noise and general deportment,—but we nevertheless sat down to dinner from a rich service of plate, though we ate little, and spent but a short

commanded by a black named Jean François,¹ had possession of the whole plain for sixty miles along the coast, and were still burning and plundering the country.

time at table in gloomy silence. The members of Madame de Rouvry's family then at home were her daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen; a young lady, her instructress; and a lady who had escaped from one of the neighboring estates that afternoon. The Marquis was in the mountains on business. The lady of the house packed up her plate, and ordered the carriages to be got ready and brought to the door just before midnight. There were evident marks of discontent on the faces of the servants, and some money was necessary to bribe the coachmen to harness their horses and get ready to start. At twelve o'clock we left the house in three carriages. The Marchioness and her daughter and instructress were in the first carriage, with the plate; myself and child, with Madame Baurly and her child, were in the second; and Mr. Perkins and the lady who had escaped as above stated, were in the third. M. Baurly was on horseback. As we were apprehensive of being stopped if we met any of the insurgents, the drivers were ordered to avoid a village which was in our route; but before their intention was discovered they had gone so far on the road that led to it, that we could not turn back without showing them our fears, and it was judged best to let them go on. Mr. Perkins and M. Baurly had agreed, in case the drivers refused to proceed, to put them both to death, and to mount their horses and drive the carriages themselves. These gentlemen were both armed; and as all our lives depended on getting to Fort Dauphin there was no other alternative. When we arrived at the village we found the houses filled with lights, and the slaves howling and dancing throughout the place. On reaching the centre of the village Madame de Rouvry's postilion drew up and stopped the whole party. We now gave ourselves up for lost, but felt the necessity of keeping silent as long as we could, for fear of alarming the blacks by whom we were surrounded, and who were evidently rejoicing over the events of the day. Madame de Rouvry, who was a woman of great courage and who was much feared by her slaves, ordered the fellow to proceed instantly or she would have him punished in the severest manner. The man hesitated; but her voice, which he had been accustomed to obey, drove him from his purpose, and he proceeded through the hamlet so quietly that the insurgents, who were all in the houses dancing and beating their drums, never discovered us. The presence of M. Baurly, who was on horseback and armed with a sword, undoubtedly influenced the postilion's decision to go on rather than run the risk of being put to death.^a The fugitives arrived safely at Fort Dauphin about four o'clock in the morning, to the great surprise of the inhabitants. A gentleman of that place, to whose house they drove, assured them that the fears of the regular troops there were so great that they could not be prevailed on to march into the country even a few miles. A 'droger' was procured, and the party embarked in her for the Cape, a distance of about forty miles. A mattress was laid on the ballast of the vessel for Mrs. Perkins and her child to rest upon during the passage."

¹ Jean François took the title of Grand Admiral of France, and his lieutenant Biassou that of Generalissimo of the conquered districts.

^a In this account of the escape of Madame de Rouvry and her guests nothing is said of Mousse, the faithful slave who warned them of their danger and facilitated their flight. In 1785, six years before the breaking out of the insurrection, this poor fellow was landed at Cape François from a slave-ship, and taken to the slave-market in an apparently dying condition. One of the brothers Perkins, happening to pass by, observed his pitiful condition, remonstrated with the slave-dealer on his inhumanity, and on being told with an oath

The unhappy whites, male and female, who had fallen into their hands were in the most deplorable condition that the imagination can conceive. The women, old and young, were collected together on the floor of a church about twelve or fifteen miles from the Cape, where many of them fortunately died under the brutality to which they were subjected. Such were the shocking accounts received of the sufferings and degradation of these unfortunate ladies that the Government thought proper to fit out an expedition under the command of the late gallant Colonel Touzard,¹ whom the negroes had named Manchot because he had but one arm, the force of which they had felt in the first conflict. This gallant officer, who had lost his right arm in this country during the Revolutionary War, stormed their position, destroyed many hundreds of them, and brought off all the whites that remained alive; but many of the females afterwards sank under their sufferings and mortifications, and were relieved by death from an insupportable burden.

The first person of any distinction who fell by the hands of the insurgents was M. Obeluc,² proctor of the Plantation Galifet, one of the most amiable and virtuous men in the colony. Himself and all his family, except one young man who made his escape, were murdered and outraged in the most barbarous manner.

¹ Colonel Touzard marched with a body of militia and troops of the line to the plantation of M. Latour, and attacked a body of about four thousand negroes. Overwhelmed by numbers, he was at length obliged to retreat. Had the negroes dared to follow him to Cape Français, they might easily have destroyed the town.

² M. Obeluc, the overseer of the Galifet plantation, where the kindness shown to the negroes was proverbial, was so firmly persuaded of their fidelity that he ventured to return there with a few soldiers, and paid the penalty of his rash confidence by death at their hands.

that the poor devil was not worth caring for, and could be bought for half a Joe (doubloon), paid the money, and sent the unfortunate African to the hospital, where he eventually recovered. Mousse was then employed in the counting-house, where he soon gained the confidence of his masters. In 1791 he went with Mr. James Perkins to Madame de Rouvry's, and by giving him timely information of the proceedings of the slaves probably saved the lives of the whole party. Mousse then returned to Mr. Samuel Perkins, who mentions him in the narrative (p. 37) as one of the blacks in his house when the town was destroyed. Mr. Perkins's only surviving daughter states that when her father was obliged to fly for his life from St. Domingo, Mousse refused to be left behind, swam out to the boats, and insisted on being taken on board. From the time of his arrival in Boston until his death in August, 1831, Mousse lived in Mr. James Perkins's house as a valued servant. An obituary notice of him which appeared in a Boston daily paper of the 13th of August speaks of Mousse's warm attachment to all the members of the household, and of the esteem in which he was held by old and young for his honesty, independence of character, and warmth of heart. "His remains," says the same notice, "were yesterday deposited in the family vault under St. Paul's Church by the side of those of his late master, who was fondly attached to him." It is said that the name of Mousse, a corruption of Monsieur, was given to him by his fellow-slaves in acknowledgment of his dignified deportment and superiority of character. He gave his real name as Deyaha, and said that after he had been captured by slave-dealers while tending sheep with his father in the interior of Africa, he was a month on his march to the coast.

This, reader, was the consequence of the first step taken by the abolitionists in disseminating their *philanthropic* tracts in the island of St. Domingo !!!¹

CHAPTER III.

Reminiscences of St. Domingo, continued.

THE period at which the last chapter closed was the autumn of 1791. Several plantations within the range of country nominally under the control of the insurgents were still in possession of their owners at this period, who defended their canes and sugar works as well as their dwellings, aided by their own slaves, against the ravages and incendiary projects of the revolted blacks.

The fidelity of the slaves in many instances was so great towards their masters that no persuasion and no threats on the part of the insurgents could tempt them to revolt; and at the risk of their own lives they maintained and protected the estates from injury. This course of conduct was not confined to those plantations where the proprietors resided, but was successfully followed up by the slaves themselves in one instance at least, within my own knowledge, for several years, and until tranquillity was finally restored in 1794. This remarkable case I shall take the liberty of relating in the course of my narrative, as it shows a devotion on the part of the slaves towards their master and his interest and prosperity, long after he ceased to be a proprietor, and for several years after he had quitted the island and resided in this country (Charleston, South Carolina), which has but few, if any parallel in history. The proprietor of this plantation was a M. Lefèvre, an elderly gentleman of great respectability and large fortune. Other cases of strong attachment and affectionate regard were shown by the blacks towards the proprietors and their families that reflect the greatest honor upon, and mark the distinguished gratitude and benevolence of these unhappy people, who, but for the ruthless pretenders to a philanthropic spirit, might have remained in peace and contentment to the end of their days. The Chevalier Dupérier, whom I have before mentioned as having always distinguished himself among the wise and humane proprietors, was at home when the revolt began to show itself. As it spread, it approached his plantation, and his slaves were invited to join in the general insurrection. Of this they informed their master; and as he had no means of

¹ It is said that within two months after the breaking out of the insurrection, two thousand whites had been massacred, one hundred and eighty sugar and nine hundred coffee and indigo plantations destroyed, and twelve hundred Christian families reduced to beggary. Ten thousand inhabitants had perished by famine and the sword, and several hundreds by the hand of the executioner.

defence against the great mass of the revolted, he found it necessary to abandon his estate, and make the best retreat he could to the town. With this intention, he ordered his carriage, intending to save his life, if he could, by the sacrifice of everything else. As soon as it was known among his slaves that he was about to leave them and to abandon his plate and other valuables, they assembled in a body and insisted on going with him as an escort to protect him against the revolted negroes. Not contented with this mark of their attachment, they collected the carts and mules, and loaded them with the valuable movable furniture of the house, placed all his plate in his carriage, and surrounding him in a body, armed with clubs, brought him safe to the city. This is only one instance out of many of the same nature which occurred during the first excesses of the insurrection.¹ M. Duplessis, a descendant of one of the first families in Europe and a large proprietor in St. Domingo, his mother, wife, and child, were escorted in the same manner through the midst of the revolted blacks by his slaves, who actually defended them at the risk of their own lives against the insurgents, who made every effort in their power to detain them.² Immediately after

¹ One of the most striking stories of negro fidelity is that of a slave belonging to M. Baillou, the proprietor of a mountain plantation, about thirty miles from Cape François, who concealed his master's family in the woods, fed them with provisions from the rebel camp for nineteen nights, and then brought them safely to Port-Margot. (Bryan Edwards, *op. cit.* p. 100.) After Colonel Mauduit's assassination (p. 309), his scattered limbs were collected by a black servant named Pierre, who gave them burial, "and, having washed them with his tears, made that tomb which his piety had raised his own funeral pile." (Lacroix, quoted in "Quarterly Review," 1819, p. 437.)

² "When this gentleman, M. Duplessis, found that the negroes of the neighboring plantation were all in insurrection, he determined to quit his residence and endeavor to reach the Cape with his family. He accordingly picked up what plate he had at hand, and with his wife and child, his wife's mother, and the child's black nurse, started for the city, he mounted on horseback, and the family in a cabriolet dragged by three mules. His blacks insisted on accompanying the carriage for the protection of its inmates; and they accordingly surrounded it, and the whole cavalcade set off for the Cape. As the carriage could not move faster than the slaves who had volunteered to protect it, the insurgents were not long in overtaking and surrounding it, threatening to put the postilion to death if he did not stop. The old lady — mother of Madame Duplessis — was a woman of strong character, very pious and very amiable; she was beloved by the slaves for her gentleness and benevolence, and was well known throughout that quarter of the plain for her just and kind treatment, as well as her absolute control over the blacks with whom she was brought in contact.

"The first step of the insurgents, after stopping the carriage, was to take out the black nurse and the child, the latter of whom was immediately seized by one of the men with a view to destroy it, as appeared by his language and attitudes. The mother had fainted, and the father was at a great distance ahead of the carriage, so that there was none but this old lady to protect the party; for their own slaves were unable to resist, both for the want of arms, with which the insurgents were furnished, and from their limited numbers compared with the incendiaries.

the destruction of the Cape, M. Duplessis, then between sixty and seventy years of age, came to this country with his family, and sold milk in the city of New York for their support, which he himself carried round to his customers, preserving his good-humor and gentlemanly manners towards every one he dealt with.

I remember that a friend of mine who had known him in the days of his fortune told me that being out early in one of the streets in New York he passed an old man, whose white locks first attracted his attention, leading a horse and crying, "Milk for sale!" At the moment he spoke my friend stopped, struck with his foreign accent and fine countenance, which he thought resembled that of some one whom he had before seen. The milkman took from his panniers a tin vessel, and entered a kitchen door of one of the houses. There was something in the face, the tone of the voice, the long white hair that covered his head, and the general movement of this person that riveted my friend to the spot where he stood, until the old gentleman again came forth. He could not tell why, but there was something in the appearance of the milkman that drew my friend towards him, intending to ask for a cup of milk, by way of introduction to a further conversation. When they came nearer, they both looked with eagerness at each other for a moment and then exclaimed simultaneously, "Good God! is this

The plantations were in flames on all sides of them, and the hands of the negroes were still wet with the blood of their late proprietors. 'Take him into the field,' said one of the savages, 'and cut his head off with a bill-hook.' 'Arrêtez, Malheureux!' exclaimed the old lady, 'n'avez-vous pas d'enfans vous-même? [Stop, wretch! have you no child of your own?] Have you no fear of God, who sees what you are doing, and will repay on the heads of your own children the evil you inflict on this innocent child? What has he done to your race that you should destroy him? If you wish for blood and for vengeance on one who has held you in bondage, take my life, but spare the life of the unoffending infant. And you, wench!' (addressing one of their women) 'how dare you suffer those wretches to commit this horrible crime? Have you no religion, no hope in God's mercy, no love for your own offspring, that you see an innocent baby sacrificed without cause, without object, and without any possible good to yourselves? Fly! quick! for I see the tear of compunction in your eyes. Fly, and save the child, and save your own soul by restoring him to his mother and his nurse unharmed; and great shall be your reward hereafter!' A universal shout arose among the women of the insurgents, and they ran in a body to the spot where the child had been carried. In the mean time, M. Duplessis had discovered that the carriage had been stopped, and he was returning full speed to see what was the difficulty, when his mother-in-law ordered the postilion to make signs to him to proceed on and not return to them, knowing his life would be endangered. This the postilion did, and at the same time pointed out a party of insurgents who were running across a field to cut off his escape. M. Duplessis saw the danger, and putting spurs to his Spanish jennet soon left his pursuers in the rear. He then stopped to watch the movements of the carriage, and soon had the satisfaction to see it move on to join him. The harangue of the old lady had produced the desired effect on the females of the band. The child was restored unharmed, and the carriage permitted to proceed."

M. Duplessis? Is this Mr. P——?” A few minutes served to explain to my friend the situation of this worthy old gentleman, who said that he had taken a small farm in the neighborhood, where he kept four or five cows, which furnished him with milk enough to keep the family from starving; that he had two or three slaves that chose to follow him to this country, who aided by their labor on the farm; that his wife took care of the dairy, and he brought the milk to town to sell; that he had a good farm that would easily maintain four or five cows more if he had the means of buying them, but that he had no reason to complain, for his family were all in good health, and were constantly employed, so that when night came they enjoyed a refreshing sleep which enabled them to pursue their daily routine of labor without much suffering; but, said he, “if I had four or five cows more, I should be the most independent man in the country, for I should have all I want this side the grave.” “That you shall not want long,” said my friend; “come with me and you shall have the means of buying the cows if that will make you happy.” He presented the old gentleman five hundred dollars in cash, which the latter declared made him as rich as a Jew, and would make his wife as happy as a queen.

I have related this anecdote because it shows that a good and well-balanced mind can be happy even in poverty; that, however elevated our situation may have been, if we have a proper view of our dependence and uncertain state in this life and a due and proper confidence in the Almighty, we cannot be degraded by the accidental loss of our property.

CHAPTER IV.

Recollections of St. Domingo, continued.

As the exclusive object of these Sketches is to show the effects and consequences of the revolt and insurrection of the blacks of St. Domingo, I have purposely omitted a variety of interesting and touching circumstances relating to the disputes between the citizens, the soldiers, and the local Government, and the massacres that ensued; but there is one fact which, although not necessarily allied to my general plan, is in some degree connected with the events I am recording, and as it forcibly illustrates a trait in human nature (not unknown nor unacknowledged by men of observation), I may be excused for relating it.

The government of the Northern Department of the island, of which the Cape was the principal city, had made a stand against the outbreaks of the people in favor of the French revolution, and many of the most respectable citizens had thought it their duty, for the purpose of maintaining order, to side with the ancient authorities in preserving the

peace of the community. Although the Government had neither violated nor entrenched on the rights or privileges of the citizens, there was a jealousy existing between them which only required a bold and desperate spirit to inflame it into wild hatred and open violence.¹ Such one was found in a young man of a Jewish family of respectability, who had been discarded by his father for his dissipated and abandoned habits. This young man, with much art and address, had by false representations and a show of ingenuousness, gained the friendship of M. Cagnon, a merchant of high standing and large fortune, who had ministered to his wants, supplied him with money for his support and comfort, and in all things contributed, as far as in his power, to restore him to the favor of his indignant parent, who was a man of character and substance; but he eventually discovered that his bounty was wasted on a profligate, and he ceased to supply him any farther.

This gentleman, who was one of the most noble-spirited men in the city, beloved by everybody who knew him for his benevolent nature and amiable manners, commanded a company of cavalry, composed of merchants and other men of character and respectability. At a general review of the militia of the town, he had been despatched with his corps to the Government House on duty. The uniform of this company was yellow, and had been such for many years before the revolution. This color, it seems, was obnoxious in the eyes of the young Jew, as he alleged to his comrades in the line where he was placed under arms, because it was the same color as that worn by the Regiment d'Artois in France. This pretext was doubtless set up with a view to rouse the indignation of those around him, having, as was believed, determined on ridding the city of his old benefactor, whose purse he could no longer command. When M. Cagnon (for that was the officer's name) returned with his troop to join the militia, the young Jew stepped out of the ranks as the other approached him on the march, and ordered the captain to strip off his coat, which he said was the badge of aristocracy. The officer, finding himself thus addressed by a young man whom he had saved from starvation and prison, was for a moment utterly astounded, but recovering himself he asked by what right *he* called on him to do an act so humiliating. The answer was: "By the right of the voice of your fellow-citizens. Off with your coat at once, or I will strip it off for you!" M. Cagnon replied with great gentleness that if his uniform

¹ "It must be owned that some of the nobility were very indiscreet in censuring and laughing at the bourgeois. Madame la Marquise de Rouvry used to say publicly under the old *régime* the soldiers' password when on duty was 'Prenez garde à vous!' ('Take care of yourself!') corresponding to the English cry of, 'All's well,' but now, under the republican system, the password was, 'Prenez garde à moi' ('Take care of me'). Such things naturally irritated the citizens, and produced ill-will towards the higher classes."

was offensive to his fellow-citizens, he would retire to his house and change his dress to gratify them. "No, citizen; off with it here on the spot!" replied the miscreant, presenting his musket at the breast of his benefactor, "or take the consequence of your refusal." "Never," said Cagnon, "while I live, shall my name be disgraced by an act so degrading to an officer and a gentleman!" The words had scarcely passed his lips before he was shot dead by this vile assassin, and a general massacre of the corps which he had commanded immediately commenced.¹ How many were destroyed I know not, but I saw several of them flying, laid prostrate on their horses, to save themselves from the fate they had just seen their comrades suffer. After this act of cruel and cool barbarity, the militia marched through the town with pieces of the coats of the troops that they had just murdered hanging to their bayonets. There is no doubt that most of the militia abhorred the act that they had not presence of mind or nerve enough to prevent; but the effect was nevertheless most encouraging to the blacks, who could not but rejoice at seeing their masters cutting each other's throats.

The base ingratitude and barbarous spirit of the young assassin was universally spoken of with horror; but there were many who had joined him in the attack on these unhappy men, and some who applauded the act, but soon it was forgotten by the occurrence of new scenes of blood and insurrection, and was overlooked and forgotten.

This was previous to the insurrection of the slaves, and was one of the encouraging circumstances which led to that event, but it was not the only evil that resulted from the disorganized state of society and the consequent laxity in the discipline of the troops of the line. About this time a whole regiment of artillery, which had command of the

¹ "M. Cagnon, with about sixteen followers, went into the body of their enemy to deliver themselves up. M. Lavard, commandant of the lately arrived dragoons, met him in a friendly and proper manner, begged him to quit his coat, as it was displeasing to the troops, and assured him of his protection. It was too humiliating for the commandant of so respectable a corps, and a man who on all occasions had behaved so well as M. Cagnon to be obliged to strip himself in the street; he would go home and do it, but not there. While they were discussing the point, a pistol was fired by one of Cagnon's party, and immediately four of them were shot dead, among which the lamented Cagnon fell. Had their fury stopped there, they might be forgiven; but no, they must add barbarity to murder. They cut off his head, stabbed his dead body in several places, cut his jacket to pieces, dipping them in his blood, and wore them in their shoes and on the end of their swords as trophies of victory." — *Extract from a letter written by S. G. Perkins to his brother James, dated Cape, Oct. 20, 1792.*

"Poor Cagnon is lamented by all the town. It is certain he did not fire at all, but sacrificed his life rather than submit to be stripped in the street. As commandant of a respectable corps, I think him right. He had rather die than be disgraced. At present there is a momentary calm, but I fear much it will not long continue. The public stores are in want of every kind of provisions, and no means of obtaining them." — *Do., dated Cape, Oct. 26, 1792.*

powder magazine and the park of artillery, revolted and turned their officers out of their quarters.

When the Government called out the regular infantry and the militia of the town to subdue them, their chief told the commander of the troops that were assembled round their quarters that the first gun that was fired would be the signal to fire the magazine, which would blow him, his troops, and the whole city to atoms along with themselves. From the character of the man, this was known to be no empty threat, and was no balm to the suffering of the citizens who were drawn up under arms on the spot. There was no doubt as to the extent of the evil that would follow the least indiscretion on the part of the commander of the assembled troops, who was the colonel of the regular regiment of infantry. He stood firm, however, although it was whispered that his own regiment was wavering. "Go," said he to his soldiers, — "go, comrades, any who are disaffected or disinclined to act in the subjugation of the rebels, — go to your quarters; you have my free consent to hide your heads from this threatened danger, or rather this holy duty. I shall stay to complete the work I came to accomplish, and bring the LEADERS of this revolt to punishment (for it is only *a few* of the regiment who are guilty), even should I remain by myself." A shout of "Vive Champford, nous vous suivrons à la mort!" extended throughout the line of his troops, and in a moment all was silent again.

All this passed within the hearing of the insurgents, who had shut themselves up within the high iron railing which surrounded the artillery park, where they were formed in line with twenty pieces of loaded cannon pointed towards the surrounding troops, and with lighted torches in their hands.

The well-pointed emphasis on the word *leaders*, and the intimation that he considered that there were but few of the regiment who were guilty, was not lost on those who had been led into the revolt against their own inclinations. "Soldiers of the artillery," cried Colonel Champford, addressing himself to the insurgents, "am I mistaken in my conjectures? Is it not true that the great body of your corps has been led away by the few factious spirits among you? Your hitherto excellent discipline and soldier-like conduct and marked bravery in the field assures me that you cannot, as a body, have turned traitors to your country. It is only the criminal leaders of this revolt that will be made answerable to the laws; and I pledge myself to you as an officer whose word was never doubted, that those among you who have been led away by the influence of the chiefs of the revolt shall be pardoned and restored to your ranks without stain. Deliver up your chiefs therefore, and surrender yourselves prisoners to the Government."

The leader of the revolt, who was a desperate and bold villain, looked round on his troop to see what effect this speech had made on

them, when, seeing them hesitate, he attempted to apply his torch to the gun immediately under his command as a signal to fire the magazine; but he was seized before he could effect his object, as were the other leaders by their own comrades, and the whole regiment was marched out under the guard of the troops and lodged in the church, where they were kept until they had been tried and sentenced.

This happy termination of one of the most daring and alarming revolts ever known was owing to the skill and spirit of the Baron de Champford, colonel of the regiment of the Cape, — a brave and discreet officer, and an amiable and excellent man. The Baron kept his word: the leaders were punished in proportion to their relative degrees of crime, and the rest were restored to their ranks, and were drawn up on the Place d'Armes to witness the degradation and the execution of the two principal leaders of the revolt. The minor criminals were sent to the galleys.¹

These events are not to be forgotten by one who was an eye-witness to the various scenes herein described, and who had to perform the duties of a common soldier during this dreadful and alarming crisis.

¹ "The form or ceremony of the degradation was very solemn. The square of the Place d'Armes was surrounded with troops. On one side was the regiment of the Cape, or regular troops of the line; opposite to them was the mulatto regiment; on the side to the right of the regulars were the citizens under arms, and opposite to them were the artillery-men, who had been brought out with their side arms to witness the punishment of their comrades. The two principal leaders were placed in the centre of the square in full uniform and unbound; they were both sergeants, daring in their appearance, and reckless in their manner. The only thing that seemed to disturb them was the scaffold, which was erected under a gallows large enough for both. Their comrades, who had been sentenced to a milder punishment, were drawn up opposite to them, with their arms bound behind them, without arms or uniform. A small detachment was drawn out as a guard over them, and their sentence was then read. As soon as this was done, the adjutant-general, placing himself in the centre of the square, ordered silence, and then read a proclamation that any person who should ask for the pardon of the criminals, or suggest by word or deed a desire to save them or to mitigate their punishment, should be shot dead on the spot. One of the sub-officers of the regiment then advanced and stripped off, first, the sword from the side of the principal criminal, then his worsted epaulets, then his hat and coat, and then with the butt end of a musket struck him on the breech as a mark of official degradation. When this ceremony had been performed also on the other soldier, they were furnished with white caps and led to the scaffold. One of them appeared depressed and humiliated; but the leader never lost his insolent and audacious manner, and when placed under the drop attempted to address the soldiers, beginning with threats and denunciation against the officers of the troops generally; but his voice was soon drowned by the drums and trumpets of the guard, and they were both launched into eternity."

CHAPTER V.

Recollections of St. Domingo, continued.

FROM the autumn of 1791 until the summer of 1793 the town of Cape François was besieged by the black army of revolted slaves, and frequent attacks were made on its outposts by the troops of Jean François.

The inhabitants of the city were all, even to the foreign residents,¹ obliged to keep a strict guard to prevent surprise. The country afforded ample supplies to the besiegers, and the harbor was entered by all nations, who brought the means of support to its inhabitants. Some few plantations in the neighborhood of the city and the rising or mountain ground behind it were still free from the depredations of the blacks; and among these the Lefèvre plantation, which was defended by the slaves to whom it had been abandoned by its owner, to whom its revenues were regularly transmitted. In the beginning of the revolt other plantations were preserved by the judicious conduct of the proprietors, and among the rest that of the Comte de Corbier, which was defended for a long time by its spirited and energetic owner, who at the time of the revolt was confined to his bed by a rheumatic fever. His first care was to send off his wife and children to the city; his next was to assemble his slaves around his bed, and to communicate to them his determination to defend his property. M. de Corbier, although not old, was in the decline of life, and so infirm that he could not stand without support, and then with great suffering. His slaves gave him assurances of their fidelity, and offered to sacrifice themselves in his defence. He had on his plantation two small brass pieces of ordnance, which he caused to be put in good condition to oppose the enemy, who were in the neighborhood. Scouts and outposts were established, and reports were made to him as the insurgents changed their position. Though everything was in flames around him he still remained tranquilly in his bed. When at length the tide of sedition began to flow towards his own estate, and he was assured by his people that his plantation was their object, he caused himself to be placed on a litter, and to be transported to the entrance of the road by which the infuriated mob was approaching. Here he ordered the

¹ "The Americans had a guard-house assigned to them, where they were obliged to keep a regular watch every night. The guard was commanded by my brother James, and I acted as his lieutenant. We drew our forces from the American shipping as well as from the residents in the city. The arms and ammunition were kept at our house, and my brother, as captain, was accountable to the Government or military commander. We had some laughable scenes at this station, and one that came very near having a tragic ending."

cannon placed on either side of him as he lay stretched on his pallet, his body raised by pillows so as to see the operations of the combat. With a drawn sword in his right hand and a pair of pistols at his side, he conducted the defence of his estate in so masterly a manner that the insurgents were not only beaten off, but so roughly handled that he was left in peace until his crop had been gathered in and his sugar transported to the city. He then himself withdrew to the town, where I saw him stretched on his bed in extreme suffering. He afterwards came to this country with his family, and placed his eldest son under the care of one of my brothers.

I mention these facts as evidences of the sincere attachment of some of the slaves to their masters, and the little inclination they had to commit any outrage on them or to seek to obtain their freedom by violent means when uninfluenced by the misrepresentations and acts of the French philanthropists. But these very slaves, when once led into deeds of violence and crime by their black companions, became as daring and as reckless as the worst among them, and in some instances more so. How any virtuous mind, knowing these facts, can suppose that the flood of destruction when once raised to a head can be stopped by the friends of humanity, I cannot conceive. When once the passions are roused to desperation, the better feelings of men are lost in the general vortex and tumult of action. Slaves who would have died in defence of their masters but a short time before under such circumstances were the first to massacre them; and the only resource left to the whites, where there was any equality of force, was a war of extermination.

But let us follow the course of events as far as our recollections serve us. The Government of the Northern Department had undergone several changes. Commissioners had been sent out from France under pretence of tranquillizing the colony. One set had been recalled, or had returned to Europe without effecting any important end.¹ A new governor (Despaches) had been sent out with fresh troops from France, but their efforts were of no avail against a people who had no local habitation. They were here to-day and to-morrow in the mountain passes, while the European forces were dying by hundreds on the burning plains without even the consolation of having signalized themselves by one deed of daring. They had no enemy to contend with but the climate, no effort to make but against disease, no excitement to rouse their failing energies but the sad duty of burying their comrades in the trenches that were left open for their reception. This

¹ The arrival of the commissioners Mirbeck, Roume, and St-Léger in January, 1792, caused great terror in the island, as it was supposed that it would be followed by a general emancipation of the slaves. The commissioners returned to France in March or April.

could not last long: the troops were recalled to the city or its outposts, and the blacks had again full command of the plains.¹

¹ "A body of several thousand troops had been sent out from France under the command of General Rochambeau, and they were billeted or quartered on the citizens. We had four of them at different times in our family, although we were foreigners. In general they dined with the master of the house where they were lodged; but with us they ate by themselves. These forces cleared the plains for a time of the insurgents, who retired to the mountains to watch their foes as they were daily sinking under the influence of the climate. Such was the mortality among them that one half the whole army perished without seeing an enemy to encourage and animate them. As soon as these troops were recalled to the city the blacks rushed again to the plains with renewed confidence, and bearded the inhabitants at the entrance of the town, which they now invested and attacked almost nightly. Every white inhabitant was a soldier attached to some corps, and even the Americans were obliged to do duty whether they were residents or not. On recurring to this fact I am reminded of a laughable circumstance that took place one night when I had the command of the guard. There was a sail-maker—a French white man—who lived next door to us, who was in the habit of getting drunk every week or so, and making a great noise so as to disturb the neighborhood. My sister, Mrs. James Perkins, being quite unwell, I was requested by her or some one to silence this noisy fellow, whose cries and oaths were such as to annoy every one within hearing. I went to his door, but it was fastened, and I could not obtain an entrance. He was then bawling and howling like a maniac. I accordingly went for a guard of French soldiers, whom I brought to the spot, where we found our man in the street stark naked, attacking every one and alarming the whole neighborhood. When he saw the guard he attempted to escape; but as they presented their bayonets on every side he was obliged to surrender. As he had no clothes on, and very short hair, it was difficult to secure him, as he slipped through their hands whenever they attempted to seize him. I accordingly procured a wide board, to which, when some negroes had caught him, he was tied on his back, and carried through the streets to prison, where he was detained a week or more, and then on promise of good behavior released. This frightened him so much that he kept quite sober for a long while, always avoiding me, drunk or sober, as he would an evil spirit. One night, however, some time after the event just related, when I had charge of the guard, one of my sailor soldiers who had been posted as a sentinel at some distance from the guard-house and near the residence of the sail-maker came running to the guard-house without his musket, frightened out of his senses, and said that he had been surprised, had had his gun taken from him by a man who was stark naked, and who appeared to be mad. I knew at once that this must be my sail-maker, and taking two men with me, armed with muskets, and arming myself with my sword, we approached the quarter very cautiously, hoping if possible to surprise the fellow should he be still in the street. As we looked round the corner of a house near the spot, we saw our man marching backwards and forwards like a sentry, with his gun on his shoulder. At the least noise he would cry out, 'Qui vive?' and present his musket in the direction of the sound. As the gun was loaded with ball it was necessary to be cautious. We therefore got as near him as possible without being seen, and as he turned from me to walk back to his limit I sprang from behind the wall of the house with my sword upraised, crying, 'Down with the traitor!' No sooner did he hear my voice than he dropped his musket, and throwing himself on the pavement, face downwards, began to beg that I would spare his life. I put my foot on his back, and let him feel the point

At this period the Northern Department was commanded by General Galbaud, who was governor of the Cape. The troops had been fed principally by the American merchants at the Cape, who furnished provisions to the Government, — first for money, then for drafts on France. When these were refused payment, as was the case, bills on the French minister at Philadelphia were proffered, and in some instances accepted, in payment for the articles required for the soldiers. My drafts on M. de Ternant, then minister at Philadelphia, for twenty thousand dollars were at first refused payment, though subsequently paid. Orders were, however, given to make no more drafts on him, and the Government was nonplussed.

Forced loans had been tried before the drafts on France had been issued; the inhabitants were discouraged, and an earthquake had shattered almost all the buildings throughout the town.¹ The fear of a revolt among the slaves in the city compelled such of the white inhabitants as were not on military duty to keep guard before their houses during the night, relieving each other every four hours. The regular troops, who were in want of food, swore that unless some measures were taken to relieve them they would plunder the city. All was despair and distrust, and efforts were made to collect what remained from the depredations of the insurgents and to ship it off to this country.

In this state of things the governor called a meeting of the French merchants, to whom he represented the condition of the troops and the necessity of providing some means for their relief. At this meeting it was agreed, and unanimously voted, that if the American merchants would furnish the necessary provisions to the Government to satisfy the soldiers, they, the French merchants, would pay for the same at fixed prices in the produce of the island, which they daily received by coasting-vessels from places to which the revolt had not spread. This engagement was solemnly entered into by the merchants, and confirmed by the governor, who caused the American Board of Commerce to be notified of the fact. On receiving the notification the Board undertook to supply the funds needed, and without hesitation fulfilled their engagement to the amount of between eight and nine hundred thousand livres,

of my sword in his loins; then made him promise never to appear naked again in the street, and that he would in future be a quiet and good citizen."

¹ "About this time an earthquake took place which shattered the houses, which were built of irregularly shaped stones, to such a degree that it appeared impossible they could stand another shock. The like had never taken place before since the settlement of the Cape. The first shock was at daylight in the morning. It would be difficult to describe the terror of the inhabitants on this occasion. The second shock, which occurred in the afternoon of the same day, was much more formidable and alarming than the first, and seemed to us the precursor of some great evil, as it proved to be."

of which amount the house with which I was connected furnished upwards of one hundred and eighty thousand. When the provisions promised by the American merchants had been delivered, they found that the French warehouses which a few days before had been well stocked with sugar, coffee, cotton, cocoa, etc., were empty with the exception of a few belonging to the more honorable and respectable merchants. The goods had, as was supposed, been reshipped on board the coasters or the European ships that lay in port; and none from the coast had been sent to replace them.

There was nothing left to pay for the goods that had been delivered, and those who had emptied their magazines professed themselves unable to comply with the requisition. A representation of the facts was accordingly made to Governor Galbaud, and he felt it his duty to designate a number of merchants who had been present at the meeting as the responsible parties, and to direct the company of the public magazines to draw orders on them for their respective shares. This was done accordingly, and some goods were delivered in the early part of the morning of Monday the 16th of June, 1793; but the French merchants after breakfast on the same day generally refused to deliver anything more, without giving any reasons whatever for so doing. Some of them had indeed delivered their full quota agreeably to their original engagement; but this amounted to a small portion of the whole debt. It was soon rumored abroad that new commissioners, Polvérel and Sonthonax, had arrived from Port-au-Prince, the seat of the General Government, where they had been to quell a rebellion.¹ Dissatisfied with what they called the dictatorial ordinance of Governor Galbaud in forcing them to pay a debt which they had solemnly contracted, the French merchants resolved on applying to these all-powerful representatives of the nation for redress of their grievances. This they accordingly did; and on June 13th General Galbaud, arrested by the commissioners, was sent prisoner on board the ship of war "La Normandie" to be transported to France for trial.²

¹ The new commissioners were three Jacobins, Sonthonax, Polvérel, and Ailhaud. The latter was sent back to France in 1793, leaving his colleagues absolute masters of the colony. Sonthonax soon after got rid of Polvérel by sending him home as bearer of despatches, and disembarassed himself of General Rochambeau, who had arrived as commander-in-chief, by ordering him on board a corvette. He then nominated Toussaint l'Ouverture to fill his place. (Quarterly Review, 1819, p. 441.)

² In the attack on the Government House by twelve hundred seamen, Galbaud's brother was taken prisoner, while one of Commissioner Polvérel's sons fell into the hands of the Government party. An exchange was proposed by the latter; but the commissioner refused to allow it, saying "that his son knew his duty, and was prepared to die in the service of the Republic." (Edwards, *op. cit.* p. 144.) On leaving St. Domingo, General Galbaud took refuge in the United

On Tuesday morning the American Board of Commerce sent a deputation to the commissioners with a memorial representing the facts, and asking payment of their debt in such manner as might appear just under the circumstances. The memorial was received by M. (or, as he was called, Citizen) Sonthonax, who ordered the committee to return the next morning for their answer. On Wednesday morning, when, at the hour appointed, the deputation returned to the Government House for their answer, Citizen Sonthonax placed in the hands of the chairman of the committee a printed document, ordering thirty-six merchants therein designated, jointly and severally, to pay the debt due to the Americans forthwith; and in default of payment on the first application the creditors were directed to apply to the procurator-general for redress. This officer was ordered by the same document to seize the property of the said merchants wherever it was to be found, and to sell as much of the same at public auction as was necessary to discharge the balance due the American merchants; and in case there was not property sufficient to be found, to seize the persons of the said merchants, and hold them in prison until the money was forthcoming.

On looking over the names designated, the chairman saw one or two names of gentlemen who had already paid their full quota, and he mentioned the fact to the commissary, considering it an injustice that they who had so honorably and promptly done their duty already, should be called on again to pay. "Withdraw, citizens," was the reply of this petty despot, "you have your answer" ("Retirez-vous, citoyens, vous avez votre réponse").

One of the gentlemen who had paid his portion without hesitation on the first demand was a M. Pousset, a merchant of the first class and standing in all respects. The committee thought it their duty to call on him immediately to show him the ordinance, and consult with him as to the course they had best take under the circumstances. The partner of M. Pousset, a gentleman whose name I now forget, read the paper with astonishment, but he said, with the greatest frankness, that the merchants of the Cape had rendered themselves responsible, and it was their duty to make good their engagements; that he could give no other advice to us than that we should see those who had not paid and show them the ordinance, and if they still persisted in refusal, to apply, as directed, to the attorney-general for aid. The whole of this day (Wednesday) was employed in hunting up the delinquents. As those whom we could find, absolutely refused to do anything, and others kept themselves out of our reach, we were obliged to call another meeting of the creditors to decide what was to be done. At this meeting it

States. The preceding governor, M. de Blanchelande, who came out in 1790, was guillotined in France, Aug. 9, 1793, and his son shared the same fate in July of the following year.

was agreed that the committee should call on the attorney-general the next day, and lay the subject before him.

Accordingly on Thursday morning, June 19, the committee proceeded to the house of the public functionary who was charged with the execution of the decree. He was not at home; but on their way to his house they saw the ordinance pasted on the walls of the houses, where it had been put the day before. Returning home they found the stores everywhere shut. The most gloomy silence prevailed in the streets, and the inhabitants, who were collected at various places in small knots or groups, eyed the committee as they passed, and showed evidently that they were speaking of them or their measures. Being acquainted with many of these persons, and seeing that something important was in agitation, I stepped up to one of those who had paid a portion of his quota and asked him the cause of all this gloom, and why the stores were shut. He replied, "You will know presently." The committee then proceeded to the Bay, as the street was called where their houses and stores were situated. Here a very different scene presented itself. All was bustle and agitation. The balconies were filled with persons armed with spy-glasses, looking attentively at the ships of war, and asking each other in loud tones what all this meant. Arrived at my house I was called up into the balcony, and a spy-glass was put into my hand. "See," said my partner, "the ships of war are getting springs on their cables, and have brought their broadsides against the town; what can all this mean?" I then related what we had seen in the upper streets; and we no longer doubted that some serious attack was intended, and that the merchants of the place were privy to the fact. The truth undoubtedly was that the French merchants, outraged by the arbitrary decree of the commissioners, whom they had but a day or two before petitioned to relieve them from the obnoxious Galbaud, and the still more obnoxious debt due to the American Board of Commerce, had now solicited protection from Galbaud himself and the French admiral against the still more obnoxious commissioners. Of this I have never had the least doubt, although I have no other evidence of the fact than the circumstances themselves. It has been said that an affront offered to some of the naval officers by the commissary or some of his mulatto troops, was the cause of the ships taking sides against the Government, but of this I know nothing. Be it as it may, we had not looked many minutes at the ships of war when we saw their large boats hauled alongside, and filled with armed men to the number of seven or eight hundred. There was no longer any doubt on our minds as to their object, and as we were well convinced that serious consequences would ensue, and perhaps the town be battered down, we sent off our books and valuable papers, together with such specie as we had on hand, on board a brig which was consigned to the house, whose

captain happened to be on shore with his boat, and was fortunately with us at the house.¹

In the mean time the armed sailors from the ships were landed and marched to the Government House, where the commissioners resided. This body of undisciplined men was headed by a brother of General Galbaud's, who had embarked with him. He bore the commission of a major in the army, as I was informed, and was considered a brave and good officer. As soon as this rabble, for it can be called by no other name, arrived in sight of the Government House and within shot of a battalion composed of two regiments of mulatto infantry, which was drawn up in front of it, two colored officers of rank from these regiments advanced, and demanded a parley with the leaders of the sailors. Galbaud ordered his people to halt, and immediately stepped forward with another officer to hear what they had to say. While saluting each other with profound respect, the mulattoes dropped their hats, and seized "*Massa Galbaud*" in their arms, while at the same moment a portion of the line of infantry discharged their pieces into the body of the sailors as they were standing huddled together, without any suspicion of treachery, awaiting the termination of the conference.² Many were killed dead on the spot, and many wounded; the rest fled at full speed to their boats, which still remained at the wharves, but so closely were they pursued by the mulattoes that few reached their ships in safety. Many of those who were in the rear, finding the boats had put off with those that arrived first, jumped into the water. Such as could swim were picked up and carried on board their ships, but many were drowned. The loss of men in this way was altogether great; but it formed only a portion of the total loss, which included those who were butchered on the occasion.

The commissioners had been doubtless informed of everything that was going forward, and knew that many of the citizens of the town who probably intended to join the sailors had been the movers in this foolish and inconsiderate measure. Doubtless an order had been given to massacre all the whites that were found in the streets, and it was most faithfully executed.³

¹ "It was fortunate for us that we decided as we did at once; for had we wasted half an hour, or even twenty minutes, it would have been too late, and we should have lost all our books and money. We had about fifteen thousand dollars on hand at the time in silver in bags. Scarcely was it placed in the boat when we heard the sound, and soon caught sight of a large body of regular troops; and the boat had not got half-way to the shipping when the whole street was lined with soldiers to prevent all communication between the shipping and the shore. No opportunity offered after this to save anything."

² "This fact was related to me by an eye-witness when I returned to the Cape six weeks afterwards, at which time Major Galbaud was confined in chains in prison. What finally became of him I never knew."

³ "A clerk of ours named Dubeau, a very athletic young man, told me that he

No sooner was this massacre ended than another scene of carnage commenced at the Government House, or in the gardens and square in front of it. A corps of young men of the first families, called the "Volunteers," composed of about three hundred high-spirited gentlemen, attacked the mulattoes, and attempted to enter the Government House

was one of the many spectators of the scene at the Government House, and that he fled with the rest down the street leading to the King's Wharf. Finding himself close pressed by the mulattoes, and numbers of merchants, as well as sailors, falling about him under the shot of the pursuers, who did not stop to examine the bodies, but followed the flying, he thought his only chance was to fall with the next volley. This he did, and as soon as the soldiers had passed over him in pursuit, he sprang on his feet and entered a house, where he secreted himself until he found an opportunity in the evening to get off to the shipping. I cannot resist an inclination to relate as briefly as possible an anecdote of this young man, Dubeau, which made a strong impression on my mind at the time it occurred. A gentleman whose name I now forget, but a man of some consequence, and a member of the Assembly, owed the house some two or three hundred dollars, and not having called to pay it as was expected, I sent M. Dubeau to him to collect the money. Dubeau returned without it, saying that the gentleman was unwell and could not be seen. Some time after I told Dubeau to go again; but he made some excuse, and showed such an aversion to going that I went myself to the house, and having inquired for the person was introduced to his chamber, where I found him walking the room. On making my business known, he begged pardon for not having paid the debt before, but said he had been confined for some weeks to his room, having been bitten by a mad dog, and that his physician had ordered him to remain indoors six weeks, when, if all was right, he might go out, and he would then call and settle the account. On my return to the counting-house, I mentioned the fact, and I observed Dubeau turn pale as ashes. A week or ten days elapsed when one day, while Dubeau was posting his books at a desk near the window that opened into the street, I turned towards the door and saw the gentleman in question, who had just arrived. Addressing him by his name, I asked him how he did. The moment his name was mentioned, Dubeau dropped his pen, sprang out of the window into the street, and took to his heels as if the man had presented a pistol at his head. I saw nothing more of him during the day, and could not account for this extraordinary behavior. The next day, when I called him to account for his conduct and absence from his duty, he related the following facts as an apology for his apparent derangement: 'Sir,' said the poor fellow, trembling from head to foot like a child, 'you will excuse me when you know the horror I feel at the name of a mad dog. My father died raving mad, having been bitten by my uncle, who had been bitten by a mad dog, and himself fell a victim to hydrophobia. I was young at the time, but I saw my father while under the effects of his wound, and the awful and heart-rending scenes that it produced in my family made such an impression on my mind that the thought of it almost makes me mad myself. When I first went to his house and was told the facts, I was so much alarmed and affected that I could not return, or tell you the reason why I declined going again. When he arrived here and you called him by name, I was seized with an indescribable terror, and the first impulse carried me out of the window and drove me away from the house. His presence haunted me during the whole day, and I was afraid to return home while it was light. Indeed, I have thought of nothing else since, and I hope the circumstances which I have related of my family misfortune may plead in my favor.'

and seize the commissioners. These, however, had made their escape into the country with a body of their guards ; but the blacks had been armed, and their liberty proclaimed, so that the numbers that were collected to oppose the whites left this unhappy battalion of volunteers no chance of success. The greater part were destroyed, but some brave fellows among them escaped and joined themselves to other armed corps.

They did not, however, die unrevenged, for their discipline was excellent, having been trained under the Chevalier Dugrés and the young Comte de Grasse ; and the efforts they made and the courage they displayed brought double their number to the ground. The scene was horrible. At the same moment a general massacre of the white inhabitants commenced in the upper part of the town ; and as no boats could either come on shore or go off from it in consequence of the whole Bay being lined with white troops who were stationed there early in the afternoon to prevent all communication with the shipping, our house towards evening was filled with women who had fled from the emancipated slaves who were butchering all they could reach in the upper part of the town. Most of these were mulatto women, who fled with the rest when the massacre began. What became of them finally I know not, for as we ourselves had no means of escape they all left the house during the night, and sought safety elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

Recollections of St. Domingo, continued.

THE Government House was distant about half a mile from the residence of the American merchants ; and the landing-place where the sailors had disembarked was nearly half that distance below them down the bay, but in full view from the balconies. A little further on was the Artillery Park, where a regiment was stationed. As the fighting was at some distance from the seaboard, we could only hear the rattling of the musketry, but could see none of the operations after the sailors had been driven into the sea, as the troops engaged were in the neighborhood of the Government residence. When the alarm among the inhabitants in our quarter had been raised to the highest pitch by the news that the commissioners had freed and armed the slaves, every one seized his firearms, and without concert placed himself at the corner of his street to defend his person and his property, or his family, if he had any, expecting momentarily that his own house servants would join in the massacres. Every moment accounts from the interior of the town were brought by the fugitives of the dreadful and deadly contention that was going on there between the white inhabitants and the armed slaves,

who now considered themselves authorized by the commissioners to commit every species of outrage. While some were struggling with the whites in the streets, others were robbing the houses of their most precious effects or committing acts a thousand times worse on the female inmates. A constant and unceasing fire of musketry had been kept up in the upper part of the city since the first attack of the mulatto regiments on the sailors, but when nightfall arrived it extended everywhere, for the fears of the whites led them to dread every one who appeared, and as they could not distinguish between the whites and blacks in the dark, it was only a cry of "Who's there?" and a shot followed the sound before the question could be answered. Thus, in the general panic whites destroyed whites and blacks destroyed blacks throughout the night, and one constant and incessant firing of musketry, with incessant roaring of cannon, was heard in every direction and even at our own doors till daylight. At this period a field-piece was planted at the corner of our house by some white soldiers, who began firing up the street, but they were soon driven from their position by other cannon at the head of it. The white troops that had in the early part of the afternoon been stationed along the seaboard to prevent communication with the shipping had withdrawn before dark, and had mostly joined the whites in defence of the town, and were now involved in the general warfare, but as the brigands of the country had been let into the city, the troops had by degrees been driven to their quarters, or to the Artillery Park, where they made their stand.

The quarter of the town where our house stood was entirely deserted, not a soul was to be seen at sunrise, and no boat of any kind was in sight from the front balcony. The hot contest was carried on chiefly at a distance from us (although a musket ball did find its way into our room while we were at breakfast). We were alone, and without support, except from our own arms.¹ We felt the necessity of escape, but we had no means left us, as there were no boats or boatmen to be seen. The cannon at the head of the street still kept up a regular fire towards the bay for some time after the enemy had retired. Soon after it ceased we heard a cry in the street, and running to the window saw a merchant of the city, who had commanded a troop of horse the day before, running swiftly to the water, with his sword drawn, and without his hat, crying as he went, "Sauvez-vous! tout est perdu!" Repeating these words with great vehemence, he plunged into the sea and swam towards the shipping. It was now time to look about us; we breakfasted, however, and consulted with

¹ "The white persons in the house, all well armed, were Mr. Burling, Mr. J. Carter, Mr. —, a French clerk of ours, whose name has escaped me, a young man named Porter, an apprentice of ours, and myself; the blacks, Tom, Samson, Plato, Mousse, Yorick, and Nancy the cook."

each other as to the course to be pursued. Although well armed, we could not expect to defend ourselves long against the numbers that would soon be upon us, and it was determined to try to rouse one or more of the boatmen who might be skulking behind some of the large flat-boats anchored along the bay, that were employed to load the shipping. After repeated calls from the front balcony for a passage-boat, with all the force we could muster, we at last had the satisfaction of seeing a black head raised above the side of one of these vessels; but all our appeals for help availed us nothing. The head was shaken in negation, and dropped out of sight. My partner, who was with us, was almost a cripple with the rheumatism. To attempt to swim to this boat was for him out of the question, and we could not and would not leave him, even if death had stared us in the face. Renewed calls for help brought up another black head and a friendly shake of assent. We all therefore left the house as we stood, without a second shirt to our backs, and even without carrying off our watches, which were left in our bedrooms, but armed with pistols for our defence.¹

We had the greatest confidence in our blacks, to whose leader — a faithful slave, whom we had long owned — we gave the charge to keep the doors shut, and to open them to no one but ourselves, should we be fortunate enough to return. This man had informed us the night before that he had been promised his liberty if he would join the rebels. We were in a few minutes placed on board a vessel belonging to Baltimore, that happened to be nearest the shore. Scarcely had we time to thank God for our escape, when, looking with a glass towards our house, we saw that it was surrounded by a troop of black cavalry; our doors were open, and our negroes were wading off towards the ships. I jumped into a boat with two sailors, and soon brought them all on board in safety. They told us that scarcely had we left the shore when they heard the tramp of the horses, and fearful of being obliged to join the insurgents, they quitted the house and made for the water, where they were hidden from the troops by the piles of lumber that covered the bay, or seaboard. This was on Friday morning, June 20. Our house

¹ "When we saw the means of relief before us, we were too much overjoyed to think of anything but the preservation of our lives, and our retreat was therefore rather precipitate. While the blacks were rowing us off we regretted our haste, and began to reproach ourselves that we had not stopped to take our watches and a change of clothes; but had we done this we should doubtless have been all sacrificed. We might have defended the passage upstairs for a time, and could have done it against quadruple our numbers, but we must finally have been overpowered and put to death. Our confidence in our strength was great, because we had plenty of muskets and ammunition, twice as many as we had men; for the ammunition and the arms of the American Guard were kept at our house, and we had loaded them all. Fortunately we were too much alarmed to wait the issue of a battle, as we could expect no support from the whites, who had abandoned our neighborhood on every side for the third of a mile."

was soon filled with blacks, like all other houses on the bay, and a regular plunder began of the most valuable effects that had been left by their late occupants. Money, plate, watches, and jewels were the first objects that were sought for. This we discovered afterwards, as will be seen by what follows. Transported on board one of our own vessels that lay farther out in the harbor, we had time for reflection, and leisure to inquire into our situation and wants. We were without clothes, except the light linen dresses which we were accustomed to wear in the morning, and of these we had only what we had on our backs. Everybody we saw among the inhabitants who had escaped was in the same situation, and of course no relief could be looked for from them. After due deliberation, we determined to arm ourselves and land the next morning, with a view to get some clothes, and if possible to save some dry-goods of value belonging to our friends, that were in one of the back rooms of the house. After having resolved on this course, we seated ourselves on the deck to watch the course of proceedings on shore.

The firing had not ceased for one moment from the time it first began on the preceding day at one o'clock, and as we approached we were able to see more distinctly where it was kept up with most vigor. At a small fort called the Picolet, which had been taken possession of by the few volunteers who had escaped from the massacre at the Government House and by some troops of the line who had abandoned the commissioners, there was a rolling fire of musketry during the whole night, and in every quarter of the town the flashing of guns was to be seen in quick succession, sometimes one or two, and in some places several together, as if a desultory warfare was carried on by detached parties, or by individuals who were destroying each other. This at the time we supposed to be a contest between the remaining whites who were defending themselves individually, or in small parties, against the slaves who had been let loose upon them, but we afterwards found it was a contest among the liberated slaves for the possession of the plunder which some were carrying away, while others who had been less fortunate in their search shot at them. Thousands of the blacks were supposed to have been destroyed in this way, for as soon as they had gotten rid of their masters, either by murdering them or by running away from them, they turned their arms against each other to secure the plunder that either or any of them possessed. This scene kept us on deck during the night, and however strange it may appear to those who have never been placed in circumstances of great peril, we were never distressed or discouraged. As soon as daylight permitted, we began our preparations for a descent, and having broken our fast we embarked in three boats with four sailors in each, and commanded, one by Captain Clark, one by my partner, and one by myself. We were all armed with muskets and pistols and with a supply of cartridges. There were, besides, one or two volunteers

to each boat, — among others, a Mr. Hunter, of Georgia, a high-spirited gentleman, who had made one of our family at the time of our flight. Our party was therefore composed of about eighteen or nineteen armed men, the leaders of whom were in too destitute a condition to hesitate about risking their lives in the hope to obtain wherewithal to cover their nakedness.

As we passed on towards the shore we were hailed by the master of a small brig belonging to Charleston, South Carolina, the brave and amiable Captain Campbell, who has since commanded the frigate "Constitution," and desired to come alongside his vessel. This we at first refused to do, as we saw the coast was clear, and were afraid that by delay we might lose what appeared so good a chance to us of obtaining our object. This we stated to him, but he insisted on our compliance, and offered to accompany us; we therefore rowed alongside his brig, and he called on his crew for volunteers to accompany him in his own boat. The call was met with three cheers both from his own crew and ours, and in a few minutes we had an accession of four stout sailors commanded by a cool, steady, and spirited officer. This gave us all our original force for fighting men, and left four men to take care of the four boats, so that our party was quite respectable as to force. We placed our boats' sterns to the shore with graplines at the head, and a sailor was left with each to steady them in this position, so that when we came down to the boats with our several loads of goods, we had only to wade off a short distance and place them in the stern-sheets, where they were stowed away by the boatguards. The sea-breeze had set in very strong, so that our clothes and a part of the goods got quite soaked with the spray which came over the bows. This arrangement was necessary, not only for the convenience of loading, but to have the boats in a position to facilitate our escape in case of need. The event showed the importance of this precaution.

We appointed Captain Campbell commander of the sailors who were to form our defence, while we attempted to save some portion of our property. The streets being laid out at right angles, and the houses built in square blocks, our guards stationed at the entrance of the streets on either side the block in which our house and stores stood, could repel any small body that might get information of our landing. No opposition was made to it, and not a person of any kind was to be seen alive. The only impediment to effecting an entrance into our own house was a dead negro, who lay directly across the doorway with a bundle at his head. On removing him, we found he had been shot in the back, probably while running off with his plunder. I shall never forget with what nonchalance one of the sailors caught up the bundle, and threw it to one of his comrades who was behind him, crying out, "Hollo, Jack, catch this, and throw it into the boat, my boy; here is

fine plunder for us!" Other dead bodies were scattered about, but all of blacks. We rushed into our several lodging-rooms, where we found our wardrobes untouched. The keys were in them, but not an article appeared to be deranged. Our watches were gone, but we had what was more important to us left, — our clothes. Each one seized a sheet, and filled it with whatever came first to hand; and as we always had a large stock of linen, we were not long in placing our bundles, filled with shirts, pantaloons, and other articles of dress, in the boats. As soon as this was done the goods-room was opened, and other sheets were filled and placed on our shoulders to be carried to the boats. As we had to cross the open street on the seaboard in going to the boats, we were saluted from behind some piles of lumber up the bay by a few musket-balls, which whistled by our ears, but we could see no one. As the party that was firing at us was so hidden that we could not return the compliment with any effect, we continued our labors, starting as quickly as we could with our burdens across the street, until we arrived under the shelter of the piles of lumber in front of our own house on the seaboard. We knew that if the alarm was once given, we should be soon overpowered from the back part of the town, and in this we were not mistaken, for Campbell, who was lame in one leg, was put to his mettle to superintend the defence of the two posts where our guards were stationed. This, however, he did so effectually that the first assailants were driven for security behind the blocks of houses above us. But we were not left long undisturbed.

Soon after the cessation of firing, a white man, dressed in soldier's clothes, rushed into one of the streets on horseback, crying to our party to save him. While pushing his horse full speed towards our lines, several muskets were fired at him by the blacks. We received him as a fugitive from the enemy. He had no arms, said he had been taken prisoner by the blacks, and had seized an opportunity to make his escape. Finding there were boats on shore with white people, he came to ask our protection and to be taken on board with us. He asked the strength of our party, and was willing to take arms and lead us to attack the rebels if we had a few brave fellows to spare for the expedition. While we were listening to this fellow, my partner came up from the boats, and hearing what he proposed, asked him a few questions, which evidently confused him, and made him look round as if desirous of escaping. He was still on horseback, and Mr. Burling, being satisfied that he was a spy sent by the negroes to see what our force was, did not hesitate, but drawing a pistol from his belt would have shot the fellow dead had I not seized his arm and prevented him. This interference led to a warm altercation between us, in which the bystanders took sides. Meanwhile the fellow made his escape to the blacks, and in fifteen minutes after, we were attacked by a strong body of them

in both streets, and our late distressed friend and fellow-sufferer was seen actively engaged in urging them on to the attack. Reinforcements were every moment arriving from the back part of the town, and a stronger body had taken their stand behind the boards above us on the bay, from whom we had every now and then a discharge.

Retreat was necessary, as we saw we should soon be overpowered; but we had made our arrangements so that the boats were manned, ready to pull off, while the guard, although diminished in numbers, kept up a brisk fire until all was prepared. As soon as this was announced, Captain Campbell drew off his battalion in a sailor-like manner, and made his retreat good to the boats, without the loss of any one except the French soldier who had stolen a march upon us. Scarcely had we put off when the blacks made their appearance, but not being able to see whether the boats were still all off-shore, they moved very cautiously, fearing an ambush, so that we had made good progress before they were prepared to fire on us from the beach, and one or two well-directed shots from the boats soon dispersed them.¹

These details may have little interest for general readers; but as they led to other results, and as they show the importance of system and organization, as well as of union of thought in all cases of a like nature, I have thought it proper to state them at the risk of taxing their patience. Had I not interfered to prevent the shooting of the soldier who came among us in the character of a suppliant for protection, we never could have been sure that his fate was deserved, and we should have always deeply regretted the rashness that led to the catastrophe. At the time I was blamed, and perhaps justly, but I have never repented that I saved a fellow-being, though he proved himself afterwards to be a spy and a traitor. It is better that ten guilty men should escape than that one innocent should suffer, either by Lynch or Statute law.

As our persons were well known to most of the blacks of the part

¹ "My partner, Mr. Burling, who had been confined with severe rheumatism for a long time, and almost deprived of the use of his limbs before the events of the 19th, became as active as any of the party in consequence of the excitement and exertion that he was obliged to make.

"When Captain Campbell announced the necessity of a retreat and all were ready to move, Burling stood at the door of the store facing the bay, ready also, as we supposed, as he had been called from the rooms above for the purpose, but at the moment when Campbell was about to draw off the guard, and the blacks were pressing on us with force, Burling cried out, 'Keep your guard, Campbell, while I run up and lock the goods-room door, we may have another chance at it yet,' — and back he ran upstairs and through the whole length of the building to lock this cursed door, while we were exposed to be overpowered by the brigands. Nothing could stop him, back he would go, and would have gone if the devil had stood on the stairs. He was the most fearless man I ever knew."

of the town where we had lived, it was soon known among them that we had landed with arms, and had shot several negroes in defending ourselves from their attacks. This was treasured in the memory of some who hoped for an opportunity to revenge themselves at some future period.

CHAPTER VII.

Recollections of St. Domingo, continued.

HITHERTO the excitement of the scene that was passing before us, and the continued action of the morning, had kept up our spirits to their highest stretch; but as we had now attained our immediate object, and were out of danger from the attacks of our enemies, we had nothing more to gain or to hope for, as we were convinced that we should never again be permitted to land, or to secure any more of our property. The silent gloom that succeeded, as we rowed forward to our ships, was soon aroused by the cries and lamentations of the miserable beings who stood on the decks of the vessels that we passed, all of whom had been watching our landing and anxious return in the frail hope that we might bring them tidings of their lost friends. Men, women, and children half naked (a most heart-rending sight), with uplifted hands were beseeching us to give them hope of safety, — some for their wives, some for their husbands, some for their children, and some for their parents. They mingled their tones of supplication and entreaty with such a show of wretchedness that the firmest hearts among us gave way to emotions that none but brutes could have resisted. We were overwhelmed with grief; and men who but a few minutes before had braved death without a sensation of fear or sense of suffering were now unmanned and as feeble as children. All that had passed before, and all that succeeded this scene, until I arrived in the United States six months afterwards (and my sufferings were neither few nor light), were nothing to what I then felt. Forty-four years have passed since that period, and the facts are now as fresh and as marked on my memory as if they had occurred but yesterday. The wives and children of planters, of merchants, and of mechanics who had been murdered in their defence were now frantic with despair, for they had lost all, even their guardians and only earthly protectors. But the horror of the husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers who were inquiring for their female relatives was, if possible, still more strongly depicted on their faces and in their agitated frames, for they felt that miseries worse than death had befallen them.

Let those who advocate the immediate emancipation of the slaves in our own country reflect for a moment, and ask themselves what would

be *their* feelings had Heaven cast their lot in the Southern States, — their only patrimony the slaves that their fathers had inherited from their parents, — should the mistaken philanthropy of their neighbors pursue a course of measures calculated to produce the same effects on them and their families that I have witnessed, and have feebly described in these pages? I say nothing of the violation of the compact that gives the Southern States the right by law to hold this property undisturbed; I speak only of the effects that would necessarily be produced, and the misery that must follow the success of their plans, — misery not only to the innocent whites, but misery and tenfold wretchedness to the slaves themselves; for this would as certainly follow a general rising of the blacks, or an immediate emancipation of them, as effect follows an operating cause. But let us proceed with our narrative.

Scarcely had we arrived on board of our own vessel when she was surrounded with boats filled with the late inhabitants of the town, who came to have their inquiries satisfied, or to beg for a few clothes to protect them from the burning rays of the sun; for hundreds who lived at a distance from the first outbreaking of the slaves, having retired to rest, had left their beds and fled with nothing but their night-clothes to cover them as the storm approached their own dwellings. Who could resist at such a moment to contribute a portion of their means to their suffering fellow-beings? There were but few of us that were not soon reduced almost to as small a stock as that we possessed before we landed, particularly in shirts, for this garment served for either sex, and all were equally destitute.

We had scarcely swallowed our dinner when we were called on deck to witness new scenes. The seaboard was now lined with black troops on horseback, with long lines of mules tied to each other by their tails, and accompanied by black drivers. These mules — which had been brought in from the country for the purpose, with their drivers, who were accustomed to this mode of transportation, coffee being brought to the town for sale in this manner — were at once loaded with the dry-goods and other articles easily transported from our stores. When one set was charged and led off, another line was brought up and loaded, until all the articles from the stores and houses that could be thus carried away were sent off to the country. The whole bay for nearly three quarters of a mile was stripped of its merchandise; and other parts of the town were doubtless plundered in the same manner, but this we could not see.

We sat watching the plunderers till nightfall, but the darkness of the night had not long set in when we were attracted by a light which soon spread into a blaze, and in a few minutes the whole line of houses on the bay were on fire. This was immediately followed by a general conflagration of the interior of the town, amidst the rattling of mus-

ketry and the roaring of cannon ; for the lower part of the city and the forts were still defended by such whites as had not been able to escape on board the ships. The nature of the merchandise in many of the French and American warehouses was such that it burned vividly, with occasional explosions, caused by the large quantities of brandy, rum, and other spirits left in them. Great quantities of oil, tar, and pitch contributed to feed and brighten the flame, so that all objects at a distance were distinctly visible.¹

The whole harbor was lighted up ; and the ships, with their miserable tenants, were not the least distressing objects before us. The sight of a great city in flames, though awful, is sublime, and we sat watching the flames until daylight announced that something must be done for our own preservation and support. The property that we had left in our stores, the debts that were due to us for goods sold to the inhabitants, were all lost forever ; our only resource was in the commissioners, whose act enforcing the payment of the goods delivered to the Government was doubtless the immediate cause of all the disasters and dreadful effects we have related. After consulting with such of the American merchants as could be collected together, it was determined to send a flag of truce on shore at the ferry at the upper part of the town, in hope of gaining access to the commissioners, who were the now ruling and supreme power.

But who would undertake this hazardous mission ? The late Commodore Barney, who commanded the ship "Samson," then in port, offered his barge, rowed by six men, with the American flag at her stern and a white flag at her bow. He would doubtless have been the best man to have gone in her, but as no part of the debt was due to him, and as he had his ship to take care of, we could not with any propriety accept his offer. In this conjuncture, being the youngest of the party who were immediately concerned in the measure, I offered to go, provided I could obtain the company of a mulatto of respectability whom I knew and had seen on board one of the ships. Without this precaution it was deemed by all a desperate attempt. The boat was accordingly manned, the flags hoisted at the stern and stem of the barge, and I set forth to find my friend the mulatto. Fortunately for me, he scouted the idea of landing among a set of savages whose hands were still wet with the blood, not only of the whites and mulattoes who had fallen within them, but with that of their fellow-slaves, whom they had destroyed to possess their plunder. "My person or my color," said my

¹ "There was in our store a great quantity of rum and brandy, oil, candles, and other combustible merchandise, beside a quantity of gunpowder in one of our iron chests made into cartridges for the American Guard, so that we outshone them all ; and our house was distinguished as exhibiting a finer display of fireworks than any along the whole bay. When it blew up there was a shout among us that on another occasion would have been taken for one of victory."

judicious friend, "would afford *you* no protection whatever, even if *I* was spared; and your flag would only be a signal for your own destruction, since it must be well known that several American boats have landed with armed men, and yourself among them, and if any of the blacks were killed you would never be allowed to reach the commissioners, but would be immediately sacrificed. For all the Government owe your merchants I would not risk my neck for one minute among them, — *I*, who have done them no harm; and I advise you to return on board your ship." By the time I had reached the vessel where our party were, a new alarm had arisen. It was circulated among the shipping that the men of war, of which there were four or five in the harbor, were preparing to leave the port that evening as soon as the land-breeze should set off from the shore. I was accordingly despatched on board the Admiral's ship to ascertain the fact. I found everything indicating a movement on board, and soon learned that it was the intention of the men of war to get out of the harbor as soon as the wind would let them.

This news was soon spread throughout the fleet, which amounted to three or four hundred vessels of all classes.

The alarm spread that the blacks were preparing to come off and attack the shipping in the night; and as the ships of war lay at the outer part of the harbor, and the merchant vessels within, it would in fact have required not a great effort on their part to have possessed themselves of all the shipping that was anchored nearest to the shore.

The excitement and disorder that ensued throughout the vessels, and the panic that prevailed among them, can be better conceived than described. Many of the great French ships lay with their yards fore and aft unprepared to put to sea; some were without ballast, some were under careen, — that is, were undergoing repairs, — and few had their sails bent; many were without provisions or water for a voyage of any length, and they had every reason to fear that they would meet with but a poor reception in any other port in the Island. But necessity hath no law: the fear of the blacks was stronger than the fear of starvation; the danger from one was immediate, from the other remote. The signal was hoisted on the Admiral's ship for all vessels to get ready to leave the port, and the confusion was without parallel.

The usual time to go to sea from this port is the morning, as soon as the objects that mark the channel can be seen; but at sundown the ships of war dropped their topsails, and as soon as the land-wind blew they got under way. In these latitudes there is little or no twilight; it was soon dark after the sun had disappeared, and the efforts to get forward were increased to such a degree by the fear of being left at the mercy of the blacks that every one set all the sail he could to pass his neighbor, by which reason the greatest disorder prevailed, and vessels

were constantly running into each other. The bawling and brailing of the masters, the cursing and swearing of the sailors, and the crying and moaning of the poor inhabitants, who were going they knew not where, was enough to shake the resolution of any one who was a silent spectator of the scene. In the morning at daylight all the fleet were laying to the wind in sight of each other off the harbor; boats were passing between the vessels, and friends joining each other to take their chance together; the city, full in sight, was still burning with violence; and the harbor, with the exception of a few vessels that had been crowded on to the shore on either side of the channel, was destitute of shipping.

I cannot refrain from mentioning an event that happened to my partner, who was on board the brig "Martha," belonging to us, on her passage out of the harbor. As he was a very passionate but a very humane and brave man, it made him extremely angry, while it caused the rest of us great amusement when he related the facts to us the next morning when we met off the harbor. As we were in different vessels, and had no time to consult with each other as to the course we should pursue, I borrowed the boat of the captain in whose brig I was passenger, and went on board the one where Mr. Burling was with our money and books. When I arrived I found him in bed, dressed in a red baize shirt and trousers which he had borrowed from one of the crew of his vessel. He was in great pain from head to foot with a fierce return of rheumatism. This did not surprise me, because he with the rest of us had got entirely wet when we went on shore on Saturday; and while the excitement was kept up he had escaped a relapse. But on questioning him as to the time when the pain returned he stated the following facts to me: "As we were passing near the shore on coming out of the harbor we heard a lamentable cry for help from the shore near the 'Picolet.' Every one said it was the cry of a woman in distress, and I accordingly ordered two sailors into the boat, and with a view to save the poor creature I got in myself, although quite stiff and beginning to feel a return of my disease. The difficulty of landing in the night among the breakers was very great, and I knew I must get drenched again. Still I could not bear the poor woman's wailing, and I determined to rescue her if possible. She might, I thought, be some reputable female who was left by her friends, and who had escaped from the brutality of the insurgents. The captain tried to dissuade me from the attempt, but I had got my head full of the suffering of the woman, and the relief I should afford her, so on we pushed into the breakers, when I got well soused before we struck the beach. It was extremely dark, but I could see the poor woman standing with outstretched arms awaiting her deliverance. As the distance between the boat and the shore was considerable, I called to her to wade off and we would take her in; off she came, but what was my horror and indignation when, instead of a woman, a tall strapping soldier, without his coat and in white trousers, presented himself alongside. 'Where is the woman,' I said, 'whom I heard crying here?' 'Womau, sir! there has been no woman here; it was I that

you heard!' The traitor that escaped us on Saturday came full upon my mind, and I took up the tiller to knock the rascal's brains out, but he was out of my reach; and I was so stiff I could not move a joint. 'Push off the boat, men, and let the rascal remain where he is; he shan't come into the boat, — knock him down with your oars if he attempts it!' said I to the sailors. The men were about to comply, when the rascal, in the most humiliating tone and crouching down in the water, with both hands uplifted in prayer, cried out, 'Pour l'amour de Dieu, sauvez-moi, Monsieur!' and I was fool enough to take him in." This scene occurred on Sunday, June 22, 1793.

No one who has not been placed in a like situation can easily imagine the feelings which overwhelm the mind when men are driven from their homes where they have passed a great part or perhaps all of their lives; deprived, not only of their property, but of many of their nearest and dearest friends by the ruffian hands of licentious bandits; not knowing where they are to go, or what is to be their future lot in this world of sorrow and suffering; doubtful whether those they have left behind are dead, or living in a state of degradation and misery ten thousand times worse than death itself; themselves on the point of being transported to a distant country where they must be shut out from all information for months, if not forever, that might allay their anxious fears. The beings who were now looking on the burning ruins of the city which but a few days before they inhabited in peace and happiness, surrounded by friends and relations, now scattered they knew not where, blessed with abundance and with those domestic ties that sweeten and make life desirable, were now friendless, penniless, and without a home on the habitable globe where they might shelter their heads. This was the work and the consequence of the sudden emancipation of the slaves in the Northern Department of St. Domingo.¹ Let those self-styled philanthropists who are now endeavoring to bring about the immediate emancipation of the slaves in our own country ask themselves whether they are willing to see themselves to be the instruments of like scenes of misery and wretchedness to their fellow-citizens. Is the

¹ The representations and entreaties of the planters who had escaped from St. Domingo induced the British Government to send an expedition to the island in September, 1793, under Colonel Whitelock, with orders to occupy such ports as were willing to accept protection. Although the commissioners had a force of some fourteen or fifteen thousand whites, and a motley band of negro troops at their command, they did not feel themselves strong enough to repel the English, and therefore resorted to the desperate expedient of proclaiming the abolition of slavery. About one hundred thousand blacks then took possession of the mountain fastnesses, while a desperate band of thirty or forty thousand mulattoes and negroes ravaged the northern districts. On hearing of the seizure of Port-au-Prince by the English, the commissioners fled to the mountains with about two thousand followers, but finding that Toussaint l'Ouverture had occupied the heights, they turned their steps to the coast and embarked for France. (Quarterly Review, 1819, p. 439.)

comfort, or what *they* call the comfort, of the blacks of more importance to them, or to the real friends of humanity, than the preservation of the lives of their white brethren of the South? Can ladies, nay, can women of any degree, contemplate the horrors of degradation which must fall on their own sex throughout the Southern States in case of sudden emancipation, or of a general rising of the blacks, still hold meetings to encourage a course of things that must inevitably produce this result? Can men who profess themselves Christians, who have wives and daughters, sisters and friends, labor to produce evils to their fellow-men, — their fellow-countrymen, too, — that if brought home to their own firesides would make them shudder with horror? But so sure as this great and awful revolution is effected the shock will not be confined to the Southern States; it will be felt to the uttermost limits of this great Republic, even to the firesides of those who have promoted it. This will be their recompense in this world; of the future we know nothing.

But the comforts and the freedom of the slaves are of more importance than any consequences that may result to our white population, say these fanatical emancipators. We shall see how it operated on the blacks after they had gained their boasted freedom.

CHAPTER VIII.

Recollections of St. Domingo, continued.

THE fleet separated on Monday forenoon, some for France, some for the United States of America, some for the bight of Leogane, and other ports to leeward in the island. Nothing can be more beautiful than a fleet of three or four hundred sail of vessels of all classes, from the humble droger or coasting-craft, up to the majestic ship of the line, all under full sail, moving in various directions. The brig in which I was destined to pursue my course, in company with half a dozen other American residents at the Cape, was commanded by an amiable and worthy Bostonian, and that in which my partner Mr. Burling had embarked was owned in this city, partly by our house. Mr. Burling, who had charge of all the money we had saved from the flames — about fifteen thousand dollars — was captured and carried to Jamaica, there being at this time war between England and France, but before his capture he had gone into a small port called *Limbé*, a few leagues to leeward of the Cape, to get water for his voyage to the United States.

I may be excused perhaps for relating an adventure that he met with at this place, as it shows what feelings and dispositions were roused among the blacks the moment they heard of the liberation of their

fellows at the Cape. On landing, Mr. Burling having chanced to meet a planter of our acquaintance, a man of great wealth and owner of several plantations, named François Lavaud, communicated to him the state of things at the Cape, and Lavaud immediately determined to load Burling's vessel with sugar, as well as that of another American who had also put in there. His carriage was in town, and he invited these two gentlemen to proceed in it to one of his plantations in the neighborhood, while he mounted his horse to accompany them, with a view of making final arrangements regarding the freight he was to give them. Scarcely had they left the town when four blacks, mounted on fleet horses, passed the carriage at full speed. They were armed with swords and pistols, and passed directly on towards Mr. Lavaud, who was some hundred or two yards in advance of the cabriolet which contained our friends. The moment the blacks arrived within striking distance of this gentleman they shot him dead. As this was done in full view of those in the carriage, they ordered the postilion to stop, and by the time they had got out the assassins were before them with their pistols presented at their breasts. The shock they had received by seeing their companion killed before their eyes, without even a question being asked him, left them no doubt that equal despatch would be made with them. "We are Americans," exclaimed both these gentlemen together; "we belong to the United States." One of the blacks who knew enough of English to understand them, cried out, "Stop, comrades, they are not French; they are from America, — a country of liberty." "No matter," said another, "they are whites, and that is enough; shoot them like dogs." A dispute arose between the four, two swearing they should be killed because they were whites, and the others opposing the step with great vigor. During the contest between the murderers, the two Americans slipped off into the woods, and as it was now nearly dark they were left to grope their way as well as they could till daylight, sometimes wading through deep swamps, and sometimes so entangled in the underbrush of the wood that they could with difficulty extricate themselves. When day appeared they found themselves on the seaboard, and soon descried their vessels at anchor. Having hailed their respective ships, they were soon on board, well pleased with having escaped this second massacre. Our woman-cook had gone on shore, where Burling left her.

The brig in which I was embarked sailed to the port of St. Mark's, where we were no sooner anchored than a guard of soldiers took possession of the vessel. The officer proceeded to examine us, and finding we were inhabitants of the Cape, sent us off to jail, where we were locked up with all sorts of filthy criminals of the lowest grade of the slave population. As soon as it was rumored throughout the town that a number of American gentlemen from the Cape were

confined in prison, we were visited by some of the white inhabitants, among whom was a Mr. Ricard whom I had formerly known at the Cape. This gentleman remonstrated with the jailer, who was a mulatto man, for putting us into a confined room with a parcel of black convicts, and finally obtained from him a promise that we should be separated. He then sent us some mattresses to spread on the floor, which was of stone covered with mud, where we were destined to sleep, if we slept at all, or to remain on our legs during the night, for there was neither chair nor bench to be had to rest upon. I had afterwards an opportunity of thanking this amiable man for his kindness, as it saved us from much suffering.

Fearing that the news of the revolution at the Cape and the emancipation of the slaves might produce similar effects at St. Mark's with those we had so lately witnessed, we were very desirous of remaining up, and in the jailer's room, to which we had been allowed to retire through the intervention of our French friend, so that we might be ready, in case the jail was forced or set fire to during the night, to defend our persons or make our escape according to circumstances.

To effect this object, we represented to the jailer that we were half famished, and begged him to procure us a good supper, and plenty of wine of the best quality, and invited him to join us in the good fare that he might provide. We gave him money to buy what was needed; and having ordered supper to be served up very late in the evening, we passed the intermediate time in cogitating on the future. During the repast we contrived to ingratiate ourselves with our host, who very obligingly allowed us to remain at table till one in the morning, when he told us it was more than his head was worth to extend this indulgence. He then locked us up in our room, and left us to a sound and undisturbed repose until the morning was well advanced.

As the governor of the place did not arrive in town until the afternoon of this day, we were detained in jail; but on his arrival he called to see us, and after some inquiries ordered our release.

When the governor first arrived he absolutely refused to let us out until he had orders from the commissioners; but on our telling him that we were under their special protection, and that the revolution at the Cape had taken place in consequence of their having ordered the merchants to pay us the debt that the Government owed us, and that this persecution would be highly resented by them when they should receive our letters, he ordered the prison doors opened, and apologized very humbly for the mistake that had been made.

The first step we had to take was to procure some ready-made shirts. I had only three remaining of all I had saved from my wardrobe, the rest having been disposed of to those that were more needy than ourselves.

After a short stay at St. Marks, I proceeded to Port-au-Prince, where I found a vessel loaded with flour from Baltimore to the consignment of our firm. Having disposed of this cargo, and obtained some money for my expenses from the commissions that I received, I determined on returning to the Cape to look after the debt due us from the Government. One of the commissioners, Citizen Polvérel, had in the mean time arrived at Port-au-Prince, where a guillotine was erected by him *in terrorem*, to keep the whites in order.

I had applied to him by letter for instructions as to the mode to be pursued to obtain my money, and was informed that without the evidence of the debt nothing could be done; that the ordinance awarding to my house the amount due to it must first be produced, and then the commissioners would take the subject into consideration. As this ordinance had been left in the hands of the commissioner of the Government stores at the Cape, I had no chance of getting anything but by going back to look it up.

I accordingly embarked on a small vessel — one of the coasting craft of the island — with several other passengers, among whom was an American, whose name I shall not mention because he is long since dead, who had also claims on the Government to an inconsiderable amount. On our passage, this person, who was a great talker, was exceedingly indiscreet in his observations respecting the commissioners. There were several Frenchmen on board the boat, and one of them was a gentleman evidently above the rank of the other French passengers. He was extremely taciturn, but evidently watchful of everything that was said or done among the guests in the cabin. I had frequently chided the half-Dutch, half-American passenger (for such he really was) for the license he gave his tongue, which I thought extremely impolitic at least, situated as we were; but his reply was, "Nobody understands us; and if they do, I care not a straw." There were several parcels on board, directed "To the Citizen Sonthonax, Commissioner, etc., at the Cape," lying in the cabin in a small open box; these had been frequently handled by this person, who said one day that he should like to see what the despatches contained, and had an inclination to open them and satisfy his curiosity. The master of the vessel was on deck at the time, but the French gentleman, whom I have mentioned, was sitting apparently half asleep at one end of the cabin. "For Heaven's sake!" said I, "what do you mean? Are you mad?" "No," said he in reply, "I am not mad; but I mean to see what mischief these rascals are brewing." Shocked at the cool and determined manner which he showed, I remonstrated with him. I represented not only the crime, but the consequences that would follow it. I attempted to rescue the packet from his grasp. Everything that could be done I did to prevent this outrage on common decency. I told him if it was

known he would be hung, and deservedly; and if the result were to end there I should not regret it, but all on board, particularly myself as an American, would be implicated, and we might expect on our arrival to be all imprisoned if the packet was missing. This rash man, however, had broken the seal, and proceeded to read the enclosures, when a movement from the person at the further end of the cabin alarmed him, and he threw the despatches out of the cabin window. My anger was roused to the highest pitch, and I said everything that my indignation suggested to him; but he remained as undisturbed as if I had been paying him a compliment for his hardihood. The French gentleman rose and went on deck, and as I had suspected that he had seen the letters thrown overboard, if not all that had passed, I followed him up, greatly distressed lest he might suspect me of participating in this shameful outrage. He joined me on the deck and immediately opened a conversation on the subject, by which I was soon relieved from all apprehension as regarded myself at least.

He told me that he had heard the conversation between me and the other American citizen during the time we had been on board; that he understood English well, and could speak it with considerable ease; that he had watched the whole proceeding below, and that he was happy to say he was fully satisfied with my conduct, and should, in case of need, bear testimony to my efforts to prevent that madman below from committing the crime he had so foolishly been led into. He then told me he was a councillor of State; that if the facts were known to the Government, the violator of these public despatches would pay for the trespass with his life; but that he should be discreet, and if the captain did not discover the loss of the parcel he should remain silent, provided no other violence was committed. He cautioned me, however, not to mention to Mr. — that he knew anything of the transaction, as it might lead to some communication between them, and in this case he should be obliged to order the captain of the vessel to arrest and confine him, which would lead to an open publicity of the transaction, and thus bring about a catastrophe which he was desirous to avoid.

I shall never forget the mild, benignant, and amiable character of this gentleman. Few men in his situation would have shown the same degree of moderation and forbearance that he did. I have now forgotten his name; but I afterwards learned that he was a man of great consideration, and high in the confidence of the Government. When we arrived at the Cape he took a kind leave of me, and bowed coldly to my companion. I confess I had some doubts on my mind whether the loss of the packet would not be discovered either by the master of the vessel or the commissary, and that we should be called on to account for it; but all passed off in silence.

The author of this shameful scene was extremely alarmed when he observed the marked difference which this gentleman showed towards us at parting, and he would have given all he was worth to have been sure of his life, for his reflections had convinced him that he had forfeited it to his curiosity.

On my arrival I went on board the Boston brig "Betsey," which had arrived at the Cape after its destruction. The captain, who was an old acquaintance of mine, received me kindly, and inquired what was my object in coming there. Being told that it was to obtain evidence of the debt due to my house from the Government, and to endeavor to collect it from them, he advised me to return without landing, as I might be assured if I went on shore I should be shot on the ramparts before twenty-four hours had passed, if I had not been already assassinated in the streets. He stated that it was well known that I had landed with a party of armed men and had shot some of the blacks; that he had heard the thing mentioned among the blacks repeatedly, and that nothing would rejoice them more than to get me into their power. I told my kind friend and adviser that we had done nothing more than we had a right to do, which was to defend our lives while we were securing a part of our property, and that if I could reach the commissary I had no doubt I could obtain from him the necessary protection against violence; and that as I had come up from Port-au-Prince with the knowledge of Citizen Polverel for this purpose, I could not return without an effort to get my money. I accordingly requested the loan of his boat to put me on shore, which he granted with tears in his eyes, and I landed on the quay called the King's Wharf. On the end of the wharf I observed a black man dressed in a suit of white dimity, wearing a white cocked hat bound with gold-lace on his head, having a gold-headed cane in his hand, and a large gold watch-chain hanging from his fob. He eyed me as I approached the quay, and when I landed he walked up to me very deliberately (for he was very fat), opened both his arms, and gave me the fraternal accolade.

By this time I had recognized André, a slave and house-servant of M. Joyeux, one of my neighbors, a stout old gentleman, who, like myself, was an American commission merchant, although a Frenchman. He had been killed in the general massacre; and his favorite servant, who was about his height, being an aristocrat in feeling, and having by the new order of things become a citizen, had thought it would well become the dignity of his new character to wear his master's Sunday suit and carry his gold-headed cane. During our short interview the good André recommended me to be cautious, not to show myself in public more than was absolutely necessary, and to sleep on board my vessel without fail every night. He also advised me to salute all the blacks I had occasion to speak to with the title of *Citoyen*, as all were now free and equal.

On leaving André, to proceed to the residence of Mr. Meyers, who was then American Consul, I perceived a number of black men and one white man in the water, in the act of rolling a hogshead of sugar into a large flat-bottomed boat. The white man was encouraging the rest to exert themselves by cheering them with his voice. "Allons, mes enfans, encore une fois!" exclaimed the old gentleman, whose head was as white as snow; "now for the last shove!" and the hogshead was safely lodged in the boat. "Now for another," said he, turning round to come to the shore for another cask, when who should I see but my former next-door neighbor, M. Laroque, lately a gentleman of large fortune, now without hat or shoes, in a coarse checked shirt and trousers, doing the labor which but a few weeks before was the business of his slaves. I immediately went down to the beach to meet him. "What!" said I, "is this M. Laroque that I see here working like a slave?" "Que faire, mon ami?" said he; "il faut bien vivre." I was struck dumb. He then cautioned me not to use the word *slave* on any occasion, as it might cost me my life.

On leaving him I proceeded to the Government stores, which were near the wharf, and there found Consul Meyers, with whom I proceeded towards the commissioner's lodgings, which were no longer at the ancient Government House, that building having been mostly destroyed during the contest. On our way we were conversing in a low tone, with our faces turned towards each other, and our heads rather stooping, my hat being drawn over my face to avoid being recognized, when I received a blow on the breast that almost levelled me with the ground. On looking up to see whence the blow came, I saw before me a negro fellow of great size, in full uniform, with his sword half drawn, glaring upon me with the most infernal countenance I ever beheld. My first impulse was to break out upon this savage with a heavy curse, but as prudence is the better part of valor, a moment's reflection cooled my anger, and I asked the fellow what he meant by striking me in that manner. He eyed me steadily for a moment, and then raising himself up with the most arrogant manner to his full height (which was six feet two or three inches), in the most contemptuous tone he exclaimed in Creole, "Moi trompé!" ("I am mistaken in my man!") and passed on. Although it was consoling that I was not his man, I did not get over the pain in my breast during the day, and I thought it best on the whole to show my face in future, that I might not have to pay for the misdeeds of others as well as my own. The incident, however, gave me an excuse for asking the commissary to give me a *carte de sûreté*, which he granted without hesitation. The commissary treated me politely enough, and told me if I could procure my ordinance he would write to Citizen Polvérel at Port-au-Prince to have my balance paid.

On application to the Guard Magazin for this purpose, I was shown

into a large room, fifty or sixty feet long, one end of which was filled with papers in one solid mass; and here I was to hunt for my single sheet of proof. I had the work of a month before me at least; I was in despair. However, to work I went, and as if fortune thought it proper to indemnify me for the blow I had received in the morning, she placed the paper in my hands in fifteen minutes. Full of spirits at my good luck, I sallied forth to find the consul and communicate to him my happiness. On the way I met a negro, whom I had known as the servant of a rich old merchant of my acquaintance who had retired from business. The fellow recognized me at once, and made up to me with his hand extended, which I took and shook with great cordiality, expressing a hope that he was well. This fellow was not decked out like my friend André, but was decently clad. I was afraid to ask about his master; for the fellow had always appeared to me to be a surly bad-tempered chap, and I felt a conviction in my mind that he had murdered him. "Will you come home to my house and dine with me?" said he; "I shall be glad to give you a dinner if you are not too proud to dine with a black man." My blood ran cold at the thought of dining with the murderer of my old friend, but I thought it best to appear satisfied, and I asked him where he lived. He said he lived in the same house where he had so often seen me. "At what hour do you dine? I have some business to attend to before dinner that will engage me for some time." "Oh, at any hour you please, only come." "Thank you; I will endeavor to be with you at two." "Very well, I'll wait for you." "Apropos," said I, "you had better not, on the whole, wait beyond your usual dinner-hour, for I may be detained altogether, and not be able to come." The fellow looked at me with a malignant eye, said nothing, and went his way. I had not separated from this man many minutes when I met an American captain who asked me where I intended to dine. I told him what had passed between me and the black, that I had resolved not to dine with him, but that I felt uneasy at his apparent suspicions and jealousy. "Never mind him," said the captain; "you will of course sleep on board, and as you are, I understand, under the special protection of the commissary, they dare not touch you in daylight if you keep yourself in the business quarter, where there are always men enough to protect you. Come and dine with me at an excellent house close by, and before dark you can go on board." I accepted his invitation, and at one o'clock we sat down to table. The host was a mulatto man, whom I had never seen before to my knowledge. It was soon rumored at table that I had a special protection from the commissary, and my host was very gracious and disposed to make me comfortable. There were perhaps twenty persons at table, — some well-dressed mulatto men, several American ship-masters, and others of whom I knew nothing, — all, however, well-clad and decent-

looking people. Scarcely were we seated at table when a black fellow, without hat or shoes, a dirty checked shirt and trousers, which had apparently been worn for six months, entered the room, and without ceremony took a chair at table. Every one turned his eyes on this individual, expecting the landlord would order him out of the room; at least that was my expectation. But the fellow, seizing on a roasted fowl, began to devour it most voraciously, and after a few minutes' eating helped himself plentifully with wine from the bottle of his neighbor which stood beside him. The landlord immediately placed another bottle on the other side of his guest, but said not a word to the intruder, who appropriated the rest of the wine he had seized to himself. After eating to his heart's content and cursing the whites in his negro Creole, he looked round the table with the fierceness of a tiger for a few minutes to see if any one chose to take exception at his conduct. Every one, however, being occupied with his dinner or his own thoughts, and not choosing to notice him, he retired. After he was gone, some one asked the host why he permitted such a scamp to take a place at his table. "If I was to refuse," said the man, "I should have my throat cut in a short time. When such things happen, as they frequently do, I have found the safest and best way to be silent, and I am then quit for a dinner and a bottle of wine; but the jealousy of these liberated slaves is such that if you hint that they are not fit company for the whites, you may be sure that they will find some occasion, when you least expect it, to put a knife into you." The captain with whom I came turned his eyes towards me, and I thought it would have been safer to have accepted the invitation I had received from the cut-throat in the morning. The host was a free-born mulatto, whom I have since seen in this country. Although cautious, he did not hesitate to speak freely of the liberated blacks as, in general, a most worthless and depraved set of men, who had already committed so many crimes that all timidity and compassion were strangers to them when their anger or their cupidity was roused. I mentioned to him the invitation I had received and how I had evaded it. "That fellow," he remarked, "is said to be one of the most daring villains among them. He murdered his master, and has possessed himself of his house and all his tangible property. You did right to avoid him, but you had better in future keep out of his way."¹

¹ "Among the various facts related to me during my then short stay at the Cape, there is one that may be worth relating, as it shows the effects and consequences of avarice and the futility of a miser's calculations. A M. Cassignarde, a near neighbor of mine, who was quite rich and always kept a large amount of specie on hand to operate with as occasion offered, on the night between the Thursday and Friday of the breaking out of the insurrection at the Cape, had allowed all his slaves to quit his house, except a child of five or six years of age. He and his partner then dug a large hole in his yard, which was in the

The quarter where business was now done was confined to a small space about the King's Wharf and the public stores, all the upper part of the town having been destroyed. Before dark I went on board and related all that had taken place to my friend the master of the "Betsey." He was rejoiced to see me well and under the protection of the commissary. "That," said he, "may save you from a public execution; but look to yourself, for I believe there is a plot among the blacks to put you to death." I considered this to be the effect of an anxious and heated imagination; for I was not conscious of ever, during my residence of nearly nine years, having done an injustice or been guilty of any severity towards any black man in the place, and the contest during the time we were securing our clothes and our goods, even if it had terminated in the death of any of them, could not in justice be imputed to me as a crime. I slept little, however, during the night; my thoughts were constantly calling up all I had done while I remained at the Cape, and I could not remember any event of my life that could justify hostility towards me from any of the slaves I had ever known. On the contrary, I knew I was a favorite with them for repeated acts of indulgence and interference in their behalf, and I did not feel afraid to trust myself with any of them that I had ever known. The man, however, with whom I had declined to dine, came frequently to my mind; but his anger was of fresh growth, and my friend could not have reference to him.

Towards morning I fell asleep, but my rest had been so much broken that when I appeared at the breakfast-table the captain thought me unwell, and insisted on my remaining on board during the day to recruit;

centre of the building, and nicely paved with bricks, and therein deposited between thirty and forty thousand dollars, replaced the paving so as to leave no marks of its having been removed. His house was burned with the rest; and although his slaves knew he had large sums in the house when they left it, after the fire no traces of the treasure could be found by them, and it was supposed he had removed it. Had M. Cassignarde, when order was restored, stated the fact to the Government, they would have had it removed to a place of safety for him, but fearing that they might claim a salvage, he determined to keep his own counsel until a fitter opportunity occurred to carry it on board some American vessel. Such, however, was his anxiety that he could not refrain from paying frequent visits at night to the place where it was deposited, and this he did until he was observed, and a suspicion aroused that the money was still there. Some of his slaves who knew the child had been left in the house, having searched in vain for the treasure, took the child with them to the spot; and he soon pointed out the place where it was hidden. They then carried it off, replacing everything as before. Cassignarde continued his watch as often as he dared to go to the place; but when, having matured his plan of removal, he went to get it on a dark night, he found that it had taken wings to itself and was gone. I saw the old man in extreme poverty at the Cape while I was there. He had entered his complaint to the Government; but it was now too late, and he was brooding over his loss and his folly for not having taken this step earlier."

but it was all-important that I should see the commissary at once, and obtain his orders on Port-au-Prince for payment of my balance. I therefore went on shore immediately after breakfast, and going to the Government House, where I left my ordinance with the secretary of the commissioner, was told to call the next day for my answer.

I now had the whole day before me, and nothing to do. I thought, therefore, I would take a stroll into the upper part of the town and up the bay to see the state of our house, and to take a last view of the ruins of a dwelling where I had passed so many pleasant and happy years of my life. I went first to the great squares where the bodies of the dead had been burned. The bones were lying in long rows across the squares in great masses, showing that the destruction of human life must have been great. As there could be no correct computation made of the number, the only means of judging was from the quantity of human bones that lay on the surface of the ground. In some of the streets dead bodies still lay exposed; but whether they were those of persons killed at the time of the destruction of the town or whether they were the fruit of more recent assassinations, I had no means of judging. The walls of the old Government House were still standing, but the interior appeared to be mostly destroyed. I descended to the bay, at least to the street which ran back of our houses. The timbers and rubbish which lay in heaps in the cellars were still burning. Our two iron chests lay among the burning materials, with their covers forced open. There was not a soul moving in that quarter of the town; all was still as death. I moved round to the front of the building on the bay side; what a change had taken place in six short weeks! This was the business part of the city, where the whole bay for three quarters of a mile was filled with merchandise being landed or being shipped; all was bustle, noise, and cheerful labor. The blacks during the working days enlivened the scene by their rough but cheering songs as they pursued their labor, with constant explosions of loud laughter at the absurdity of their own roundelays. On Sundays, groups of dancers took the place of laborers, and the drum and the pipe, and the laugh and the song, made the air ring with gayety and frolic. Now all was hushed as death; not even the dip of an oar or the sight of a boat, where all was alive but yesterday, with the voice of the mariner urging his craft to her appointed destination. The stores and warehouses that were so lately loaded with merchandise from all parts of the world lay smouldering in flames, and the harbor that formerly was filled with the ships and crafts that had transported it hither contained only a few inferior vessels at its outer anchorage. A melancholy came over my spirit, as I leaned against the wall of the house, contemplating these sad changes, that I had never before felt. I turned my back on the gloomy scene, and stood gazing into the cellar, endeavoring to see what were the materials that had for so long

a period retained combustion. I had not been in this position long when I heard the tramping of horses, and immediately turned round to see whence it proceeded. At no great distance from me, coming from the then business quarter of the town, I saw a troop of black horsemen. The captain of the troop, as I took him to be from the epaulet on his right shoulder, was some distance in advance of his troop. My first impulse was to move off into the back street; but this I thought might cause suspicion, and as I had the commissary's protection in my pocket, I thought it best to remain where I was, looking steadily at the troop. I observed the leader of these men look at me with a scrutinizing eye from the moment I turned my face towards him; the troop continued to advance until they came within a hundred yards of me, when the chief ordered a halt, and advanced alone to the spot where I stood. I had no doubt he came to arrest me, but as I had lived a life of suffering and danger for some time, and was naturally of a firm temperament, I stood his glance without showing any fear, although I would have given much to have been on board my ship. After eying me for a moment he said in negro Creole, "Vous pas conné moi, ha!" "No," said I, "I don't know you." "Si fait, vous couné moi bien, oui!" ("You don't know me, ha! but you do know me very well, yes!") I told him I did not recollect him if I knew him. "Vous pas connaître Antoine, naigre M. Lefèvre? Ces épaulets là pour quoi vous pas couné moi." ("Don't you know Antoine, the negro of M. Lefèvre? It is my epaulets there that prevent your knowing me," pointing to his epaulets.) You may perhaps recollect that I mentioned in the first part of these Sketches a black slave belonging to M. Lefèvre, who had charge of and defended his plantation against the insurgents on the Plain du Nord. Antoine was this very man. I knew him well, for he used to come in the large flat-bottomed boat with the crew to get the necessary provisions from our store for the plantation. I knew all he had done before the destruction of the Cape to preserve his master's property, and my heart jumped for joy when I heard his name. "You see those fellows there," continued Antoine in his Creole, and pointing his thumb over his shoulder; "the rogues think themselves free, but they are a thousand times more slaves than ever. They are cut-throats, murderers, wretches, ready to commit any crimes, but they have put on uniforms, and think they are great men! And what," said he, "have the blacks gained that have been set free? They are starving for the greater part for want of food; some work, to be sure, when they can get work to do, but most of them are too lazy to work, and go without food until they are obliged to seek it by plunder." All this was said in a subdued voice, but with sufficient action to lead his followers to suppose he was in dispute with me. He asked why I exposed myself by coming to that part of the town. I told him I had a

written and sealed protection from the commissary. "That 's right," said he, "let me see it." I accordingly pulled out the paper, which he took care to display so that his comrades might see it. After returning my passport, he asked me if I had any vessel at the Cape, as he wished to load one for Charleston, where his master lived. He said he had loaded one already, and had produce enough on the plantation to load another; if I would let mine go to Charleston, he would load her for his master. He uniformly made use of this word *master* in speaking of M. Lefèvre. I told him I had understood that one third of the produce of the plantations went to the Government, one third to the blacks that worked it, and one third to its support and the maintenance of the workmen. "That is true," said Antoine; "but I always contrive to save enough out of the two thirds to remit a good portion to my master, who, after all, if justice was done him, is the owner of the whole." I was truly delighted with my friend Antoine, and could have given him the fraternal accolade with all my heart; and as I stepped forward to offer him my hand he saw my object, and stopped me. Pointing with his sword (which he had drawn when he first came up to me) up the cross street, as if ordering me to be gone, he advised me to retire and not to put myself in peril again, but to sleep on board always, and to get away as soon as I could. I had told him I had no vessel, which was a great disappointment to him; but he said he should look out for one, and hoped to make a good shipment to M. Lefèvre. I afterwards saw and dined with this old gentleman in Boston, and related the facts above stated to him. He said it was all true; that this man had continued for a long time to make him remittances, but that of late they had ceased, and he was afraid the faithful Antoine was dead.

As I returned to the King's Wharf determined not to dine on shore again, I met the chap who had invited me to dine with him the day before. He walked directly up to me, and with a fiendish expression on his countenance addressed me thus: "Well, Citizen, so you would not dine with me yesterday." I attempted to make some apology, but the fellow cut me short with — "It is not true; the reason you did not come is because I am black, because you despise the black people. I know what you did when you landed with a body of armed men; that account is to be settled, look to yourself!" Some persons coming by, he walked on; and so did I as fast as I could towards the boat that was waiting for me.

I now determined to get away from the Cape as soon as possible; and as a brig ("Delight," I think her name was) had come out from Boston to my address, I resolved, if I could get my papers from the commissary the next day, to go down to Port-au-Prince in her the day after. I had told my adventures of the day to my friend the master of the "Betsey," who cursed the papers and the commissaries, and

swore I was a madman to wait for anything. I however went on shore in the morning, and proceeded directly to the commissary, who gave me my orders on the Commissioner of the Public Stores at Port-au-Prince, with which I embarked, and sailed the next morning in the "Delight;" and delighted I was to get away from my once happy home.¹

I ought not, perhaps, to omit mentioning an incident that occurred while I was at the Cape, which serves to show, in another instance, that the blacks, when left to themselves, were generally contented and happy with their masters. I had observed that the negro woman who was formerly our cook had left the brig at Limbé while my partner was on

¹ "I subsequently understood, from persons whom I left at the Cape, that a regular plot was laid to take my life, by false information to the commissary as to my having tried to prevail on a negro boy, named Farmer (who had remained behind at the Cape when his master, my friend Mr. Tremain, fled with us), to go off with me; and if this failed it was planned to draw me away from the small settlement about the public stores, and put me privately to death. I understood that this scheme was laid by a free black woman named Betsey, who had been a sort of housekeeper or upper servant in our family while Mrs. Perkins remained at the Cape; and as she had always conducted herself well during that time, we retained her in the same capacity after Mrs. Perkins left the island. This woman had been suspected of embezzling wine and other stores belonging to the house that were under her charge; and I had determined to get rid of her, although I could not allege this as a reason, because I had no proof of the fact. She, however, contrary to the rules of the family and to the police of the city, stayed out one night till ten o'clock; and having no written card from us, as the law required, she was taken up on her return home by the patrol and lodged in the guardhouse. I knew nothing of this till the next morning, when Miss Betsey was not to be found, and the keys of the store-closet, of which she had charge, were missing; but we soon learned that she was in limbo, waiting for an order from me to release her; but in limbo I was determined she should remain, at least for the whole of that day. When she was released, she complained at my having left her there so long, and I paid her her wages, and discharged her. This made her very angry, as I was told at the time; but after a while she appeared to have gotten over it, and used occasionally to visit the house. This had happened some time before the events above spoken of, and the circumstances had slipped my mind at that time, although I had been told that with all her apparent reconciliation, she still continued to feel a revengeful spite towards me. When I arrived at the Cape from Port-au-Prince she kept a boarding-house, and had a barber's shop attached to her establishment, in which she had placed Master Farmer as principal operator, he having been accustomed to dress his master's hair, which was always well frizzled and powdered. To this shop I went to get shaved; and there, to be sure, I had some conversation with Farmer about his master, asked him why he did not come off with our slaves, though I avoided asking him to go away then, as I knew this was strictly prohibited. Nevertheless this, it seems, was made the foundation of a plot to take my life, through the revengeful disposition of Miss Betsey. I had seen her that morning, and she was very gracious indeed, and urged me to take lodgings and to eat at her house; but as I had determined not to sleep on shore, she lost an opportunity of carrying her purposes into execution while I was there, and I left the Cape before she was aware of my intention."

shore, and that he left her there. On my arrival at the Cape she came immediately to see me, and after expressing her joy at finding me well, asked me to give her my clothes to wash while I remained there. This I did without hesitation, and they were all returned to me the next day done up in nice order; but when I offered to pay her for washing them, she turned on her heel and exclaimed, "Pray, what do you take me for, master? Do you think I would take money from you now?" I did everything in my power to prevail on this woman to accept some money, if not for washing my clothes, as a present from me; but nothing that I could say had any effect on her. She absolutely refused to take anything, and insisted on washing my clothes while I stayed, without pay, saying, "You will want it all by and by, master, and I have hands that will always provide me with enough." I was very much affected with the disinterested and kind conduct of this girl. She had been many years our slave, was an excellent cook, but was generally esteemed to be a bad-tempered woman. She was hideous in her form and face, although she now appeared to me quite comely, and was very clean in her person and habits.

On my arrival at Port-au-Prince I delivered my credentials, and was assured that I should have the first produce that came in from the country on the Government account; but I soon found that a Philadelphia ship, on board of which there was a French supercargo, that had arrived at Port-au-Prince after I did, was getting all the sugar that arrived, while I was put off with excuses by the old commissioner of the warehouses, who had orders to supply my demands first.

I complained, and told the old gentleman that he had no right to do this; but although he promised that I should have the next parcel, still the French supercargo found means to soften his heart that I had not the power of doing. At last I became fearful that I should get nothing, and I told the old fellow that unless he stopped furnishing the other vessel and gave me my produce, I should complain to Commissioner Polvérel, who was at Port-au-Prince. This, however, he disregarded, and was moreover somewhat impertinent, so that I determined to pay a visit to the great magician who held the lives and fortunes of every one in his right hand.

I had never seen Citizen Polvérel, although I had corresponded with him; but I knew his character, and had no doubt he would see that the order of his colleague was executed. I accordingly went to the Government House, and sent in my name requesting an audience. I was not kept long waiting, but was soon ushered into this man's presence. There was in the room with him an old mulatto man named Penchina, a Counsellor of State, said to possess great acquirements and great integrity. He had a mild and amiable countenance. He bowed respectfully when I entered, and directing my attention by a wave of his head

to the side of the room on which I had entered, he said, "There is the Citizen Commissioner."

The Citizen Commissioner was seated at a table covered with papers, pens, and ink; and as I turned to the spot where he sat, his large white eyes met mine with such a peculiar stare and forbidding frown that it had almost as powerful an effect upon my frame as the blow I had received in the breast from the black officer in the Cape. "What is your business, Citizen?" said he, rising from his seat, and showing a figure as powerful as his eye was severe and frightful. I stated in as few words as possible the object of my visit, and told the manner in which I had been put off from day to day, while another vessel was loaded with the merchandise I had been encouraged to believe from the Citizen Santhonax would be delivered to me in preference to all others after my arrival at Port-au-Prince. The commissioner's eyes grew red as I related my story, until they looked like those of an angry tiger ready to leap on his prey. Where the storm was to fall I knew not, but I would readily have given up my claim to have been safe on board the "Delight." My senses began to reel, and the guillotine erected at Port-au-Prince, which I had frequently seen, rose up before my eyes in terrible array, when the commissioner burst out with a voice of thunder, his hand clenched and extended towards me, "Allez, Citoyen, allez à ce Gueux-là, et dis-lui de ma part, que s'il ne vous paye pas tout de suit, je lui mettrai l'épée aux reins" ("Go, Citizen, go to that villain there, and tell him from me, that unless he pays you immediately, I will plunge my sword into his loins"). By this the gentle commissioner meant only to say he would have the old man guillotined. The style or title by which the commissioners Santhonax and Polvérel were sent to St. Domingo by the National Assembly of France was "the Civil Commissioners!" "Well," thought I, "that is kind, gentle, and forbearing!" I did not wait, however, to talk with this philanthropic emancipator for fear that he might take it into his head to emancipate me from the toils of life; I therefore departed to pay a visit to my old friend of the warehouses.

I told him literally what the commissioner had said; and the doors of the public stores were immediately thrown open for my inspection, with assurances that all that was there (which, by the by, was very little) and all that came should be at my service. I must say that I was very much amused at the terror and dismay of the old man when I told him what the Citizen Polvérel had said; but as his fate was in my hands, I thought there was no great harm in suspending the sword of justice over his head until he had fulfilled his duty.

One other instance of the paternal care which the Citizen Commissioner exercised over his loving subjects may show the state of the white population under the reign of these lovers of freedom. My friend Mr. J.

G. F——, an American citizen of the United States, but a resident merchant of Port-au-Prince, had written to his correspondents in this country that such was the precarious situation of the place that he could not advise them to send out any more goods for sale, and recommended a suspension of their shipments to Port-au-Prince until things bore a more favorable aspect. I had done the same thing myself; but my letters were not copied, nor seen by any one. How the fact got to the commissioner's ears I know not; but while I was in the act of writing one of these letters in the counting-room of Mr. F——, a file of soldiers commanded by an officer entered. Mr. F—— was out on business. The officer demanded to see him; called for his letter-book and paper case, where he kept his half-written, unfinished letters; summoned an interpreter, and began the examination of the unfinished letters then lying on his table. I looked at these people with astonishment, not knowing their object; but as soon as the interpreter began to read, and the officer to comment on those parts of the letters that related to the importations of goods, I found that I was myself exposed to be brought up before those horrid white and red eyes again, that had so lately thrown me into a cold sweat. I continued to write on for a minute or two, as if quite easy about their movements, and then doubling up my paper, as if it contained some memoranda, I rose and left the room without interruption. I went in pursuit of F——, but he was not to be found; he was, however, soon arrested and sent to prison. After a fortnight's detention in jail to the great injury of his business, he received his trial at the request of the American masters and some American citizens, who represented to the Government the baleful effects that such proceedings must produce when known in the United States. I attended the trial. The commissioner was not present; and I had reason to be thankful that my friend maintained such perfect self-possession. The trial was by interrogatories from the judge to the prisoner. F—— acknowledged without hesitation all he had written, stated the grounds on which he did it, declared that he would do it always when he thought it for the interest of his friends and the United States, and so completely justified himself that the court ordered him to be discharged, with a caution to be prudent.

The young men who had escaped from the massacre of the Cape on board of coasting-vessels, and others that fell into the hands of the commissioners at the time, settled at Fort Dauphin, a small town about forty miles east of the Cape. A second massacre took place there some months afterwards, that carried off the principal part of the survivors of the first.

The circumstances were related to me by a gentleman by the name of Jolly, whom I had long known at the Cape, on my return to St. Domingo in 1794. I met this gentleman at Cape St. Nicholas mole, or

at St. Mark's, I forget which. He told me that Jean François, the commander of the original insurgents of the plain Du Nord, had become jealous of having so large a body of young white men so near him, although they had taken no steps whatever to annoy him. They at first had received assurances of protection from him, and I think he said the black chief had visited Fort Dauphin, and had held a conference with them as to their views; but of this I am not certain. However this may be, they felt themselves in perfect security from having received his promises not to molest them, and no guard was kept on foot to give the alarm in case of need. Accordingly, one night when all the inhabitants were buried in sleep, this man, Jean François, entered the town with a strong party of black troops, and murdered every white man they could find. A few, very few, made their escape. A number of the young volunteers who had fought so bravely at the Government House at the Cape on the 19th of June, and had subsequently escaped and gone to Fort Dauphin, were all butchered in their beds, or while endeavoring to escape in their night-clothes. M. Jolly had succeeded in getting off in a boat, and subsequently arrived at the place where I saw him.

From this gentleman, and some others who had been preserved from the knives of the blacks in the sacking of the Cape and carried into the country, I learned also the fate of many of the inhabitants, male and female, who fell into the hands of the commissioners. The road, said my informants, from the town to the Haut-du-Cape (a village about two or three miles from the Cape), was lined with men, women, and children of all colors, lying on the ground exposed to the burning rays of the sun; without food, without liquid of any sort to quench their vehement thirst; exposed to all the outrageous insults of the blacks who guarded them; half naked, and half raving with their sufferings, and praying the Almighty to relieve them from their miseries by death. Some had already been happy enough to reach "that bourne from which no traveller returns;" some were speeding their way thither; some weeping, some praying, and some cursing the cruel authors of their sufferings. Among them there were some who, having money within their reach when they were obliged to fly, had taken gold, as the lighter article in proportion to its value, in their pockets. They endeavored to bribe their guards to give them a glass of water in exchange for gold pieces of eight or sixteen dollars in value; but the savages refused their yellow money, and demanded white money or dollars, with which they were acquainted. Such as were fortunate enough to have it obtained what they wished, but those that were without it were refused, although they offered sixteen times the value that their neighbors had paid for it. Hence arose a traffic of dollars for Joes or doubloons, happy to give one piece for another as it would procure them what they most wanted,

a little water. How long these miserable people were left in this situation, I know not; but finally the commissioners ordered that they should receive food and shelter. Among the sufferers were many mulattoes and blacks who had not joined the insurgents; and as soon as the excitement was passed, and the plunder of the freed blacks was expended, they themselves had to experience a full share of the miseries they had inflicted on their masters. Famine and sloth soon accomplished what my friend Antoine had so strongly prophesied would be their fate; and those who had been used as instruments to extirpate the whites soon became the greater sufferers.

Long before the destruction of the Cape it was known that the insurgents of the plain Du Nord, who were commanded by Jean François, were languishing under the severest trials and the most despotic rule. The life of the laborer and the soldier were equally under the sole control of this chief. The smallest departure from the orders given them cost them the severest stripes, or the loss of their lives. Even those highest in the ranks were without hesitation cut off, if his will ordained it; and his second in command was shot by his order, without trial, because he had disobeyed him. It is true that he sometimes exercised his authority for beneficial and humane purposes; but his power was, nevertheless, absolute, and his orders instantly executed whether for good or bad ends.¹

So far from gaining a relief from labor or the blessings of liberty, the blacks were ten times more slaves than ever, and ten times more severely treated and worked, without any of those comforts that always awaited them under their former masters when their labors for the day were over, and when sickness or wounds were their lot. In lieu of a clean comfortable bed, and kind nurses in a commodious hospital to watch

¹ "The following well-authenticated anecdote shows what summary punishment this chief of the insurgents was accustomed to inflict: The black man who was second in command, whose name has escaped my memory, had a separate command at some distance from Jean François. He was one of those brutes that always extend their barbarity in proportion to their power. His cruelties to the whites who had fallen into his hands, and particularly to the women, had been reported to his chief more than once; but occupied with other objects of more importance to himself, he had overlooked them. It was, however, finally reported to him that he held an old lady in prison who was supposed to have hidden money on her plantation, and that the lieutenant had threatened that unless she revealed the place where it was deposited before a certain day, he would tie her up and whip her to death. On the morning of the day assigned for this execution, Jean François set off for the quarters of his lieutenant with a company of cavalry. On his arrival he was informed that his second was in the courtyard executing this threat. The chief entered, and found the poor and helpless old woman, stripped naked and tied to a tree, undergoing the infliction of the cart-whip; while the lieutenant was seated in his arm-chair, encouraging his menial to lay on the strokes harder! Jean François had him shot dead on the spot."

over them, they were left to seek relief from the shelter of the hedge on the bare ground, without the care that they had formerly seen given by their masters, even to the beasts of the field.

Certainly, if a balance of suffering could be made up, the black slaves lost as much in proportion to their wants and habits of life by their emancipation in St. Domingo, as the whites did. Instead of being raised in the scale of humanity, they were doubly degraded; for they became the slaves of their own black or mulatto chiefs, a cruel race whom they detested, in lieu of being the slaves and servants of the comparatively humane whites, by whom they were always well fed and well clothed and generally well treated.

NOTE— taken from various authors, such as Cornier's 'Mémoire sur la situation de St. Domingue à l'époque de Janvier, 1792;' also from a work by M. Buclis, called 'Un mot de vérité,' published at Paris, December, 1791; and partly from the speeches of the deputies sent from St. Domingo to the National Assembly and delivered at the bar of that body, Nov. 30, 1791.

"While the National Assembly," says a writer of that day, "was considering how laws should in future be made for St. Domingo, that valuable colony exhibited the most ludicrous caricature of the revolution in the mother country. Two of the mulatto deputies to the Assembly, "Henry" and "Hirondelle Viard," having clandestinely returned to the island after the insurrection of Ogcé, imported thither all the artifices used by the demagogues of Paris. They distributed libels and incendiary publications of every kind, and provided persons to read them at private meetings of the slaves who could not read; all was summed up in one favorite expression from Robespierre, "Perish the colonies rather than sacrifice one iota of our principles!" It was industriously disseminated that the king had given liberty to the negroes through the influence of the Abbé Grégoire, but that the white colonists withheld the boon thus granted to them. They consequently looked upon Grégoire as their patron saint. The revolt broke out in the night between the 22d and 23d of August, and was marked in its commencement with that base ingratitude which too often enhanced the guilt of bloodshed in the mother country. The first person of any distinction who fell was M. Obeluc, member of the General Assembly, and the attorney of M. Galifet's estates, on all of which the treatment of the slaves had been so eminently mild, humane, and paternal that it was a prevalent mode of expressing any man's happiness to say at the Cape that he was happy as one of Galifet's negroes. When M. Obeluc recognized his coachman among his assassins, he said, "I have ever treated you with kindness; why do you seek my death?" "True," replied the wretch, "but I have promised to cut your throat;" and instantly the whole gang rushed in and murdered their benefactor. About twenty white persons, nearly all who were present, perished with him. Another principal place where the insurrection broke out at the same time, was the plantation of M. Flaville. The attorney who resided there owed his death to his gentle and merciful disposition. About eight days before, a negro had been caught in the act of setting fire to an out-building belonging to M. Chabaud. On his examination the man gave intelligence of a plot for a general conflagration and massacre, and pointed out four of M. Flaville's negroes as the principal ringleaders. On being made acquainted with this charge, the attorney had so much confidence in the attachment which he had deserved from those under his management, that he assembled them, told them of the accusation and his own disbelief, urged the enormity of such a crime,

and offered his own head as an atonement if he had injured any of them. With one voice they answered that the story was a gross calumny, and loudly swore inviolable fidelity to him. They kept their oath by bursting into the bedrooms of the members of his family, murdering five of them as well as himself, in the presence of his wife, who on her knees in vain implored mercy for him, and told her, in mockery of her sorrow, that she and her daughters would be spared to serve their pleasure. Then throwing down their weapons, the murderers took torches, and soon set everything on the spot in a blaze. It was the appointed signal, and all the neighboring gangs instantly armed themselves. This account was given by a young man of sixteen, who escaped, though with two wounds. Wherever whites were found they were immolated. Men and women, young and old, fell indiscriminately under the unrelenting fury of the assassins. It was thought that if the Government had sent a strong force into the country, the insurrection might have been suppressed; but they sent only a small detachment, and the flames gained ground on all sides, until the adjacent districts presented to the view nothing but heaps of ashes and mangled carcasses. This small force, however, gained some advantages over the insurgents; but the negroes had increased to such numbers, that when beaten in one quarter they spread themselves into another, till they had filled the greater part of the Northern Department with carnage and desolation. Those who were taken and tried for the murder of their masters pointed to the real source of the mischief: "he was not," said they, "a bad or cruel man; we killed him for the sake of the nation; they have labored in France to give us freedom."

"The crimes committed in this struggle for the French rights of man,' says this writer, 'are shocking in the recital, but they are due as a dreadful lesson to the world and to posterity.' (Here follows a detailed account of the horrible acts of butchery and brutality which were inflicted on the whites, both male and female; but they are too shocking to present to the eye of any man of feeling, and too gross to be read by any female of character.) 'Nor did the ferocity of the negro natures, stimulated as it was by the new principles, show itself against those only whom they considered their enemies, but also against their confederates, their countrymen and kindred. Such of their own race as declined joining in their excesses, they frequently seized and roasted by the next fire.' 'When they were in want of surgeons to attend their wounded,' says this historian, 'they confined them in a hut and set fire to it. Their chiefs were always at enmity with each other, and ready for mutual destruction; they exercised over their followers an absolute despotism and unparalleled tyranny; their claims to superiority were outrages of nature, — children killing their fathers with their own hands, and presenting their dead bodies to their comrades as evidence of their courage, and proofs of title to the confidence of their companions.' Accounts were received in France before the National Assembly had dissolved itself, that property had been destroyed in St. Domingo to an amount exceeding twenty-five million pounds sterling, or about one hundred and twenty millions of dollars. About two thousand white inhabitants had been destroyed, or had perished miserably; and at least fifteen thousand of the insurgents themselves had fallen, less by the despair to the which they had driven the colonists than by their own internal jealousies, and the barbarities of the chiefs they had chosen. 'It is a melancholy fact,' says our author, 'that the slaves who had been most kindly treated by their masters were generally observed to be the very soul of this no less perfidious than bloody insurrection. Yet, for the honor of human nature, it should be also known that some were found who at the risk of their lives rejected with disdain all attempts to seduce them.'"

Boston, Jan. 11, 1836.

FRANKLIN DEXTER, Esq.

DEAR SIR, — Your last note, which I received a few days past with the second part of the narrative of the revolution of St. Domingo, requests me to give you an account of the events of my voyage after I left that island at the close of 1793. I omitted to do it in the narrative, because it was unconnected with the facts that you had expressed a wish to learn regarding the insurrection.

Very truly and respectfully yours,

S. G. PERKINS.

*Port-au-Prince to Boston the latter Part
of the Year 1793.*

THE constant alarms which existed at Port-au-Prince after the destruction of the Cape, lest a similar fate should befall that city; the frequent arrests of persons who were obnoxious to the ruling powers, and some rumors that were current as to the disposition of the slaves, led me to determine on returning to America; and accordingly, after my business was closed, I took passage on board the brig "William," Captain P——, for Boston.

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