

THE HORRORS OF SAN DOMINGO.*

[Concluding Chapter.]

THE subject which I hoped to present intelligibly in three or four articles has continually threatened to step out of the columns of a magazine and the patience of its readers. The material which is at hand for the service of the great points of the story, such as the Commercial Difficulty, the Mulatto Question, the State of Colonial Parties, the Effect of the French Revolution, the Imbroglia of Races, the Character of Toussaint l'Ouverture, the Present Condition of Hayti, and a Bibliography of the whole subject, is now detached for perhaps a more deliberate publication; and two or three points of immediate interest, such as the French Cruelties, Emancipation and the Slave Insurrection, and the Negroes as Soldiers, are grouped together for the purpose of this closing article.

PLANTATION CRUELITIES.

THE social condition of the slaves cannot be fully understood without some reference to the revolting facts connected with plantation management. It is well to know what base and ingenious cruelties could be tolerated by public opinion, and endured by the slaves without exciting continual insurrections. Wonder at this sustained patience of the blacks passes into rage and indignation long before the student of this epoch reaches the eventual outbreaks of 1791: it seems as if a just instinct of manhood should have more promptly doomed these houses of iniquity, and handed them over to a midnight vengeance. And there results a kind of disappointment from the discovery, that, when the blacks finally began to burn and slaughter, they were not impelled by the desire of liberty or the recollection of great crimes, but were blind agents of a complicated situation.

* See Numbers LVI., LVIII., LIX., and LXV. of this magazine.

It is only in the remote historical sense that Slavery provoked Insurrection. The first great night of horror in San Domingo rose from circumstances that were not explicitly chargeable to the absence of freedom or to the outrages of the slaveholder. But if these things had not fuelled the lighted torches and whetted the blades when grasped, it would have been strange and monstrous indeed. Stranger still would it have been, if the flames of that first night had not kindled in the nobler breasts among that unchained multitude a determination never to endure plantation ferocity again. The legitimate cause for rebelling then took the helm and guided the rest of the story into dignity.

The frequency of enfranchisement might mislead us into expecting that the colonial system of slavery was tempered with humanity. It was rather like that monarchy which the wit described as being "tempered by assassination." The mulatto was by no means a proof that mercy and justice regulated the plantation life. His enfranchisement reacted cruelly upon the negro. It seemed as if the recognition of one domestic sentiment hurt the master's feelings; the damage to his organization broke out against the lower race in anger. The connections between black and white offered no protection to the former, nor amelioration of her lot. Indeed, the overseer, who desired always to be on good terms with the agent or the proprietor of a plantation, was more severe towards the unhappy object of his passion than to the other women, for fear of incurring reproach or suspicion. When he became the owner of slaves, his emancipating humor was no guaranty that they would receive a salutary and benignant treatment.

When a Frenchman undertakes to be cruel, he acts with great *esprit*. There

is spectacular ingenuity in the atrocities which he invents, and even his ungovernable bursts of rage instinctively aim a *coup de théâtre* at his victim. The negro is sometimes bloodthirsty, and when he is excited he will quaff at the opened vein; but he never saves up a man for deliberate enjoyment of his sufferings. When the wild orgy becomes sated, and the cause of it has been once liquidated, there is no further danger from this disposition. But a French colonist, whether smiling or sombre, was always disposed to be tormenting. The ownership of slaves unmasked this tendency of a race which at home, in the streets of Paris and the court-yard of the Abbaye and La Force, proved its ferocity and simple thirst for blood. The story of the Princess Lamballe's death and disfiguration shows the broad Gallic fancy which the sight of blood can pique into action. But the every-day life of many plantations surpassed, in minuteness and striking refinement of tormenting, all that the *sans-culotte* ever dared or the savage ever dreamed.

Let a few cases be found sufficient to enlighten the reader upon this point. They are specimens from a list of horrors which eye-witnesses, inhabitants of the island, have preserved; and many of them, being found in more than one authority, French as well as colored, are to be regarded as current and unquestionable facts.

The ordinary brutalities of slaveholding were rendered more acute by this Creole temper. Whippings were carried to the point of death, for the slave-vessel was always at the wharf to furnish short lives upon long credit; starving was a common cure for obstinacy, brine and red-pepper were liberally sprinkled upon quivering backs. Economy was never a virtue of this profuse island. Lives were *sauce piquante* to luxury.

The incarceration of slaves who had marooned, stolen vegetables, or refused to work, had some features novel to the Bastille and the Inquisition. A man would be let down into a stone case or

cylinder just large enough to receive his body: potted in this way, he remained till the overseer considered that he had improved. Sometimes he was left too long, and was found spoiled; for this mode of punishment soon ended a man, because he could not move a limb or change his attitude. Dungeons were constructed with iron rings so disposed along the wall that a man was held in a sitting posture with nothing to sit upon but a sharpened stick: he was soon obliged to try it, and so oscillated between the two tortures. Other cells were furnished with cases, of the size of a man, that could be hermetically sealed: these were for suffocation. The floors of some were kept submerged with a foot or two of water: the negroes who came out of them were frequently crippled for life by the dampness and cold. Iron cages, collars, and iron masks, clogs, fetters, and thumb-screws were found upon numerous plantations, among the ruins of the dungeons.

The *quatre piquet* was a favorite style of flogging. Each limb of the victim was stretched to the stake of a frame which was capable of more or less distention; around the middle went an iron circle which prevented every motion. In this position he received his modicum of lashes, every muscle swollen and distended, till the blood dripped from the machine. After he was untied, the overseer dressed the wounds, according to fancy, with pickled pimento, pepper, hot coals, boiling oil or lard, sealing-wax, or gunpowder. Sometimes hot irons stanchd the flow of blood.

M. Frossard* is authority for the story of a planter who administered a hundred lashes to a negro who had broken a hoe-handle, then strewing gunpowder in the furrows of the flesh, amused himself with setting the trains on fire.

M. de Crévecœur put a negro who had killed an inhuman overseer into an iron

* *La Cause des Esclaves Nègres et des Habitans de la Guinée, portée au Tribunal de la Justice, de la Religion, de la Politique*: I. 335; II. 66.

cage, so confined that the birds could have free access to him. They fed daily upon the unfortunate man; his eyes were carried off, his jaws laid bare, his arms torn to pieces, clouds of insects covered the lacerated body and regaled upon his blood.

Another planter, attests M. Frossard, after having lived several years with a negress, deserted her for another, and wished to force her to become the slave of her rival. Not being able to endure this humiliation, she besought him to sell her. But the irritated Frenchman, after inflicting various preparatory punishments, buried her alive, with her head above ground, which he kept wet with *eau sucrée* till the insects had destroyed her.

How piteous is the reflection that the slaves made a point of honor of preserving their backs free from scars, — so that the lash inflicted a double wound at every stroke!

There was a planter who kept an iron box pierced with holes, into which the slaves were put for trivial offences, and moved towards a hot fire, till the torment threatened to destroy life. He considered this punishment preferable to whipping, because it did not suspend the slave's labors for so long a time.

"What rascally sugar!" said Caradeux to his foreman; "the next time you turn out the like, I will have you buried alive; — you know me." The occasion came soon after, and the black was thrown into a dungeon. Caradeux, says Malenfant, did not really wish to lose his black, yet wished to preserve his character for severity. He invited a dozen ladies to dinner, and during the repast informed them that he meant to execute his foreman, and they should see the thing done. This was not an unusual sight for ladies to witness: the Roman women never were more eager for the agonies of the Coliseum. But on this occasion they demurred, and asked pardon for the black. "Very well," said Caradeux; "remain at table, and when you see me take out my handkerchief, run and solicit his life."

After the dessert, Caradeux repaired to the court, where the negro had been obliged to dig his own grave and to get into it, which he did with singing. The earth was thrown around him till the head only appeared. Caradeux pulls out his handkerchief; the ladies run, throw themselves at his feet; after much feigned reluctance, he exclaims, —

"I pardon you at the solicitation of these ladies."

The negro answered, —

"You will not be Caradeux, if you pardon me."

"What do you say?" cried the master, in a rage.

"If you do not kill me, I swear by my god-mother that I will kill you."

At this, Caradeux seized a huge stone, and hurled it at his head, and the other blacks hastened to put an end to his suffering.

Burning the negro alive was an occasional occurrence. Burying him alive was more frequent. A favorite pastime was to bury him up to his neck, and let the boys bowl at his head. Sometimes the head was covered with molasses, and left to the insects. Pitying comrades were found to stone the sufferer to death. One or two instances were known of planters who rolled the bodies of slaves, raw and bloody from a whipping, among the ant-hills. If a cattle-tender let a mule or ox come to harm, the animal was sometimes killed and the man sewed up in the carcass. This was done a few times in cases where the mule died of some epizootic malady.

Hamstringing negroes had always been practised against marooning, theft, and other petty offences: an overseer seldom failed to bring down his negro with a well-aimed hatchet. *Coupe-jarret* was a phrase applied during the revolutionary intrigues to those who were hampering a movement which appeared to advance.

Cutting off the ears was a very common punishment. But M. Jouanneau, who lived at Grande-Rivière, nailed one of his slaves to the wall by the ears,

then released him by cutting them off with a razor, and closed the entertainment with compelling him to grill and eat them. There was one overseer who never went out without a hammer and nails in his pocket, for nailing negroes by the ear to a tree or post when the humor struck him.

Half a dozen cases of slaying women alive, inspired by jealousy, are upon record; also some cases of throwing negroes into the furnaces with the *bagasse* or waste of the sugar-cane. Pistol-practice at negroes' heads was very common; singeing them upon cassava plates, grinding them slowly through the sugar-mill, pitching them into the boiler, was an occasional pastime.

If a woman was fortunate enough to lose her babe, she was often thrown into a cell till she chose to have another. Madame Bailly had a wooden child made, which she fastened around the necks of her negresses, if their children died, until they chose to replace them. These punishments were devised to check infanticide, which was the natural relief of the slave-mother.

Venault de Charmilly, a planter of distinction, afterwards the accomplished agent of the emigrant-interest at the court of St. James, used to carry pincers in his pocket, to tear the ears or tongues of his unfortunate slaves, if they did not hear him call, or if their replies were unsatisfactory. He pulled teeth with the same instrument. This man threw his postilion to the horses, literally tying him in their stall till he was beaten by their hoofs to shreds. He was an able advocate of slavery, and did much to poison the English mind, and to create a party with the object of annexing San Domingo and restoring the colonial system.

Cocherel, a planter of Gonaïves, had a slave who played upon the violin. After terrible floggings, he would compel this man to play, as a punishment for having danced without music. He found it piquant to watch the contest of pain and sorrow with the native love of melody. The cases where French planters

watched curiously the characteristics of their various expedients for torture are so common that they furnish us with a trait of French Creolism. A poor cook, for instance, was one day thrown into an oven with a crackling heap of *bagasse*, because some article of food reached the table underdone. As the lips curled and shrivelled away from the teeth, his master, who was observing the effects of heat, exclaimed, — "The rascal laughs!"

But the most symbolical action, expressive of the colony's whole life, was performed by one Corbierre, who punished his slaves by blood-letting, and gave a humorous refinement to the sugar which he manufactured by using this blood to assist in clarifying it.

Let these instances suffice. The pen will not penetrate into the sorrows which befell the slave concubine and mother. The form of woman was never so mutilated and dishonored, the decencies of feticism and savageism were never so outraged, as by these slaveholding idolaters of the Virgin and the Mother of God.

The special cruelties, together with the names of the perpetrators, which have been remembered and recorded, would form an appalling catalogue for the largest slaveholding community in the world. But this recorded cruelty, justly representative of similar acts which never came to the ears of men, was committed by only forty thousand whites of both sexes and all ages upon an area little larger than the State of Maine. There was agony enough racking the bosoms of that half-million of slaves to sate a hemisphere of slaveholding tyrants. But the public opinion of the little coterie of villains was never startled. It is literally true that not a single person was ever condemned to the penalties of the *Code Noir* for the commission of one of the crimes above mentioned. One would think that the close recurrence, in time and space, of these acts of crime would have beaten through even this Creole temperament into some soft spot that belonged to the mother-country of God,

if not of France. Occasionally a tender heart went back to Paris to record its sense of the necessity of some amelioration of these colonial ferocities; but the words of humanity were still spoken in the interest of slavery. It was for the sake of economy, and to secure a natural local increase of the slave population, that these vague reports of cruelty were suggested to the government. The planting interest procured the suppression of one of the mildest and most judicious of the books thus written, and had the author cast into prison. When the crack of the planter's lash sounded in the purlieus of the Tuileries itself, humanity had to wait till the Revolution had cleared out the Palace, the Church, and the Courts, before its clear protest could reverberate against the system of the colony. Then Grégoire, Lameth, Condorcet, Brissot, Lafayette, and others, assailed the planting interest, and uttered the bold generalization that either the colonies or the crimes must be abandoned; for the restraining provisions of the *Code Noir* were too feeble for the sugar exigency, and had long ago become obsolete. There was no police except for slaves, no inspectors of cultivation above the agents and the overseers. He was considered a *bon blanc*, and a person of benignity, whose slaves were seldom whipped to death. There could be neither opinion nor economy to check these things, when "*La côte d'Afrique est une bonne mère*" was the planter's daily consolation at the loss of an expensive negro.

Such slavery could not be improved; it might be abolished by law or drowned in blood. There is a crowd of pamphlets that have come down to us shrieking with the ineptitude of this period. It was popular to accuse the society of the *Amis des Noirs* of having ruined the colony by inspiring among the slaves a vague restlessness which blossomed into a desire for vengeance and liberty. But it is a sad fact that neither of those great impulses was stirring in those black forms, monoliths of scars and slave-brands. Not till their eyes had grown red at the sight

of blood shed at other suggestions, and their ears had devoured the crackling of the canes and country-seats of their masters, did the guiding spirit of Liberty emerge from the havoc, and respond with Toussaint to the call of French humanity, by fighting for the Republic and the Rights of Man. Suicide was the only insurrection that ever seemed to the slave to promise liberty; for during the space of a hundred years nothing more formidable than the two risings of Padre Jean and Makandal had thrilled the consciences of the planters. If the latter had preserved the unity of sentiment that belonged to the atrocious unity of their interest, and had waived their pride for their safety, they might have proclaimed decrees of emancipation with every morning's peal of the plantation-bell, and the negroes would have replied every morning, "*Vous maître.*"

There is but one other folly to match the accusation that the sentiment of French Abolitionism excited the slaves to rise: that is, the sentiment that a slave ought not to be excited to rise against such "Horrors of San Domingo" as we have just recorded. The men who are guilty of that sentimentality, while they snugly enjoy personal immunity and the dear delights of home, deserve to be sold to a Caradeux or a Legree. Let them be stretched upon the *quatre-piquet* of a great people in a war-humor, whose fathers once rose against the enemies that would have bled only their purses, and hamstrung only their material growth.

In the two decades between 1840 and 1860 the American Union was seldom saved by a Northern statesman without the help of San Domingo. People in cities, with a balance at the bank, stocks floating in the market, little children going to primary schools, a well-filled woodshed, and a house that is not fire-proof, shudder when they hear that a great moral principle has devastated properties and sent peaceful homes up in the smoke of arson. Certainly the Union shall be preserved; at all events, the woodshed must be. Nothing shall be

the midnight assassin of the country until slavery itself is ready for the job. So the Northern merchant kept his gold at par through dread of anti-slavery, and saved the Union just long enough to pay seventy-five per cent. for the luxury of the "Horrors." Did it ever once occur to him that his eminent Northern statesman was pretending something that the South itself knew to be false and never hypocritically urged against the anti-slavery men? Southern men of intelligence had the best of reasons for understanding the phenomena of San Domingo, and while the "Friends of the Black" were dripping with innocent French blood in Northern speeches, the embryo Secessionists at Nashville and Savannah strengthened their convictions with the proper rendering of the same history. Take, as a specimen of their tranquil frame of mind, the following view, which was intended to correct a vague popular dread that in all probability was inspired by Northern statesmen. It is from a wonderfully calm and judicious speech delivered before the Nashville Convention, a dozen years ago, by General Felix Huston of Mississippi.

"This insurrection [of San Domingo] having occurred so near to us, and being within the recollection of many persons living, who heard the exaggerated accounts of the day, has fastened itself on the public imagination, until it has become a subject of frequent reference, and even Southern twaddlers declaim about the Southern States being reduced to the condition of St. Domingo, and Abolitionists triumphantly point to it as a case where the negro race have asserted and maintained their freedom.

"Properly speaking, this was not a slave insurrection, although it assumed that form after the island was thrown into a revolutionary state.

"The island of St. Domingo, in 1791, contained about seven hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, about fifty thousand of whom were whites, more than double that number of mulattoes and of mixed blood, and the balance were negroes.

"The French and Spanish planters had introduced a general system of concubinage, and the consequence was a numerous progeny of mulattoes, many of whom associated with the whites nearly on terms of equality, were educated at home or sent to Europe to be educated, and many of them were wealthy, having been freed by their parents and their property left to them. These things had lowered the character of the white proprietors, gradually bringing them down to the level of the mulattoes, and lessening the distance between them and the blacks; and in addition to this, there were a number of the white population who were poor and enervated, and rendered vicious by the low state of social morals and influence of the climate.

"In this state of affairs, when the French Revolution broke out, the wild spirit of liberty caught to the island and infected the mulattoes and the lower class of white population, and they sought to equalize themselves with the large proprietors. The foundations of society were broken up by this intermediate class, and in the course of the struggle they called in the blacks, and the two united, exceeding the whites in the proportion of twelve to one, expelled them from the island. Since that time a continual struggle has been going on between the mulattoes and the negroes, the latter having numbers and brute force, and the former sustaining themselves by superior intelligence.

"There never has been a formidable slave insurrection, considered purely as such; and a comparison of our situation with slavery as it has existed elsewhere ought to relieve the minds of the most timid from any apprehension of danger from our negroes, under any circumstances, in peace or war."

This generally truthful statement, which needs but little modification, shows that San Domingo was helping to destroy the Union at the South while it was trying to save it at the North. The words of the Secessionist were prophetic, and Slavery will continue to be the great un-

impaired war power of Southern institutions, till some color-bearer, white or black, in the name of law and order, shakes the stars of America over her inland fields.

AUGUST 22, 1791.

WHEN the French vessels, bringing news of the developing Revolution, touched the wharves of Cap Français, a spark seemed to leap forth into the colony, to run through all ranks and classes of men, setting the Creole hearts afire, till it fell dead against the *gros peau* and the *peau fin** of the black man. Three colonial parties vibrated with expectations that were radically discordant when the cannon of the people thundered against the Bastille. First in rank and assumption were the old planters and proprietors, two-thirds of whom were at the time absentees in France. They were, excepting a small minority, devoted royalists, but desired colonial independence in order to enjoy a perfect slaveholding authority. They were embittered by commercial restrictions, and longed to be set free from the mother-country, that San Domingo might be erected into a feudal kingdom with a court and gradation of nobility, whose parchments, indeed, would have been black and engrossed all over with despotism. They wanted the freedom of the seas and all the ports of the world, not from a generous motive, nor from a policy that looked beyond the single object of nourishing slavery at the cheapest rates, to carry its products to the best markets in exchange for flour, cloths, salted provisions, and all the necessaries of a plantation. The revolutionary spirit of France was hailed by them, because it seemed to give an opportunity to establish a government without a custom of Paris, to check enfranchisements and crush out the dangerous familiarity of the mulatto, to block with sugar-hogsheads the formidable movements in France and

England against the slave-trade. These men sometimes spoke as republicans from their desire to act as despots; they succeeded in getting their delegates admitted to seats in the National Assembly to mix their intrigues with the current of events. Their "*Club Massiac*" in Paris, so named from the proprietor at whose residence its meetings were held, was composed of wealthy, adroit, and unscrupulous men, who often showed what a subtle style of diplomacy a single interest will create. It must be hard for bugs of a cosmopolitan mind to circumvent the *formica leo*, whose sole object in lying still at the bottom of its slippery tunnel is to catch its daily meal.

If this great party of slave-owners had preserved unity upon all the questions which the Revolution excited, their descendants might to-day be the most troublesome enemies of our blockade. But history will not admit an If. The unity which is natural to the slaveholding American was impossible in San Domingo, owing to the existence of the mulattoes and the little whites.

A few intelligent proprietors had foreseen, many years previous to the Revolution, that the continuance of their privileges depended upon the good-will of the mulattoes and the restriction of enfranchisement. The class of mixed blood was becoming large and formidable: of mulattoes and free negroes there were nearly forty thousand. They were nominally free, and had all the rights of property. A number of them were wealthy owners of slaves. But they still bore upon their brows the shadow cast by servitude, from which many of the mixed blood had not yet emerged. The whites of all classes despised these men who reminded them of the color and condition of their mothers. If a mulatto struck or insulted a white man, he was subjected to severe penalties; no offices were open to him, no doors of society, no career except that of trade or agriculture. This was not well endured by a class which had inherited the fire and vanity of their French fathers, with intellectual qualities that caught pas-

* *Gros peau*, thick skin, was the French term equivalent to *Bozal*; *peau fin* was the Creole negro.

sion and mobility from the drops of negro blood. Great numbers of them had been carefully educated in France, whither they sent their own children, if they could afford it, to catch the port and habits of free citizens. They were very proud, high-strung, and restless, sombre in the presence of contempt, lowering with some expectation. Frequent attempts had been made by them to extend the area of their rights, but they met with nothing but arrogant repulse. The guilty problem of the island was not destined to be relieved or modified by common sense. The planters should have lifted this social and political ostracism from the mulatto, who loved to make money and to own slaves, and whose passion for livid mistresses was as great as any Frenchman's. They were the natural allies of the proprietors, and should have been erected into an intermediate class, bound to the whites by intelligence and selfish interest, and drawn upon the mother's side to soften the condition of the slave. This policy was often pressed by French writers, and discussed with every essential detail; but the descendants of the buccaneers were bent upon playing out the island's tragedy. *

The mulattoes were generally selfish, and did not care to have slavery disturbed. When their deputies went to Paris, to offer the Republic a splendid money-tribute of six million livres, and to plead their cause, one of their number, Vincent Ogé, dined with Clarkson at Lafayette's, and succeeded in convincing the great Abolitionist that he believed in emancipation. "The slave-trade," they said, "was the parent of all the miseries in St. Domingo, not only on account of the cruel treatment it occasioned to the slaves, but on account of the discord which it constantly kept up between the whites and people of color, in consequence of the hateful distinctions it introduced. These distinctions could never be obliterated while it lasted. They had it in their instructions, in case they should obtain a seat in the Assembly, to propose an immediate abolition of the slave-trade, and an immediate amelioration of the state of slavery

also, with a view to its abolition in fifteen years." *

There is reason to doubt the entire sincerity of these representations, but they were sufficient to convert every proprietor into a bitter foe of mulatto recognition. The deputies were soon after admitted to the bar of the National Assembly, whose president told them that their claims were worthy of consideration. They said to Clarkson that this speech of the president "had roused all the white colonists in Paris. Some of these had openly insulted them. They had held also a meeting on the subject of this speech; at which they had worked themselves up so as to become quite furious. Nothing but intrigue was now going forward among them to put off the consideration of the claims of the free people of color." The deputies at length left Paris in despair. Ogé exclaimed, "If we are once forced to desperate measures, it will be in vain that thousands will be sent across the Atlantic to bring us back to our former state." Clarkson counselled patience; but he found "that there was a spirit of dissatisfaction in them, which nothing but a redress of their grievances could subdue,—and that, if the planters should persevere in their intrigues, and the National Assembly in delay, a fire would be lighted up in St. Domingo which could not easily be extinguished."—This was the position of the Mulatto party.

The third class, of Little Whites, comprised the mechanics and artisans of every description, but also included all whites whose number of slaves did not exceed twenty-four. This party likewise hailed the Revolution, because it hated the pride and privileges of the great proprietors. But it also hated the mulattoes so much that the obvious policy of making common cause with them never seemed to be suggested to it. Among the Little Whites were a goodly number of debtors, who hoped by separation from the mother-country to cancel the burdens incurred for slaves and plantation-neces-

* Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade*, Vol. II. p. 134.

saries; but the majority did not favor colonial independence. Thus the name of Liberty was invoked by hostile cliques for selfish objects, and the whole colony trembled with the passion of its own elements. Beneath it all lay stretched the huge En-celadus, unconscious of the power which by a single movement might have forestalled eruption by ruin. But he gave no sign.

Several mulattoes had been already hung for various acts of sympathy with their class, when Ogé appeared upon the scene at the head of a handful of armed slaves and mulattoes, and attacked the National Guard of Cap Français. He was routed, after bravely fighting with partial success, fled into the Spanish quarter, whence he was reclaimed in the name of the king, and surrendered by the governor. Thirteen of his followers were condemned to the galleys, twenty-two were hung, and Ogé with his friend Chavannes was broken upon the wheel. A distinction of color was made at the moment of their death: the scaffold upon which they suffered was not allowed to be erected upon the same spot devoted to the execution of whites.

Now the National Guard in all the chief towns was divided into adherents of the mother-country and sympathizers with colonial independence. In a bloody street-fight which took place at Port-au-Prince, the latter were defeated. Then both factions sought to gain a momentary preponderance by allying themselves with the mulattoes: the latter joined the metropolitan party, which in this moment of extremity still thought of color, and served out to the volunteers *yellow pom-poms*, instead of the white ones which distinguished themselves. The mulattoes instantly broke up their ranks, and preserved neutrality.

It would be tedious to relate the disturbances, popular executions, and ferocious acts which took place in every quarter of the island. Murder was inaugurated by the colonists themselves: the provincial faction avenged their previous defeat, and were temporarily masters of the colony. On the 15th of May,

1791, the National Assembly had passed a decree, admitting, by a precise designation, all enfranchised of all colors who were born of free parents to the right of suffrage. When this reached the island, the whites were violently agitated, and many outrages were committed against the people of color. The decree was formally rejected, the mulattoes again flew to arms, and began to put themselves into a condition to demand the rights which had been solemnly conceded to them. In that decree not a word is said of the slaves: the *Amis des Noirs*, and the debates of the National Assembly, stretched out no hand towards that inarticulate and suffering mass. The colonists themselves had been for months shaking a scarlet rag, as if they deliberately meant to excite the first blind plunge of the brute from its harness.

The mulattoes now brought their slaves into headquarters at Croix-des-Bouquets, and armed them. The whites followed this example, and began to drill a body of slaves in Port-au-Prince. Amid this passionate preoccupation of all minds, the ordinary discipline of the plantations was relaxed, the labor languished, the negroes were ill-fed and began to escape to the *mornes*, the subtle earth-currents carried vague disquiet into the most solitary quarters. Then the negroes began to assemble at midnight to subject themselves to the frenzy of their priestesses, and to conduct the serpent-orgies. But it is not likely that the extensive revolt in the Plaine du Cap would have taken place, if an English negro, called Buckman, had not appeared upon the scene, to give a direction to all these restless hearts, and to pour his own clear indignation into them. No one can satisfactorily explain where he came from. One writer will prove to you that he was an emissary of the planting interest in Jamaica, which was willing to set the fatal example of insurrection for the sake of destroying a rival colony. Another pen is equally fertile with assurances that he was bought with the gold of Pitt to be a political instru-

ment of perfidious Albion. It is shown to be more probable that he was the agent of the Spanish governor, whose object was to effect a diversion in the interest of royalism. According to another statement, he belonged to the Cudjoe band of Jamaica maroons, which had forced a declaration of its independence from the governor of that island. Buckman was acquainted with Creole French, and was in full sympathy with the superstitious rites of his countrymen in San Domingo. Putting aside the conjectures of the times, one thing is certain beyond a doubt, that he was born of the moment, and sprang from the festering history which white neglect and criminality had spread, as naturally as the poisoned sting flutters from the swamps of summer. And he filled the night of vengeance, which was accorded to him by laws that cannot be repealed without making the whole life of the planet one sustained expression of the wrath of God.

A furious storm raged during the night of August 22: the blackness was rent by the lightning that is known only to the hurricane-regions of the earth. The negroes gathered upon the Morne Rouge, sacrificed a black heifer with frantic dances which the elements seemed to electrify, thunder emphasized the declaration of the priestess that the entrails were satisfactory, and the quarters were thrown into a huge brazier to be burned. At that moment a bird fell from the overhanging branch of a tree directly into the cooking spell, and terrible shouts of encouragement hailed the omen. Is it an old Pelasgic or a Thracian forest grown maniac over some forgotten vengeance of the early days? It is the unalterable human nature, masked in the deeper colors of more fervid skies, gathering a mighty breath into its lacerated bosom for a rending of outrage and a lion's leap in the dark against its foe.

"Listen!" cried Buckman. "The good God conceals himself in a cloud, He mutters in the tempest. By the whites He commands crime, by us He commands benefits. But God, who is good, ordains

for us vengeance. Tear down the figure of the white man's God which brings the tears to your eyes. Hear! It is Liberty! It speaks to the hearts of us all."

The morning broke clear, but the tempest had dropped from the skies to earth. The costly habitations, whose cornerstones were dungeons, in whose courts the gay guests of the planter used to season their dessert with the punishments he had saved up for them, were carried off by exulting flames. The great fields of cane, which pumped the earth's sap and the negro's blood up for the slaveholder's caldron, went crackling away with the houses which they furnished. Rich garments, dainty upholstery, and the last fashions of Paris went parading on the negroes' backs, and hid the marks of the floggings which earned them. The dead women and children lay in the thickets where they had vainly implored mercy. There are long careers of guiltiness whose devilish nature becomes apparent only when innocence suffers with it. Then the cry of a babe upon a negro's pike is the voice of God's judgment against a century.

Will it be credited that the whites who witnessed the smoking plain from the roofs of Cap Français broke into the houses of the mulattoes, and murdered all they could find, — the paralytic old man in his bed, the daughters in the same room, the men in the street, — murdered and ravished during one long day? In this crisis of the colony, suspicion and prejudice of color were stronger than personal alarm. Every action of the whites was piqued by pride of color and the intoxication of caste. These vulgar mulatto-making pale-faces would hazard their safety sooner than grasp the hand of their own half-breeds and arm it with the weapon of unity. Color-blindness was at length the weakness through which violated laws revenged themselves: the French could not perceive which heart was black and which was white.

If Northern statesmen and glib editors of Tory sheets would derive a lesson from San Domingo for the guidance of the peo-

ple, let them find it in the horrors wrought by the white man's prejudice. It is the key to the history of the island. And it is by means of the black man that God perceives whether the Christianity of Church and State is skin-deep or not. Beneath those oxidated surfaces He has hidden metal for the tools and swords of a republic, and into our hands He puts the needle of the text, "God has made of one blood all nations," to agitate and attract us to our true safety and glory. The black man is the test of the white man's ability to be the citizen of a long-lived republic. It is as if God lighted His lamp and decked His altar behind those bronze doors, and waited for the incense and chant of Liberty to open them and enter His choir, instead of passing by. So long as America hates and degrades the black man, so long will she be deprived of four millions' worth of God. In so much of God a great deal of retribution must be slumbering, if the story of San Domingo was a fact, and not a hideous dream.

NEGRO SOLDIERS.*

THE native tribes of Africa differ as much in combative propensity and abil-

* *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, von Dr. Theodor Waitz. Zweiter Theil: die Neger-völker und ihre Verwandten. Leipzig, 1860. Very full, minute, and humane in tone, though telling all the facts about the manners and habits of native Africans.

Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Révolution de Saint Domingue. Par le Lieutenant-Général Baron Pamphile de La Croix. 2 Tom. Generally very fair to the negro soldier: himself a distinguished soldier.

Le Système Colonial dévoilé. Par le Baron de Vastey, mulatto. Terrible account of the plantation cruelties.

Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire d'Hayti. Par l'Adjudant-Général Boisrond-Tonnerre. Written to explain the defection of Dessalines from Toussaint, and the military movements of the former. The author was a mulatto.

Des Colonies, et particulièrement de celle de Saint-Domingue; Mémoire Historique et Politique. Par le Colonel Malenfant, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, etc. A pretty impartial book, by a pro-slavery man.

ity for warlike enterprises as in their other traits. The people of Wadai are distinguished for bravery above all their neighbors. The men of Ashantee are great fighters, and have such a contempt for death that they will continue their attacks upon a European intrenchment in spite of appalling losses. A band that is overpowered will fight to the last man; for it is the custom of the kingdom to punish cowardice with death. They are almost the only negroes who will deliver battle in the open field, in regular bodies with closed ranks. In Dahomey war is a passion of the ruler and the people, and the year is divided between fighting and feasting. The king's body-guard of five thousand unmarried women preserves the tradition of bravery, as European regiments preserve their flags. The mild Mandingos become obstinate in fight; they have minstrels who accompany armies to war, and recite the deeds of former heroes; but they are not capable of discipline. On the contrary, the negroes of Fernando Po march and exercise with a great regard to order. In Ashantee and upon the Gold Coast the negroes make use of horn signals in war to transmit orders to a distance; and on the White Nile and in Kaffa drummers are stationed in trees to telegraph commands.

L. F. Sonthonax à Bourdon de l'Oise. Pamphlet. The vindication of Sonthonax for declaring emancipation.

Colonies Étrangères et Haïti. Par Victor Schoelcher. 2 Tom. Valuable, but leaning too much towards the negro against the mulatto.

Histoire des Désastres de Saint-Domingue. Paris, 1795. Journalistic, with the coloring of the day.

Campagnes des Français à Saint-Domingue, et Réfutation des Reproches faits au Capitaine-Général Rochambeau. Par Ph. Albert de Latre, Propriétaire, etc., 1805. Shows that Rochambeau could not help himself.

Voyages d'un Naturaliste. 3 Tom. Par Des-courtilz. Pro-slavery, but filled with curious information.

Expédition à St. Domingue. Par A. Metral. Useful.

The Empire of Hayti. By Marcus Rainsford, Captain in West-Indian Regiment. Occasionally valuable.

Great circumspection is not universal; but the Veis maintain posts, and when they are threatened, a watch is kept night and day. The negroes of Akkra know the value of a ditched intrenchment.

The English praise the negro soldiers whom they have in Sierra Leone for good behavior, temperance, and discipline; and their Jolofs at the Gambia execute complicated manœuvres in a striking way. West-Indian troops have performed many distinguished services, and English officers say that they are as brave as Europeans; but in the heat of a fight they are apt to grow intractable and to behave wildly. The troops which Napoleon used in Calabria, drawn from the French Colonies, emulated the French soldiers, and arrived at great distinction.

D'Escayrac says that the native negro has eminent qualities for the making of a good soldier,—dependence upon a superior, unquestioning confidence in his sagacity, an enthusiastic courage which mounts to great audacity, passiveness, and capacity for waiting.

From this the Congos must be excepted. Large numbers of them deserted General Dessalines in San Domingo, and fled to the mountains, frightened at the daring of the French. Here, if brave, they might have been armed and officered by Spaniards to effect dangerous movements in his rear. But he knew their timidity, and gave himself no trouble about them. There is a genealogy which derives Toussaint from a Congo grandfather, a native prince of renown; but it was probably manufactured for him at the suggestion of his own achievements. The sullen-looking Congo is really gay, rollicking, disposed to idleness, careless and sensual, fatigued by the smallest act of reflection; Toussaint was grave, reticent, forecasting, tenacious, secretive, full of endurance and concentration, rapid and brave in war.* What a confident and noble aspect he had, when he left his

guard and walked alone to the head of a column of old troops of his who had deserted to Desfourneaux, and were about to deliver their fire! "My children, will you fire upon your father?"—and down went four regiments upon their knees. The white officers tried to bring them under the fire of cannon, but it was too late. Here was a greater risk than Napoleon ran, after landing at Fréjus, on his march upon Paris.

Contempt for death is a universal trait of the native African.* The slaveholder says it is in consequence of his affinity to the brute, which does not know how to estimate a danger, and whose nervous organization is too dull to be thrilled and daunted in its presence. It is really in consequence of his single-mindedness: the big necks lift the blood, which is two degrees warmer than a white man's, and drench the brain with an ecstasy of daring. If he can clearly see the probable manner of his death, the blood is up and not down at the sight.† The negro's nerves are very susceptible; in cool blood he is easily alarmed at anything unexpected or threatening. His fancy is peopled with odd fears; he shrinks at the prospect of a punishment more grotesque or refined than usual. And when he becomes a Creole negro, his fancy is always shooting timid glances beneath the yoke of Sla-

* When the insurgents evacuated a fort near Port-au-Prince, upon the advance of the English, a negro was left in the powder-magazine with a lighted match, to wait till the place was occupied. Here he remained all night; but when the English came later than was expected, his match had burned out. Was that insensibility to all ideas, or devotion to one?

† Praloto was a distinguished Italian in the French artillery service. His battery of twenty field-pieces at Port-au-Prince held the whole neighborhood in check, till at length a young negro named Hyacinthe roused the slaves to attack it. In the next fight, they rushed upon this battery, insensible to its fire, embraced the guns and were bayoneted, still returned to them, stuffed the arms of their dead comrades into the muzzles, swarmed over them, and extinguished the fire. This was done against a supporting fire of French infantry. The blacks lost a thousand men, but captured the cannon, and drove the whole force into the city.

* The independent Congos in the interior are more active and courageous, expert and quarrelsome than those upon the coast, who have been subjected by the Portuguese.

very. The negroes and mulattoes at San Domingo looked impassively at hanging, breaking upon the wheel, and quartering; but when the first guillotine was imported and set in action, they and the Creole whites shrank appalled to see the head disappear in the basket. It was too deft and sudden for their taste, and this mode of execution was abandoned for the more hearty and lacerating methods.

When a negro has a motive, his nerves grow firm, his imagination escapes before the rising passion, his contempt for death is not stolidity, but inspiration. In the smouldering surface lies an ember capable of white heat. That makes the negro soldier difficult to hold in hand or to call off. He has no fancy for grim sitting, like the Indian, to die by inches, though he can endure torture with tranquillity. He is too tropical for that; and after the exultation of a fight, in which he has been as savage as he can be, the process of torturing his foes seems tame, and he seldom does it, except by way of close reprisals to prevent the practice in his enemy. The French were invariably more cruel than the negroes.

Southern gentlemen think that the negro is incurably afraid of fire-arms, and too clumsy to use them with effect. It is a great mistake. White men who never touched a gun are equally clumsy and nervous. When the slavers began to furnish the native tribes with condemned muskets in exchange for slaves, many ludicrous scenes occurred. The Senegambians considered that the object was to get as much noise as possible out of the weapon. The people of Akkra planted the stock against their hips, shut both eyes and fired; they would not take aim, because it was their opinion that it brought certain death to see a falling enemy. Other tribes thought a musket was possessed, and at the moment of firing threw it violently away from them. When we consider the quality of the weapons furnished, this action will appear laudable. But as these superstitions disappeared, especially upon the Gold Coast and in Ashantee, negroes have learned to use the mus-

ket properly. Among the Gold-Coast negroes are good smiths, who have sometimes even made guns. In the West Indies, the Creole negro has become a sharp-shooter, very formidable on the skirts of woods and in the defiles of the *mornes*. He learned to deliver volleys with precision, and to use the bayonet with great valor. The old soldiers of Le Clerc and Rochambeau, veterans of the Rhine and Italy, were never known to presume upon negro incapacity to use a musket. The number of their dead and wounded taught them what men who are determined to be free can do with the white man's weapons.

Rainsford, who was an English captain of a West-Indian regiment, describes a review of fifty thousand soldiers of Toussaint on the Plaine du Cap. "Of the grandeur of the scene I had not the smallest conception. Each general officer had a *démi-brigade*, which went through the manual exercise with a degree of expertness seldom witnessed, and performed equally well several manœuvres applicable to their method of fighting. At a whistle a whole brigade ran three or four hundred yards, then, separating, threw themselves flat on the ground, changing to their backs or sides, keeping up a strong fire the whole of the time, till they were recalled; they then formed again, in an instant, into their wonted regularity. This single manœuvre was executed with such facility and precision as totally to prevent cavalry from charging them in bushy and hilly countries. Such complete subordination, such promptitude and dexterity, prevailed the whole time, as would have astonished any European soldier."

These were the men whose previous lives had been spent at the hoe-handle, and in feeding canes to the cylinders of the sugar-mill.

Rainsford gives this general view of the operations of Toussaint's forces:—"Though formed into regular divisions, the soldiers of the one were trained to the duties of the other, and all understood the management of artillery with

the greatest accuracy. Their chief dexterity, however, was in the use of the bayonet. With that dreadful weapon fixed on muskets of extraordinary length in their hands, neither cavalry nor artillery could subdue infantry, although of unequal proportion; but when they were attacked in their defiles, no power could overcome them. Infinitely more skilful than the Maroons of Jamaica in their cock-pits, though not more favored by Nature, they found means to place whole lines in ambush, continuing sometimes from one post to another, and sometimes stretching from their camps in the form of a horse-shoe. With these lines artillery was not used, to prevent their being burdened or the chance of loss; but the surrounding heights of every camp were well fortified, according to the experience and judgment of different European engineers, with ordnance of the best kind, in proper directions. The protection afforded by these outworks encouraged the blacks to every exertion of skill or courage; while the alertness constantly displayed embarrassed the enemy, who, frequently irritated, or worn out with fatigue, flew in disorder to the attack, or retreated with difficulty. Sometimes a regular battle or skirmish ensued, to seduce the enemy to a confidence in their own superiority, when in a moment reinforcements arose from an ambush in the vicinity, and turned the fortune of the day. If black troops in the pay of the enemy were despatched to reconnoitre when an ambush was probable, and were discovered, not a man returned, from the hatred which their perfidy had inspired; nor could an officer venture beyond the lines with impunity."

The temporary successes enjoyed by the French General Le Clerc, which led to the surrender of Toussaint and his subsequent deportation to France, were owing to the defection of several black officers in command of important posts, who delivered up all their troops and munitions to the enemy. The whole of Toussaint's first line, protecting the Artibonite and the mountains, was thus un-

expectedly forced by the French, who plied the blacks with suave proclamations, deprecating the idea of a return to slavery. Money and promises of personal promotion were also freely used. The negro is vain and very fond of pomp. This is his weakest point. The Creole negro loved to make great expenditures, and to imitate the lavish style of the slaveholders. So did many of the mulattoes. Toussaint's officers were not all black, and the men of color proved accessible to French cajolery.

Take a single case to show how this change of sentiment was produced without bribery. When the French expedition under Le Clerc arrived, the mulatto General Maurepas commanded at Port-de-Paix. He had not yet learned whether Toussaint intended to rely upon the proclamation of Bonaparte and to deliver up the military posts. General Humbert was sent against him with a strong column, and demanded the surrender of the fort. Said Maurepas,—"I am under the orders of Toussaint, who is my chief; I cannot deliver the forts to you without his orders. Wait till I receive his instructions; it will be only a matter of four-and-twenty hours." Humbert, who knew that Toussaint was in full revolt, replied,—"I have orders to attack."

"Very well. I cannot surrender without an order from General Toussaint. If you attack me, I shall be obliged to defend myself."

"I also have my orders; I am forced to obey them."

Maurepas retired, and took his station alone upon a rampart of the works. Humbert's troops, numbering four thousand, opened fire. Maurepas remains awhile in the storm of bullets to reconnoitre, then coolly descends and opens his own fire. He had but seven hundred blacks and sixty whites. The French attacked four times and were four times repulsed, with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Humbert was obliged to retreat, before the reinforcement which had been despatched under General Debelle could reach him. Maurepas's orders were not

to attack, but to defend. So he instantly hastened to another post, which intercepted the route by which General Debelle was coming, met him, and fought him there, repulsed him, and took seven cannon.

This was not an encouraging commencement for these children of the French Revolution, who had beaten Suwarrow in Switzerland and blasted the Mameluke cavalry with rolling fire, who had debouched from the St. Bernard upon the plains of Piedmont in time to gather Austrian flags at Marengo, and who added the name of Hohenlinden to the glory of Moreau. Humbert himself, at the head of four thousand grenadiers, had restored the day which preceded the surrender of the Russians at Zürich.

Le Clere was obliged to say that the First Consul never had the intention of restoring slavery. Humbert himself carried this proclamation to Maurepas, and with it gained admittance to the intrenchments which he could not storm. This single defection placed four thousand admirable troops, and the harbor of Port-de-Paix, in the hands of the French, and exposed Toussaint's flank at Gonaïves; and its moral effect was so great upon the blacks as to encourage Le Clere to persist in his enterprise.

In the brief period of pacification which preceded this attempt of Bonaparte to reconquer the island, Toussaint was mainly occupied with the organization of agriculture. His army then consisted of only fifteen demi-brigades, numbering in all 22,500, a guard of honor of one thousand infantry, a regiment of cavalry, and an artillery corps. But the military department was in perfect order. There was an État-Major, consisting of a general of division with two aides-de-camp, a company of guides, one of dragoons, and two secretaries, — ten brigadier-generals with ten secretaries, ten aides-de-camp, and an escort, — and a board of health, composed of one chief inspector, six physicians, and six surgeons-general. The commissary and engineer-

ing departments were also thoroughly organized. The pay of the 22,500 men amounted to 7,838,400 francs; rations, 6,366,195; musicians, 239,112; uniforming, 1,887,682; officers' uniforms, 208,837. The pay of a non-commissioned officer and private was 55 centimes per day.

In this army there were one thousand mulattoes, and five or six hundred whites, recruited from the various artillery regiments which had been in the colony during the last ten years. Every cultivator was a member of the great reserve of this army, its spy and outpost and partisan.

The chief interest of the campaign against Le Clere turns upon the obstinate defence of Crête-à-Pierrot. Here the best qualities of black troops were manifested. This was a simple oblong redoubt, thrown up by the English during their brief occupation of the western coast, and strengthened by the negroes. The Artibonite, which is the most important river of the colony, threading its way from the mountains of the interior through the *mornes*, which are not many miles from the sea, passed under this redoubt, which was placed to command the principal defile into the inaccessible region beyond. The rich central plains, the river, and the mountains belonged to whoever held this post. The Mirbalais quarter could raise potatoes enough to nourish sixty thousand men accustomed to that kind of food.

When Toussaint's plan was spoiled by defection and defeat, he transferred immense munitions to the mountains, and decided to concentrate, for the double purpose of holding the place, if possible, and of getting the French away from their supplies. It was a simple breastwork of Campeachy-wood faced with earth, and had a ditch fifteen feet deep. At a little distance was a small redoubt upon an eminence which overlooked the larger work. To the east the great scarp-ed rocks forbade an approach, and dense spinous undergrowth filled the surrounding forest. The defence of this place was given to Dessalines, a most audacious and able fighter. Toussaint intended to

harass the investing columns from the north, and Charles Belair was posted to the south, beyond and near the Artibonite. Toussaint would then be between the fortress and the French corps of observation which was left in the north, — a position which he turned to brilliant advantage. Four French columns, of more than twelve thousand men, commenced, from as many different directions, a slow and difficult movement upon this work. The first column which came within sight of it found a body of negroes drawn up, as if ready to give battle on the outside. It was the surplus of one or two thousand troops which the intrenchment would not hold. The French, expecting to rout them and enter the redoubt with them, charged with the bayonet; the blacks fled, and the French reached the glacis. Suddenly the blacks threw themselves into the ditch, thus exposing the French troops to a terrible fire, which was opened from the redoubt. General Debelle was severely wounded, and three or four hundred men were stretched upon the field.

The advance in another quarter was checked by a small redoubt that opened an unexpected fire. It was necessary to take it, and cannon had to be employed. When the balls began to reach them, the blacks danced and sang, and soon, issuing suddenly, with cries, "*En avant! Canons à nous,*" attempted to take the pieces with the bayonet. But the supporting fire was too strong, they were thrown into disorder, and the redoubt was entered by the French.

Early one morning the camp of the blacks was surprised by one of the columns, which had surmounted all the difficulties in its way. Notwithstanding the previous experience, the French thought this time to enter, and advanced precipitately. Many blacks entered the redoubt, the rest jumped into the ditch, and the same terrible fire vomited forth. Another column advanced to support the attack; but the first one was already crushed and in full retreat. The blacks swarmed to the parapets, threw planks

across the ditch, and attacked both columns with drums beating the charge. The French turned, and met just resistance enough to bring them again within range, the same fire broke forth, and the columns gave way, with a loss to the first of four hundred and eighty men, and two or three hundred to the latter.

Upon this retreat, the cultivators of the neighborhood exchanged shots with the flanking parties, and displayed great boldness.

It was plain to the French that this open redoubt would have to be invested; but before this was done, Dessalines had left the place with all the troops which could not be fed there, and cut his way across a column with the loss of a hundred men. The defence was committed to a quarteroon named Lamartinière.

While the French were completing the investment, the morning music of the black band floated the old strains of the Marseillaise within their lines. La Croix declares that it produced a painful sensation. The soldiers looked at each other, and recalled the great marches which carried victory to that music against the tyrants of Europe. "What!" they said, "are our barbarous enemies in the right? Are we no longer the soldiers of the Republic? Have we become the servile instruments of *la politique*?" No doubt of that; these children of the Marseillaise and adorers of Moreau had become *de trop* in the Old World, and had been sent to leave their bones in the defiles of *Pensez-y-bien*.*

The investment of Crête-à-Pierrot was regularly made, by Bachelu, an engineer who had distinguished himself in Egypt. Batteries were established before the head of each division, a single mortar was got into position, and a battery of seven pieces played upon the little redoubt above. This is getting to be vastly more troublesome than the fort of Bard, which held in check these very

* *Think twice before you try me*: the name of a *morne* of extraordinary difficulty, which had to be surmounted by one of the French columns.

officers and men upon their road to Maréngo.

Rochambeau thought he had extinguished the fire of the little redoubt, and would fain storm it. The blacks had protected it by an abatis ten feet deep and three in height, in which our gallant ally of the Revolution entangled himself, and was held there till he had lost three hundred men, and gained nothing.

"Thus the Crête-à-Pierrot, in which (and in the small redoubt) there were hardly twelve hundred men,* had already cost us more than fifteen hundred in sheer loss. So we fell back upon the method which we should have tried in the beginning, a vigorous blockade and a sustained cannonade."

The fire was kept up night and day for three days without cessation. Descourtiz, a French naturalist, who had been forced to act as surgeon, was in the redoubt, and he describes the scenes of the interior. The enfilading fire shattered the timber-work, and the bombs set fire to the tents made of macaw-tree foliage, which the negroes threw flaming into the ditch. A cannoner sees a bomb falls close to a sick friend of his who is asleep; considering that sleep is very needful for him, he seizes the bomb, and cuts off the fuse with a knife. In a corner nods a grenadier overcome with fatigue; a bomb falls at his side; he wakes simultaneously with the explosion, to be blown to sleep again. The soldiers stand and watch the bright parabola, in dead silence; then comes the cry, "*Gare à la bombe!*" Hungry and thirsty men chew leaden balls for relief. Five hundred men have fallen. Some of the officers come for the surgeon's opium. They will not be taken alive. But the excitement of the scene is so great that opium fails of its wonted effect, and they complain of the tardiness of the dose. Other officers make their wills with *sang froid*, as if expecting a tranquil administration of their estates.

During the last night the little garrison evacuates the upper redoubt, and is

* Negro authorities say 750.

seen coming towards the work. Down goes the drawbridge, the blacks issue to meet them, taking them for a storming party of the French. There is a mutual mistake, both parties of blacks deliver their fire, the sortie party retreats, and the garrison enters the redoubt with them. Here they discover the mistake, but their rage is so great that they exhaust their cartridges upon each other at four paces. Descourtiz takes advantage of the confusion to throw himself into the ditch, and escapes under a volley.

The place is no longer tenable, and must be evacuated. A scout apprises Toussaint of the necessity, and it is arranged that he shall attack from the north, while Lamartinière issues from the redoubt. During Toussaint's feint, the black garrison cut their way through the left of Rochambeau's division.

General Le Clerc cannot withhold his admiration. "The retreat which the commandant of Crête-à-Pierrot dared to conceive and execute is a remarkable feat of arms. We surrounded his post to the number of more than twelve thousand men; he saved himself, did not lose half his garrison, and left us only his dead and wounded. We found the baggage of Dessalines, a few white cannoners, the music of the guard of honor, a magazine of powder, a number of muskets, and fifteen cannon of great calibre."

Toussaint turned immediately towards the north, raised the cultivators, attacked the corps of observation, drove it into Cap Français, ravaged the plain, turned and defeated Hardy's division, which attempted to keep open the communications with Le Clerc, and would have taken the city, if fresh reinforcements from France had not at the same time arrived in the harbor.

After the arrest of Toussaint, Dessalines reorganized the resistance of the blacks, and attacked Rochambeau in the open field, driving him into the city, where Le Clerc had just died: in that infected atmosphere he kept the best troops of France besieged. "*Ah! ce*

gaillard," the French called the epidemic which came to complete the work of the blacks. Twenty thousand men reinforced Rochambeau, but he capitulated, after a terrible assault which Dessalines made with twenty-seven thousand men, on the 28th November, 1803.

One more touch of negro soldiery must suffice. There was an intrenchment, called *Verdière*, occupied by the French, upon a hill overlooking the city. Dessalines sent a negro general, Capois, with three demi-brigades to take it. "They recoiled," says Schoelcher, "horribly mutilated by the fire from the intrenchment. He rallied them: the grape tore them in pieces, and hurled them again to the bottom of the hill. Boiling with rage, Capois goes to seek fresh troops, mounts a fiery horse, and rushes forward for the third time; but the thousand deaths which the fort delivers repulse his soldiers. He foams with anger, exhorts them, pricks them on, and leads them up a fourth time. A ball kills his horse, and he rolls over, but, soon extricating himself, he runs to the head of the troops. '*En avant! En avant!*' he repeats, with enthusiasm; at the same instant his plumed chapeau is swept from his head by a grape-shot, but he still throws himself forward to the assault. '*En avant! En avant!*'

"Then great shouts went up along the ramparts of the city: '*Bravo! bravo! vivat! vivat!*' cried Rochambeau and his staff, who were watching the assault. A drum-roll is heard, the fire of *Verdière* pauses, an officer issues from the city, gallops to the very front of the surprised blacks, and saluting, says,—'The Captain-General Rochambeau and the French army send their admiration to the general officer who has just covered himself with glory.' This magnificent message delivered, he turned his horse, reëntered the city, and the assault is renewed. Imagine if Capois and his soldiers did new prodigies of valor. But the besieged were also electrified, would not be overcome, and Dessalines sent the order to retire. The next day a

groom led a richly caparisoned horse to the quarter-general of the blacks, which Rochambeau offered as a mark of his admiration, and to replace that which he regretted had been killed."

The valor and fighting qualities of the blacks in San Domingo were nourished by the wars which sprang from their own necessities. They were the native growths of the soil which had been long enriched by their innocent blood; more blood must be invested in it, if they would own it. Learning to fight was equivalent to learning to live. Their cause was neither represented nor championed by a single power on earth, and nothing but the hope of making enormous profits out of their despair led Anglo-American schooners to run English and French blockades, to land arms and powder in the little coves of the island. Will the negro fight as well, if the motive and the exigency are inferior?

We make a present to the Southern negro of an excellent chance for fighting, with our compliments. Some of us do it with our curses. The war does not spring for them out of enthusiasm and despair which seize their hearts at once, as they view a degradation from which they flee and a liberty to which they are all hurrying. They are asked to fight for us as well as for themselves, and this asking is, like emancipation, a military necessity. The motive lacks the perfect form and incandescence, like that of a star leaping from a molten sun, which lighted battle-ardors in the poor slaves of San Domingo. And we even hedge about this invitation to bleed for us with conditions which are evidently dictated by a suspicion that the motive is not great enough to make the negro depend upon himself. If the war does not entirely sweep away these poor beginnings and thrust white and black together into the arms of thrilling danger, we need not expect great fighting from him. He may not disgrace himself, but he will not ennoble the republic till his heart's core is the war's core, and the colors of two races run into one.

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