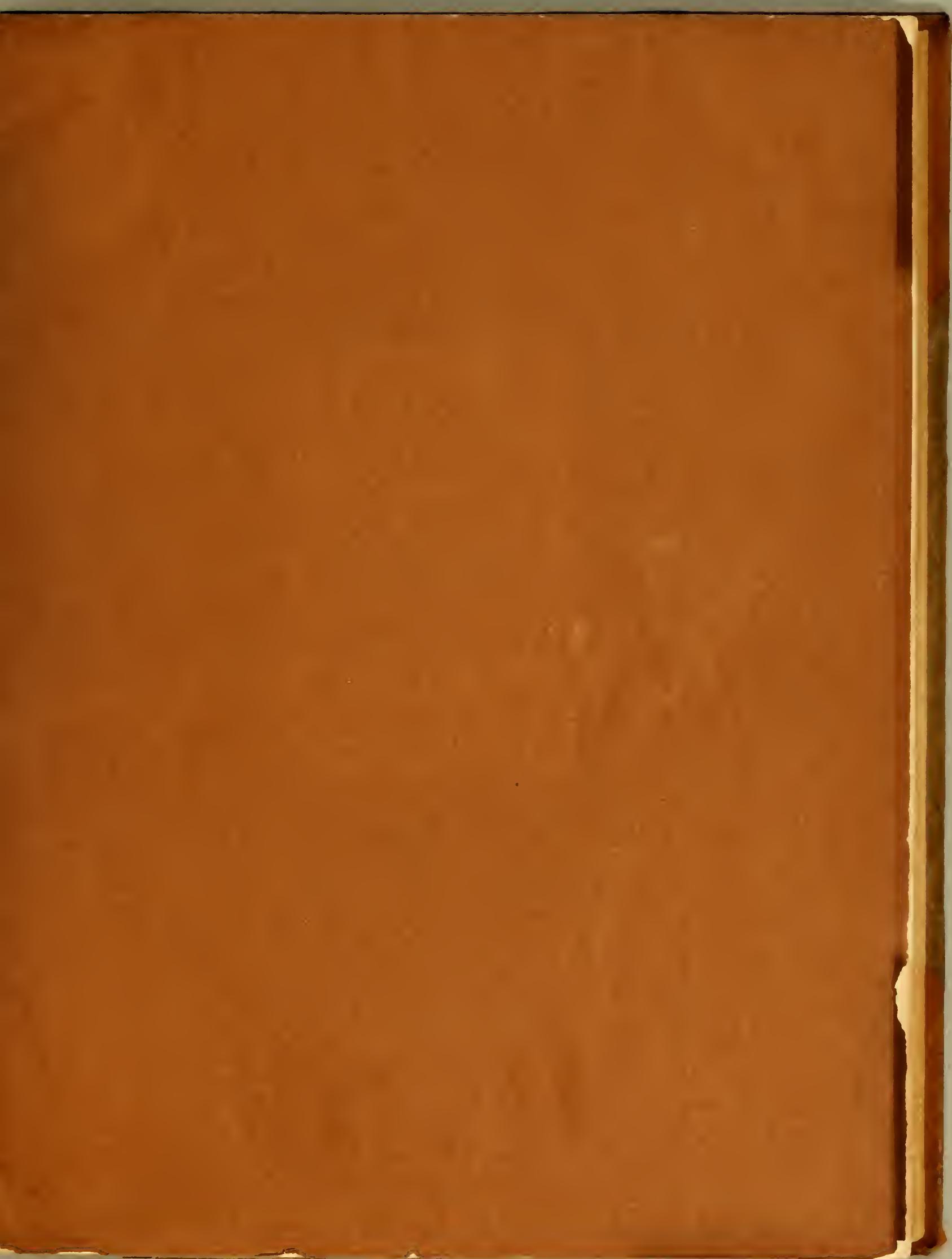
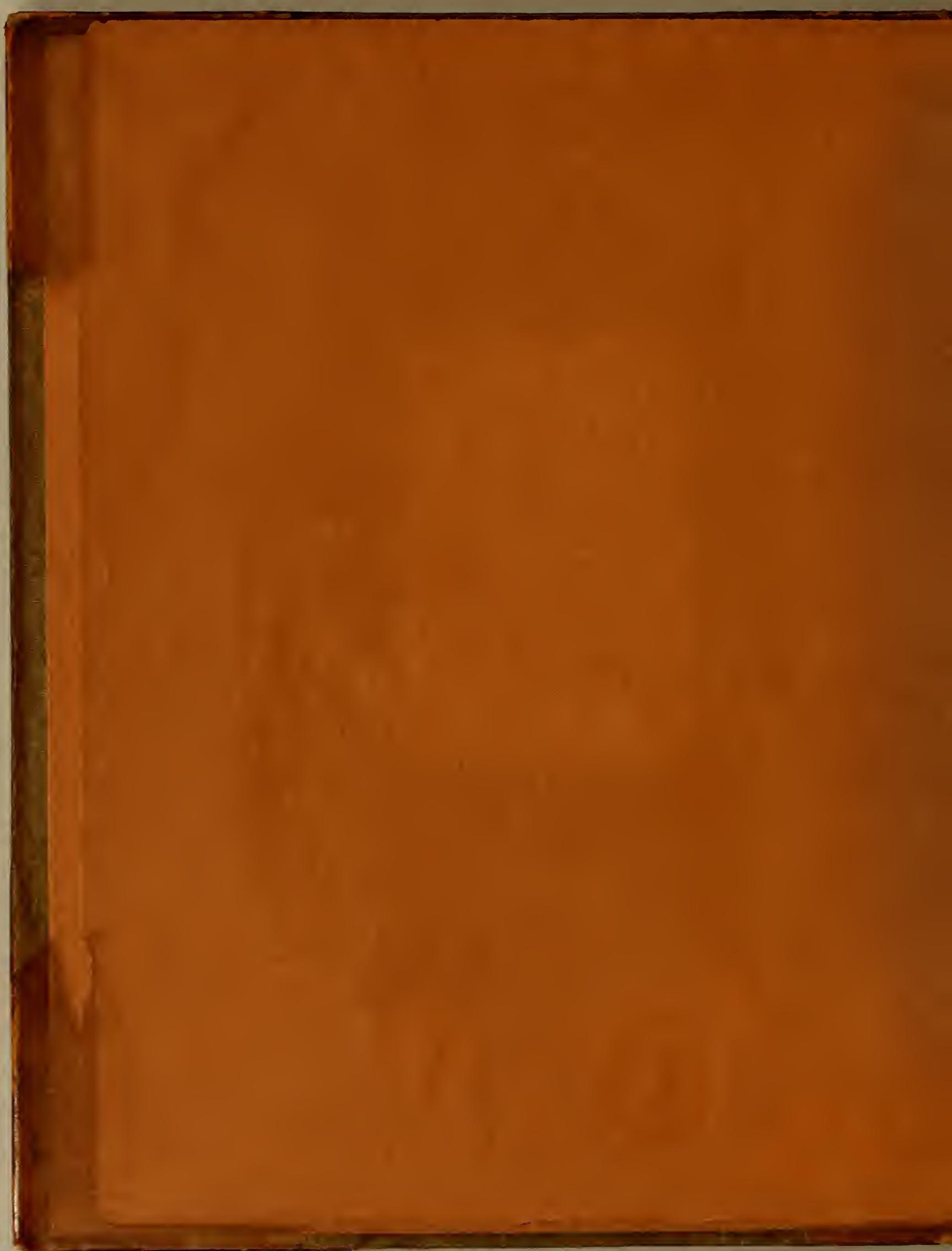


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AN
Historical Account
OF THE
BLACK EMPIRE OF HAYTI.

WILLIAM
ROBERTSON

RPJC



M. Rauniard del.

J. Barlow sculp

The Author in Conversation with a private Soldier of the Black Army on his Excursion in St Domingo.

AN
Historical Account
OF THE
BLACK EMPIRE OF HAYTI:
COMPREHENDING A VIEW OF
THE PRINCIPAL TRANSACTIONS IN THE REVOLUTION
OF
SAINT DOMINGO;
WITH
ITS ANTIENT AND MODERN STATE.

BY
MARCUS RAINSFORD, Esq.
LATE CAPTAIN THIRD WEST-INDIA REGIMENT,
&c. &c.

"Tros, Tyriusve, mihi nullo discrimine agetur."

VIRGIL.

— "On peut dire avec vérité qu'il y a peu de traits de barbarie qui puissent leur (*les noirs*) être imputés."

DE CHARMILLY.

ALBION PRESS PRINTED:
PUBLISHED BY JAMES CUNDEE, IVY-LANE, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND SOLD BY C. CHAPPLER, PALL MALL.

1805.

RPJC

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS all that is necessary to preface the following work will be found in the Introduction, nothing more is intended in this place than to advertise the reader of some circumstances which could not be so well communicated under any other head.

The sedentary attention so necessary to the production of a literary work, but ill comports with the character of a soldier; this, with other temporary inconveniences, and frequent migrations during their composition, will, it is feared, give occasion for apology in regard to some parts of the following sheets, where an inequality of style and occasional confusion of persons are perceptible, which must be attributed to the want of that tranquillity, the desire of the enlightened in all ages, so necessary to a correct view of men and things, and which

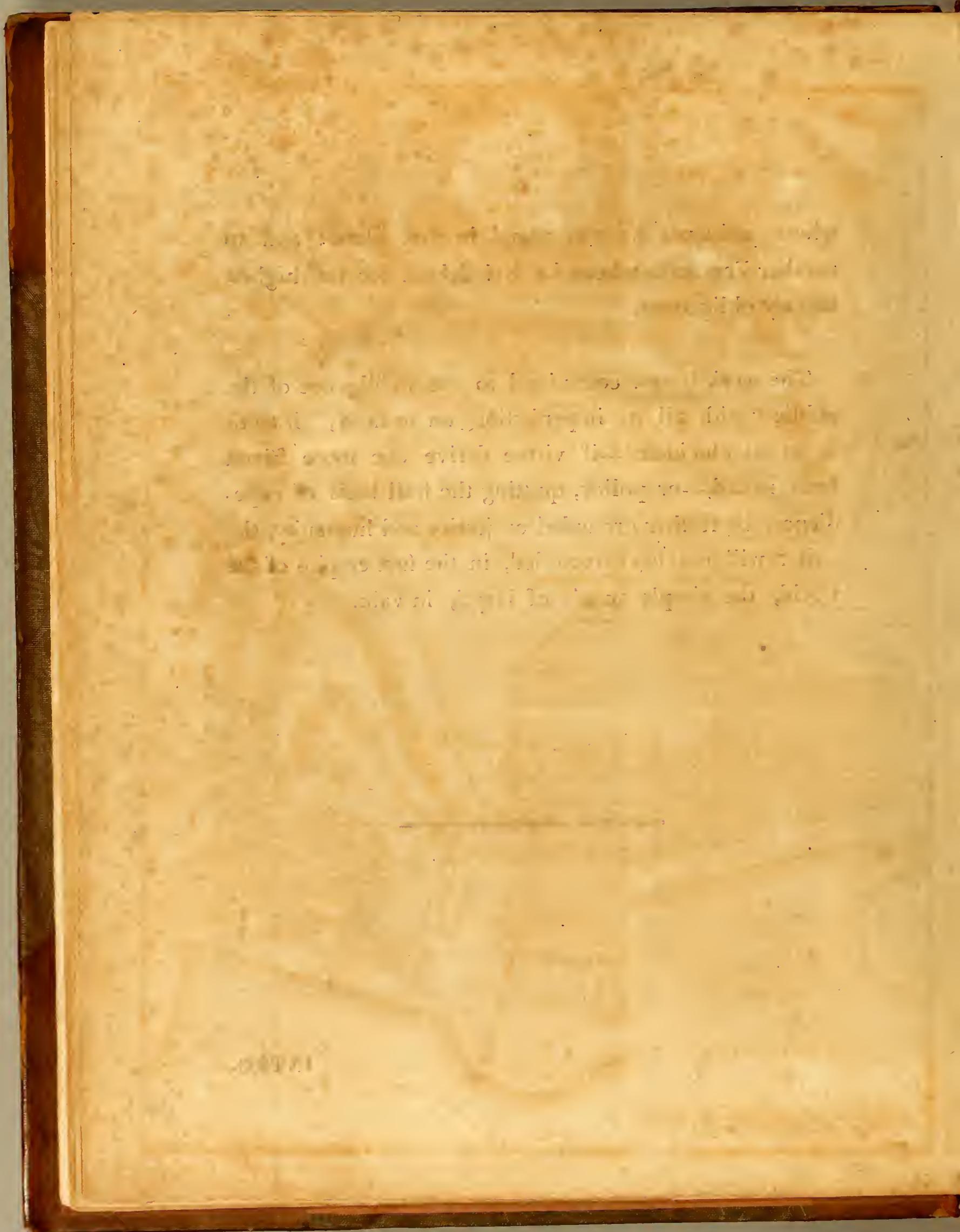
polishes

polishes, while it imparts the utmost reach of intellect. A deficiency may, perhaps, be found in the part confessedly compilation: but it may, at the same time, be said, that to *make a book* nothing unnecessary is obtruded: and the writer may truly assert, that "he sat down to write, what he thought, (and saw) not to think what he should write."

It is pleasing to contemplate the kind attentions of those who disinterestedly communicate what information they possess. Of these, the writer would wish to have mentioned many, who, with a delicacy equal to their intelligence, refused to be thanked in public: yet he resolves, without permission, to acknowledge his obligations to Admiral SMITH, whose local information, had it not been for the distance between them, might have conferred much more interest upon his work;---to JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq. of his Majesty's navy, whose name will be found hereafter, and whose absence at sea he has never ceased to regret;---to WILLIAM CURTIS, Esq. of Cavendish-square, for the liberal communication of his plans, of which he is anxious to avail himself further, in future;---to an AMERICAN resident, at St. Domingo, of whose

whose assistance he was proud in that island: and to another FRIEND to whom he is indebted for the highest literary obligations.

The work is now committed to the indulgence of the public "with all its imperfections on its head;" if truth be at all elucidated---if virtue derive one more friend from its aid,---or policy, quitting the frail basis of expedience, be further grounded on justice and humanity, the writer will not have recorded, in the first empire of the world, the simple annals of Hayti, in vain.



Plan of the City of Cape-Francois as it existed before the Revolution.



CAP FRANCOIS.

1785.

Le Cap a l'Eglise Meridienne 74° 38' 25". Latitude 19° 16' 21".

AFJCB



View of a Temple erected by the Blacks to commemorate their Emancipation.

RPJCE



M.Rainsford del

J.Barlow sculp

The Court Martial which sentenced the Author to Death.
General Christophe President.

RPJCB



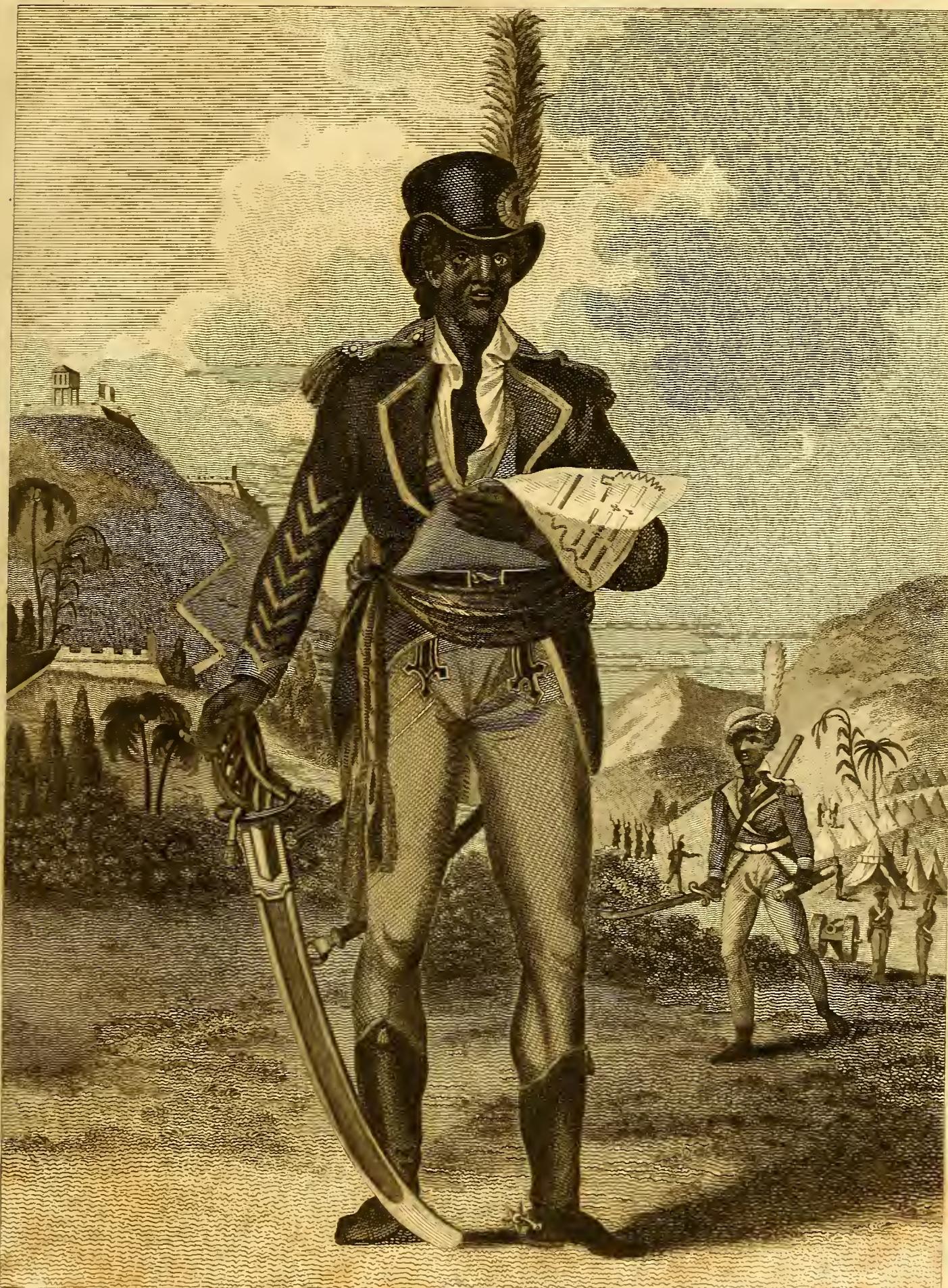
M. Rainsford del.

J. Barlow sculp

The Author when under sentence of Death relieved by
a benevolent Female of Colour.

Published as the Act directs, July 1st 1803, by J. & C. Dundee, Tyre Lane, Paternoster Row

APJCB



M. Rousland del

J. Barlow sculp

Toussaint Louverture?

Published as the Act directs, Sub 1st 1803, by J. Curdee, by Lane, Paternoster Row

EPIC



The Mode of exterminating the Black Army as practised by the French.

2100



Revenge taken by the Black Army for the Cruelties practised
on them by the French.

APICB



Blood Hounds attacking a Black Family in the Woods.

PPJCB

Liberté.

Egalité.

Au Capo ^{façais} le 16 novose) l'an septième de la République
française, une et indivisible.

TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE,

Général en chef de l'Armée de Saint-Domingue,

A Monsieur Edward byd Smith
Commandant pour S. M. B. le Voisneau
l'Amiral.

Monsieur le Commandant

Le Lieutenant Storix a rempli la missioz
dont vous l'avez chargé. Comme je me
suis trouvé au Capo, il m'a été amené et
m'a remis vos deux Lettres des 3 & 5
Janvier, qui que addressed au Commandant
de cette place. Je veux que vous ayez
à votre bord 64 prisonniers français
que vous me proposerez à échanger, ce que
je n'aurai pas obtenu de faire de sautet
si j'avais ou ici le même nombre de prisonniers.

Mais mes principes s'humoressent répondant
parfaitement à ceux que vous me manifestez.
Je vous prémunis. Serai obligé de relaxer
les prisonniers français; je vous enverrai
bientôt 600 au plus tard le plus tôt que
possible, et l'exception d'un qui ayant
été la cuisse cassée se trouve à l'hôpital
pour lequel je vous demanderai des
lettres pour le fort de gracie et le
môtier où je vous enverrai ordre de vous
faire la brûlure de la prisonnière que vous
voudrez. Et si par chance ou mal je n'avais
complété ce nombre, je vous enverrai
ma parole d'honneur de les remettre à
votre disposition, lorsque le fort de la
Guerche en remettra à la même.

Dans le cas que vous ne ferez pas
confiance dans les lettres que je vous

(1808)

donnerai pour le mole & le fort de guiné
alors vous pourrez transporter des pris ouviers
français que vous avez fait faire au endroit
où ils pourront être échangés. J'attendrai
votre réponse pour me faire le Gouverneur.

Quoique le port de Leithum et le
pasbou que vous avez en la Cévilité d'adresses
au chef de cette ville en une tout point
particulier adressé par laist prangue
de vous en faire une Révercieuse, je voudrai
avoir ici quelque chose qui peut vous être
agréable, pour le secourir. Je permettrai à
Votre Domestique de faire les provisions
dont vous pourrez avoir besoing.

J'ai l'honneur d'être

Monsieur le Commandant

Votre très humble &
obéiss serviteur

Toussaint Louverture

QEPJOB



M. Rainsford del.

J. Barlow sculp.

The mode of training - Blood Hounds in St. Domingo, and of
exercising them by Chasseurs.

RFJCE

INTRODUCTION.

IT has frequently been the fate of striking events, and particularly those which have altered the condition of mankind, to be denied that consideration by their contemporaries, which they obtain from the veneration of posterity. In their vortex, attention is distracted by the effects; and distant society recedes from the contemplation of objects that threaten a violation of their system, or wound a favourite prejudice. It is thus that history, with all the advantages of calm discussion, is imperfect; and philosophy enquires in vain for the unrecorded causes of astonishing transactions.

To remedy the evil in this enlightened æra, the disquisitions of the observer, and the relations of the traveller occur; but these are perused with the rapidity, with which they are necessarily made, and, although they teach us what regards our own nature, impress no other sense of the period described, than as relates to the fleeting objects of immediate import—furnishing, therefore, little more (if so

much may always be expected) than frail documents for the judgment of the future historian.

Such is precisely the case with the subject of the following pages. The rise of the Haytian empire is an event which may powerfully affect the condition of the human race; yet it is viewed as an ordinary succession of triumphs and defeats, interrupted only by the horrors of new and terrible inflictions, the fury of the contending elements, and destructive disease, more tremendous than all.

It will scarcely be credited in another age, that philosophers heard unmoved, of the ascertainment of a brilliant fact, hitherto unknown, or confined to the vague knowledge of those whose experience is not admitted within the pale of historical truth. It will not be believed, that enlightened Europe calmly witnessed its contrasted brilliancy with actions which, like the opaque view of night, for a sullen hour obscured the dazzling splendour.

It is on ancient record,* that negroes were capable of repelling their enemies, with vigour, in their own country; and a writer of modern

* LEO AFRICANUS says, that the negroes between Senegal and Gambia, in Africa, (the parts from whence slaves are, at present, supplied,) lived in the utmost innocence and simplicity, till the armed Moors came among, and subjected them, teaching them afterwards their religion, and the arts of life. About the fourteenth century, however, Heli Ischia, a native-negro, at the head of his countrymen, turning their own arts against them, bravely expelled their Moorish conquerors. This negro continued in power, and acted as king, leading them to several foreign wars, and establishing them in power over a great extent of country.

date * has assured us of the talents and virtues of these people; but it remained for the close of the eighteenth century to realize the scene, from a state of abject degeneracy:—to exhibit, a horde of negroes emancipating themselves from the vilest slavery, and at once filling the relations of society, enacting laws, and commanding armies, in the colonies of Europe.

The same period has witnessed a great and polished nation, not merely returning to the barbarism of the earliest periods, but descending to the characters of assassins and executioners; and, removing the boundaries which civilization had prescribed even to war, rendering it a wild conflict of brutes and a midnight massacre.

To attract a serious attention to circumstances, which constitute an æra in the history of human nature and of martial affairs, is the purpose of the present disquisition; which, it is hoped, will tend to furnish an awful, yet practical lesson, as well as to excite and gratify a laudable curiosity.

To this subject, the attention of the writer was peculiarly led, from a long acquaintance with the West-Indies, and opportunities of considerable observation of the colonies in that Archipelago. To the French colony of St. Domingo, his notice was early and particularly attracted; several of his military friends were afterward

* Adanson, *Voyage à l'Afrique*, 1749-53.

employed

employed on its shores, and ultimately an accident caused a personal visit; the information resulting from which, on account of its subsequent effects, could not fail to be deeply impressed on his memory.

Of *Hispaniola*, or *St. Domingo*, there is no particular history, in any language, similar to those of the British colonies, so ably executed by Sir HANS SLOANE and others. The earliest accounts are incorporated with the voyage of the great discoverer, his Spanish coadjutors, and the legends of the missionaries. Of these the description of COLUMBUS, and that of PETER MARTYR, are the most intelligent, while the account of LAS CASAS is particularly interesting, and the History of HERRERA acute and correct. That of VESPUCCI ought scarcely to be named, in retribution for his injury to Columbus. After the establishment of the French colony, when priests from the mother-country settled upon the island, they furnished accounts of the establishment, and of the manners of its inhabitants, generally interesting and correct; the most celebrated of these are by the Fathers DU PERS, CHARLEVOIX, DU TERTRE, and LABAT. Neither are the accounts of the Buccaneers (the first founders of the French colony), by themselves—nor the observations of an anonymous writer in the *Histoire Generale des Voyages*,* without merit. From these sources, with the assistance of the able compilation of the ABBE RAYNAL, and occasional reference to the most polished of modern historians, Dr. ROBERTSON, the *facts* with which the present work commences, are drawn.—

* Paris, 1759.

For

For the different light in which some incidents will appear, from their authorities, as well as the opinions or sentiments which are occasionally interspersed, the writer alone is answerable.

When the circumstances which ultimately led to the independence of the island commenced, the first English work, exclusively, on St. Domingo made its appearance ;* and, though in the form of a pamphlet, contained a correct account of facts, with no other fault than an inflammatory style, easily imparted by such a subject at the period it was written. Not long after, Mr. BRYAN EDWARDS, who had been successful in a General History of the British Colonies in the West-Indies, and who had intended to write a similar one of the French colonies,† published a quarto volume on the subject, comprising all the information he could collect. This work, however, although it contained documents of the most authentic kind, did not increase Mr. Edwards's fame as an accurate writer ; being, in point of fact, as well as topographically, incorrect ; it provoked a volume of equal size in answer, from a gentleman, who, for many reasons, was well acquainted with his subject ; M. de CHARMILLY,‡ the commissioner empowered by a number of the colonists to offer a capitulation of St. Domingo to Great Britain. Though replete with errors arising from personal interest, and local prejudices, some facts are furnished

* An Inquiry into the Causes of the Insurrection in St. Domingo, 1792.

† Hist. Survey. Preface.

‡ To Mr. Edwards he says, (in his "Lettre en Refutation de son Ouvrage sur St. Domingue")
" You should have acknowledged, that all your information was derived from others, during a stay of a
few

furnished by both these writers which could not be obtained by any other means. About the same time, there appeared at Paris, a work in two small volumes, in the form of Letters, under the name of the "Baron de WIMPFEN;" which, from external evidence, appear to be a collection of facts, arranged in an agreeable manner, on a subject occupying the attention of the French public, at the time. Whether it were or not a real voyage, among a variety of observations calculated to suit a temporary purpose, there are some that deserve a much better character. To these were added in France, a short time after, a work containing some authentic facts in a memoir of Toussaint, and a life of that great man, distorted for the purposes of party, by a popular writer, Du BROCAS. The Remarks of Colonel CHALMERS, in England, succeeded; from whose experience and local opportunities much was to be expected.* Of these, with a variety of private documents obtained from an extensive and intelligent correspondence, the writer has

few weeks only, in a time of general disorder, shut up in the town of the Cape; while the inhabitants of the colony, and even the city, were divided into different parties; and that you could not speak the French language, or very badly."

" Il fallait dire—‘ Pendant un séjour de quelques semaines seulement que j'ai demeuré enfermé dans la ville du Cap, aussitôt après la révolte des negres en 1791, j'ai rassemblé dans un tems de désordre et de troubles, les importans matériaux qui m'ont servi:—‘ que vous aviez rien vu par vous-même,’ ” &c.

M. de Charmilly, at the same time, views the conquest of St. Domingo by the English as very easy—ridicules the idea of the blacks ever attaining any force, and hangs the fate of the whole of the Antilles on the prosecution of his favorite project.

* It is amusing to see the confidence with which the subjugation of St. Domingo constantly inspired its advocates. Col. Chalmers, in other respects, a well-informed soldier and gentleman, is incautious enough to have the following assertion in his preface:—" The late events in St. Domingo

has availed himself, in his third and fifth chapters, in a way, he trusts, neither injurious to their authors, nor unacceptable to the public.

Two other works have arisen out of the subject more recent than the foregoing, which deserve to be mentioned: that of M. d'AR-CHENHOLZ on the *Buccaniers*, published in Germany; and Mr. DAL-LAS's English History of the *Maroons*, furnished from the materials of their superintendent, Mr. Quarrell, of Jamaica. On the former, while it furnishes illustrations of human nature, little dependence is to be placed in point of historical fact; for it follows the Spanish accounts of the people of whom it treats, and conveys an obvious calumny on their most respectable members.* From the latter, some inferences are to be drawn, applicable to the subject of this volume, though the source, enveloped in interest, and the prejudice inseparable from a fa-

mingo have been much misunderstood, or highly exaggerated: he trusts that he has clearly proved that the *temporary* misfortunes sustained by France were occasioned by her impolicy, cruelty, or other causes, totally independent of the power of her black enemies, whose strength, as stated, is utterly inadequate to render them independent of that empire, or of any other *much less formidable power*. If so, it is humiliating to hear senators gravely pronounce that France has lost St. Domingo." The colonel adds, from Homer,---

" To few, and wonderous few, has Heaven assign'd
" A wise, extensive, all-considering mind !!!"

* Of the intrepid, generous, and intelligent Morgan (among others), M. d'Archenholtz asserts, "The horrors he committed are more dreadful than those of any of his colleagues. This monster filled the highest posts in the (*British*) state, and enjoyed with perfect security that enormous wealth which had cost the tears and blood of so many victims to his avarice, without suffering the smallest remorse to approach his hardened heart!"

vourite

vourite project, is not so pure as could be wished on such an important occasion.

To the abstracts of these works may be added a variety of temporary productions (including the foreign and English public journals), to which proper reference has been had, with the caution necessary for consulting such an heterogeneous mass of materials. Thus, no correct or comprehensive account, has been given in our language, of this interesting country; even those who have enlightened the public mind on other great occasions, falling in with the general apathy, have forborne on this wonderful revolution.*

To supply this omission, in a small degree, the writer, on a former occasion,† submitted to the public his ideas in a crude and imperfect state; and the attention they received from some intelligent minds, afforded sufficient proof, that the public only required to be roused to entertain the considerations they suggested; while the adoption of his humble narrative in the journals of those countries‡ that

* From this censure, however, must be excepted Mr. Cobbett, (the author of the Political Register) who has in more than this instance deserved the character he has obtained of an enlightened politician.

† In the winter of 1801-2.

‡ See "The Merchant," a respectable paper published in Rotterdam in the beginning of 1802, &c. &c.

might

might be supposed to possess the priority of information, evinces the necessity of such a communication as the present.*

In it, will be found a succinct, and he trusts candid, view of the early history of the Spanish colony, in which the *impolicy* of cruelty, and the *errors* of injustice, are exposed, in preference to any national prejudice, or habit. The same ideas are continued, regarding the French establishment; and a reference to human nature is preferred, when considering the character of those, whose actions of terrific splendour could be tried by no other test. In regard to the height of the French colonial prosperity, he has not dilated the account by so minute a view of their domestic life as by some might be wished; but, in what is necessary to give a correct idea of manners and conduct, it is hoped no deficiency will appear. In any case where the question of slavery interferes, considering the subject on a broad basis, without regard to party, he has shewn its general *inexpediency*, rather than scrutinized its measures. And in tracing the revolutionary spirit to its source, he has endeavoured to point out moral delinquency without any other expression of rigidity than that which arose from the subject itself. In cotemporary history, that hazardous, and perhaps invidious enterprize, he has rather adopted those facts, wherever such could be found, which have already received the common consent, than obtruded his own, in their place; and where the latter are of necessity introduced, they have been scrupulously

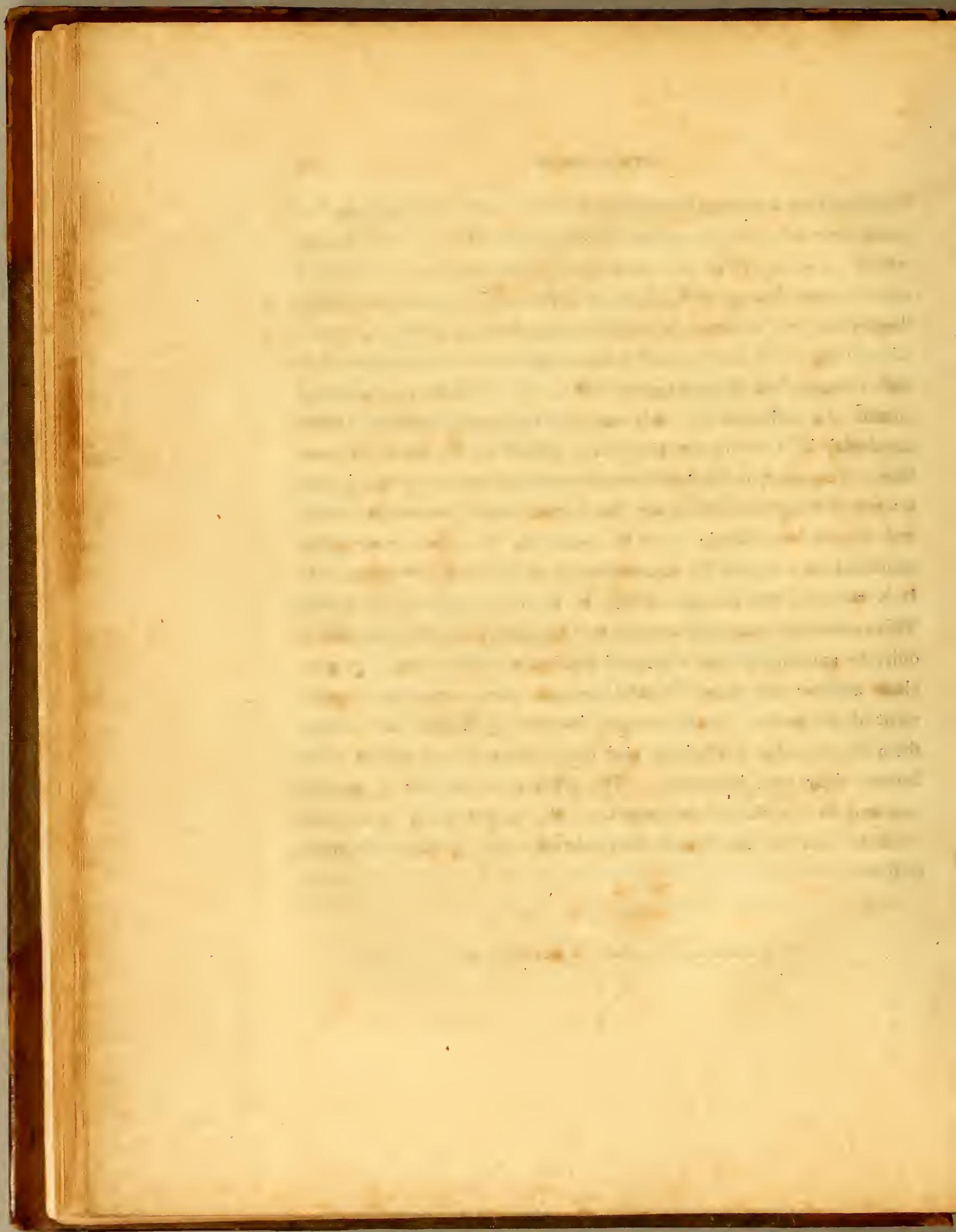
*See also "The Monthly," and other Reviews of this period.

examined and confirmed. His own sojourn at Cape François and Fort Dauphin is the unaffected tale of a way-worn soldier,* experienced in the cross-roads of life, equally happy in the hospitality of an Indian cottage, or that of a magnificent empire—yet not regardless of each exclusive excellence, nor appropriating that of the one, to the other, or denying either. With regard to the transactions of the Black Republic (the appellation first given to the black government by the author), great care has been used to obtain the medium of truth between a variety of conflicting accounts; and, for the better comprehending their direct intent and views, much attention has been paid to give in the translation of their public papers, their original spirit.

Of one prominent subject of the present volume, it is painful to speak—yet an application to the general reader is necessary, as well as an apology to the sensibility of that sex, which the author would be much afflicted to forego—for the representations of cruelty, which will, he trusts, prevent such another violation of the human character. He is also desirous to avoid the appearance of enlarging on a subject which regards a country against whom his own is in hostilities. It must, therefore, be recollectcd, that it was during the peace which afforded an opportunity for the commission of crimes against human nature, of which he complains, that he first attacked the expedition against St. Domingo, and the immediate recourse to the assistance of the ferocious animals, which were surpassed by the cruelty of those,

* The writer, at the time of his first publication, had been twenty-four years an officer in his Majesty's service.

by whom they were employed. Mere description conveys not with so much force as when accompanied by graphic illustration, those horrors which are wished to be impressed upon the public mind. The existence of blood-hounds in the Spanish settlements in America, though disgraceful to the nation by which it is permitted, may yet continue, without any effect more extensive than with regard to the colonists, or their visitants; but the practice of, and terrible reference to, the savage custom of a barbarous age (only employed exclusively against the worst criminals) in a European army, is a subject of the most alarming kind. That every public exhibition of even the forms of cruelty is productive of dangerous effects on the human mind, cannot be denied, and should be avoided; what then must be the callous insensibility produced on a soldier by circumstances such as are here delineated? It is reducing the heroism of war to a base contrivance of death. This cautionary memorial records the first step; it is for the public only, by marking it with a general sentiment of detestation, to preclude another and more dreadful, because more extensive, employment of the means. Such measures increase upon those who adopt them by insensible gradations, and once admitted, may extend even beyond their own intentions. The modern art of war is already removed to a sufficient distance from the magnanimity of ancient combat. Let not the breach be rendered wider by adoptions such as these.



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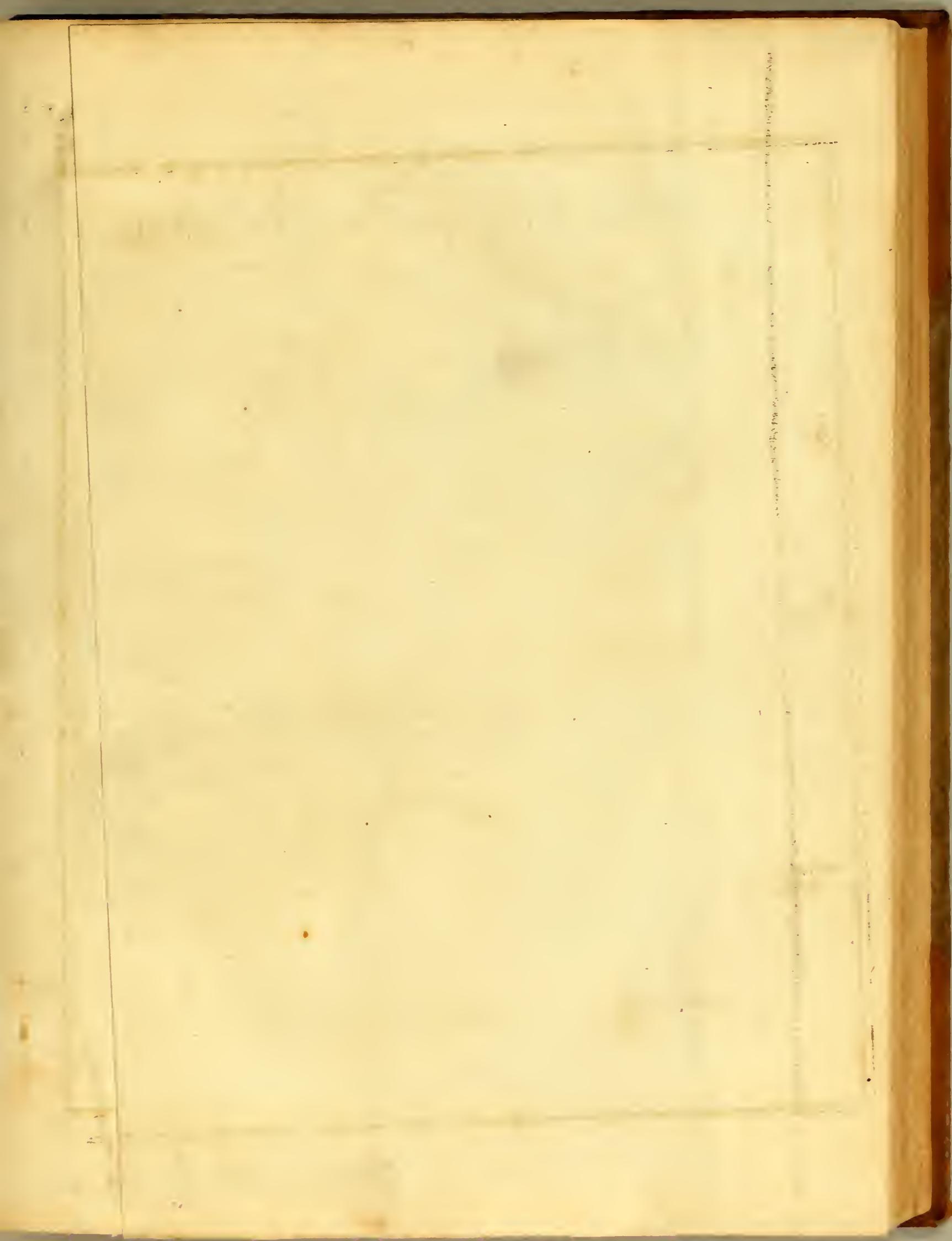
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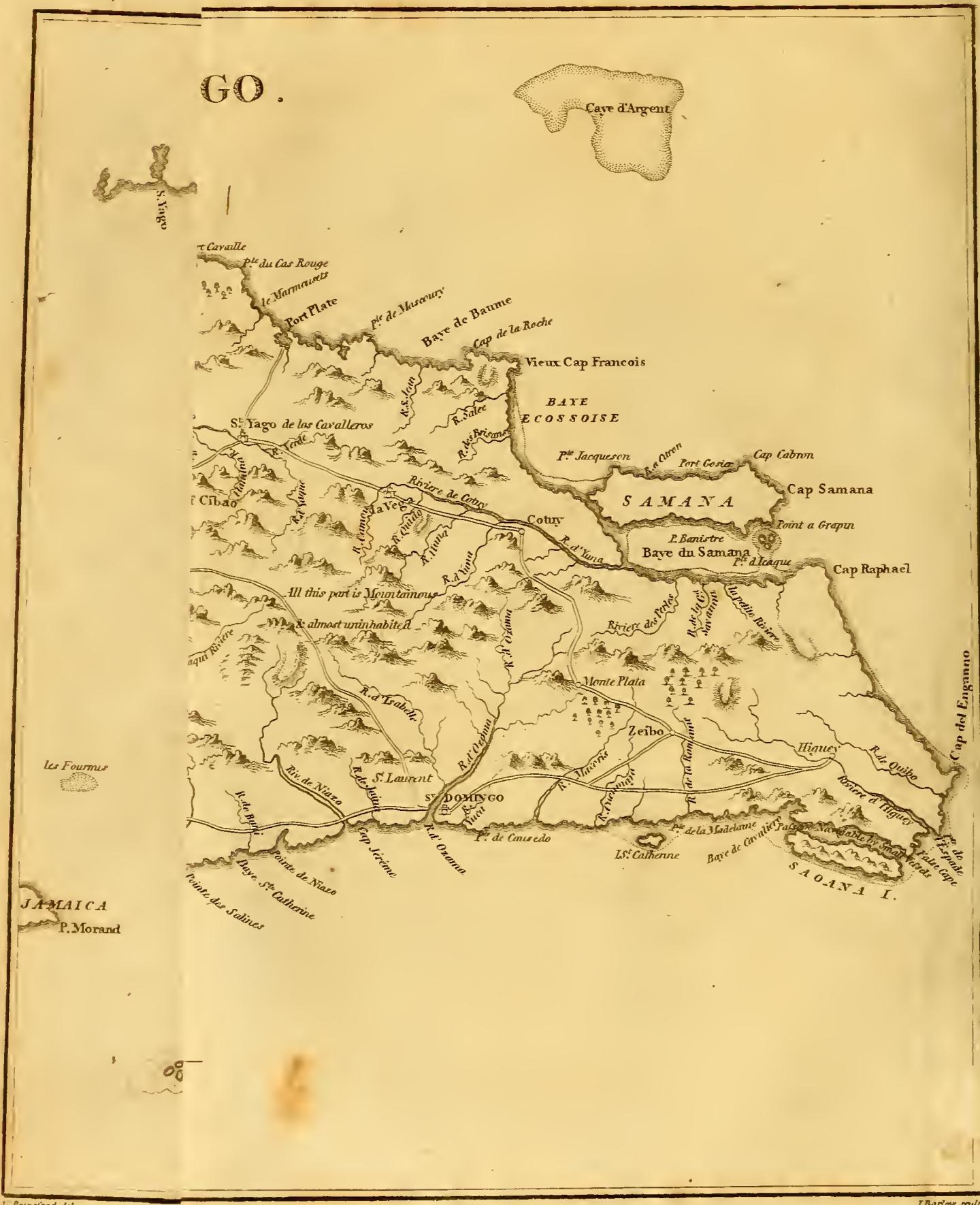
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ERRATA.

- Page 28, line 19, erase "their;" after "clergyman," insert *who*.
p. 40, l. 16, erase "of whom I am about to speak."
p. 42, l. 20, for "it," read *Tortuga*.
p. 45, l. 18, erase "truly gallant."
p. 83, l. 8, for "confined," read *conferred*.
p. 101, l. 11, for "I am considering this subject," read *this subject is now considered*.
p. 107, l. 21, begin *Thus concludes*.
p. 112, insert *March 8*, as a side-note opposite the resolution of the assembly.
p. 121, l. 20, after "armed," insert *indirectly*.
p. 139, l. 7, after *society* substitute the following sentence: "Mr. Edwards's account is here quoted as
the most authentic."
p. 168, l. 7, for "disinclined," read *inclined*.
— 1. 23, for "the government afforded," read, *the Spanish government refused to afford*.
p. 202, l. 16, for "became," read *becoming*.
— 1. 21, for "its possessors," read *the conquerors*.
p. 203, l. 13, before "government," insert *the British*.
p. 245, l. 24, erase "perhaps."
p. 265, l. 2, for "the same month," read *of January, when*.
p. 276, l. last, after "sons," insert *dressed in the uniform of his enemies*.
p. 311, l. 22, before "weakness," insert *mental*.
p. 323, l. 17, erase "period of."
p. 324, l. 6, for "its," read *his*.
-



9



A

SUCCINCT HISTORICAL
VIEW OF ST. DOMINGO.

CHAP. I.

*From the Period of its Discovery, by Columbus, to its highest State
of Prosperity in 1789.*

HAYTI, Hispaniola, or St. Domingo, the largest and most valuable of the West India Islands, is situated in the Atlantic ocean, between the island of Porto Rico on the east, and Jamaica and Cuba on the west; a small part of the rocks and shelves which form the Bahama islands lie at no great distance to the north; and it is bounded on the south by the Caribbean sea, and ultimately by the continent of South America. It lies in the latitude of 18 deg. 20 min. north, and in 68 deg. 40 min. west longitude from Greenwich. It is in length, according to the best accounts, more than 450 miles from east to west, and 150 in breadth.

CHAP. I.
1492.

Situation of
St. Domingo.

B

This

CHAP. I.
1492.

This beautiful island was the sixth discovered by the enterprising and unfortunate Columbus in his progress towards the discovery of a new world, of the honor of which, in the appropriation of a name, he was to be deprived by the caprice of his contemporaries, in favor of an obscure adventurer, of no other merit in the discovery, than that of having trodden in his steps*. It was the first on which he formed a settlement, or made any stay in his first voyage, and appears to have afterwards received the principal marks of his consideration. To it he was directed by the natives of Cuba, where he had previously landed, as more rich in its mines of that fertile ore with which it was necessary to bribe the avarice of the Spaniards, to prolong that ardour of discovery which it had cost him so much labour to excite.

Original
name, *Hayti*.

Named by
Columbus
Espagnola,
or *Hispanio-*
la.

Columbus first arrived at *Hayti*, for so this country was called by its natives, on the 6th day of December, 1492. He landed at a small bay, which he called St. Nicholas, and then named the island Espagnola, in honor of the country by whose king he was employed: from thence he sailed along the northern coast till he found a more convenient harbour, which he named Conception, and where he first had access to the inhabitants, through the

* When the prosecution of discoveries in Spain had fallen into the hands of private adventurers, *Alonzo de Ojeda*, who had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage, was among the first to propose an expedition under his own command. With this active and gallant officer sailed Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine gentleman, apparently of no ostensible character whatever; but having framed a fraudulent narrative of his voyage with some elegance, which formed the first description of any part of the new world, he obtained from its circulation the honor of giving name to America.

means of a female whom his people overtook, and prepossessed in their favor, by the usual means of trifling presents and gentle behaviour.

CHAP. I.
1492.

It is our wish to pursue in this place a sober narrative of fact, rather than to give loose to the fascinations of romantic description, or else the early Spanish writers have handed down such accounts of the aborigines of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica, as would warrant the most extravagant eulogy on their personal appearance, manners, and ingenuity. It may, however, naturally be supposed possessing the necessaries of life without labour, on a soil the most fertile, and in a benignant climate, in a state of the utmost simplicity, and consequently free from the general enemies to beauty, they would have personal advantages not to be expected in their descendants under the combined evils of slavery in a voluptuous state. Even the rigidity of history has been softened into the most pleasing descriptions of them: "They appeared," says Robertson*, "in the simple innocence of nature, entirely naked, their black hair, long and uncurled, floated upon their shoulders, or was bound in tresses around their heads.—They had no beards, and every part of their bodies was perfectly smooth. Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour; their features singular, rather than disagreeable; their aspect gentle and timid; though not tall, they were well shaped and active." "The industry and ingenuity of this race," says another elegant writer,

Original inhabitants.

* Hist. of America, vol. i. l. 2.

CHAP. I. 1492. "must have exceeded the measure of their wants. Placed in a medium between savage life, properly so called, and the refinement of polished society, they were perhaps equally exempt from the bodily distresses and sanguinary passions of the former conditions, and from the artificial necessities and solicitudes of the latter." They were unquestionably the most unoffending, gentle, and benevolent of the human race*.

That there were some grounds for a belief in the ingenuity ascribed to them by Peter Martyr† and others, as far as it related to their simple agriculture, and some progress in the arts of ornament as well as utility, may, perhaps, be proved by a fact of another nature which tends to illustrate the character of this people, while it may afford a lesson to our own times;—would that we could not say to our own country.

When, among the numerous disasters of Columbus, he was wrecked on the eastern coast of the island, and if he had before impressed the natives with admiration of the superior nature of their visitors, was now placed in a situation the best calculated to prove their natural equality, and even to tempt by an unlucky opportunity any inclination to their injury, instead of the smallest hostility. Guacanahari, the caíque, or king of this division of their island, of which it appeared to be governed by seven, having been informed of his misfortune, expressed great grief for his loss,

* Hist. Jamaica, Dallas's Hist. vol. i. 23.

† De Rebus Oceanis, &c.

and

and immediately sent aboard all the people in the place in many large canoes; they soon unloaded the ship of every thing that was upon deck, as the king gave them great assistance: "He himself," says Columbus, who records it, "with his brothers and relations, took all possible care that every thing should be properly done both aboard and on shore; and from time to time he sent some of his relations weeping, to beg of me not to be dejected, for he would give me all that he had. I can assure your Highnesses," he adds, "that so much care would not have been taken of securing our effects in any part of Spain; as all our property was put together in one place near his palace, until the houses which he wanted to prepare for the custody of it were emptied; he immediately placed a guard of armed men, who watched during the whole night, and those on shore lamented as much as if they had been interested in our loss*. They are supposed to have migrated originally from the neighbouring continent, and are ascribed by Sir Walter Raleigh to the Arrowauk tribe of Guiana †.

Thus far we have preserved the necessary sobriety in collecting a description of the first inhabitants of St. Domingo; but when we come to speak of the territory itself, this caution ceases, for, no description that we have yet seen is adequate to the appearance,

CHAP. I.
1492.

Report of
them to his
monarch by
Columbus.

* Letter of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. See his Life in Churchill's Voyages, as written by his younger son Ferdinand, an ecclesiastic, and founder of the Columbine Library at Seville; also Herrera's General History.

Description
of the coun-
try.

† Raleigh's Voyages.

even

CHAP. I.
1492.

even at the present day, of a country which requires all the aid of romance to imagine, much less to describe.—Of fertility, which it requires but the fostering hand of man to guide to all the purposes of life, and of a climate the most salubrious among the Antilles, and in which longevity is general.—“In these delightful countries too,” observes Robertson, “Nature seemed to assume another form; every tree and plant, and animal, was different from those of the ancient hemisphere;”—Columbus boasted of having discovered the *original seat of Paradise*.—“In these delightful vales,” exclaims the Abbé Raynal*, “all the sweets of spring are enjoyed, without either winter or summer. There are but two seasons in the year, and they are equally fine. The ground always laden with fruit, and covered with flowers, realizes the delights and riches of poetical descriptions. Wherever we turn our eyes, we are enchanted with a variety of objects, coloured and reflected by the clearest light. The air is temperate in the day time, and the nights are constantly cool.”—“In a country of such magnitude,” says Edwards†, “diversified with plains of vast extent, and mountains of prodigious height, is probably to be found every species of soil which nature has assigned to all the tropical parts of the earth. In general it is fertile in the highest degree, every where well watered, and producing almost every variety of vegetable nature and beauty for use, for food, and luxury, which the lavish hand of a bountiful providence has bestowed on the richest portion of the globe.” “The possessions of *France* in this noble

* East and West Indies, vol. iv. 231.

† Historical Survey, chap. 19.

island,”

island," he continues, " were considered as the garden of the West Indies, and for beautiful scenery, richness of soil, salubrity, and variety of climate, might justly be deemed the paradise of the new world."—"What you have said," replies De Char-milly*, animadverting on the preceding passage, "is *nothing* when it is known that the extent of the French part is but one half of that of the Spanish division, and that this is yet more fertile than the French part, requiring only cultivators, &c." Of even such an account, when contemplating the various parts of St. Domingo in which we have been, with an eye well accustomed to tropical scenery, and satiated with the luxury natural to its soil, we could be almost inclined to say too, *this is nothing*.

It is not to be wondered at, that the inhabitants should consider the Spaniards, on their first interview, as preternatural beings, a circumstance, however, very favorable to their intercourse, and which might have been turned to more advantage in a better purpose than that to which it was applied. They possessed gold, which they found in the beds of the rivers, or washed by the heavy rains from the mountains, and which they gladly exchanged for bells, beads, or pins. A prince, or caíque of the country, who visited Columbus, was carried in a sort of seat upon mens' shoulders, and derived great respect from his attendants. He was extremely courteous, and presented the

* Lettre à M. Edwards, p. 70.

CHAP. I. admiral with many articles of curious workmanship, and received
1492. with complacency some trifles in return.

They had no idea of the imaginary value attributed by their visitors to gold, and readily pointed out the mountains, which yet retain their original name of Cibao, as the great repository of the ore they so much desired.

Distresses of
the great dis-
coverer.

It was at this period that Columbus lost one of his ships through the carelessness of a pilot, and experienced the tender ness which has been already mentioned. Of another of his ves sels out of three, he had procured no intelligence since his arrival, and suspected some treachery in the captain who commanded it. The third was of course insufficient to receive the whole of his crew, and he was desirous to return to Spain. The simplicity of the natives, and their terror from the incursions of the people who inhabited several islands to the south east, whom they called Caribbeans*, and who were of a very opposite character to themselves, being fierce and warlike, and devouring the flesh of their prisoners, gave confidence to Columbus, in the proposition of leaving a part of his crew behind, which would embrace the two advantages of forming a settlement on the island, and enable him to return to Spain immediately. They agreed without a

* M. de Charmilly constantly confounds the character of the inoffensive aborigines of St. Domingo, with that of the Charaibs, or Cannibals, and of the African negroes in their present state of slavery, and thence draws deductions, which must consequently fall to the ground.

murmur, and even assisted in the erection of a fort which was to be afterwards used as a means of their own subjection.

CHAP. I.
1493.

Thirty-eight Spaniards were appointed to remain on the island, under the command of Diego de Arado, a gentleman of Cordova, to whom Columbus communicated his own powers, and every thing requisite for their establishment; having first endeavoured very successfully to impress the natives in their behalf, by acts of beneficence and exhibitions of power. He promised to revisit them soon, and in the interim to make respectable mention of them to their country. Columbus left the little colony on the 4th of January 1493, and arrived in Spain in the month of March following.

1493.

Departure of
Columbus
after estab-
lishing a
colony.

The departure of Columbus had not long taken place, when, as too often happens, the garrison he had left behind grew impatient of restraint, and threw off the command of their newly appointed governor. Regardless of the prudent instructions which had been given them, the men who composed it became insolently independant, and gratified their avaricious and licentious desires at the expence of the natives, making a wasteful prey of their gold, their women, and their provisions; thus, instead of supporting the estimation in which they were held, exhibiting themselves as the most depraved of human beings. At length the caíque of Cibao, whose country the Spaniards chiefly infested, cut off a part of the colonists, surrounded the remainder, and destroyed their fort.

The colony
destroyed.

CHAP. I.
1493.

Return of
Columbus.

Columbus having employed himself for six months at the court of Spain in receiving the rewards of his distresses, and in interesting it in behalf of the splendid enterprize of which he was the author, no sooner accomplished his aim, and procured a sufficient fleet, under the papal sanction, on the part of the king of Spain, than he became impatient to revisit his colony. He accordingly departed on his second voyage, and after touching at several other islands towards the north west of his route, arrived at Hispaniola on the 22d of November following.

His surprize may easily be conceived to find that his colony no longer existed; and while the Spaniards in dismay were weeping over the fate of their countrymen, a brother of the friendly cauzique Guacanahari arrived, and related to him the account of their fate.

City of Isa-
bella built.

Instead of wasting his time by a retaliation of injuries, Columbus set about the erection of a town, of which he traced the scite in a large plain, near a spacious bay. He obliged every person in his suite, of whatever quality, to assist in a work so necessary to the common safety. This City, the first which obtained that appellation in the new world, was named Isabella, in honor of his patroness the queen of Castile.

Columbus experienced all the difficulties attendant on an infant colony, and a timely excursion in great pomp to the mountains of Cibao, which they found to answer the description of the Indians, in the possession of gold in considerable quantities, perhaps

haps only saved the establishment from final ruin. As soon as concord was restored by the prospect of the mines, Columbus again purposed to leave his colony for the prosecution of new discoveries. He appointed his brother Diego, with a council of officers, to govern in his absence; and a body of soldiers, under the command of Don Pedro Margarita, were sent to visit the different parts of the island, and to establish the authority of the Spaniards. He then set sail on the 24th of April, but after an absence of five months, during which time he had not been distant many leagues, and had experienced the most disastrous circumstances, he returned almost dead to the colony, where he found a brother Bartholomew, whom he had not seen for thirteen years, who had arrived in his absence, and whose unexpected appearance, after sustaining distresses scarcely inferior to his own, so much revived his spirits as to produce a speedy convalescence*.

CHAP. I.
1494.

During the absence of Columbus, the soldiery under Margarita had repeated the conduct of the first colony, while the necessities even of abstemious Spaniards rendered them unwelcome neighbours to a race who, requiring very little food to support a life of indolence and innocence, made but proportional provisions when any care was necessary. Maize, with a few vegetables,

* Bartholomew Columbus had been dispatched by the great navigator to England, to negotiate with Henry VII. his project of discoveries, in case he should be disappointed in Spain, as he had been in Portugal. On his voyage, the negotiator fell into the hands of pirates, who stripped him, and retained him several years a prisoner. At length, having escaped, he arrived in London, but in such poverty, that he was incapable of appearing at court on his mission, till, by drawing maps for sale, in the execution of which he was very ingenious, he procured decent clothing, and a moderate subsistence.

CHAP. I.
1494.

Conflict with
the Indians,
March 24,
1495.

and very little, if any animal food, formed their only necessary stock, and on this a body of men fortifying themselves in towns, must have made a formidable inroad. Famine, and the success of their former revolt, with long repeated grievance, at length provoked other attempts to rid themselves of the burthen, and Columbus was compelled to have recourse to arms, which he had hitherto with much solicitude avoided. The Indians were defeated by their precipitance: instead of the mode natural to them, of drawing the enemy into their fortresses, they rushed into an open plain, the Vega Real, and numbers being thrown into consternation by the first appearance of European warfare, the impetuosity of cavalry, (which they conceived, like the Thessalonians, to be Centaurs,) and the fierce onset of the *dogs**, they yielded to Columbus an easy victory; and those who were not taken prisoners, and reduced to servitude, resigned themselves entirely to despair. Such was the disparity of power, that though near an hundred thousand Indians took the field with missile weapons of their rude fashion, the victory was obtained by two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty large dogs, which formed the whole disposable force of the Spaniards.

Columbus employed several months in passing through the island to complete its subjection, and impose a tribute on all the natives above the age of fourteen, which was one of the first effects of a policy adopted against his own inclination to gratify the avarice of the Spanish court, at which he was attempted to be

* Of the mode of introducing these combatants into Spanish tactics, some account will be found in a future chapter.

undermined,

undermined, and which proved afterwards, however moderately used by himself, a means of tyranny and cruelty in the hands of others. This taxation was an insurmountable infringement on the habits of the Indians, to whom restraint on labour was an intolerable evil. It induced an attempt at another kind of hostility, that of starving the appetites of the Spaniards, on the gratification of whose voracity they conceived so much to depend. They pulled up the roots, and suspended all their simple agricultural operations, and retiring to inaccessible mountains, they produced in themselves the effects they vainly hoped to produce in their usurpers. Few as were their wants, they were soon totally unsupplied, and more than a third part became victims to their self-created famine.

It was at this time that divisions began to be created in the island through the intrigues of the enemies of Columbus in Spain; they procured one Aguado, a groom of the bed-chamber, to be sent commissioner to Hispaniola, who displayed all the insolence of mean minds disordered by sudden elevation. To relieve himself, and obtain an explanation with his enemies before his monarch, Columbus returned to Spain, leaving his brother Bartholomew as adelantado, or lieutenant-governor, and through a misplaced trust, appointing Francis Roldan, a gentleman of rank and character, chief justice.

Though as usual experiencing difficulties in his passage, he so far gained over Ferdinand and Isabella, as to obtain further provisions

CHAP. I.
1494.

Origin of the
slavery of the
natives.

1495.

1496.

Columbus
undermined,
and Aguado
sent commis-
sioner to His-
paniola.

Columbus
visits Spain,
and returns
with a fleet
of colonists,

CHAP. I.
1498.
after discover-
ing the
American
continent.
1498.

Capital of
St. Domingo
built.

visions for his colony, in a digested plan, and on a more permanent and extensive scale. Women, artificers, and husbandmen, were joined to the new expedition, but, as all his acquisitions received some alloy, to these were unadvisedly added the criminals from the jails, that fatal resource for population which has so often miscarried. It was almost two years, however, before Columbus set out on his third voyage, and several months after before he returned to Hispaniola, having in the interim discovered the continent of America, the crown of all his enterprises, and of all his sorrows. He returned weary and sick, but he found the colony in a state that admitted of no repose.

Don Diego Columbus had, at the desire of his brother, during his absence, removed the colony to a more eligible station on the opposite side of the island, where he had founded a city, which he dedicated to St. Domingo, or Dominica, in honor of the name of his father, and which remained so long the seat of Spanish dominion in the new world.

1499.

Restless spirits will sometimes be found, however inconsistently, in the highest stations, and political troubles arise from very unexpected sources; such was the case with Roldan, whose appointment was to have preserved peace and order; and, when Diego had reduced to subjection what remained of the island unsubdued by his brother, this man excited rebellion among his countrymen, and even the Indians, with such artifices, as caused the most alarming effects, and was only quelled by the temperate, conciliatory,

conciliatory, and expedient policy of Columbus. Of the bad consequences of this restoration of tranquillity, however, was the re-establishment of Roldan, and a concession to the avarice of the Spaniards, which was the first step in reducing the Indians to actual slavery. Lands being allotted to the mutineers in different parts of the island, the Indians of the district were appointed, in lieu of their tribute, to cultivate a certain portion of ground for the use of their new masters, from the characters of many of whom may be easily derived the origin of numberless calamities to that unhappy people.

Of the mutiny, the effects were by no means terminated in appearances, the progress of discovery was stopped, and such false representations were made by his opponents, that a knight of Calatravia, called Francis de Bovadillo, was sent to supersede Columbus, and by means known only to courts, to send him immediately a criminal in chains to Spain. Thus closed the fifteenth century in St. Domingo, a period which, while it saw the founder of an empire disgraced and wretched, afforded a better prospect to the colony than had hitherto appeared. Such provisions had been made for working the mines, and cultivating the country, as assured *not* only its existence, but a considerable revenue to the monarch, who suffered Columbus to be circumvented and abused.

Bovadillo proceeded, as might be expected, to render himself popular, by gratifying the entire inclinations of his countrymen. He numbered all the remaining Indians, and dividing them into classes,

CHAP. I.
1499.

1500.

Bovadillo
appointed
governor.

CHAP. I.
1500.

classes, distributed them as property among the Spaniards, who, disregarding the only true means of obtaining wealth by agriculture, sent them to the mines, and imposed on them such a disproportioned labour as threatened their utter and speedy extinction.

1501.

Ovando go-
vernor.

To prevent this dreadful event, and preserve the shew of decency to the world, on the arrival of Columbus in Spain, and his appeal to the justice of Ferdinand, another knight of the military order of Alcantara, Nicholas de *Ovando*, was sent to replace *Bovadillo*. Regulations were adopted to prevent the licentious spirit which had arisen in the colony under his government; and, to check the inordinate progress of wealth, the gold was ordered to be all brought to a smelting-house, where one half should become the property of the crown. Columbus remained in Spain many months soliciting attention in vain, till his proposition of an attempt at discoveries to the east was accepted; and he sat out on his fourth voyage in May, 1502.

Ovando brought to St. Domingo the most respectable armament hitherto seen in the new world, consisting of thirty-two ships, with two thousand five hundred settlers. On his arrival, Bovadillo, with Roldan and his accomplices, were ordered to return to Spain.

Columbus having experienced some inconvenience from one of his vessels, altered the course in which he steered, and bore away for St. Domingo, with a hope of exchanging it for some ship of Ovando's fleet; eighteen of which, however, he found

laden, and preparing to depart for Spain. He requested permission to enter the harbour, (first acquainting Ovando with his destination,) that he might negotiate an exchange, and avoid a violent hurricane that he saw approaching, and which he advised the departing fleet also to avoid. To neither of these objects did he obtain an acquiescence. He, however, took precautions against the tempest, and saved himself, while nearly the whole of the eighteen ships of his enemies were lost. In them perished Bovadillo, Roldan, and the greater part of those who had persecuted Columbus and the Indians, with the whole of their ill-gotten wealth, amounting in worth to upwards of fifty thousand pounds sterling; a sum at that time equal to many multiplications of its value at present.

CHAP. I.
1502.

Columbus refused admission to the island of his own discovery.

Columbus did not long remain on the inhospitable shore of a country to which he was refused access, by those who owed to him entirely its possession, but prosecuted his voyage in the fruitless hope of discovering the Indian ocean.

In the mean time Ovando, who had received a commission more favorable to humanity than his predecessors, relieved the Indians from compulsory toil, and the colony, though retarded by deficiency of labourers, began to advance in its approaches to a regular society; but, alas! in no instance is the constant variance between justice and expedience in what is called the social state to be more regretted than in the present. The Spaniards became incapable, without the assistance of the inhab-

1503.

D
bitants.

CHAP. I.

1503.

1504.

bitants, (which no inducement could procure) to cultivate the soil, or to work the mines, and many of the new settlers died of disorders incident to the climate, not yet understood, while others quitted the island when deprived of their slaves. These circumstances demanded some attention, and the consequence once more returned to the unoffending Indians.

Columbus
again visits
St. Domingo.

Columbus, persevering through misfortune, this year again paid a visit to his favorite isle, after having been not only unsuccessful in his attempt at farther discoveries, but a sufferer by complete shipwreck, and detained near twelve months in the island of Jamaica, which he had discovered nine years before, but of which no farther notice had been taken. Ovando appears to have been cautious of admitting into the country, under his government, a man of such vast powers, and to whom belonged, by the most determinate of all rules, the dominion of a world he had found: he at length, however, furnished the means for his escape, and received him with every public honor on his arrival at St. Domingo.

He remained only a month upon the island; with his usual ill-fortune, encountering violent storms, sailed seven hundred leagues with jury-masts on his way to Spain, where, exhausted by his sufferings, and disgusted with the dissimulation and injustice of a monarch whose reign he had immortalized, he died fifteen months after*, aged fifty-nine years. It is useless to

On the 20th of May, 1506.

lament

lament in this place the melancholy end of a man whose memory is eternized. The recollection of it rather communicates a balm to the sorrows of inferior multitudes ; and the details of history will apply the event with advantage to the instruction of future ages.

CHAP. I.
1504.

A few months before Columbus, died his patroness Isabella; so that a powerful influence was withdrawn from the interests of humanity, as they regarded the new world; and as Ovando began to experience the ill effects of a liberal conduct, he began also to relax in the execution of the royal edicts. He made a new distribution of the Indians among the Spaniards, with the difference only, that they were to be paid for their labour, reduced the royal share of the gold to one third, and afterwards to a fifth part; for which he obtained, (with better success than Columbus,) the sanction of the court.

1505.

Notwithstanding the apparent mildness of the present governor, it was at this period that the rage for cruelties commenced which have stained the page of history with more horrors than can be conceived by those possessing even an ordinary love for the species. No treachery was too gross, no violation of sex or dignity too painful for this unhappy people in the hands of the Spaniards; all regulations tending to mitigate the rigour of their servitude were forgotten, while their labour was increased. Ferdinand conferred grants of them as rewards to his courtiers,

Cruelty of
the Span-
iards to the
Indians.

CHAP. I.
1505.

Flourishing
state of the
colony.

1506.

who farmed them out, being no longer treated or considered but as animals of an inferior species, of no other use than as instruments of wealth, and I could almost say, subjects of oppression. At their expence, however, the colony increased in riches and in consequence; for with such rapidity and success were the mines explored, that for several years the gold brought into the royal smelting-house, amounted in value to more than half a million sterling, (according to the present standard of money). Sudden fortunes arose among private persons, which tempted others to embrace the opportunity of enriching themselves both at the expence of health and reason; and the effect was for a time highly advantageous to the colonists, and to the government of the mother country. Like the progress of a conflagration, however, the blaze was short in proportion to its extent. The same exertions which exhausted the unhappy Indians enriched the Spaniards, both as related to the nature of the operations, and to the government of Ovando, who is described to have introduced much wisdom and justice into his jurisdiction over his countrymen, but a proportionate rigour towards the original inhabitants of the country.

Ovando first gave a permanence to the laws he had established by executing them impartially, the only means of procuring regard for any establishment. He seems also to have attended to every object of advantage to the colony, and, among others, endeavoured to turn the attention of some of the Spaniards to the

the more laudable pursuits of agriculture. Having obtained from the Canary Islands some slips of the sugar-cane, which throve exceedingly, he tempted them to form plantations, and to erect sugar-works, which fortunately became an important support when the bowels of the earth were exhausted. The conduct and success of Ovando soon apprized Ferdinand of the value of those discoveries, he had hitherto appeared to depreciate, and on the author of which he had conferred only disgrace and misery; he accordingly set about forming commercial and ecclesiastical regulations, and at length established a system of policy the most profound, and every way calculated to secure to Spain the entire advantages of her colonies.

While these provisions were taking place for its government, some circumstances began to make their appearance, for which, however to be dreaded, no remedy could be found; and therefore, notwithstanding all other advantages, immediately threatened the dissolution of the colony. The consumption of the natives, which was the natural consequence of the inconsiderate oppression of the Spaniards, (and in whom rested the source of all their prosperity,) became so evident, as to afford serious cause for alarm. Fatigue, to which they were unequal; diseases, the result of an inattention to their change of habit; famine, the effect of preferring so long the search of wealth in the mines to agriculture; and self-violence, the consequence of despair, conspired so forcibly, as to reduce their number upwards of 40,000 in the space of fifteen years, there remaining but about

CHAP. I.
1506.
Culture of
sugar intro-
duced.

1507.

Rapid de-
crease of the
native popu-
lation.

60,000

CHAP. I.
1507.

60,000 out of more than a million, to which the original population amounted *.

1508.

This diminution continued with such rapidity, as to occasion a stagnation not only of the colonial improvements, but of the common operations of life, which demanded immediate relief, and Ovando in consequence adopted an expedient which was again the source of enormities that seemed to increase in proportion to the progress of their society. The description will afford a mild example of the temper and conduct experienced by the simple, and benevolent beings of whom, Columbus, with an ingenuousness natural to great minds, had spoken in such exalted terms to the Spanish court. He proposed to seduce the inhabitants of the Lucay Islands †, which had been previously discovered, to Hispaniola, "under the pretence that they might be civilized with more facility, and instructed to greater advantage in the Christian religion, if they were united to the Spanish

* M. Charmilly, (*Lettre à M. Edwards*), has a long, and, in some respects, sufficiently accurate calculation, to prove the original diminutive population of St. Domingo, in opposition to Mr. Edwards's general description of the massacre of a million of inhabitants. He falls, however, as is usual with those influenced by a spirit of party, into self-contradictions and inconsistency: for he alludes to a perfect knowledge of the topographical antiquities of the country, the existence of which he has proved to be impossible; and he supposes his author to have believed in the instantaneous sacrifice of a million of persons in the four chief mines of the country. General assertions are certainly distracting, and Mr. Edwards is too frequently superficial; but in this instance he is perfectly right. It is from Herrera, the most correct and intelligent of the Spanish historians, whom Dr. Robertson has also adopted, that the fact in the present text is derived, and not Oviedo, to whose amplifications M. de Charmilly ascribes the supposed error. Benzoni states the original population at two millions.

† The same with the Bahamas.

colony,

colony, and placed under the immediate inspection of the missionaries settled there." Ferdinand, deceived by this artifice, or willing to connive at an act of violence which policy represented as necessary, gave his assent to the proposal. Several vessels were fitted out for the Lucayos, the commanders of which informed the natives, with whose language they were now well acquainted, that they came from a delicious country, in which the departed ancestors of the Indians resided, by whom they were sent to invite their descendants to resort thither to partake of the bliss enjoyed there by happy spirits. That simple people listened with wonder and credulity; and fond of visiting their relations and friends in that happy region, followed the Spaniards with eagerness. By this artifice above forty thousand were decoyed into Hispaniola to share in the sufferings which were the lot of the inhabitants of that island, and to mingle their groans and tears with those of that wretched race of men *.

The ardour for discovery, which had languished during the anxiety for the wealth of the mines, began to be renewed by an expedition under Juan Ponce de Leon, (who commanded under Ovando in the eastern district,) to the island of Puerto Rico, which in a few years was subjected to the fate of Hispaniola. Ovando also commissioned an officer, named Sebastian de

CHAP. I.
1508.

Natives of
the Lucayos
seduced to
supply the
deficiency of
labourers.

Cuba and
Porto Rico
explored by
expeditions
from St. Do-
mingo.

* Hist. of Amer. vol. i. p. 263. I have quoted this from Dr. Robertson, as the best and most moderate description. His authorities are, Herrera, Dec. 1. lib. 7. c. 3.; Oviedo, lib. 3. c. 6.; Gomara Hist. c. 41.

CHAP. I.
1508.

Columbus had supposed to be a part of the neighbouring continent.

Honor and
integrity of a
court of jus-
tice.

*Diego, the
son of Colum-
bus, restored
to the govern-
ment.*

1509.

But though late and unexpected, by a perseverance the most constant, a degree of justice was at length to be accorded to Columbus in the person of his son Diego. Almost wearied out in the courtly delay which had exhausted his father, he determined upon the bold alternative of an appeal against his monarch to a council for Indian affairs, which he had himself established. Unequal as the parties were, and recent as was its own existence, the court honourably sustained its integrity, and determined on the side of justice, even against the king : with this decision, and the support of powerful connections, subsequently acquired by marriage, he soon obtained (though but a partial concession of his rights) the government of St. Domingo, and such privileges as enabled him to arrive in the island with more splendour and magnificence than had hitherto been witnessed : Ovando was of course recalled. That splendour, and the numerous retinue with which it was supported, while it added lustre to the settlement, effected no other change to the unhappy aborigines, than the seal of a more determinate slavery, by a numerical division of them among the Spaniards, according to the rank of the latter.

The destruction of the labourers proportionally decreasing the produce of wealth to their masters, naturally excited an impatience in those who had been glutted with wealth, and satiated with dissipation. They had already began to contemplate other countries,

countries, whose inhabitants were yet unexhausted; they had established a pearl-fishery at the small island of Cubagua, and lodged a small colony on the continent, at the gulf of Darien, under the brave and enterprising, though as usual, unfortunate, Vasco Nugnez de Balboa, when Diego Columbus made a proposition to which they readily acceded. This was the establishment of a colony in the neighbouring island of Cuba, to which an armament immediately embarked under the command of Diego Velasquez, one of the companions of the great discoverer on his second voyage. The only circumstance concerning this expedition, as it regards the island which is more immediately under our consideration, besides its relief from a number of discontented members, was the opposition of Hatuey, a caique, or prince, who having fled thither from St. Domingo, indignant at the destruction of his innocent subjects, might naturally be expected to oppose the intrusion of their destroyers into the place of his refuge. His feeble party (for they were of the same inhostile nature with his former subjects) were soon dispersed, himself taken prisoner, and condemned to the flames under the *barbarous maxim*, which considered him only as a slave, who had taken arms against his master. "When Hatuey," says Dr. Robertson*, "was fastened to the stake, a Franciscan Friar, labouring to convert him, promised him immediate admittance into the joys of Heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith."—"Are there any Spaniards," says he, (after some pause), "in that region of bliss which you describe?" "Yes," replied the monk, "but only such as are worthy and good." "The best of them," re-

CHAP. I.
1509.

1511.

Bravery and
repartee of
Hatuey, a
caique of
St. Domingo.

* Hist. of America, vol. i. p. 277. edit. 1800.

CHAP. I.
1511. joined the indignant cazique, “have neither worth nor goodness; I will not go to a place, where I may meet with one of that accursed race!”

Another expedition soon took place from St. Domingo, to assist in the discovery of the South Sea, by the justly celebrated Balboa, from whose incursions in the continent on which he was established, he had sent home such quantities of gold, as tempted a number by no means contemptible to join him. It comes not into my promise to shed fruitless tears on the perverted fortunes of this truly great man; his name, consigned to unfading memorials, has, I trust, its use with those who possess a fertile mind without the power to sustain its operations.—Though the passage to the Indian ocean was not obtained, as was expected, they reached the South Sea, and prepared the way for more important discoveries.

1514. In 1514, died more peaceably than he had lived, Bartholomus, the uncle of the present Governor; a man of very respectable powers, and an unsullied character; who had occasionally filled offices of high importance in the island, and who, it would appear, was more closely connected with its history than his contemporaries have enabled us to state.

The government of Diego Columbus was neither inefficient nor violent; neither did he want inclination or ability to render the colony both prosperous and happy: but that justice which had been unwillingly accorded him, on the part of the deceased

Monarch,

Monarch, was, as much as possible, impeded by every political artifice that could be employed. The meaner officers of the government were encouraged to thwart the authority of the governor, in a variety of measures, and at length the power of distributing the *Repartimientos* was created into an office, and conferred upon Roderigo Albuquerque, the relation of a confidential minister called *Zapata*. On the loss of this necessary advantage, in addition to the embarrassment he had already experienced, Diego resolved on returning to Spain for the purpose of remonstrance: leaving behind him the best administration in his power, reached his destination in safety, but he soon found with very small hopes of redress in the object of his voyage.

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1514.

A minister,
named *Albu-*
querque, ap-
pointed to
the island.

1517.

In his new capacity Albuquerque discovered no other care than to repair his own indigent circumstances, for which purpose he first ordered a renumeration of the Indians, (now reduced to 14,000,) and then put them up to sale in different lots. This was the only stroke wanting to complete the extinction of this unhappy race, by a consequent separation from the habitations to which they had been accustomed, and the imposition of additional labour for the indemnification of their purchasers.

As is too frequently the case when political injuries become irreparable, those measures which, earlier adopted, would have preserved a sacrificed people; now served, only to excite useless controversy and public disturbance; the Monks, who, since the ecclesiastical establishment of Ferdinand, had arisen to consider-

CHAP. I.

1517.

able power, began to oppose their eloquence publicly to the system on which the natives were reduced to absolute slavery, or rather, consigned to perish in progressive misery. They could not be insensible to the impolicy of the measure; and, no doubt, impressed with the inutility of a mission to a people who were rapidly ceasing to exist, they had early remonstrated, but appear to have been easily silenced, till the present period. Even now, but a part of the mission, the Dominicans, stood forth to represent the mild precepts of religion; the Franciscans attached themselves to the more popular cause; and while they could not unblushingly defend the *Repartimientos*, palliated the principle on the ground of expedience, so often improperly assumed in society.

*Las Casas
defends the
Indians.*

The consequence was, an application to the king by both parties, of which the only circumstance of importance, was the interference of *Las Casas*, a man of romantic disposition, and benevolent mind; whose exertions, though unsuccessful, were neither wanting in genius or perseverance; whose character cannot be omitted even in the compression of abridgment. It may be previously observed, that the appeal was terminated on the side of the Franciscans, a few regulations of their labour only, being for decency promulgated; Albuquerque pursuing his violence and rapacity with impunity.

Bartholomew de las Casas, (a Clergyman,) came hither on the second voyage of Columbus, and who had early exerted himself in the cause of the Indians, was not to be diverted from his purpose; finding the rapacious governor deaf to all postulation

postulation that militated against his immediate interest, he embarked for Spain, to make a personal appeal to the Emperor, and to exert that eloquence, of which he was so eminently possessed, in their behalf. Aided by fortuitous circumstances, he was particularly successful with the Emperor, then on the point of death, and with Cardinal Ximenes, who became Regent. The effect of this success was the appointment of three Superintendants of the colonies, to whom were added a lawyer of probity named Zuazo, with judicial power, and Las Casas, with the title of Protector of the Indians. These soon arrived in St. Domingo, and began their career by the auspicious act of liberating all the natives who had been granted to the Spanish courtiers, or to any person not residing in America. To avoid the influence of party spirit, neither of those orders, who had contended the subject were suffered to have a member among these Superintendants; they were composed of three Monks of the order of St. Jerome, who appear to have exercised not only ability, but a knowledge of the world, which is seldom to be obtained in a cloister. The result of this mission was, as might be expected, only negatively advantageous to the Indians, without whose labour, reduced as it was, the colony could not be hoped to exist; the best regulations that could be formed were adopted for the prevention of excessive rigour and of cruelty towards them, while, without coercion, they ceased to work, and were obstinate in proportion to their power.

Las Casas still dissatisfied with any thing less than, the entire freedom of the Aborigines, and finding no countenance in the island,

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1517.

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1517.

island, with undiminished perseverance, again returned to Spain. and found Ximenes, as he had before found Ferdinand, on the point of death. With the Emperor, (Charles V.) who immediately arrived from the Low Countries, and with his Flemish minister, he prevailed so far, as to induce the recal of the superintendent and his colleague Zuazo; and Roderigo de Figuerra was appointed Chief Justice of the Island, with directions to moderate the sufferings of the Indians, and to prevent their threatened extinction. Finding that this, was all that could be accomplished, in the hurry of imagination which always marks such characters, (not more eminently successful on some occasions, than dangerous on others,) Las Casas now proposed, in support of his favourite scheme, to substitute, in the place of those he wished to liberate from slavery in their own country, the inhabitants of a distant one, whom he appeared to consider more capable of labour, and more patient under sorrow.

The earliest advantage of the Portugueze in Africa had arisen from a trade in slaves*, but it had been abolished, and was considered ineffectual. About fourteen years before, the importation of a few slaves had been permitted by Ferdinand, but not as a public concern, and in 1511 the number was increased, without producing any effect on the population. This plan, which had been peremptorily refused by Ximenes, was adopted by Charles, who granted a patent to one of his Flemish favorites for an importation of the limited number of four

* For the origin of this traffic the reader is referred to a future chapter, to which it is more closely connected.

thousand,

thousand; this privilege being sold to some Genoese merchants, proved the first formation of a regular trade for supplying the island, which has continued to increase through the whole Archipelago.

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1517.

Even the farther introduction of other Slaves produced so small a change in the Colony, that the invention of Las Casas was directed to other substitutes; and with a more plausible view, it occurred to him, that if *Labourers* could be induced to emigrate from the Mother Country, their habits of life would enable them to bear the effects of the climate under agricultural operations; and that they might, by soon becoming opulent citizens, introduce habits of industry, and a promotion of virtue:—but, though countenanced by the ministry, his laudable plan was defeated by an ecclesiastic, who had long opposed him, the Bishop of Burgos. Thus deprived, of all his hopes with regard to his favourite Island, this extraordinary man turned his attention to the Continent, and his schemes to the prevention of similar abuses in that part of the new world, which was yet but little explored. After many unsuccessful applications in behalf of this colony of labourers, he at length obtained permission to form one in Cumaná; but with such opposition, that the number of colonists whom he could persuade to accompany him did not exceed two hundred. It is not within our plan to follow this unfortunate party through their various distresses, occasioned by the bewildered cruelty of their countrymen:—prevented from arriving at their destined country by the detestation which was every where excited against the Spanish name, and unpopular with Spaniards as the followers

1518.

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1518.

of Las Casas, they became the innocent victims of both parties; while their leader, driven from every asylum, shut out from all resource, abandoned, and houseless, took refuge in the Dominican convent in the city of St. Domingo; where he soon after assumed the habit of the order, and, as it may be readily supposed, did not long survive the death of all his happiness.

Expedition
of Diego
Ocampo
from St.
Domingo
against Cu-
mana.
1520.

The occasion of that violence which had every way met the party of Las Casas, originated more particularly in the predacious excursions of the Spaniards, who would seem in these piracies to have left no means of cruelty or depredation unattempted. When, by the extinction of the Natives, every exertion of industry began to stagnate in St. Domingo, and even Slaves, were sold at a price beyond the reach of many, they fitted out a sort of Privateers, which, cruizing along the coast of the continent, under the pretence of trading with the unsuspecting natives; whenever they found an opportunity, seized upon and sold them as slaves on their return: this conduct, however, combined all the Indians to revenge it, and in consequence, among others, two Dominican Missionaries were killed. This was the signal for more extensive hostilities, and Diego Ocampo, with five ships, and three hundred men, were dispatched to lay waste the country of Cumana, and to transport all the inhabitants that could be procured as slaves to St. Domingo.

About this time, to add to the embarrassments of the colony, it suffered considerably from those extraordinary swarms of ants

which sometimes used to infest the Archipelago, and injure the vegetation. After ineffectual many endeavours to destroy them, the Spaniards (according to Herrera) determined on appealing to the saints; but some time elapsed before they could fix upon one for so singular a business; at last, however, being relieved from the disastrous effects of the insects, and happening to invoke St. Saturninus at the same time, that saint acquired the merit of a miracle.

CHAP. I.
1520.

The return of Diego Columbus to Spain appears to have been attended with some circumstances which are yet unknown, for he shewed no inclination to return to the new world, till we find him in 1523 called to Jamaica to suppress a revolt of the Indians, in the absence of Francis de Garay, its governor, who had embarked in an expedition against Panuco, which had, without his knowledge, already submitted to the government. Among the political arrangements of Ferdinand, was that which separated from the power of Diego the island of Jamaica, attaching it to that division of the continent, not subject to his dominion: he, however, acted with a spirit no less creditable to his character than on former occasions, and regained the island; which afterwards descended to his heirs, and, yielded the title of Marquis, among other honors, which descended to his family. Diego Columbus died in 1525.

1523.

1525.
Death of
Diego Co-
lumbus.

To return to the domestic situation of Hispaniola, that quick decline, which we have already described, continued to be acce-

1528.

CHAP. I.

1528.

City of St.
Domingo.

lerated, by the cruelty and impolicy of those, to whom no means were exceptionable in the search of wealth. In external appearances, however, this decline was not perceptible, and the capital of St. Domingo, as is the case with all falling states, still presented an august reverse to the internal poverty of its inhabitants. In 1528, the city is described by some Spanish historians, and particularly Oviedo, who was there at that time, as "not inferior to any in Spain, the houses mostly built of stone like those of Barcelona, but the streets much better, being large and plain, crossing each other at right angles. With the sea on the right, and the river Ozamo on the left, health and beauty were united more than in any other part of the world. Ships heavy laden discharged their cargoes in a manner under the house windows. The citadel, which stood exactly in the centre, also gave security to an extensive command. The houses were fit to receive any nobleman of Spain with his suite, and the grandeur of Don Diego's palace as viceroy was beyond conception, and every way fitting to receive the king his master. The cathedral was of exquisite workmanship, and well endowed; the dignity of its bishop and canons well supported. There were three monasteries, dedicated to St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Mary de Mercedes, and an hospital founded by Michael Passamont, the treasurer-general."

How much were it to have been wished, that such public splendour had argued equal prosperity; that it did not, however, is certain, from every account; and Benzoni asserts, that towards the

the middle of the sixteenth century, scarce one hundred and fifty of the native Indians remained alive *.

CHAP. I.
1550.

The dealers in slaves, however, beginning to lessen their demands, as time and competition affected their trade, the colony might have once more recovered itself by an attention to agriculture; but that cruelty which appeared to be inherent in the breasts of these early colonists, (increased by disappointment and pecuniary difficulties,) excited in their new servants a spirit of insurrection that soon broke into open revolt, and which, though unsuccessful, compelled their masters to a relaxation of their severity and inordinate avarice.

The consequences produced by the smallest degree of moderation, became soon perceptible in the increased cultivation, and sugar, tobacco, cocoa, ginger, cotton, peltry, &c. were shipped for Spain in such quantities, as induced the best hopes of their increase continuing; but these flattering hopes were not to be realized, the Spaniards remaining inactive, weak, unprotected, and useless.

In 1586, Sir Francis Drake came before the island, and pil-
laged the capital with a degree of barbarity, surprizing in the
present refinement of European warfare. The invaders held
possession of St. Domingo for a month, during the latter part of

1586.
Invasion of
Sir Francis
Drake.

* Benzoni, Nov. Orb. Hist.

F 2

which

CHAP. I.
1586.

which they employed every means from day-break, till the heat became intense in the forenoon, to destroy the beautiful edifices that surrounded the town, but on which, from being composed of stone, fire made no great progress, and ordinary means became too laborious; after two hundred sailors, with as many soldiers to protect them, had been employed for several days only to destroy one third part of the town, and were completely wearied with the task, they condescended to accept of about 7000l. sterling as a ransom for the rest.

Among the severities which were practised, the following will afford an example, which, notwithstanding its cruelty, some will think from the circumstances of the times, not badly imagined: a negro boy having been sent on a message to the Spanish governor with a flag of truce, was run through the body by some straggling Spanish officers, and only lived to complain to the English general; he immediately ordered two friars, who were his prisoners, to be taken to the same spot, and hanged, commissioning another at the same time to acquaint the Spaniards, that until the party, who had thus murdered the general's messenger, should be delivered into his hands, there should no day pass without the execution of two prisoners; on the following day the offender was produced, and his countrymen compelled to be his executioners.

* See the account of this expedition in Hackluit's Voyages.—Sir Anthony Shirley pursued a similar conduct in Jamaica in 1596.

The

The decline of the mother country could not fail to weaken the situation of her colonists, who had suffered neglect, even from the importance of her acquisitions at home. Those who remained, rather from a want of power to quit the island, than any other cause, sunk into a kind of debility and sloth that resigned them to every evil. Gradually degenerating from the spirit and manners of their ancestors, they became little anxious about any thing beyond an indulgence, as degrading as fatal. Associating in common with their female slaves, they propagated a people of almost every *grade* of colour, and became entirely a mixed colony, of which, Spaniards formed in fact a very small part. Their mines were deserted, agriculture was neglected, and their cattle ran wild in the plains. They employed themselves, as may be expected from such an irregular establishment, not only in an illicit foreign trade, but in piracies against the property of their own country, of which the practice of fitting out ships clandestinely, for the purpose of procuring slaves, (as has been already observed,) afforded them the best opportunities, and a secret understanding with the ships of war, guaranteed their safety and success. Instead of an attempt to remedy this evil, of which there were many means *, the short-sighted policy of the Spanish court chose rather to complete the dejection of the islanders, by demolishing the sea-ports which had been illicitly employed, and compelling the inhabitants to

CHAP. I.
1586.

Degenera-
tion of the
Spanish co-
lony.

1600.

* Among others, even the Flemish were refused the permission they requested to clear the lands of this fertile country, and revive its splendour by the more solid pursuits of agriculture.

CHAP. I.
1600.

retire to the interior of the country. History is silent, during a considerable period of the existence of this miserable people, whose actions could indeed admit but of little variety; who are described as “ demi-savages, plunged in the extremes of sloth, living upon fruits and roots, in cottages without furniture, and most of them, without clothes *.”—“ Their slaves had little more to do,” says Raynal, “ than to swing them in their hammocks;” nor can a more striking proof be given of the wretched situation of that country which had supplied empires with gold, than the necessity to which it was reduced, of adopting pieces of leather as a circulating medium among its inhabitants †.

1620.

While the government of Spain, however, was so remiss in regard to the colony, which might be considered as the centre of their possessions in the new world, they were as much the reverse, with respect to the admission of any other power into a participation of its produce, or its territory:—their caution extended even to absurdity; and all ships were stopped who were met beyond the tropics. Notwithstanding this care, during a war with Spain, the English and French, had become acquainted with the Windward Islands, (whose warlike and sullen inhabitants, the Charibs, generally repelled the Spaniards,) equipped a small fleet to interrupt the Spanish vessels in those seas, whose piracies were not interrupted by peace; in conse-

* The Abbé Raynal,—History of the Trade and Settlements in the East and West Indies, vol. iv. p. 18.

† Edwards's History of the British West Indies, b. ii.

quence

quence of the jealous policy already described. A part of these under an enterprizing Englishman named Warner, and the captain of a French privateer called Desnambuc, took possession of the island of St. Christopher on the same day *, and divided it into two equal shares; the fierce inhabitants, who had been more favorable to the enemies of the Spaniards than to themselves, retiring from the parts on which they were fixed, telling them nevertheless, with usual Indian acuteness, that "land must be very bad, or very scarce with them, since they had traversed such a distance with so much difficulty, to seek for it among savages."

CHAP. I.
1623.

The court of Madrid immediately alarmed, at the vicinity of these members of two active and industrious nations, ordered Frederic of Toledo, on his way against the Dutch in Brazil, to attack these newly established powers while they were yet weak in their new establishment; they were soon defeated, and those who were not either killed or taken prisoners, fled for refuge to the neighbouring islands. The greater part, however, returned to their possessions as soon as the danger was over, except a small number who remained on the little barren isle of Tortuga lying off the north-west coast of Hispaniola, and within a few leagues of Port Paix. These, inconsiderable as they were in their outset, were the founders of a race which giving rise to

1630.

* Some writers state that Mr. Warner had obtained possession two years before, and had suffered the loss of his plantations by an hurricane.

CHAP. I.
1630. the French colony that is soon to become an important part of this history, and being hitherto but imperfectly described, demands particular attention.

1655. Previously, however, it is but justice to the Spanish colony to say, that after the first surprize at seeing a large English fleet commanded by Admiral Penn, with nine thousand land forces under Colonel Venables, (the same which afterwards conquered Jamaica,) who had been dispatched by Oliver Cromwell to obtain for England a portion of the new world, they compelled the enemy to re-embark with disgrace. A want of unanimity was the apology made on the part of the English, who ill brooking such a reception, determined on no alternative between victory and death on their next and more successful attempt.

1660. By the middle of the seventeenth century these incursers, of whom I am about to speak, had received some accessions from the French colonies, which had by that time been established, and assumed an appearance as formidable as it was singular. They had gradually obtained notice under the appellation of Buccaneers from their mode of curing animal food, which was derived from the savages, being slowly dried, or rather smoked, over fires of green wood, in places from thence called by the Spanish term, *Buccans*, a custom yet retained by the Spaniards. As they were for a time destitute of wives and children, they associated pairs, (as recorded by former historians); property was common, and

survivor inherited the residence; theft was unknown amongst them, though no precaution was used against it, a virtue they borrowed from the savages. They seldom disputed, but if any were obstinate, they decided with arms; and if any foul appearance occurred in the combat, as a back or side wound, the assassin was put to death. Every member of the fraternity assumed a warlike name on admission into the body, which descended to their several successors. Their dress consisted of a shirt died with the blood of the animals they killed in hunting; an apron, or trowsers, yet dirtier; a leathern girdle, containing a short sabre, and other knives; a sort of military cap, and shoes, without stockings. A Buccaneer was satisfied if he could supply himself with a small gun, and a pack of dogs, to the number of twenty or thirty. Their employment consisted chiefly in hunting the bulls, with which the Spaniards had furnished the neighbouring island; which they killed chiefly for the skins, regaling, perhaps, on a small part of the flesh, preparing it sometimes with a seasoning of pimento, and the juice of orange.

CHAP. I.
1660.

The remainder of the indolent colonists could not, however, bear with the idea of more active neighbours; which gave rise to several unavailing conflicts, that ended in a determination to destroy all the bulls by a general chase, a scheme which had the effect of turning the attention of the Buccaneers to the more permanent pursuits of agriculture.—Tobacco soon became a profitable culture, which, with the produce of several excursions

CHAP. I.
1660.

sions made by the most intrepid in their cruisers, amply repaid their difficulties. However, another Spanish armament was commissioned for their extirpation, which inspirited them to deeds that will live to future ages—pregnant with bravery and horror.

Possessed of an island eight leagues long and two broad, in a fine air, and with capability of improvement, unshackled by the prescriptions of ancient society, with a vast territory open to their predatory incursions, and numerous channels accessible to their maritime courage, the success of the Buccaneers may be easily supposed to have spread. To this lawless, yet far from unsalutary dominion, those who sought a refuge from the tyranny of creditors, or of want, as well as enterprizing spirits without opportunity for action, in their mother-country, (particularly from Normandy,) had a resource, which formed a considerable acquisition to its power. Envious of the establishment, the court of Spain made an attempt to dislodge them, which is worthy of notice, only from its wonted cruelty; the general of the galloons exerted his commission while the greater part were at sea, or hunting on the large island; he put all he found to death, leaving it as desolate as possible.

The effects of these cruelties, and the sentiments of revenge they inspired, produced a closer combination of the Buccaneers; for which purpose they agreed to sacrifice personal independence, to social safety, and accordingly appointed a leader,

leader, much in the same way, as the origin of all monarchies; as they were yet composed of English and French united, an Englishman, distinguished for his prudence and valour, named WILLES, was the first appointed, who appears to have excited jealousy, by an invitation of his countrymen to the settlement, and the use too frequently made of power, when its origin becomes forgotten in its advantages. A governor-general had, therefore, no sooner been appointed over the French windward islands,* than finding the opportunities probably agreeable, and being, perhaps, privately solicited, he sent a small force from St. Vincent, who, joined by the Frenchmen on the island, suddenly ordered all the English to withdraw from it; when supposing an order of such, audacity supported by a much greater force, they immediately agreed to evacuate the island, and never returned. They still pursued the bold career in which they had embarked, and afterwards obtained regular commissions from the English government to act against the common enemy, though the settlements and navigations of the Spaniards continued the prominent objects of their hostility. One of them afterwards arrived at situations of honour and emolument, having received the dignity of

CHAP. I.
1660.

* This Governor, who was named De Poincy, appears to have held his appointment on the same tenor as Willes, receiving it when the increased followers of Warner and Desnambuc had, in 1660, joined in a treaty independent of their respective governments, which had regarded them with indifference. By this treaty it is pleasing to see the native Charibs considered, Dominica and St. Vincent's being appropriated to their reception. According to their respective rights of conquest, France obtained Guadaloupe, Martinico, Grenada, and some less considerable acquisitions; and England was confirmed in the possession of Barbadoes, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, and several other islands of little value. St. Christopher's still belonged to both nations.—See *Raynal's History, Vol. III. p. 284. &c.*

CHAP. I.
1660.

knighthood, and being advanced to the high office of lieutenant-governor of Jamaica! His character, however, will be given more regularly among those of the other Buccaneers, to whom, as original founders of the French colony in St. Domingo, this history is more particularly directed.

Alternately losing and gaining the little island of Tortuga from the Spaniards, the French, under a captain of their own choice and nation, at length retained it, and obtained a firm footing on St. Domingo, which rendered it, at the same time, of less importance. Of the consequence to which they arrived (a consequence which, to this day, furnishes the West-Indies with legendary tales of their valour and honour), an idea will be best obtained by a description of their mode of life and warfare, and of those characters to whom they were indebted, for many of the exploits which have rendered them conspicuous to the admiration, if not the approbation, of the present and of future ages.

They formed themselves into small companies, from fifty to three times that number, of whom, some appear to have preferred agricultural pursuits. As the authority they had conferred on their captain did not extend to their domestic œconomy, they were at perfect liberty as to their manners, or a preference of rest or pleasure in their intervals of peace. Their armaments were formed of boats, without any difference, but in size, in which, they were exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather; as through their careless dispositions, on shore they were subject to the severest

rest extremities of hunger and thirst. After the various cruelties exercised by the Spaniards in the attempt to extirpate them, the sight of a ship is said to have transported them to frenzy;—no superiority of power affected them, they boarded as soon as possible, and the skill they had in the management of their small vessels, screened them from the fire of their enemies, while their fusleers, who presented themselves at the fore-part of their vessels by an excellent aim at the port-holes opposed to them, confounded the most experienced gunners. They seemed to have a religious notion of humility and gratitude, for they implored the aid of heaven to their success in any onset, and returned thanks to the deity for every victory obtained; such was their uninterrupted bravery, that the Spaniards, at length, trembled at their very approach, and surrendered immediately to those whom they designated as devils, as much as if they had been in reality preternatural beings. Among those whose names have come down to us, as having particularly distinguished themselves, were Montbar, a Frenchman; a truly gallant Welshman (already mentioned) named Morgan; and a Dutchman, called Van Horn. In the conduct of these men, may be seen the general character of the Buccaneers, the proportion of this sketch not admitting of a more enlarged insertion, which might otherwise be easily selected.

Montbar was born a gentleman of Languedoc, and his connection with the freebooters appears to have arisen neither from necessity nor chance, but an early spirit of romance—such as has determined

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determined the most heroic characters. Indeed, to those who have seen unqualified descriptions of the Spaniards in the New World, without an acquaintance with human life sufficient to discriminate, such a Quixotic idea will not excite surprize. It is said, that while at college having seen these accounts, their enormities had so strongly impressed him, that, acting in a private play the part of a Frenchman, who quarrelled with a Spaniard, it was with difficulty the performer of the latter character escaped from him with life. His imagination continuing to be heated by day-dreams, in which he beheld the expiring victims of a rage, more cruel than that of religious fanaticism, he viewed them, as calling on him for vengeance; although but imperfectly acquainted with the history of the Buccaneers, he determined to join them, and accordingly procured a ship for the expedition. On the passage they met with a Spanish vessel, which they immediately boarded, when Montbar was the first, sabre in hand, to fall upon the enemy; he broke through them, and hurrying twice from one end of the ship to the other, levelled every thing that opposed him. When the enemy surrendered, leaving to his companions the care of the booty, he desired only to contemplate, with horrid pleasure, the dead bodies of the Spaniards, which lay in heaps upon the decks, and seemed strengthened in the cause, in which he had so romantically embarked. Arriving on the coast of St. Domingo, the Buccaneers, who applied to barter provisions for brandy, pleaded, as an apology for their quality, that the Spaniards had recently taken advantage of their absence to destroy them: “ And do you not seek

seek revenge?" exclaimed Montbar. He soon found they were no more tardy in destruction than himself, and offered his services as a leader: was accepted, and astonished the boldest by his bravery. He continued with them during his life; and their sufferings (from his courage and success) procured for him, among the Spaniards, the appellation of *The Exterminator*.

Van Horn was a native of Ostend, whose intrepidity in the discipline of his crew, is the only peculiar trait handed down to us. He commanded a frigate, which was his own property. In the heat of an engagement, he was constantly seen in every part of the ship; and where he observed any one shrink at the sudden report of the cannon, he instantly killed him. He became the idol of the brave, and liberally shared with his successful companions, the riches so dreadfully acquired.

It is pleasing to turn from characters terminating with the same violence with which they set out, to one who, after having blazed in the full strength of a meridian-sun of power, is seen retiring to the mild evening of domestic life.

MORGAN,* the Welshman, only remains to be mentioned, descended from respectable parents in Glamorganshire, whom he
early

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* I wish to be acquitted of any local preference in the description of these men, or partiality of delineations in their characters. But notwithstanding the representation given of Morgan (in extension of the calumnious old history of the Buccaneers) by the Abbé Raynal

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early quitted (as it was then termed) in search of his fortune. His adventurous spirit leading him accidentally to Bristol, he found an opportunity of embarking for the West-Indies, in the way of many others, by indenting himself for four years to serve a planter. When released from a service executed with fidelity, he joined the Buccaneers, and adding ability to courage, soon shared their success and their riches. One of the exploits which first rendered him famous was the capture of Porto Bello (which Admiral Vernon afterwards destroyed with difficulty); for which, the plan of operations was so well contrived, that he took it without opposition. In attacking the fort, to spare the effusion of blood, he compelled the women and the priests, whom he had made prisoners, to set the scaling-ladders to the walls, from an idea, that the Spaniards would not fire at the objects of their love and reverence. *Their* omnipotent power, however, was wealth, in preference to religion or beauty; and the humane expedient miscarried, to the great injury of the besieged. The conquest of Panama seems to have been attended with prodigious difficulty, both by sea and land; but even here, he did not forget a merciful expedient—buying the fortified island of St. Catharine, which was necessary to his progress. At Panama they found immense treasures: among the dreadful sacrifices that were made, some cir-

Raynal, he is constrained to confess, that in the midst of hostility he *fell in love* with a beautiful Spaniard; and that he did not sacrifice her to his wishes, though she attempted his life. A breast capable of admitting a passion of this nature, under such circumstances, could not surely be considered as the most barbarous; and of the respectability of his subsequent character, we have certainly the best account.

cumstances

cumstances less severe are recorded: vanity received a singular punishment; and it was here that Morgan became captivated by a captive. The first of these circumstances occurred in a beggar, who, entering a castle deserted by its owners, found some rich apparel, which, in preference to every thing else, he adopted; the besiegers entered, and pressed the grotesque noble for his wealth, when, pointing to the rags he had just quitted, he received the effects of his folly and pride in a death scarcely unmerited.

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Morgan, appears to have addressed the lady by whom he was smitten, with respect and forbearance, sentiments not always to be found, in more refined invaders, and they met with a contrary return. "My fortune and my liberty, which depended on others," said the indignant fair, "you have already, but my honour is my own care;" upon which, she drew a poignard from beneath her dress, and attempted to plunge it into his breast; fortunately he avoided the blow.—Agonized with passion, yet incapable of violation, with more philosophy than is often called forth under such circumstances, it is probable that he wisely and nobly tore himself from the scene of his attraction, as he suddenly quitted the spot; even before his companions could accompany him. On the peace, which a few years after took place, between England and Spain, he retired to Jamaica, and having purchased a plantation, betook himself with much industry to its cultivation. He succeeded in these tranquil pursuits, and, in time, grew into equal repute in a pacific life to that which he had experienced

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in war; he was called to bear a part in the government of the island in which he had become a proprietor; and, finally, to the command of Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, and to the dignity of knighthood. He executed the duties of every situation in which he was placed with probity and honour; and a writer of the present day,* who saw some of his letters in the possession of a friend on the island, describes them as manifesting a spirit of humanity, justice, liberality, and piety.

It is painful to relate, that Sir Henry Morgan, three years before the close of his chequered and useful life, was committed to the Tower by King James II. at the instance of the Spanish Emperor, where he remained till his death without trial, and of course without conviction of any crime. Though a sacrifice to the same monarch, with his great predecessor Raleigh, his life was not, however, included, and he died in peace.

To return to the community of Buccaneers, although separated from each other, the English and French still continued to act in concert; the latter retiring, after the conflict, to St. Domingo, to share the spoil, and the former to Jamaica. When any were maimed, the first steps, were those taken for their provision in the most honourable way; no one secreted any share of the booty under pain of expulsion; nor had favour any influence in its division, which was with much judgment. Dissipation of

* Bryan Edwards, Esq. M.P. F.R.S. &c.

every

every kind succeeded their advantages, and he who was rich one day, resigned himself to poverty the next. They continued to increase in force, and to proportionably depress the Spaniards, who, at length, retired into a sullen inactivity, which passively continued, till all other communication with their mother-country ceased, than that which could be maintained by a single ship of no great burthen.

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Nor did the Buccaneers themselves continue to prevail as they had been accustomed. After the settlements of the French and English in the New World became established, many were killed and lost, and some adopted agriculture; till, at length, France, who had not been altogether ignorant of its progress, became attracted by the infant colony then formed in St. Domingo, if it could yet be so called.

1666.

The number of planters to whom only could be really accorded the character of colonists did not exceed four hundred; the first care of the government then was to multiply this number, and to form them into a more regular society; for this purpose it commissioned a gentleman named Bertrand D'Ogeron, who had emigrated from Anjou about nine years before, but who had evinced too much virtue and sensibility to hope for commercial success, without a better fortune. With the best contrived plans he had failed; but the ability and fortitude, he had shewn in adversity, had won him the general esteem and attachment so much, that

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1665.
D'Ogeron
governor.

he was considered as the most proper person to direct, or rather to settle the colony.

Women first
introduced to
the colony.

Of the difficulty of such an enterprize, none could doubt but himself, depending much on his own powers, who knew no other wish, than the good of human kind; he began by reconciling the idle to labour, and those who had traded with all the world, to the monopoly of a privileged company, which had the year before, been established for all the French settlements. He held out allurements for new inhabitants in a country which had suffered every species of calumny: when the maritime determined to go in search of greater advantages, he seduced them to stay, even by relinquishing the revenues of his post, and procuring them commissions from Portugal to attack the Spaniards, when they had made peace with France; to the huntsmen he advanced money without interest to erect habitations: and to the planters he united every encouragement. Nor did he long suffer them to remain in a cheerless celibacy, which denied an increase of population by the best and most natural of all means, and left them without the most powerful attraction to a fixed residence—that of mild, unassuming beings, who create comforts unknown by any other means; conferring interest and felicity, while they are as ministering angels to alleviate the sorrows, and soften the asperities of man. D'Ogeron sent for women, and obtained an hundred from France—such as should be the female inhabitants of an infant colony, young, healthy, amiable, and enterprising. To prevent the effect of the

most

most impetuous of passions, he contrived, that while choice was not entirely suppressed, those should first become husbands whose industry had rendered them equal to the payment of an adequate sum; and the others (who respected social justice) waited anxiously to be so blessed in their turn: but they were disappointed, and the colony injured, as is too often the case, by expedients of which their insufficiency is the most favorable objection. The females, who afterwards made their appearance from the mother country, as if all regard for the constitutions of society, had been lost, were those for whom delicacy would wish to find a better name than the refuse of cities; selected without discrimination, they were bound as to masters for three years; of such a connexion, we need not attempt the description. The only circumstance worthy of record respecting it, is the declaration of the Buccaneers, who chiefly adopted them, on their simple marriage. "I ask you no questions," said he, "respecting your former life, but you are now mine; and if you prove false, this," putting his hand to the muzzle of his gun, "will revenge me." The effects of the profligacy introduced at this time were long, very long felt. In the course of four years, however, D'Ogeron found means to increase the number of planters in proportion to the population, so that, in 1699, they amounted to more than 1,500.

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1665.

Foundation
of the colony.

1669

1670.

In the following year the benign exertions of this good man, received a check from the elation of the India Company, which is the too frequent consequence of successful monopolies. Conceiving

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1670.

ceiving themselves secure in a new and extensive trade, and not satisfied with a moderate profit, they ventured to raise the prices of their goods in a proportion of two thirds; the colonists, who had not yet changed their natural inclinations to violence, had immediate recourse to arms, and the price of tranquillity was a free trade to France, except an allowance of five per cent. to the company, to be paid by all ships on their arrival and departure. Even this disaster afforded D'Ogeron an opportunity for exertions of beneficence, of which only himself was capable. He procured two ships seemingly intended for his own produce, but, in fact, for the use of the colony. Every one shipped his commodities on board these vessels at a moderate freight, and, on their return, the cargo brought from the mother-country was exposed to public sale at prime cost. A general credit was given without interest, and even without security, this generous governor hoping to inspire them with probity and noble sentiments by such a confidence: thus, under a jurisdiction so exquisite, every public disaster served but to consolidate the colony; and could not fail also to excite a regret the most poignant, on an occasion which happened much too early; for the patriotic and benevolent D'Ogeron was cut off in the midst of his parental offices in 1673, an example of every humane and social virtue.

1673.

It was three years before the much lamented death of D'Ogeron, that the town of Cape François had been founded. It is to be regretted as a consequence of religious intolerance to drive from

from their country its most useful members. Gobin, a calvinist, flew from persecution to the mild state of St. Domingo, and built the first habitation on the cape, to which he invited others, who immediately flocked thither as the ground became cleared.

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1673.

The place held by D'Ogeron was supplied with tolerable success by his nephew, M. Ponancey, who, although described as of a less amiable disposition than his uncle, seems to have followed him in his laudable plan of government. He had the honor of completing what his great predecessor had so ably begun, the establishment of a colony upon a regular and firm basis, without the promulgation of laws, or the coercion of military force. More virtue than could be expected, from a variety of governors, was, however, required to sustain such a government; as licentiousness, naturally increased with population, aided by the unfortunate introduction of females, of the character already mentioned, it became of course necessary to submit to ordinary forms. Two administrators were therefore commissioned from Martinico, who established courts of judicature for the several districts, accountable to a superior council at Petit Goäve. These innovations were gained by a little finesse without much disagreement, and, but for the interference of private interest, which will ever obtrude upon infant establishments, the colony might have immediately opened a mine of wealth upon its shores.

Du Casse go-
vernor.

1684.

1685.

CHAP. I.
1694.

It may not be improper to remark here, as a glaring instance of the want of power, or capacity in the Spanish colony, that in 1685 it suffered the Duke of Albemarle, then governor of Jamaica, and Sir William Phipps, to obtain considerable wealth, by raising the wreck of a Spanish plate ship which had been stranded off the north-east coast of their own territory twenty-four years before, on a shoal between the north and south riff, almost in sight of Old Cape François.

1688.

Negroes
adopted in
the colony.

Skins and tobacco, were hitherto, the principal articles of commerce from the French colony; for the latter, in consequence of the restrictions, they substituted indigo and cocoa; for similar reasons the profitable culture of cotton, which had been added, was soon abandoned. Hitherto the labours of the colony had been prosecuted chiefly by the poorest of the inhabitants, and a few negroes, which had been obtained by successful expeditions against the Spaniards; but in the war of 1688, several slaves being taken from the English, they began to contemplate the culture of the sugar-cane, as an additional source of wealth, and one of the greatest importance. With this view they continued to increase their stock of negroes, by every means in their power, though but slowly, till the year 1694, when, taking advantage of a combination of misfortunes which had reduced Jamaica, the governor (a spirited man, who had before desired permission to chase the Spaniards from his own colony,) landed in that island with a force, which shewed the anterior progress of St. Domingo to power, and increased

it

it more than any other event, that had hitherto occurred. Whatever were the other motives that induced this expedition, Du Casse seems to have had an eye to the principal necessities of his colony, by including in his booty a considerable number of negroes, perhaps not less than two thousand. The other captured property, added to the private wealth of some of the remaining Buccaneers, (if those embarked in privateering, could be still so called,) enabled them to employ these slaves, and furnish buildings and articles for the production of sugar. The year following, however, the English returned the compliment of M. Du Casse, by attacking the now flourishing settlement of Cape François, in conjunction with the forces of Spain, which they took, plundered, and reduced to ashes. It was soon, however, rebuilt on the same scite; and from this period no difficulty or misfortune to the colony, was sufficient to impede its gradual progress to that eminence, which obtained for it, in another century the appellation of the Garden of the West Indies.

CHAP. I.
1698.

The peace of Ryswick afforded the first regular cession of the western part of the island to the French; for the preceding treaties of Aix la Chapelle and Nimeguen in 1668 and 1678 did not, by any means, conciliate the national antipathies in St. Domingo; and even by it there were no other boundaries established to the possessions thus ceded, than a custom, constantly submitted to change from a variety of circumstances. By this cession the French appear to have obtained all the territory excluded, with-

CHAP. I.
1698.

out an oblique line reaching from the then Cape François on the north-east coast, to Cape Rosa on the west, intercepting the towns of Isabella and Jago at the one point, and those of Petit Goäve and Port Louis at the other.* Still, therefore, the scene of constant feuds between the more antient colonists and their neighbour, a large part of the colony towards the south, continued unoccupied, except by a few straggling inhabitants in miserable huts, and it remained a desirable object with the government to procure its settlement, in some way, at once both permanent and effectual. To accomplish this end, another company was privileged in France, which adopted the title of St. Louis, to whom this fine and extensive country was granted as a property for thirty years; on condition—that it should open a contraband trade with the Spanish continent, and clear the ground. The company immediately granted lands to all who chose, with certain allowances, providing them also with slaves and other necessaries, and every thing began to wear a promising aspect. The colony continued to increase with so much vigour, that, at the beginning of the next century a superior jurisdiction became necessary in Cape François, and it was accordingly established in 1702. The town of the Cape was, in every other respect, the capital of the colony, though, except in time of war, when it was removed hither, Port au Prince was the seat of the government.

* From the demarcation on the map of Herman Moll executed in less than twenty years after.

In proportion as the French colony rose in splendor, the Spanish inhabitants decreased in comfort, apparently shrinking from the effects of an industry they could not reach; yet, the former was not without difficulties to counterbalance its advantages: for in the year 1715, the death of nearly all the cocoa trees on the colony, deprived it of a very lucrative revenue; and shortly after, it experienced, in common with more important states, a shock that threatened its total subversion. This flourishing colony had arrived at a pitch of prosperity and refinement, sufficient to enable many of its proprietors to return with ample fortunes to France, or retire under easy circumstances when age required it; but when LAW's fatal scheme of finance exploded, those whose property had been paid for in the notes, or securities of the Mississippi company, or others, allied to them, were left destitute, without any hopes of retribution; many returned poor to the island, from which they had departed rich, and were compelled to serve those, who had formerly been their servants, for bread. The presence of these unfortunate victims, seemed to prolong a sensation with respect to that delusive stroke of policy, which nothing else could have occasioned; it, however, recovered the shock; and, in its worst moments, surrounded by the pleasing effects of successful industry, might look with pity upon the opposite situation of its neighbours; if such sentiments could be expected to prevail under a disparity of circumstances.

CHAP. I
1702.

1715.

Effect of
LAW's finan-
cial scheme
on St. Do-
mingo.

CHAP. I.
1717.

In 1717, the Spanish colony, (which had in the time of Herrera, according to his history, included 14,000 pure Castilians among its inhabitants, with a proportional population in every class,) had only 18,410 souls of every description; and, but for the ecclesiastical and juridical importance of its dilapidating capital, perhaps scarcely even a vestige would have remained. Without affecting, in allusion to these times, either the bigotry, which must be occasionally allowed in Edwards, or the inveteracy of Raynal, in favor of peculiar opinions, we may clearly view, in this decline, the fatal consequences of intolerance and cruelty, while we can happily contemplate with redoubled pleasure the agreeable contrast, which a mild regimen affords through every class of created beings.

1720.

In 1720, the produce of the French colony amounted, according to Raynal*, to 1,200,000 pounds weight of indigo, 1,400,000 pounds of white sugar, and 21,000,000 pounds of raw sugar, and its increase was as rapid, as it was successful: never satisfied, however, with ordinary advantages, it is the very nature of monopoly to grasp at every opportunity of increasing its exclusive rights, without any regard to those which are the objects of its privileges. In consequence of a degree of insolence, with which, the introduction of a measure intended to confine the trade of slaves to themselves was conducted, a violent commotion took place in 1722, which was not quelled entirely for two years,

1722.

* Settlements and Trades in the East and West Indies, vol. iv. p. 235. during

during which period the buildings and ships of the company were destroyed, and their commissioners disgraced. It will naturally be supposed that a commotion which extended with the most inconceivable firmness through every part of the island, affected the progress of cultivation and commerce for some time after the re-establishment of peace; yet, in 1734, we find a considerable increase of plantations, in which the growth of cotton, and coffee, had been added to a great extent. This increase of opulence, occasioned, naturally, an augmentation of the respectability of the government, for in 1750 we find a new establishment at Port au Prince, the capital, which now became the residence of a commander in chief, a superior council, and an intendant.

In the year 1754, the amount of the various commodities of the colony was equal to 1,261,469l., but such was its increasing prosperity, that the inhabitants received from the mother country, imports to the amount of 1,777,509l. The population of pure whites amounted to upwards of 14,000; free mulattoes nearly 4,000; and upwards of 172,000 negroes of different descriptions. There were 599 sugar plantations, and 3,379 of indigo. The cocoa trees amounted to 98,946; the cotton plants to 6,300,367; and there were near 22,000,000 of cassia trees. The provisions consisted of near 6,000,000 of banana trees; upwards of 1,000,000 plots of potatoes; 226,000 plots of yams; and near 3,000,000 trenches of manioc. The cattle, did not exceed 63,000 horses and mules, and 93,000 head of horned cattle *.

* Raynal, vol. iv. p. 236.

CHAP. I.
1732.

1734.

1750.

1754.

CHAP. I.
1757.

1764.

1767.

1770.

In short, the remaining events of St. Domingo, up to the period of the French revolution, consists of a series of successes the most brilliant, and a display of industry and opulence the most creditable to the French character. Even the government of Madrid seems to have been excited, to some degree of emulation about the year 1757, as a company was formed at Barcelona, with exclusive privileges, to attempt a re-establishment in the eastern part of the island. The most, however, that appears to have been accomplished, was the equipment of two small vessels annually, by which they received in return, a few thousand hides, and some other trifling articles; but in 1765, when Charles III. opened a free trade to all the Windward Islands, they suddenly assumed quite an altered appearance; and Hispaniola, so long depressed by the false policy of the mother country, seem determined to attempt a renewal of her former activity. During the five years preceding 1774, the custom-house duties were more than doubled. It extended, however, comparatively to little more than a dying struggle. The French still continued to increase rapidly; in 1764, they had a force of 8,786 white men, capable of bearing arms, with whom 1414 mulattoes were enrolled, and their slaves had increased to 206,000. In 1767, they laded 347 ships for France, besides a considerable overplus, not less than one fifth of that number, distributed in various ways.

As if it were to temper the success of this splendid colony, a dreadful earthquake, happened on the third day of June, 1770, which

which levelled the capital, Port au Prince, with the ground. It has been, however, rebuilt with additional convenience, and enlarged with much labour, several streets having been raised upon the shore by means of causeways, though it does not possess, by any means, the elegance of Cape Fran^cois; many of the buildings being composed of wood.

CHAP. I.
1770.

In 1776, a determinate cessation took place of the dreadful feuds which had constantly occurred between the Spanish and French inhabitants of the colony, by the formation of a new line of demarcation, to separate the different partitions of the island. This settlement, though from a strange avarice in the Spaniards of territory, which they knew not how to occupy, appears to encroach considerably on the former possessions of France, was a most desirable concession to the latter. Nor were the consequences of this agreement less favorable to the Spaniards in other respects: for they afterwards opened a more liberal commerce with their neighbouring colonists; whom they supplied with every description of cattle, receiving in return through their means all the productions of Europe, and expending with them the monies received from Spain for the purposes of the government.

After the conflict between Great Britain and her American colonies, the Spanish government began to pay more regard to its territories in that quarter, and it accordingly became furnished with a more respectable garrison. Since that time, the number
of

1785.

CHAP. I.
1785.

of Europeans added to it, tended also to improve its respectability as a colony.

From this period, to the commencement of revolutionary activity in 1789, when those principles which had long been concealed in a smouldering flame, were about to have vent through the world, the French establishment in St. Domingo reached a height superior, not only to all other colonial possessions, but to the conception of the philosopher and politician; its private luxury, and its public grandeur, astonished the traveller; its accumulation of wealth surprized the mother country; and it was beheld with rapture by the neighbouring inhabitants of the islands of the Antilles. Like a rich beauty, surrounded with every delight, the politicians of Europe, sighed for her possession; but they sighed in vain; she was reserved for the foundation of a republic as extraordinary as it is terrible, whether it ultimately tend only, to the ascertainment of abstract opinions, or unfold a new and august empire to the world, where it has heretofore been deemed impossible to exist.

It remains only to the present division of the work, to add a brief account of the general appearance of the island, as it existed at this date of its history; which, will then subdivide itself into the different heads, under which it is proposed to consider the causes, progress, and consequences of its revolution, and present establishment.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding, the reduced state of that part of the island which still continued in the possession of Spain, what has been collected of its topography, or, natural history, shall, in justice to the ancient proprietors, commence the brief detail which concludes the present chapter.

The Spanish division of St. Domingo is understood to have comprehended, at that period, the whole territory within the diversified line of demarcation, fixed upon a few years before, which confined the French to apparently an insignificant part of the island. Commencing with the river Du Massacre on the north, it stretched in an irregular curve towards the west, crossing all the great roads from Fort Dauphin and the Cape, passing the hills at about thirty miles distant from the coast, and intersecting the conflux of the streams of La Trouble and Plaisance; when, turning shortly round the hills at Atalaye, it assumes its southern direction, and crossing the stream of La Petite Riviere at its mouth, stretches through a delightful plain watered by the great river Artibonite: crossing this, and the river Du Fer, and winding round a single hill, it then proceeds through the little lake of Cul de Sac; returning to its eastward direction, it falls in with the river á Pitres at a point nearly opposite to that of its departure, having formed an elipsis of not less than 170 miles, the nearest point approaching within a very short distance of the town of Gonäves, situate in the bay of that name, upon the western coast*.

* This line is believed to be accurately delineated in the corrected map of the island prefixed to the present work.

CHAP. I.
1789.

Topography
of the island.

Last line of
demarcation.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

It will be perceived, what a large proportion of this delightful territory, remained in the possession of Spain; which, whatever the degraded character we have been obliged to attribute to its possessors, must have produced a very ample return for the cultivation they bestowed upon it. With an extent of coast of between five and six hundred miles, in which are not less than seven capacious bays, (with innumerable inlets,) into which twenty large rivers, besides many nameless streams, discharge themselves; while the interior, consisting of large fertile plains, well watered, and protected, rather than interrupted, by the different chains of mountains with which they are variegated; producing the most delightful and salubrious vallies: nothing was wanting but the moderate labour of the cultivator, and a liberal policy, to render it the most desirable country in the world. In wanting these, however, it sunk into a beautiful wilderness, and its sullen shores repelled the eye which had been attracted by distant fertility. On scites that would have received and encouraged the population of cities, were placed the solitary huts of fishermen; whose miserable toils, perhaps, a melancholy monk was embittering by a thousand painful restrictions of his poverty-stricken career on earth, and dreadful views of eternity; the result of morbid intellects, nursed by the wild scene around him.

City of St.
Domingo.

The principal towns, after the ancient city of St. Domingo, were, Monte Christi, La Vega, St. Jago, formerly that of the Conception, Zeibo, St. Thomé, Azua, and Isabella, if the latter could deserve the appellation. The other places were merely villages.

villages of the most wretched appearance, which, instead of alluring society from the distant provinces, seemed rather to mark with desolation those natural meadows with which they abounded. The most important of these were St. Laurent, a few miles north of the capital, in which were a few villas, very inviting, from the beauty of the plain in which it was situated; Higuey, whose advantageous situation on the river of that name, might have procured for it much more importance; Baya, Bayaguana, and Monte Plata, surrounded by the finest land in the known world, and in the vicinity of forests, whose riches and utility were unappreciated; Cotuy, near the union of the rivers Yuna and Cotuy, about eight leagues from the centre of the bay of Samana; St. Juan de Maguana, delightfully placed on the banks of the Neybe, and separated by a small mountainous district from the lake of Riquille; St. Jean de Goava and Banica, served often as points of the commerce between the two colonies, as well as Atalaye, which stretched towards the extremity of the angle reaching into the French division opposite the bay of Gonäve; St. Miguel, Dejabon, Venta de Cana, Sala, Jarbon, Espani, and Amina, distributed in the course of a few leagues from the northern coasts, though inhabited by a kind of wealthy graziers, form a powerful contrast to the wild beauty of the surrounding country.

St. Domingo, the capital, and seat of the ecclesiastical government of the colonies, and at one time of the whole of the Spanish dominion in the new world, still continued an archiepiscopal see,

Spanish ca-
pital.

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1789.

Topography,
&c.Spanish divi-
sion.

to which the bishops of the other islands were suffragans. It is situated, as hath been before described, near the mouth of the river Ozama, on the southern coast of the island, and on the border of a fertile and delightful level of near ninety miles in length, and thirty in breadth, significantly called Los Llanos. The cathedral, and other public buildings, yet retained no mean degree of importance; and, notwithstanding their dilapidating antiquity, wore an elegance of appearance that was not to have been expected. The remains of many other superb buildings of antiquity were yet to be seen, and those of a modern date of brick, stone, and wood, were not unworthy the capital of such a territory. It yet contained several religious establishments, and what is of more importance, the extent and safety of its harbour, containing an ample depth of water, and, protected by a bar, over which the largest vessels rode with safety, could not fail to render it of great commercial interest. The streets were principally broad, and towards the middle of the town retained their original rectangular neatness; they were also clean, and enlightened by three handsome squares. It yet contained an appearance of great strength towards the sea, and even on the side of the land it was guarded by a sufficient wall. Some remains yet exist of the ancient citadel, and also of the palace of the First Viceroy.

Monte
Christi.

The town of Monte Christi still retained a busy appearance, and some degree of importance, from its continued traffic with the neighbouring continent of North America, and the vicinity of

of some of the most flourishing plantations of the French colony. During the wars between England and France, while Spain was disengaged from the troubles, the Spaniards traded much to this part, as did also the English smugglers.

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1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

La Vega, neither pleasing nor convenient, situated in the extensive plain of the Viga Real, which is, in length, nearly that of half the island, though seldom exceeding thirty miles in breadth, derived its chief consequence from the surrounding pasture, and some excellent sugar-walks in its vicinity.

St. Jago retained a considerable air of antiquity, but no other St. Jago. recommendation; for all the former grandeur which it would appear to have possessed is now in ruins, and it affords but an additional monument of desolation; yet it contained a miserable monastery of Franciscans, to whom were attached some of the finest lands in the neighbourhood; but whose chief power seemed to be employed in the rule of the slaves in the adjacent plantations, in the care of whose religious duties they frequently forgot their temporal avocations.

Zeibo was a place of some business, from being the only town Zeibo. towards the eastern coast, as St. Thomas is, again, from being situated in the very centre of the island, among the mountains of Cibao. Agua was also of little other importance than from being placed in the middle of a very fine bay on the southern coast. The first and the last of these towns, besides their desolatory

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.
St. Thomas.
Isabella.

state, bordering on extensive swamps, were therefore unhealthy; while St. Thomé, receiving the invigorating winds, as they sweep from the mountains on one side, and the salubrious breeze from the plains on the other, was a situation desirable for the farmer, or the valetudinarian, and capable of much improvement. On the site of the first city erected in the new world, in honour of Isabella, remain a few houses and ruins, while here and there a solitary cross peeping from amidst the luxuriant grass, served just to tell us—"such things were." One little stream watered its vicinity, and a rugged road marked its few occasions to direct an inquisitive traveller to its haunts.

Ecclesiasti-
cal govern-
ment.

Of the ecclesiastical government of the island, little shall here suffice. Notwithstanding that conduct on the part of the clergy which had compelled certain regulations of their conduct, and the liberality of sentiment which began to gain ground in Spain, the American church still retained an inordinate power over every class of the community, and an undue interference with every object of the colony. Independent of the papal jurisdiction,* and originally endowed with immense revenues from the wealth, and afterwards the devotion of the people, they still continued in extraordinary numbers, fattening on the very desolation of the country, to whose benefit their order had not, in

* The Emperor Ferdinand having obtained from the Popes Alexander VI. and Julius II. such an exemption on the first discovery of the New World, to favour its extension.

the

the least, contributed.* Many of the benefices were, however, now filled by the secular clergy, according to the effort of Ferdinand VI. to remedy the vicious and abominable abuses of the regulars. It has been already stated to have been honoured with the seat of the archiepiscopal see; it had also all the minor dignities, while the *Curas*, or parish-priests, were to be found in all the sacerdotal dignity throughout the country. The inquisition was also established in this as well as all the other American islands.

The constitution of Hispaniola is not easily defined. The different towns were under the immediate direction of a sort of local municipality; but their power was very weak, and much infringed by the privileges of different bodies of the clergy. They confined themselves chiefly, therefore, to the minor commercial regulations of their own district, and even these were under the control of a governor of the colony. The more important ends of general justice were administered by six more respectable judges, severally appointed, for civil and criminal jurisdiction, who formed one of the eleven Courts of Audience distributed among the colonies, and which are a model of the Spanish Chancery. The decisions of these courts were subject to appeal

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1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

* "Though, by the ample provision which has been made for the American church, many of its members enjoy the ease and independance which are favourable to the cultivation of science, the body of secular clergy has hardly, during two centuries and a half, produced one author whose works contain such useful information, or possess such a degree of merit as to be ranked among those which attract the attention of enlightened nations."—*Robertson's Hist. Vol. IV. p. 50.*

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

to the Council of the Indies in Spain, except in civil cases, where the object of litigation did not amount, in value, to a sum near fifteen hundred pounds. The vice-roy of New Spain represents the head of the government. The council over-ruled every department, civil and ecclesiastical, military and commercial, and has always preserved its dignity; with it originates every ordinance relative to the government of the colonies, which must be passed by the majority of a third of its members. At the head of this council the king is always understood to preside. There is also a commercial assembly for the purposes of an immediate attention to all its objects which could not be affected by any other means. The local officers immediately below the whole of these, consist of the different commandants, and a variety of inferior officers of almost every description; many of whose situations were sinecures, as valuable as the proprietors of the island were depreciated.

Military
force.

Of the military force of the colony little can be said; for, except the garrison of St. Domingo, and a few posts established towards the line of demarcation, the regular soldiery distributed throughout the island were inconsiderable; nor could the militia, in which all capable of bearing arms were included, be said to produce an addition very effective. The principal ports along the line were those of Verettes, St. Michael, and St. Raphael.

Inhabitants.

The different inhabitants of the Spanish colony were designated as follows:—The pure Spaniards, who visited America for the purpose

purpose of employment, and who always enjoyed every situation of power, were called *Chapetones*. They looked down with disdain upon every other order of men.

The second class of subjects were the Creoles, or descendants of Europeans settled in America. Though frequently deriving their pedigree from the noblest families in Spain, and possessing ample fortunes, yet the abjectness of political debasement—the enervation of indulgence in a warm climate, had subdued their minds, and subjected them to the vilest sloth. While the *Chapetone* amassed immense wealth, the Creole remained satisfied with his unimpaired patrimony; a determined hatred reigning between them.

The third was the offspring of an European with an Indian, or a negro: the former, called Mulattoes, the latter Mestizos. Of these, there was a considerable number in this, as in all the other Spanish settlements. In proportion as the number exceeded the colonies of other nations, from the early policy of encouraging an intermixture of the Spaniards with the natives, and from a greater indulgence of licentious intercourse. Among these there were a variety of different shades of colour, from the jet black of Africa, and the copper, or brown hue of America, to that of the European complexion. Those of the first and second generations, were considered not sufficiently removed, for distinction, from their parent race; in the third, the colour sensibly declined; and, in the fifth

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
Spanish divi-
sion.

they embraced the characteristics and privileges of Europeans. The mechanic arts and active offices of society were left, by the proud and indolent Spaniards, to this robust and hardy race; who were lively, well-tempered, and frequently accomplished.

The Negroes compose the fourth rank; of this singular, and important part of the human species, more will be found in another department of this work. In Hispaniola, as well as several other of the Spanish colonies, the Negroes were much used in domestic service, and for purposes of luxury. They were splendidly dressed, and, in many respects, rendered so subservient to vanity, that they became themselves, more silly, vain, and imperious, than their masters*.

However, the distinctions between Europeans and the people of colour were, by no means, kept up in the Spanish colonies as in those of other nations, except with regard to ecclesiastical establishments, to which they were not generally admitted.

Country.

The Spanish coast is, in many parts, of a bold and rocky appearance, presenting high cliffs and extended promontories, and, in others, for many leagues, beautiful in the extreme, delighting the eye with an agreeable variety of hills, vallies, woods, and rivers.

* The Indians in those of the Spanish colonies where they yet remain, form a fifth, and the most depressed class of inhabitants.

The generally luxurious face of the country continues the same throughout, with very little appearance of sterility even on the deserted north-east coast. The richest glades, with a most delightful foliage appear in the very bosoms of the mountains; and nothing can exceed the fertility of the cultivated lands, in every direction.

The vast plain of Los Llanos, stretching along the south-east part of the island, is adapted to the growth of every tropical production, and, (abounding with rivers,) always capable of irrigation, as well as the Vega Real, which lies more towards the north, and through which flows the Yuna and the Cotuy, over a space of from fifty to an hundred miles; till meeting at a short distance from the coast, they discharge their united streams into the bay of Samana. On the northern coast, (by which Columbus first approached the island,) is also a large tract of land which, though consigned to vast herds of wild cattle of various descriptions, exhibited its fertility, in the support of this object of commerce, as well as in several grass-farms, which lay to the northward line of demarcation. The present produce is sugar, ginger, cocoa, tobacco, cotton, indigo, maize, and the Cassava-root, of which, what they could spare (with wood for dying,) was received by the mother-country. But their principal article of exportation was the hides of the horned-cattle, which ran wild in the plains, with no other guards than the names, or the marks of their owners: at length, they regarded the carcasses also, which being gladly received by their neighbours, they were found to be a valuable resource. Not confining themselves to horned-

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1789.

Topography,
&c.Spanish divi-
sion.

CHAP. I.

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Topography,
&c.Spanish divi-
sion.

cattle, they furnished also great numbers of horses and mules, which required less trouble in their rearing, and were very acceptable to the French colony.

The population, though an exact account may be deemed impossible, may, probably, approach to the statement of M. de Charmilly, at 60,000; the number of whites was certainly greater than 2000, and that of the negroes *less* than half the total number; the free race of mixed blood of different grades, composing the remainder.

The Spanish division of Hispaniola, affords every species of tropical herb, and beast; as, in this respect, it is similar to the western part of the island, they will be considered together.

French divi-
sion.Divided into
provinces.Northern
province.

The French colony of St. Domingo, comprehended the whole of the territory westward of the line of demarcation, before described: with fewer natural advantages, it presented such a contrast to the inactivity of the neighbouring country, as procured for it a character almost equal to that which has been so generally given to the whole of the island at its discovery. This colony, of which we are able to give a more regular account, was divided, as indeed nature appears to have directed, into the northern, western, and southern provinces. The first of these extended about forty leagues along the northern coast, from the river Massacre to Cape St. Nicholas, and contained (including the

the island of Tortuga) twenty-six parishes. The principal towns and harbours were, Cape Fran^cois, Fort Dauphin, Port Paix, and Cape St. Nicholas.

The western province commenced at Cape St. Nicholas, and occupying the whole line of roadsted forming the Bite, or vast and general bay of Leogane, terminated at Cape Tiburon. It contained fourteen parishes, in which the chief towns were, Port-au-Prince, St. Mark, Leogane, Petit Goäve, and Jeremie; with the considerable villages of Gonaives, and Arcahaye. The best harbours are those of Port-au-Prince and Gonaives, the others are open and dangerous.

The southern province occupied the remaining coast from Cape Tiburon to L'Ance à Pitre, (or rather the river of that name): of the ten parishes, there were but two chief towns, those of the Cayes and Jacmel. Its roads and harbours are dangerous; and the shipping off Aux Cayes are frequently obliged to take refuge in the bay des Flamands.

The town of Cape Fran^cois, in effect the capital of the colony, stands on a small plain, as it were, hollowed out of the Morne du Cap, a mountain which rises on both sides from the bay. The Morne, which allows only a narrow passage to the plain, is joined by the northern mountains, extending to Fort Picolet, which is placed on the edge of the rock, and defends the entrance to the roads; though built, in some respects, disadvantageously

CHAP. I.

1789.

Topography,
&c.French divi-
sion.Western pro-
vince.Southern
province.Town of
Cape Fran-
çois.

CHAP. I.
1897.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

tageously (except as regarded its commodious bay, and sometimes experiencing an inconvenient closeness from the situation,) it had risen to a degree of elegance concordant to the importance of the island, and which might cope with many European cities of the first order and opulence. It was composed of upwards of thirty well-formed streets, which crossed each other at right angles, and were many of them elegant. The houses built of stone and brick, were frequently handsome and commodious. It contained also two magnificent squares, those of Notre Dame and Clugny, ornamented with fountains; besides public shops, and long ranges of warehouses, suited to the commercial purposes to which this scene is dedicated. The principal public buildings after the church, which had not been erected many years, were the government-house, formerly a convent of Jesuits,* the barracks, arsenal, playhouse, and prison. There were also, I believe, two hospitals of a similar nature to our own, and two of the establishments which Raynal calls houses of Providence. Whether the *Hôpital de la Charité* (an alms or work-house), in the road to L'Haut du Cap, at a small distance from the town, was of this kind, I am not certain, though I believe it; they were, however, as Raynal observed, "truly pious and divine institutions;" being for the benefit of such Europeans as might remain in the colony destitute of resources, or who, before they had acquired by industry, an opportunity to procure subsistence,

* His Royal Highness, the Duke of Clarence, was entertained in this building at the conclusion of peace in 1783.

became

became subject to disorders often fatal. Males and females were separately taken care of, and nourished till they were disposed of in some employment in which they could help themselves. The theatre was supplied by a respectable company of comedians, who performed, with short intervals, all the year round, besides other exhibitions and entertainments.

Fort Dauphin, about thirty miles from the cape, from whence there is an excellent road at a small distance from the shore, supplies the place of an ancient town called Bayaha, which was situated at a greater distance from the coast: it was the last town on the eastern frontier of the French, and stands in the farthest recess of a spacious harbour, which has only one narrow outlet. It has a small river flowing by the village of Trou to the west, and the shore of Manchenillo bay to the east. The fort stands on a little peninsula to the north, and it is bounded on the south by the same luxurious and extensive plain which enhanced the riches of the town that has been just described. It was well fortified, and could have held out against a considerable force for some time. It had also a theatre well supplied, assemblies, and concerts. Though the greater part of the produce of the plain was carried to Cape François, Fort Dauphin had more than its share of contraband trade, with several advantages, derived from proximity to the forlorn part of the Spanish dominion.

Port Paix stands on a worse situation than either of the preceding towns, from the former of which it is distant about forty miles.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

Fort Dauphin.

Port Paix.

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1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

miles. It was the first establishment of the Buccaneers on the island, when, quitting the habits of freebooters, they began to form themselves into a more peaceable society. Port Paix is healthy, though a considerable swamp is not far distant, to the north-east; and every exertion of Agrarian industry has been exercised to its advantage, even to the erection of several well-planned aqueducts. Its retirement well adapting it to the purposes of contraband trade, to the great emolument of the Americans, who frequented this port as well as the next, which forms the boundary of the northern province.

Cape St. Ni-
cholas.

The town of Cape St. Nicholas is situate on the sterile spot from which it derives its name, and which is considered the key to the windward passage, being directly opposite to the port of Maisi in Cuba. Its chief excellence is its harbour, which is capacious, and rendered perfectly secure by the mole, or peninsula, on the north-west, which, with the mountains on the north-east, form a bay nearly six miles long, sheltered from every wind. Behind, rise the mountains of the cape, which, altogether, renders it a place of a formidable appearance. It was rendered a free port by the French in consequence of its unproductive quality, (as before mentioned,) and to allure residents, to whom the French ministry allied a colony of Acadians and Germans.

Port-au-
Prince.

Port-au-Prince was the ostensible metropolis of the French colony, and the seat of its government; except in time of war, when it was removed to Cape François. It must have been one
of

of the unaccountable caprices that sometimes direct the settlements of towns, that could have obtained for this place, indefensible at all points, the distinction it received. It was neither healthy nor inviting, though opulent, and well built, with every attention to convenience, but chiefly of wood. The water is of a brackish and otherwise disagreeable taste. It enjoyed, in common with the principal towns of the other provinces, the vicinity of a rich plain, the Cul de Sac, which contained no less than 150 sugar plantations, with every convenience for their advantage; while the mountains behind it, clothed with plantations of coffee, reached quite to the Spanish settlements at Riquille. The dreadful earthquake which happened in 1770, occasioned the town to be much enlarged and improved. There were many long and populous streets, but not handsome. A few public edifices ornamented situations, not the best calculated to receive them; among these, the residence of the intendant, and the theatre, were most conspicuous. There are two harbours formed by some islets, open to any attack. The town extending along the sea-shore, in the centre of the western coast, is damp, and cheerless, except from the hurry of business. It is accessible at every point, from the land. A road, about 40 miles in length, reaches from hence to the village of Sale Trou, situate between two small rivers, near L'Ance a Pitre, on the southern coast.

The town of St. Mark, stretching along the sea-shore at the bottom of the bay of that name, was rather handsomely built, of

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion

CHAP. I. freestone from the hills, which form a crescent behind it; the
 1789. only instance of that kind of building in the colony. It was not
 Topography, large, but possessed a good trade, and received all the crops from
 &c. French division.
 the intervening country, to Cape St. Nicholas. It is within ten miles of the mouth of the great river Artibonite, which winds its serpentine course through the plain to which it gives name, flowing behind it at the village of Tapion, about four leagues in the interior. Being the only river on the plain, an artificial use of water, by irrigation to a great extent, was necessary for its cultivation, which was an impediment to its opulence in contrast to those plains, which, (as was generally the case,) were watered by numerous streams or rivulets.

Leogane.

Leogane stands about a mile and a half from the shore opposite the island, or peninsula, of Gonave, between the channel of Gonave and the bay of St. Mark; it is a spacious, handsome town, surrounded with fertility, and in the neighbourhood of many streams of excellent water. It is a situation capable of defence, and in many respects preferable to Port-au-Prince. It was here the seat of government was transferred from Goäve, previous to its settlement at the late capital.

Petit Goäve.

Petit Goäve, the original seat of government of the whole French colony, was long in a very decayed state, notwithstanding its importance in the first settlement of the Buccaneers, and the excellence of its harbour, still extremely good, and to which may be attributed any advantage it yet retains.

L'Anse

L'Anse de Jeremie, or, La Grand Anse, is a thriving town, well situated, healthy, and neat. Its trade was forming in a manner that left no doubt of increasing opulence, and to it, the privateers generally brought the prizes they made, in its neighbourhood.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.
Jeremie.

The village of Gonaves is situate on the south side of the Gonaves. bay of that name, immediately opposite the projecting point of the line of demarcation, so that the French colony in this part, (nearly the centre of their territory,) contained in breadth little more than twenty miles. The soil is the most productive, and the most grateful to man, of any spot in the whole of the Antilles. Its harbour was excellent in point of safety, being formed by a little island, which crossing the bay, left a narrow channel, but with sufficient depth of water.

Aux Cayes is completely sunk in marshy ground, without a harbour, or salubrity to recommend it; yet such is the fertility which every where surrounds this town, as to have tempted the choice of every new settler to its swampy shores, and stagnant ponds. Its population was, therefore, much greater than could have been supposed. It has also in its vicinity a variety of bays and villages, which all tend to its prosperity.—Many ships have been lost here, from the insecure and dangerous anchorage; yet, as the Abbé Raynal has observed, “ even the caprices of industry are to be indulged by the government;” and “ trade like a plant that only flourishes in a soil of its own

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.
La Vache.

Jaquemel.

choosing, disdains every kind of restraint." Vache Island, which lies off this coast, was a celebrated resort of the free-booters in their molestation of the Spaniards, and is yet the successful haunt of the privateers of an enemy.

To this island, as to that of Tortuga on the opposite coast, the colony was indebted for the foundation of a town, which, though small, is of some importance. Jaquemel, at the best of times, did not contain one hundred houses, and derives no support from its soil, which is not fruitful, and comparatively hid among the neighbouring hills. As Port-au-Prince is to L'Ance à Pitres, so is Jaquemel to Le Petit Goäve, being situated on the opposite side of the south projection of the Bight, sometimes called the Bight of Leogane. It is therefore a kind of store-house, or magazine, to the colony, receiving safely during war, (which can be done at no other place,) assistance of every kind, which is easily communicated to the western side, by a road of only twenty miles, leading to Leogane, and from thence to Port-au-Prince.

Villages.

Besides the towns, and the villages of Gonaves and Arcahaye already mentioned, there are numerous others to which either commerce, agriculture, beauty, or strength of situation, attached important advantages; among these may be ranked St. Louis, which, though poor, and containing a small number of houses, without even water to drink, till some Jews, in return for their safety, proposed to erect, at their own expence, an aqueduct; by

being occupied in some of the purposes of government, receiving the men of war which appeared there, and thus protecting the trade and wealth of Aux Cayes, it assumed the characteristic of a defence of the island. Baynette, about fifteen miles from Jacquemel, and Acul, at a less distance from Aux Cayes, derive a similar adventitious importance, as well as Nipes and Miragoane, on the opposite coast; while Cul de Sac, Petit Fond, and Plaisance, in the interior, are of a different character. To these many more might be added upon the northern coast, but enough hath been said to shew the different appearance of the French colony from that of Spain: suffice it to add, that every part teemed with population, and smiled with industry.

The cultivated land in the colony amounted to 2,289,480 English acres,* which was divided into 793 plantations of sugar, 3117 of coffee, 789 of cotton, 3160 of indigo, 54 of cocoa or chocolate, and 623 smaller settlements for raising grain, yams, and other vegetable food.†

Of the differences which agitated the two colonies, happily religion did not form an object; for, though exempt from the interference of Rome, on one part, by express concession, and, on the other, by a light administration of ecclesiastical government, they both acknowledged the forms of her church, and

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

Ecclesiasti-
cal govern-
ment.

* Or 763,923 carreaux of French measurement.

† This last statement, which has every mark of authenticity, is taken from Mr. Edwards, Hist. Surv. p. 136.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

entertained all the appendages of her hierarchy. The order of Jesuits was obtained here; that able, though insidious body, which, separated from secular projects and political intrigues, might have become benefactors to the human race. More need not be said of the local establishments of religion in a colony, whose inhabitants counted really but little upon it, and whose writers have told us still less.* The edifices of public worship did not, in elegance of building, detract any other, and that there were many excellent benefices, might be collected from the manner in which many of the ecclesiastics have been known to live.

Constitution.

The government of the French colony was composed of two principal officers, a governor-general, and an intendant, or general administrator, whose office lasted three years. They were appointed through the marine minister, and their power was unbounded; for they, in effect, enacted laws, filled all vacant offices, and presided ultimately over all councils, or courts of justice. The governor had the whole naval and military force under his command, and had the power of personal liberty throughout the colony. He had also the power, by certain impediments, to prevent arrest by any other authority, and in part to stop the course of justice. The intendant regulated and superintended every department relative to the public revenue: to this he had the occasional assistance of a court ridiculously enough

* Except the tales of some fanatics among the French missionaries, with whom many of the slaves are described as "*spiritual*," though it is sufficiently known that these people, in a state of slavery, neither comprehend, nor retain, even the forms of Christian worship.

called

called the Colonial Assembly, in which every superior public officer bore a part. A subordinate court of justice was placed at Port-au-Prince, for the provinces. The principal officers presided in it, with a president, twelve counsellors, and four assistant judges. In this court, which was formerly divided between that town and Cape François, were registered all the royal edicts, and those of the colonial government. Much, very much of the happiness of the colony, depended on the governor, who was generally a person of distinction, and most frequently selected from the army or navy. An appeal from every decision lay to the King, in which justice was insured; whatever impediments to its course might have been found in St. Domingo.

The chief force of the island, though certainly inadequate to its defence, consisted of the militia, of which each parish raised from one to three companies of whites, one of mulattoes, and one of free blacks, none of which received pay; and the king's troops upon the colonial establishment generally comprised from two to three thousand men.

The inhabitants were composed, as usual, of pure whites; ^{Inhabitants.} people of colour, and blacks of free condition; and negroes in a state of slavery. The whole of the intermediate grades were called generally mulattoes.

The character of the European planter in St. Domingo was imperious, and voluptuous to a higher degree than in the other

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

CHAP. I.
1789.
Topography,
&c.
French divi-
sion.

islands: this character also shewed itself on every occasion; he was impatient of even the constraint of the laws, avaricious of wealth and honor, and a devotee to all the arts of indulgence. Hospitality, was unbounded among them, and charity, at the same time, very extensively bestowed. “ ‘Tis the inheritance,” says Father le Pers,* “ which they have preserved the most entire from their ancestors; and it would seem that this excellent virtue was confined with the very air of St. Domingo.

Many circumstances combined to render the situation of the mulattoes much more eligible than in any other island, though in some respects worse. They were also more numerous. The free man of colour had the command of his own property, without any restriction, both in life and death; he could bear testimony even against the whites; he could marry as he pleased, and transmit freedom to his children; and he might embrace a liberal profession; but prejudice frequently damped his efforts, and precipitated him below what an hostile law could have done. The meanness of birth was never forgotten in his own land. They were also compelled to serve in one of the brigades of horse, furnished in all the parishes, under the appellation of the Marshalsea. The numbers of this class were to be accounted for, by several circumstances, amongst which were the superior comforts of the lower order of whites, employed in the superintendance of the

* “ L’heritage qu’ils ont conservé le plus entier de leurs peres, est l’hospitalité, &c. il semble qu’on respire cette belle vertu avec l’air de S. Domingue.” *Charleroi Hist. de S. Domingue.*

plantations,

plantations, and the engaging manners of the women of colour, who are often elegant, if not sometimes really beautiful. The mulattoes were frequently opulent and respected.

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The next class, the enslaved negro, appears to have been comparatively happy, rather than otherwise; not condemned to an unreasonable duration of labor, they were sufficiently provided, without any anxiety for their future existence. They had gardens which produced the necessities of life; pigs, poultry, and even horses; and were sufficiently clothed, agreeably to the climate; but they were considered and treated, as much beneath, the ordinary class of human beings: yet, M. de Charmilly, whose judgment in this particular need not to be doubted, says, "that this race of men is naturally good; that if nature has denied them attention, reflexion, observation, perseverance, and all the advantages which render the whites superior to them, she has done every thing for them necessary to the climate in which they exist, not only in physical advantages, but also in those of the heart; for she has given that sensibility for the sex which makes them forget so many sorrows, and the most lively affection for their children, which renders every thing supportable to them."*

* —“ Que cette race d'hommes est naturellement bonne; que si là nature lui refuse l'attention, la réflexion, l'observation, la persévérance, & tous les avantages qui rendent les blancs supérieurs à eux, elle a tout fait pour eux du côté du climat, des avantages physiques & même du cœur; car elle leur a donné cette sensibilité pour les femmes qui fait oublier tant de malheurs! et le plus vif amour pour leurs enfans, qui leur rend tout supportable!”
—*Venault de Charmilly, Lettre à M. Bryan Edwards, &c. p. 41.*

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The appearance which we have already ascribed to the Spanish coast, may be naturally supposed to extend itself to that of the French division, with the difference which must be created by a continual range of cultivation, either glistening in a tropical sun, or winding in an umbrageous alley towards dwellings which might be easily conceived a second paradise. The Mole of Cape St. Nicholas, which is justly considered as a key to the windward passage, presents an appearance such as it should to the ocean, sterile and commanding. The south peninsula resounded with the language of trade, and the northern coast with arms and with agriculture.—Unlike their neighbours, the French colonists caused their land to be cultivated up to the very mountain tops, from which the cane-grounds appeared as so many thickets; while every invention that could be adopted to their purpose was readily encouraged. Their roads were in general excellent, being made and kept in repair, by the contributions of every planter, who sent a proportionate number of his slaves to work upon them, (a burthen entitled the *Corvées*.) Sometimes they overflowed in the morning, and were dusty again in the evening; although generally shaded on both sides by lime trees; and the different grounds were separated by hedges of citron trees. The approach to the residence of a planter, was through an avenue of both these, and the pimento and palm graced its extended prospect.

Their principal rivers are the Artibonite, which flows from its source in the centre of the island, through the plain of that name, till

till it empties itself in the gulf of Gonaves; that called the Three Rivers, whose mouth is at Port Paix; and the Great River, or La Grande Riviere, which reaches the sea near Jeremie.

To describe the productions of the French colony of St. Domingo, would be enumerating those of the whole of the Antilles. Their principal were, however, as have been before described, sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, and cocoa, or chocolate. To these may be added a little tobacco.

In return for the useful droves of cattle for slaughter and labour, smoked beef, bacon, skins, and the greatest part of the money received from Spain, they supplied their neighbours with wearing apparel, hardware, and guns.

The population was considered at about 40,000 whites, 500,000 negro slaves, and 24,000 free people of colour; and the average exports, as stated by M. Marbois, the intendant of the colony, amounted to 4,765,129*l.* sterling.

It is not intended in this place, to satisfy the scientific views of the naturalist in regard to St. Domingo, notwithstanding that, with an inclination to that study, the writer had some opportunities for its indulgence, which were not entirely lost, but reserved for some future opportunity. The amateur of this elegant research will, no doubt, have recourse to the valuable histories which have been long furnished of a neighbouring island, in

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these respects so similar, as to admit of very little variation in the subject to which I allude.

The food of the early inhabitants of St. Domingo, appears to have comprised a similar description of vegetables to that of the negroes at this day:—plantains, Indian wheat, millet, the cassavi root, potatoes, and Caribbee cabbage. Their quadrupeds included the smaller species of a lizard; yet, the delicacy of a West India table; the Agouti Rat, of which a description are yet found in some of the islands; and the Alco, a small short-tailed dog, which did not bark, with others whose names have not come down to us. Their fishery was more abundant, every bay and creek furnishing an ample supply, as many of them do to the present time. The European quadrupeds now supply the necessary food of European colonists, with only such local additions as are objects of delicacy, or introduced by custom; among these, may be named the land crab, the ortolan, and a variety of wild fowl of delicious taste and flavor. The indigenous vegetables yet remain, including plantains, yams, a species of spinage, potatoes, cassava, Indian wheat, and cabbage; to these are added the European roots, herbs, and pulse; and no want is found of cabbage, turnips, carrots, parsnips, peas beans, artichokes, &c. A variety of fruits ornament the luxury of the table, among which, the melon and pine-apple, peaches and strawberries, oranges and lemons, the cashew, apples, pears, plums, and nuts, are plenteously combined with a variety of productions introduced from different countries.

To describe the nature, properties, and mode of cultivation of those productions, which form the different objects of commerce, would uselessly extend the present chapter, and the accounts are to be found in different works peculiarly appropriated to these subjects *. Sufficient is now already mentioned to acquaint

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* Sugar, coffee, and cotton, are rendered familiar to almost every reader. I shall, however, briefly add here a slight description of the two other staple commodities of St. Domingo—cocoa and indigo.

The cocoa-tree presents less beauty than utility to its cultivator, for its branches form so many trunks separating from each other to a distance immediately above the parent one, and these bend with their separate branches immediately down to the earth. It seldom, therefore, rises high. Its leaves are long, terminating in a point, and emitting an agreeable smell. In the pistil of a flower blooming from every part, is contained an husk, in the form of a melon, which grows ordinarily to the length of six inches, and the breadth of four or five, composed of several small inclosures, in which the fruit, comprising a number of small nuts, of the shape of almonds, is found. It is propagated from the seed; is green in the early part of its growth, and becomes yellow at maturity. When it assumes a deep hue, it must be immediately gathered and dried; two crops of equal value are annually formed. It requires shade and moisture, and loves the protection of large trees at a sufficient distance, which must be also regarded with respect to its own plants. It requires rather due care, and a few necessary precautions, than a culture either laborious or expensive, and its returns are of the most profitable kind. Its nutritious, and other advantageous qualities, are too sufficiently known to require a recital, and its commercial value will be better known from other parts of the present account.

Indigo, an article of such general domestic service, as to be used as a beautifier of the finest part of our dress, and an important object of commerce, flourishes no where so well as at St. Domingo. It is a shrub with a thick, spreading root, about two feet high, of a faint, but not disagreeable smell. The stem is of a dry appearance, and different shades of colour. The leaves are of an oval form, and connected by a short pedicle. The pistil of its small and scentless flowers changes into a pod, and discloses its seeds, of the appearance of gunpowder. The blue is found adhering to the leaves, which, when gathered on the branches, are thrown into a tub filled with water, and fermented: it is then made to run into another, when it is discovered among the water, in the form of a subtile earth. The water is then agitated by various means, and with the utmost circumspection, to combine the coloured particles, which, when effected, are left to precipitate to the bottom. The liquid,

become

CHAP. I. the reader with the country, from whose rich prospects, and
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become of a thicker consistence, is drawn off into another vessel to settle, and thence drained through sacks, from which it is removed into chests, where it becomes dry, and fit for sale. It is divided into two sorts, whimsically designated the true and the bastard. The first is finer, but the latter heavier and more profitable, and therefore more generally cultivated. They are both liable to frequent accidents, among which the most destructive is the effect of the caterpillar, which devours the leaves, and their produce, in a few mornings. It is quickly ripe, and generally cut at intervals of six weeks. At the end of two years it becomes degenerated, and fresh plants are necessary. Moisture and shade are required considerably for this plant, and the principal care is to deprive it of the weeds, which would otherwise immediately choke it. It exhausts the soil considerably, and potatoes, and other similar plants, are cultivated in its place occasionally, for the purpose of burning the leaves as manure.

Those who would enjoy an acute and curious dissertation on sugar, may consult the interesting account of Dr. Moseley, in his volume of Medical Miscellanies, &c.

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Origin of the Revolutionary Spirit of this Period in St. Domingo.

THE origin of principles is not always to be traced to the approximating causes of an event; for, as in nature, so in morality, the seeds of many productions lie dormant through varying seasons, till the moment when an unseen influence calls them into obvious existence: hence, to be capable of discerning the signs of the times, is a power that hath always been duly appreciated, and an attention to which hath frequently changed the fate of a country, if not of mankind. Yet, it is not often that man can be hoped to distinguish with precision, the approaching evil from the good, particularly in circumstances that affect, perhaps, not only his interest, but his immediate happiness; it is thus, therefore, that surprize is so frequently excited, at the apparent blindness to the future with which principles and practices are so frequently urged in society, diametrically opposite to the dictates of nature and philosophy, and repugnant to the common experience of ages. Collateral circumstances form the general argument

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ment in their favor; and it may endure with them a little while; but truth is eternal.

If accuracy of discrimination is not always to be found in philosophers, it is not to be expected in any large mixed body; and still less so, in those who form the population of colonies, particularly of the extent of that which is the subject of the present observations. Though the greatest empires have arisen from the overflow of cities into colonies, it cannot be contended that no sculculence mixed with the flood.

To attribute to the general number of colonists any specific character, (where, collected fortuitously, they must necessarily admit of the strongest marks of variety), would be ridiculous; it is, however, certain, that among those, devoted to pursue fortune in distant dependencies upon their native country, may be ranked many who have no peculiar capacity, nor opportunity for employment at home; many of the higher classes without prospects, and of the lower without character; who cannot fail to consider their destination, as intended to supply every want; and to consider those means the best, which have the most facility. To those may, no doubt, be added many of the germs of genius, to whom, it is to be feared, the warmth of a tropical sun does not always prove more genial, than the wintry rays of their own; and, probably, some with qualities fitted for any sphere of life, to whom a spirit of enterprize alone might dictate the migration. To the self-interested, the term of his own probation will always bound

bound his considerations, and it is not the bulk of mankind who can be, nor who incline to be, legislators, much less moralists. The officers of government may be able and good, but their dominion is too short to conciliate any local affection, and an expedient temporization will and must always supersede even ordinary virtue.

Of the West India colonists from France, the modern writers of that nation have afforded us no reason to think with increased tenderness, since Raynal has imputed to them a viciousness of conduct, beyond the apparent bounds of human actions; and De Charmilly (one of themselves) has described those, of whom the best conduct was to be expected, receiving appointments under the government of the colony, as the rewards of an intriguing court to its meanest dependants, and vilest accessaries! Their character, as displayed on prominent occasions, during that period which is the intent of these sheets to describe, unhappily was not often such as to controvert the assertions made from such good authority.

The man who first contemplated the *purchase* of laborers by thousands,* to be conveyed in close vessels, without the power of

* The commencement of the African slave-trade, like many other objects of importance, seems to have taken place from a very trifling accident. In 1440, Anthony Gonsales, one of the Portuguese navigators, in the prosecution of his discoveries, seized, and carried off some Moors near Cape Bojador, whom prince Henry afterwards ordered him to restore. When again exploring the coast of Africa about two years after, he executed this order, landing them at Rio del Oro, and received from the Moors, in exchange, *ten blacks*, and a quantity of gold dust. His success in this transaction tempted his countrymen to a repetition, till at length they fitted out ships for the purpose, and afterwards formed settlements for the trade in black slaves. Ultimately patents were granted, and the dealers in human flesh were sanctified by a bull from the holy see.

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rest or exercise, or nourishment proper for any situation, much less for a dreary voyage to a foreign land; and, who knew these men, although little removed from a state of nature, to be susceptible of those impressions which mock the utmost refinements of civilization, to the attainment of some of which, morality often strives in vain; must have been bold to conceive that they would continue always patient of their wrongs, and resigned to compulsory labour, even though it should be in a state of comparative advantage, particularly in the constant converse of annual acquisitions of their countrymen, whose remembrances were not obliterated; yet no objection would appear to have occurred to him, and his plan proceeded till the employers of it, with a physical proportion of twelve to one against them, imagined themselves capable of coercing five hundred thousand of these men, exclusive of the descendants of others, without any determined exertion of virtue, or consideration on their own part.

Let it not be conceived that it is here intended to arraign the conduct of the planters in general, or to view with complacency the revolt of servants of any description, much less to plead their apology; I am but to state facts which are necessary to the argument intended to be produced.

The African negro is described as “frivolous, inconstant, vain, timid, jealous, and superstitious; yet good and generous, without foresight, always guided by the impression of the moment; and adding to these characteristics, the *vices of slaves*, indolence, gluttony,

tony, dishonesty, and falsehood; vindictive also, like all weak beings, injustice driving them to despair."* I take the whole of this character for granted, from the experience of the writer, and the different opportunities which have been confided to him of judging with truth. That the dependance of colonies, then, could have been originally placed upon such beings, was a strange perversion of human judgment; but that it could be expected to continue through ages, without a superior portion of human wisdom and virtue, (instead of a very small exercise of either,) is only attributable to the blindness I have just described. The result has proved the position; for, from the first moment at which African slaves were imported, the effects of all the bad qualities ascribed to them have been frequent, in revolt, treachery, murder, and suicide; nor, at the same time, have the instances been few, of actions arising from the superior impulses, or unconquerable affection, gratitude, inviolable fidelity, or bravery, have been experienced from them by their masters and connections; and circumstances are still recited that might cope with the history of the ancient republics. No more is described than is necessary to the present purpose; for it is not the wish of the writer to discuss the question of the slave-trade, already too much agitated in this country, but to trace the origin of the revolutionary spirit which has ended so fatally to the colonies of France.

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ry spirit.

* — “ légers, inconstans, vains, timides, peureux, jalouse, bons, généreux, sans prévoyance, superstitieux, toujours conduits par l'impression du moment: ils joignent à cela les vices des esclaves: paresseux, gourmands, voleurs, menteurs, vindicatif, comme tous les êtres, faibles, l'injustice les desespere.” De Charmilly, Lettre, p. 41.

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Regardless of the frequent exercise of several minor qualities also which must tend to render men impatient of slavery, the labour of the islands continued to be performed by their means; without any other foresight, than related to expedients which might procrastinate the evil for each successive proprietor. Hence they have been successively punished by domestic means, chased as wild-beasts, combated like a foreign enemy, and treated with as independant powers! Yet, so prone are men to consider that what they wish the case, that scarcely a doubt was entertained of those who had not deserted, or *marooned*, nor were any other than coercive principles contemplated for those who remained; the same routine of purchase to supply deficiencies, and of regulations to secure their value, prevailed. The planter, instead of exhibitions of virtue and power that should impress respect and awe, appeared a feeble voluptuary, forgetting, in idle dalliance with the female labourers of his field, the utility of moral principles, and the decencies of life. The effects of such examples are incontestible, as regards private morality, without any allusion to the offices of religion; and it requires not to be depressed into a community of the most abject description of slaves to discover, that the effects of vice in undermining public virtue is the certain basis of revolt.

Thus an ignorance, in the first instance, of human nature, a blindness to actual circumstances, and a want of individual virtue in the colonists, gave birth to the revolutionary spirit in St. Domingo; which, instead of being created, was only fanned into

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flame,

flame by the occurrences which took place in the relations of the colony, with the mother-country, on the change of its government.

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The support of colonies by means of such a disproportion of African slaves, to the other population as are necessary, continually and progressively acquired, is radically impossible, from the nature of the people themselves, and the manner of obtaining them; but if it were not, the want of powers required for their management—of a policy sufficiently subtle and yet enlightened, for their government, would render it, permanently, impracticable; even with both these probabilities in their favour, that, in such a depraved state as that of the French colony in St. Domingo, every other advantage would be annihilated.

It is, perhaps, necessary here to anticipate an observation not unlikely to be made; therefore, be it understood, that the impossibility of the continued existence of slavery is not by any means asserted. It is not forgotten that there was a period when, from the happy state under which I am considering this subject, unrestricted by the check of civil or ecclesiastical tyranny, parents sold their children as slaves to a foreign country, and inherited others themselves, who were their captives, or who had been acquired by other means; but these, notwithstanding they may have

* See an account of slavery in Europe in Robertson's Charles V. vol. I. p. 272.—Also an assemblage of the different laws on this subject, in Huntingford's *Laws of Master and Servant Considered*, chap. I. p. 36.

been

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been treated as inferior classes of society (as the productive power is too generally to this day), bore no mark*, by which they should be considered, as distinguished by nature to be scarcely belonging to the human species, as is the case with that of complexion.

Nor, is the writer at present opposing the practice of the slave-trade. He is an enemy to it, only, as he is to every employment which offers an undue power to many, not the most unlikely to abuse it; and as a principle hostile to humanity and inefficient in its purposes. He is aware, that the situation of colonial-slaves at present is, in many respects, superior to that of the labourers or the artizans of Britain. The first have not, indeed, the command of secession, neither have the two latter the power; for if they cease from labour, they cease from its advantages. When it is considered that the artizan must wander in search of employment, and submit to the optional reward of those who may chuse to employ him, after encountering distress in consequence of repeated refusals; the slave will appear more happy, though sometimes enduring corporeal punishment too severe, whose food and residence is provided without anxiety; and who is certain of employment, or of the same provision.

* It is recorded, but where I cannot, at present, refer, that St. Gregory observing some beautiful English children in the slave-market at Rome, exclaimed in a Latin pun, if I may be allowed the expression, that they were not English, but Angels, if they had but been Christians.—“*Non Angli, sed Angeli;*” &c. This practice will, however, appear to have been continued after they had the benefit of the Christian Religion. See *Anderson's History of Commerce*, vol. I. p. 99.

Nor

Nor, would the writer be supposed to sanction the means which have been used to procure an abolition of the trade, which he disapproves; much less, the emancipation of those slaves already in the colonies. Of the latter step, the humanity would be equally problematical, with that which would dictate the liberation of the poor bird long nursed in domestic comfort, to flutter a little while in solitary freedom, a stranger to his own kind, and to the winds of heaven.

What has been said, has arisen from a conviction that, but for the circumstances described, a revolutionary spirit would not have so soon been spread throughout St. Domingo; and to point out the beacon to the colonies of the British nation in the same sea, with that which has produced an illustration of these positions, and a picture so full of terror, on this more will be said, and with greater propriety, at the end of this work.

Flushed with opulence and dissipation, the majority of planters in St. Domingo had arrived at a state of sentiment the most vitiated, and manners equally depraved; while, injured by an example so contagious, the slaves had become more dissolute, than those of any British island. If the master was proud, voluptuous, and crafty, the slave was equally vicious, and often riotous; the punishment of one was but the consequence of his own excesses; but that of the other, was often cruel and unnatural. The proprietor could bear no rival in his parish; and would not bend even to the ordinances of justice. The creole-

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

Such was the situation of the inhabitants of St. Domingo in the beginning of the year 1789, prompt to any movement that should create an effervescence among them, or afford the one party an opportunity of opposing the other; yet, while private feuds were eager for an opportunity to burst into public clamour, the situation of the country was such as hath been described, like the verdant bosom of a volcano, unconscious of the flame about to burst; the people were cheerful, the markets plentifully stocked, the lands loaded with production, and the colony, if "*overwhelmed with debt*,"* it may be admitted to be so said, flourishing every where.

In the mean time, the great kingdom, under whose care it had expanded to its present growth, and to whose government it yet

* — “la colonie qui, ayant encore *beaucoup de dettes*, n'avait pas besoin de payer celles de la France.” *Lettre à Edwards*, p. 48.

looked

looked for parental care, disordered by embarrassment, and agitated by conflicting interests, began to approach to that period which had been considered as inevitable, by philosophers, for more than half a century. Notwithstanding the absolute tyranny which had prevailed in other respects, France, under the feeble reign of the unhappy Louis, had been the nurse of morality and philosophy; and she drew nigh, not unwittingly, to that political mortality to which it would appear all states are subject; for it had been sung by her poets under the walls of her own capital, and repeated in auguries which did not err.

Of the different expedients that had been resorted to, the colonies did not want information; nor did it fail in the effect which might be expected upon every class of their inhabitants. In a new regimen the proprietors looked to some aggrandizement either in property or consequence; the free people of colour anticipated a favourable change in their condition; and even the slaves viewed, through the political alterations that began to occupy the attention of those above them, something to excite their curiosity, and a vigilance to gratify it. Each motion of the French court became canvassed by every class throughout the island. When a spirit of deliberation upon subjects usually considered above the capacities of the vulgar begins to spread, it seldom ends precisely as it begun; whatever may be the event, it does not fail to call into notice circumstances and opinions not easily repressed, and characters in their support who might otherwise have preserved through life “the noiseless

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tenor of their way." It had its full effect in St. Domingo, already so ripe to receive it; and when the news arrived that the States-General of France were to be summoned (the last convulsive effort of expiring monarchy), all parties resolved on making their own interests a part of the general concern.

In opposition to the wishes of a judicious few (among whom was the intelligent De Charmilly) and even to the prohibitions of the government, the impetuous proprietors summoned provincial and parochial meetings, for the purpose of electing *themselves* to legislative functions; heated resolutions were passed; and eighteen deputies were elected, to represent the island in the meeting of the States-General, without any other authority than the noise of demagogues, and their own inclinations. Twelve were never recognized in France, and the other six were received with difficulty. The mulattoes, who could have no share in this self-created body, thought it naturally time to show an attention to themselves; and, accordingly, not only communicated with numbers of their brethren then resident in the mother-country, but augmented those powerful advocates in their behalf, with much more effect than was produced by the self-created body of colonial deputies. The negroes, however, more successful than all, without either deputies or intercessors, obtained, unsolicited, the interest of such a powerful body in their behalf, as to drown the recollection of every other object. A society, in which were enrolled the names of several great and good men, under the title of "The Friends of the Blacks"

(Amis

(*Amis de Noirs*), circulated its protests and appeals with such vigour, that, before the negroes themselves, although eager and alert in their enquiries, were acquainted with the importance which they had obtained in the deliberations of the mother-country, they were the prominent subjects of conversation and regret in half the towns of Europe. They were not, however, tardy in acquiring this information; and though it would be difficult to contemplate any thing in human nature so bad, as to suppose that the highest and best of motives did not actuate so respectable a body as that which composed this society, or the similar establishment which had before obtained in London; yet the unhappy eloquence with which the miseries of slavery were depicted by them, and the forcible points of view in which all the errors of their opponents were placed, as well as the enthusiasm which always accompanies the exertions of ardent minds, were certainly the cause of bringing into action, on a broad basis, that spirit of revolt which only sleeps in the enslaved African, or his descendant, and which has produced on their side, and on that of the white inhabitants of the colonies, such horrors as "make ev'n the angels weep."

I conclude this account of the *origin* of the revolution of St. Domingo, with observing how much better it would have been for themselves, and perhaps for humanity, if happily discerning the signs of the times, the planters of this delightful and flourishing colony (a character which none have attempted to deny it), by resigning an overweening fondness for dominion, and an undue

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avarice of gain, had rather calmed than provoked the dissensions of those whose interest should have bid them to agree; and by softening the evils of a state which is so bad in its best form, have conciliated the affections of those to whose labours, under the present regimen, every thing productive of wealth or prosperity must depend. A partial concession to those who, by complexion itself, claim half a right to political existence, would have been sufficient: with a little regard for the morals of a people who require them the most, and a revolution in their own minds, as far as human nature will admit. These would have preserved to them, now lingering in a melancholy exile, if not the sudden victims of their impolicy, an island the boast of the new world, and a powerful support of the old. If they had then contemplated some more legitimate means of prosecuting the labours of their colony, they might, however immediately unavailing, have laid a foundation for their posterity more lasting than the bequest of inordinate wealth, and have claimed the approbation of society.

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C H A P. III.

*Account of the Progress and Accomplishment of the Independence
of St. Domingo.*

AT the commencement of these changes in the government of the mother country, and consequently of others in that of the colonies, the governor of French St. Domingo was M. Duchilleau, a man of no moderate powers, but who, from conciliating the temper of the new council of France, was continued in his office. It soon however became, in power or consequence, but nugatory; for, upon the first meeting of the assemblies before described, his proclamations were disregarded, and his government insulted, if not despised.

The states-general, at which two deputies appeared from each of the provinces, declared themselves the National Assembly in May, 1789, and on the 20th of August they made their *Declaration of Rights*. Between these two periods, the public mind had been heated against the white colonists by such

CHAP. III.
1789.
M. Duchil-
leau, gover-
nor.

CHAP. III. such a variety of means, as to threaten their total annihilation.
1789.

The publication of the Declaration of Rights did not tend to remedy this unfavorable impression of the people against one of their own communities; for the article that, "All men are born, and continue, free and equal as to their rights," implied an entire subversion of their establishments, and created a complete ferment among the whole of the French proprietors. They conceived, and the French government appear afterwards to have done the same, that the effect of this declaration was to rouse the negroes to an assertion of those rights it was supposed to give them. Apprehensive of disorders arising in the colony, the governor soon received orders from his new constituents, the National Assembly, to call together the inhabitants for the purpose of interior regulation. The measure had been anticipated by the ready disposition of the self-constituted legislators, and a provincial assembly for the northern district had already met at Cape François; an example which was soon followed by the western and southern provinces, the former of which met at Port-au-Prince, and the latter at Aux Cayes. For more immediate communication between the people, and to accommodate every description, parochial committees were also established. These committees were of the disposition which might be expected, and, by dividing among themselves upon every occasion, they served only to inform the negroes of their frivolity, and to excite them to take advantage of their want of unanimity and power; and the prin-

pal determination in their proceedings was that, of the necessity of a full and speedy colonial representation. The order of the king, however, which was received in January 1790, tended to supersede their deliberations, by convoking a general Colonial Assembly, which was appointed to meet in the central town of Leogane. The mode which it directed of electing the members did not satisfy the provincial assemblies, and they substituted a plan of their own, changing the town of Leogane to that of St. Mark, and fixing on the 25th of March, and afterwards on the 16th of April, for the time of meeting.

The mulattoes, not willing to be left behind in exertion, when they perceived the opposition of the whites to every movement of the government, determined to proceed a step still farther, and accordingly arming themselves, they proceeded to claim by force the benefit of equal privileges with the whites. Their combination was premature, and they were soon overpowered. Different parties were secured at Jacmel and Artibonite, to whom, on their submission, notwithstanding the exasperation of the whites in general against them, an unconditional pardon was given. In the division of parties, too, inconsistent as it may appear, some of the whites, among whom were included persons of high respectability, adopted the cause of the people of colour, and even seconded their inclination to revolt. Among these, an old magistrate named Ferrand de Beaudierre, was the first to become conspicuous, for the purpose of removing the disgrace which had attached to him in consequence of having offered

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offered marriage to a woman of colour. He drew up a meḿorial in their behalf, which had not time to be presented to the parochial committee, before he was seized by an enraged mob, and put to death. The deputy procureur-general, M. Dubois, also, whose duty demanded a different course, became so infatuated, as to declaim against the slavery of the negroes in their presence; but he enjoyed a milder fate; he was only arrested by the people, and dismissed from the colony by the governor, who soon after followed.

Such was the confused state of the colony, and every one seemed to be so bent upon harassing the metropolitan government, that it was, with great reason, apprehended in France, that the island was about to declare itself independant, or to submit to some foreign power. The alarm became general throughout those places which had any concern with St. Domingo, and the National Assembly on being earnestly implored to consider of the best means of saving so valuable a dependancy resolved, after a serious discussion of the subject, “ That it was not the intention of the Assembly to interfere with the interior government of the colonies, or to subject them to laws incompatible with their local establishments; they therefore authorized the inhabitants of each colony to signify their own plan of legislation and commercial arrangement, preserving only a conformity with the principles of the mother country, and a regard for the reciprocal interests of both.” It superadded, that no innovation was intended in *any system of commerce in which*

the colonies were already concerned. It will easily be conceived that this conciliating resolution, so necessary, as regarded the discontented white colonists, would be very differently received by the people of colour. It excited among them a general clamour, which extended to every part where their cause (diffused by the means used on those occasions) was known, or even heard of.

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The period having arrived to which the General Assembly of St. Domingo had been prorogued, it met to the number of two hundred and thirteen members, at the town of St. Mark. ^{18th April.} ^{Peynier, go- vernor.} These consisted of two representatives from each parish, twenty-four from the city of Cape François, sixteen from that of Port-au-Prince, and eight from Aux Cayes. The provincial assemblies continued in their self-appointments notwithstanding, and even formed committees, to act in the intervals of meeting. The new assembly commenced its functions by reviewing the objects of abuse in the old colonial government, and in proposing means for their remedy, of which the political incapacities of the mulattoes, and a revisal of the slave laws, bore a promising part. They put the mulattoes, in point of military duty, on the same footing with the whites, restricting the king's officers commanding in the towns, from those oppressive acts towards them which they had sometimes experienced; they examined into those abuses in the courts of judicature which claimed immediate redress; and set about preparing a new colonial constitution.

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To extend the divisions, which were increasing, rather than otherwise, among the proprietors and their representatives, the new governor-general was a man privately devoted to the old system, who immediately combined those who had any interest in the ancient despotism, to oppose the colonial revolution, which would be likely to deprive them of their corrupt sources of profit. As these included all the officers under the fiscal administration, tax-gatherers, appendages to the courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction, and most of those who held military commissions under the king's authority, they formed a power, by no means contemptible, and possessed an advantage in being all sincere in their attachment to one cause, while a diversity of opinions swayed the newly established party. To this association was added one, (from many of whom their country has since suffered much,) who, with considerable talents, and an enterprising genius, was bent upon counter-projects against every act of the General Assembly; this was the Colonel and Chevalier Mauduit, who commanded, and was beloved by the regiment of Port-au-Prince. He had returned from France, by way of Italy, and had last parted with the Count D'Artois, to whose fortunes he was much devoted. Thus, impressed with more than common warmth in the cause, in which he now took such an active part, he did not fail to strike a blow to the interests of the colony; by insinuating himself between the Assembly and those in whose favor they were exerting themselves, he divided them against each other, and to this effort Peynier, who was weak and uninformed, resigned all his power, or influence, into his hands.

As if to meet the insidious policy of Mauduit, the divisions of CHAP. III.
the new legislative bodies burst into open convulsion, by the
conduct of the provincial assembly of the north, who endeavoured
to the utmost of their power, to counteract the provisions of the
General Assembly.

The decree which was the result of its deliberations being May 28.
completed, the plan for a new constitution was published; which,
as if every thing was to coincide with the untoward disposition
of affairs, was so framed as to please scarce any party, and formed
the ostensible motive for the commencement of hostilities in the
party of M. Peynier. The principal articles of this constitution
(of which there were ten,) consisted in

I. Vesting in the "*General Assembly of the French part of St. Domingo,*" the entire management of the internal concerns of the colony.

II. Preventing any act of the legislative body relative to the internal concerns of the colony, from becoming a law, until definitively sanctioned by the Representatives of the People, and confirmed by the king.

III. IV. and V. Enabling the Assembly to enact provisional laws for their own government. Nevertheless, to keep as a separate question the execution of those laws; and in case of the governor-general (to whom such decrees shall be notified for the purpose of being enforced) sending any observations on them to the Assembly, causing them to be entered on the Journals, ordering

CHAP. III. a consequent revision, and ultimately deciding on its confirmation, or rejection, by a majority of two thirds.
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VI. Establishing a communication on all common, and commercial concerns, with the National Assembly, without which, nor until they are confirmed by the Colonial Assembly, its decrees shall not be valid.

VII. Allowing the importation of necessary articles upon pressing occasions, under the cognizance of the governor-general.

VIII. Submitting every provisional act of the Assembly to be transmitted for the royal sanction, and suspended upon its refusal.

IX. Creating a new General Assembly biennially.

X. Communicating to the King, the National Assembly, the Colonial Governor, and the different districts and parishes, the present decree.

To repeat that much difference of opinion existed with respect to this descreve, is what was to be expected from every circumstance; and the power retained by the Assembly, was evidently beyond what had ever been contemplated in the colonies. The leading opinions were, however, (among those the most capable of judging,) that it was intended to declare the island an independant state, or, that it was already sold by a party to the English. That both these reports were not entirely without foundation, subsequent events will appear to have proved, for it is confessed by M. de Charmilly, one of the members of this very

assembly, that the former proposition "was a subject of consideration among a few of the inhabitants, the opulence and prosperity of the colony having dazzled some sanguine characters,"* and, it was not three years after, before that gentleman induced the British government to accept the submission of a part of the proprietors of the island.

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The inhabitants of the Cape, and of some of the western parishes, did not wait for these confirmations of their opinions; for, immediately on the publication of the new plan of government, they renounced all obedience to the Assembly, and presented a memorial to the governor, requesting its dissolution. This step could not but be agreeable to Peynier, if it was not the effect of the exertions of his party; and, another circumstance which happened, gave him the opportunity he evidently desired, of coming to an open rupture. In consequence of an espousal of the conduct of the governor and his party by M. Galisonierre, the commander of a ship of the line, called the Leopard, then in the harbour of Port-au-Prince, the crew thought proper to withdraw their obedience from him, and to oblige him to quit the ship; they then gave the command to the first lieutenant, and declared themselves waiting the orders of the General Assembly. The Assembly, by no means disinclined to such an offer, transmitted them in return a vote of thanks, and directed July 27.

* "Je conviens qu'il a été question d'indépendance parmi un petit nombre d'habitans, mais la richesse de la colonie, sa prospérité, avaient trompé quelques caractères ardents, &c." —*Lettre, p. 52.*

them,

CHAP. III.
1790. them, in the name of the law and the King, to detain the ship in the road, there to wait till further orders. To retain this acquisition, they permitted some of their partizans to take possession of the powder magazine at Leogane. It has been disputed whether the crew of M. Galisonierre's ship had been corrupted by the party supporting the Assembly, or actuated by the caprice which so often influences seamen; but as it appears that their future movements were without the knowledge of the Assembly, it is reasonable to believe, that neither the one nor the other was the cause, but that they acted entirely by themselves, among whom might be probably some characters of more importance, than is conceived by those who view them merely in their ordinary employment.

Such are the fortuitous incidents which lead to events that decide the fate of countries.

M. Peynier now conceived himself provided with the means of criminating the party, whose power so much curtailed his own. He immediately proclaimed the dissolution of the Assembly, charging it with projects of independency, and with having traitorously possessed itself of one of the king's ships by corrupting the crew; pronouncing the whole, with their adherents, traitors to the colony, the French nation, and the King; he declared his intention of bringing them to condign punishment, and to commence hostile operations against them. He had no sooner threatened, than he attempted to put his menaces into execution.

execution. He prepared for the restoration of the ancient system, and he even applied to the neighbouring island of Cuba for the aid of foreign troops; and he commissioned Mauduit to arrest the committee of the western provincial Assembly, who had become obnoxious to him from their inclination to the measures of his opponents, at their midnight meeting in Port-au-Prince. Mauduit, however, found them protected by four hundred of the national guards, (formerly the colonial militia,) and having himself but one hundred men, he was compelled, after a short skirmish, to retire, without effecting any thing more than the seizure of the national colours, which he must have obtained by some undue means, and bore off in triumph.

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The General Assembly in return summoned the people from every part of the colony, to arm for the protection of their representatives, and the summons seemed to be generally obeyed with alacrity. The western and the southern provinces were unqualified in their approbation, and immediately dispatched a force of two thousand men on their way to Port-au-Prince. The Provincial Assembly of the north, however, joined the party of the governor, and detached a part of the regular troops in that quarter, with a body of two hundred mulattoes. Thus the flames of civil war were immediately about to be lighted, and a dreadful conflict was expected on every side, when a circumstance occurred which for the present prevented it, and gave a more favourable turn to the public affairs than that which they had hitherto taken.

The

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August 8.

The crew of the Leopard having determined upon returning to France, they brought the ship into the entrance of St. Mark's bay, to apprise the Assembly of her departure, and to wait under sail for their dispatches to the King and the National Assembly. The General Assembly was reduced by this time, in consequence of sickness and secession, to less than one hundred members, and was diminishing every day: they had found themselves at first not sufficiently competent to the art of legislation, and their task was becoming every day more arduous. The majority of them were fathers of families; and could not but perceive that a storm was gathering, in which some, if not all of them, might be involved. Whatever was the motive, or whether or not it had a portion of the eccentricity which has been ascribed to it, eighty-five members of the General Assembly came to the immediate, and unexpected resolution, of availing themselves of this opportunity to proceed to Europe, for the purpose of deriving assistance in their future conduct, and justifying themselves as to what had already passed, preventing the effusion of human blood. They took their departure, therefore, on board the Leopard, and such was the good fortune which attended this step in the outset, that it excited for them, for the first time, a very general admiration; crowds followed them to the shore with tears and blessings, and prayers were every where preferred for the success which their forbearance was considered to deserve. The armaments were mutually suspended. The heads of the government party viewed the circumstance with mixed emotions of surprize and terror, and M. Peynier tremblingly resumed his seat.

Thus

Thus, it were to be hoped that peace would have continued during the passage of the members to France, and until the result of their journey were known; particularly as the remaining part were occupied in arrangements, and in prepossessing the French government against the General Assembly on their arrival; but, no sooner was one cause of commotion removed, than another supplied its place, of a more hostile complexion, and with less occasion—the rebellion of James Ogé, a mulatto; whose mother had a coffee-plantation about thirty miles from Cape François. During his residence at Paris, for the purpose of education, he had imbibed, in addition to the natural feelings of his class, all the prejudices entertained at this period against the white planters in the mother country. Having become connected with the society of Amis des Noirs, and inflated with an idea of his own capacity, he was easily persuaded by Robespierre, and other violent members, to attach himself to a conspiracy, supposed to be already ripe in St. Domingo, and requiring only the talents of an active leader to produce the effects desired, in behalf of the people of colour. Armed by their means, and charged with all the inveteracy of the party, Ogé arrived in St. Domingo about two months after the Assembly had left it, and immediately prepared to assume an imaginary command, for which he had no foundation. He found means to convey a quantity of arms and ammunition to a place called Grand Riviere, about fifteen miles from the Cape, where his brother had been prepared to receive it, and, having collected about two hundred followers, exerted

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October 12,
Ogé's rebel-
lion.

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himself every where in spreading disaffection; he wrote impetuously to M. Peynier, stating the inattention which had been paid to the execution of the Code Noir,* demanding its enforcement, and also an extension of the privileges enjoyed by the whites to all persons without distinction. He took upon himself the character of Protector of the Mulattoes, and declared his intention, if necessary, of arming in their behalf. He established his camp where he had deposited his stores, and appointed his two brothers, and another mulatto, of a ferocious character, named Mark Chavane, his lieutenants. These men commenced their unruly operations by the murder of two white men, whom they met accidentally, and by punishing with extreme cruelty those of their own complexion not disposed to revolt; one who excused himself on account of a wife and six children, they murdered, with the whole of his family. Fortunately their reign was not long, for a body of regular troops, and the Cape militia, were dispatched to invest their camp, when, with a weak resistance, they were totally routed; many were killed, sixty were taken prisoners, and the chiefs escaped into the Spanish part of the island.

This rebellion, though so easily crushed, excited a considerable animosity against the people of colour, who, in their turn, as if fearing a retaliation of cruelty, took to arms, and formed camps in different parts of the island, each of them of much

* The laws for the protection of the Blacks, instituted by Louis XIV.

greater

greater importance than that of Ogé. The white inhabitants collected themselves in force to oppose them. But Colonel Mauduit, (by means not publicly communicated,) in a conference, had, singly and unattended, with the mulatto leaders, at their chief camp at Verettes, induced them to an immediate dispersion. Various doubts existed as to the nature of the means, which were supposed not to be highly honourable to M. Mauduit: certain it is, however, the mulattoes were not perfectly satisfied; for their leader at Aux Cayes, Rigaud, declared that "it was a transient and deceitful calm, and, that no peace would be permanent until one class of people had exterminated the other."*

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The insurrection of the mulattoes was no sooner suppressed a second time, than a fresh object of disturbance arose, more fatal than either, and least expected. This was the arrival of a November, decree of the National Assembly, censuring, with great asperity, the conduct of the General Assembly of St. Domingo, charging it with disaffection to France, and insubordination; annulling all its acts, incapacitating its members from ever serving again; approving the conduct of the governor's party, particularly the Northern Provincial Assembly and Colonel Mauduit; directing a new Colonial Assembly to be formed on the principle of the decree of March 8, and the instructions of March 28, and ordering under arrest, during its pleasure, the members who had

* Edwards's St. Domingo, p. 46.

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1789.

quitted the island, and who were still at Paris. It also recommended an additional force, both naval and military, to be sent to the colony for the better support of the authority of the government.

On the arrival of the eighty-five members of the Colonial Assembly at Brest (on the 13th of September), they had been received with the utmost respect and attention by all ranks of people; and the most liberal provision made for them in every way; but, such had been the activity of M. Peynier, that deputies had arrived before them from the provincial assembly of the north, who, with their agents, had so prejudiced the mind of M. Barnave, the minister for this department, that they met at Paris with indignities of every kind; were dismissed from the bar of the National Assembly with contempt, and refused even permission to confront their enemies as they requested. On the 16th of October the report of the committee for the colonies on the subject was presented by M. Barnave, their president, and the members placed under arrest.

A very general manifestation of surprize and indignation took place on the arrival of this decree, and a very different sentiment pervaded the public mind from that intended to be produced by the National Assembly; in every particular Mauduit and his regiment became objects of the warmest resentment. Many of the parishes would send no other deputies to form the new Colonial Assembly, because they considered those in France as their legal

legal representatives, the annulling of whose decrees, they attributed to the revival of the ancient system of despotism.

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Whether it was from intimidation at these succeeding disorders, or from the wish of the National Assembly, does not appear; M. Peynier, however, to the great satisfaction of the majority of the planters, at this time resigned his office to the gentleman next in command, General Blanchelande, a field-officer in the French service, who entered upon the government with peculiar vigour.

Blanche-
lande gover-
nor.

The first exercise of his power, and one rather unexpected, was to demand of the Spaniards the fugitives from the rebellion of Ogé, who were accordingly delivered up, and placed in the jail of Cape François, till a commission should be issued to bring them to trial. It was soon commenced, but lasted for a considerable time, during which they were strictly examined, and, of course, condemned.

Ogé and his lieutenant, Chavane, were sentenced to be broken alive upon the wheel, and left to perish. His followers, including one of his brothers (the other not being found), to the number of twenty, were condemned to be hanged. Ogé was not a man calculated for a leader of rebellion. His mother having been enabled to support him in France as a gentleman, he had cherished a delicacy of sentiment very incompatible with the ferocity

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December.

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ferocity of revolt; but it would appear also that he wanted personal courage, and that fidelity to his colleagues which alone inspires respect in his circumstances. When he heard the judgment of the court, he wept bitterly, and implored mercy in the most abject manner; proposing to purchase life by exposing the secrets of numerous conspiracies, which he described as impending over the colony: he, however, extended it only by a reprieve for twenty-four hours, just time enough to make a brief deposition of facts of the highest importance, if they had been immediately attended to; and was then hurried to execution with a celerity rather barbarous, and an impolicy which afterwards met with its consequences. Chavane preserved the appearance of courage to the last, and resigned himself to his fate without a groan.

The persons before whom the deposition of Ogé was taken, (Ruotte and Vertierres, members of the Northern Provincial Assembly,) had been appointed to examine the revolters; and were devotees to the ancient system; from what motive, perhaps, may be seen afterwards, whether by the desire of the principal officer in the colonial administration, or of the Northern Provincial Assembly, is not minutely ascertained; but these men suppressed entirely the information communicated by Ogé, and reported that he had said nothing of importance, burying his secret, if he had any, with himself. That this was not the case will appear hereafter.

The

The decisive spirit of the new governor did not prevent the people from viewing the detention of their representatives in France with a general dissatisfaction, and those to whom they attributed the original cause of it, with additional dislike. Mauduit continued to be the object of their censure in a particular degree; they avowedly disapproved of that conduct at St. Marc's, which the National Assembly had made a subject of particular approbation; one act of which they availed themselves with reason; this was, taking from a detachment of the national guards, as before-mentioned, their colours, which had never been returned. This deprivation the whole of the national guards regarded as an insult to their body, which they would have immediately revenged, but that the veteran regiment of Port-au-Prince was remarkable for its superior discipline, and attachment to the commanding officer, whose bounty was always open to them. They had long given him a particular token of their regard, in supplanting the national cockade, by a white feather, the avowed insigne of royalty. The regiment therefore, as well as its colonel, became obnoxious to the whole of the army, who were attached to the new constitution. At this time, a reinforcement of troops from France, comprising two battalions of the regiments of Artois and Normandy, arrived in the frigates Le Fougueux and Le Borée, who, having communicated in some way with the crew of the Leopard (the vessel which carried the Colonial Assembly to France), no sooner landed at Port-au-Prince, than they discovered the same animosity against the regiment of Mauduit, as was manifested

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by the national guards. They treated them as traitors, which, no doubt, the peculiarity of the white feather confirmed, and refused all kind of intercourse with them. The conduct of the national guards had hitherto passed unheeded, but when two other regiments, and those arrived from the mother-country, became leagued against them, it occasioned a visible effect upon the minds of the officers and the men. They began to view each other with distrust, and to consider the regard which they had hitherto born to their idolized commander, as almost criminal. A sullen discontent appeared on every face, and their actions, amongst which was a contemptuous dismissal of the white feather, augured no good intentions towards him who, but a few weeks before, might have led them over the world. Mauduit was not insensible of the change, or of the probability of danger; and he prepared for some arrangement to induce a return of the good opinion of his troops; before he made the experiment, however, he bravely insisted on the governor removing himself and his family to Cape François, that he might not have a chance of sharing in his own ruin if it was unavoidable, to which M. Blanchelande (rather pitifully) consented.

Colonel Mauduit prepared, as the first effort of conciliation, for a restitution of the colours to the national guards, the unfortunate cause of the alienation of his own troops; and proposed, if they would support him, to carry them with his own hands, at their head to the church, in which they should be deposited. He harangued his grenadiers to that purpose, and they promised to support

support him with their lives. On the succeeding day he put his proposed plan in execution, before the whole community of Port-au-Prince. A considerable murmur took place, but means were taken by the citizens (among whom it is said were some he had most injured) to prevent any accident.* He had replaced the colours, and was turning, no doubt, to meet the gratulations of his troops, which had so often cheered him, when one of them commanded him aloud, to ask pardon of the national guards, *on his knees!* He started with indignation at the proposition, and intending to offer them his life, rather than his honour, exposed to them his naked bosom. In an instant, an hundred bayonets seemed to vie with each other which should wound the deepest, and he fell, gored all over; while scarce an arm of the number he had so often made happy, was raised to save him, or a voice among those so often exerted in his praise, to bid his spirit rest.† The spectators, however unfriendly they might have been to the deceased, were petrified with astonishment and disgust. Not contented with the extinction of life, this unmanly and treacherous number, whose conduct is, it is hoped, unparalleled, not content with destroying his house, and

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* The exertions on this occasion of the brave Beausobre were too striking to be passed in silence. He had been struck with a shot, when protecting the Colonial Committee, in the affair for which Mauduit was now attempting an extenuation; yet, with a generosity not often equalled, he was among the foremost to step forward on the present occasion, and was wounded by a sabre in defending the life of Mauduit.

† Two officers named Galefeau and Germain, to their honour, did not desert their colonel till the last moment, but their exertions were of no avail; and the indignation of the soldiers being at its height, there was no time for preparation.

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1791. every thing belonging to him, gratified themselves with mutilating the dead body of their once-loved commander; and, by a thousand diabolical contrivances, rendering disgusting in death a form which, through life, had been always beloved and honoured, and sometimes respected and admired. This wretched regiment met the proper fate of all such dastardly perpetrators. They were despised even by the soldiery whom they meant to oblige, compelled to lay down their arms, and sent prisoners to France, where, in some shape or other, punishment failed not to await them.

During these dreadful transactions, as if eager to provide fresh fuel to light up in this unhappy island, the society of Amis des Noirs continued to devise new projects that thoroughly effected that purpose. There was great reason to suppose, at this time, that the general body of mulattoes were not averse to conciliation, while there was as much cause to desire it on the part of the whites. The president of the colonial committee in France, (M. Barnave,) had also, after the most strenuous opposition to the planters, avowed his conviction, that all interference of the mother-country with their internal regulations should cease. But the principal members of this society, among whom were Gregoire, La Fayette, and Brissot, determined otherwise, and the foundation of their plan was in making the National Assembly the medium, in obedience to the chapter of instructions for its proceedings, which had followed the decree of March 8. These instructions, which consisted of eighteen articles,

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cles, directed "that every person of the age of twenty-five and upwards, possessing property, or, having resided two years in the colony, and paid taxes, should be enabled to vote in the formation of the Colonial Assembly." This direction, repugnant to the very decree it was to accompany, was asserted by those who procured it, to regard only the privilege of voting in the Parochial Assemblies; as under the old government it was known that they were constituted solely of white persons, the mulattoes had expressed no inclination to intrude themselves. To induce them to do so, they were apprised that not being excepted, they were virtually included, and after much entreaty, were persuaded to send deputies to France, to procure an explanation from the National Assembly. This was the chief point required, for it produced a public debate on the subject, in which was also introduced the claim of the mulattoes to all the privileges of whites. The fascinating eloquence of the Abbé Gregoire was exerted on the subject with its usual vigour, and, to give additional aid, the death of Ogé became known at the same time, which afforded a popular subject for the theatres. Every mode was exerted to render the proprietors of the colonies detestable; and with such success, that they could not, at length, appear in public with safety. "Perish the colonies," exclaimed Robespierre, "rather than sacrifice our principles!"—Gregoire, Condorcet, La Fayette, and Brissot, names which often excited admiration, all joined in the cry. The National Assembly forgetting, at once, its former acts, and the principles it had acknowledged, decreed to the May 15.

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June.

people of colour "an equal right with the white proprietors, in the choice of representatives and to seats in the colonial government." The colonial committee at Paris, which had formerly opposed the General Assembly, immediately declared itself useless; and the deputies of the colonies declined further attendance. These decisive steps had no other effect, however, than that of hastening the departure of three commissioners, (who had been appointed some time previous) to St. Domingo, for the better regulation of its affairs. The proceedings of the colonial officers in the mother-country, afforded but a faint presentiment of those which took place in St. Domingo on the arrival of the first information of this last decree in that island. There then existed a variety of opposite opinions, and parties inveterate against each other, but it immediately consolidated them all. They heard it with doubt, which was soon succeeded by the frenzy of despair. All the divisions of party united themselves against the mother-country; every violence was projected and commenced; the preparations making for the federation of the 14th of July were suspended; they determined to reject the civic oath; an embargo was laid on all vessels in the harbour; and even a motion was made in the Northern Provincial Assembly, to erect the British standard in the place of the national colours; all subordination was done away, and it is said, "the people of colour being threatened to be fired upon in the streets, fled from the city, retiring to the woods and other retreats for safety."* At length it was determined

* "Inquiry into the Causes of the Insurrection in St. Domingo," &c. 1792.

to

to elect a new general Colonial Assembly, which had its first meeting, to the number of one hundred and seventy-six members, at Leogane, from whence they adjourned to Cape Fran-
çois, proposing to open their session at the expiration of a fort-night.

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During the whole of these transactions the governor-general, M. Blanchelande, remained a political cypher, without any other power, than to give a formal assent to proceedings which he could neither impede nor amend. He wrote to the king's ministers an account of the disturbances, and expressed his fears that the decree would prove "the death-warrant of many thousands of the inhabitants;" he sent a copy of his letter to the Provincial Assembly, with a solemn assurance, that he would suspend the execution of the decree whenever it should come to him.

Alarmed at the various symptoms of hostility manifested towards them, the mulattoes collected in armed bodies in different places, and fears were entertained of fresh conflicts between them and the whites; but the latter were too much occupied in the hopes entertained from the meeting of the Colonial Assembly to notice them, and, in fact, a complete removal of grievances was fully expected.

As little cessation had been experienced, from the occurrence of one disaster to another, on the expectation of pacific measures (from the auspicious sentiments of the new assembly,) another

CHAP. III. another misfortune arose, which, however it might have been long expected, was still more unlooked-for than any other. Witnesses of the general commotion of the colony, and perceiving that, notwithstanding the attention which had been paid by the mother-country to the people of colour, (except interweaving their sufferings with the subject, for the purposes of oratory,) nothing was proposed with regard to them; the negroes began to consider of some melioration for themselves among the new arrangements then taking place. As they had unfortunately perceived that the first step in all the disputes of their masters had consisted of outrage, so they determined to follow those means which promised such certain success, and at the same time, afforded objects the most grateful to people in a state of slavery. It cannot be denied, that they may have felt no great pleasure in contemplating an acquisition of power by the mulattoes, who, from being, according to their own account, more conversant with their habits, and better acquainted with their dispositions, had always been considered by the negroes as their severest masters; it is very probable, that they exercised the same, or greater rigor, over the negroes, than they received themselves from the whites. Be this as it may, while a perfect calm seemed to pervade every contending interest, one morning before day-break a sudden and confused alarm spread throughout the town of the Cape, that the negro slaves in the neighbouring parishes had revolted, were murdering the whites, and setting fire to the plantations. The governor immediately assembled all the military officers, but nothing cer-

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tain could be collected till dawn, when the reports were too CHAP. III.
1791. sadly confirmed by the arrival of numbers, just escaped with life, who, begging for protection in the town, communicated the particulars.

From them they found, that the negroes in a plantation called Noé, in the parish of Acul, were the ringleaders, fourteen of whom, after having murdered the principal managers of the plantation, followed by the remainder, hastened to the adjoining one, and repeated the same enormities. The slaves of this estate immediately joined them. Their determination seemed, that it was necessary none should escape, for they shewed not the same discrimination they afterwards used. M. Clements, the owner of the latter plantation received his death from one he had regarded with much tenderness, and promoted (for so it was considered) to be his postilion. The same occurred at the largest plantation on the plain of the Cape, that of M. Galifet, whose negroes, the whole of whom joined the insurrection, were proverbial for receiving good treatment. Similar circumstances took place at the very time, on the estate of M. Flaville, a few miles distant, from whence they carried off the wife, and three daughters, of the Procureur, after murdering him before their faces. Day-light convinced the astonished inhabitants that the revolt was concerted, for some parties of observation sent from the town, soon perceived that the rising was general throughout the province, and the flames quickly burst from all quarters. The terror of the whole

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whole community now became excessive, and the shrieks of women and children as the appearances of horror spread, wildly running from door to door, inquiring their fate of each other, produced a most distressing effect. The men armed themselves, and the General Assembly invested the governor with the command of the National Guards. As soon as any plan could be matured, it was determined, to send the white women and children on board the ships in the harbour; and the ablest of the domestic negroes in the town were also sent, under a guard, lest they should be concerned in any treacherous connection.

The next transaction which took place was relative to a considerable body of mulattoes in the town, who, although they had not joined the previous disputes, were immediately marked as objects of vengeance by the lower classes of white people, and it became necessary for the Assembly to afford them protection. This circumstance became the medium of an agreeable conciliation; for, in return, all the able men among them, proposed themselves to march against the rebels, leaving their wives and children as hostages for their fidelity. They were, therefore, enrolled in the militia, and a mutual confidence, to a certain degree, established itself between them.

As many seamen as could be spared from the ships were joined to the inhabitants, and the whole formed into a military order, when M. de Touzard, an officer who had distinguished

himself in North America, took the command of a detachment of militia and troops of the line, and marched to attack the most powerful body of the revolters in the neighbourhood. They were posted at the plantation of M. Latour, to the number of 4,000 negroes, a large portion of whom were destroyed, but their places were supplied by such increased numbers, that M. de Touzard was compelled to retreat. The weakness of the town obliged the governor to stand on the defensive, till he could contrive means to strengthen the only position he could command; if the negroes had proceeded to Cape François at that time, they might have easily taken the town, and effected every enormity they chose.

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On the river which intersected the main road from the plain at the east end of the town, over which there was a ferry, a battery of cannon was raised on boats, protected by two small camps at a short distance; at the other principal road lying over the Haut du Cap, a considerable body of troops, with artillery, was stationed, while a strong palisade and chevaux-de-frize, surrounded the town on the land side; an embargo was laid on the shipping, for the purpose of retreat, and retaining the assistance of the sailors. The whole of the inhabitants, without distinction, laboured at the fortifications.

Every method was used to communicate the information of the insurrection, when it could be conveyed with safety, and several camps were formed, which seemed to arrest the progress

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of the rebellion; nevertheless, those at Grande Riviere and Dondon were attacked by the negroes, joined by mulattoes, and after a sharp contest, forced with great slaughter. The surviving whites from Dondon took refuge in the Spanish territory.

The whole of the plain, of the Cape, and the district of Grande Riviere, now in the possession of the insurgents, and abandoned to their ravages, as were the miserable inhabitants, to whom no assistance could be given, who, therefore, suffered every injury, that bewildered licentiousness could devise, before a death, in this instance merciful, but of more than common torments, closed for them the scene.

It serves few of the purposes of history to describe the various modes of torture which occurred to the savage insurgents, or to relate accounts of the grossest violations of virgins and pregnant women, in the presence of their dying husbands, or parents; much it is to be regretted, that civilized states should ever find it necessary to render torture of any kind familiar to vulgar minds, for they are exhibitions that live in the memory, and steel the heart against those affections which form the grandest boundary of our nature. There is reason to fear that the perpetrators of those horrid deeds, had been witnesses to the ridicule of misery in others who should have evinced themselves superior to such conduct, by the godlike attributes of mercy and benevolence; the licentiousness of their intercourse with the female slaves, could leave no impression to prevent a retaliation on the occasion

sion, with objects, too, of such superior attraction, alas! unhappily for themselves.

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It is pleasing, however, to alleviate these horrors by the recital of an instance of fidelity, and affectionate solicitude, in one of the revolted negroes, which has been already narrated, but which cannot be too much impressed upon the minds of the people in every relation of society. I quote Mr. Edwards's words, as I know of no more authentic source to which I can refer.

" Monsieur and Madam Baillen, their daughter and son-in-law, and two white servants, residing on a mountain plantation about thirty miles from Cape François, were apprized of the revolt by one of their own slaves, who was himself in the conspiracy, but promised, if possible, to save the lives of his master and his family. Having no immediate means of providing for their escape, he conducted them into an adjacent wood; after which he went and joined the revolters. The following night he found an opportunity of bringing them provisions from the rebel camp. The second night he returned again with a further supply of provisions, but declared it would be out of his power to give them any further assistance. After this they saw nothing of the negro for three days; but at the end of that time he came again, and directed the family how to make their way to a river which led to Port Margot, assuring them they would find a canoe on a part of the river which he described. They followed

CHAP. III. his directions; found the canoe, and got safely into it, but were
1791. overset by the rapidity of the current, and after a narrow escape,
thought it best to return to their retreat in the mountains. The
negro, anxious for their safety, again found them out, and
directed them to a broader part of the river, where he assured
them he had provided a boat; but said it was the last effort he
could make to save them. They went accordingly, but not
finding the boat, gave themselves up for lost, when the faithful
negro again appeared, like their guardian angel. He brought
with him pigeons, poultry, and bread; and conducted the family,
by slow marches in the night, along the banks of the river, until
they were within sight of the wharf at Port Margot; when,
telling them they were entirely out of danger, he took his leave
for ever, and went to join the rebels. The family were in the
woods nineteen nights.”*

The town of the Cape being somewhat strengthened, the governor, with the advice of the Colonial Assembly, came to the resolution of re-commencing offensive operations against the rebels; accordingly, a small force, under the command of M. Rouvray, encamped at a place called Roucooa, in the eastern part of the plain. A division of the negroes at the same time took possession of the principal buildings on the estate of the amiable M. Galifet, and mounted on the walls several pieces of heavy artillery, which they had procured from the different har-

* Edwards's Hist. chap. vi. p. 75.

bours

bours on the coast. In this intrenchment, they began to shew somewhat of regular manœuvres; though they seldom stood more than a single volley in their skirmishes, yet they were repeated with alacrity, and with such success, that they harassed the whites by perpetual alarms, and desolated the country. After their first stock of ammunition was exhausted, it was discovered they had been supplied from the king's arsenal, by some negroes in Cape François; in a short time the small American vessels opened a brisk trade with them in this article, for the sugar and rum of their masters.

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In two months of the rebellion, upwards of two thousand white persons had fallen, of all conditions and ages; it appeared, one thousand two hundred families were “reduced from opulence to such a state of misery, as to depend altogether for their clothing and sustenance on public and private charity;” one hundred and eighty plantations of sugar, about nine hundred of coffee, cotton, and indigo, had been destroyed, and the buildings consumed by fire. On the side of the rebels it was computed, that upwards of ten thousand had perished in the different accidents attendant on their horrid warfare, besides several hundreds by the execution of the law. It is to be lamented, that a retaliation of cruelty took place upon all rebel prisoners who were taken, which could produce no advantage to those who had already suffered, and might cause additional miseries to the unfortunate objects who afterwards fell in the way of the enemy. One description of punishment at the Cape, has been often

quoted.

CHAP. III. quoted from the gentleman who witnessed it. I cannot perfectly coincide with him in the oblique censure conveyed against the unfortunate persons who expressed a degree of satisfaction at the death of their enemies, for it is a difficult sentiment to repress on such an occasion; nor, while I lament, can I deny the necessity of such executions, ON SUCH OCCASIONS; they are not intended as a feast for the philosopher, but they are a gratification to those whose services, whatever their feelings and their sentiments, demand and obtain *from all enlightened politicians on all occasions respect.*

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"Two of these unhappy men," says Mr. Edwards, "suffered in this manner under the window of the author's lodgings, and in his presence, at Cape François, on Thursday the 28th of September, 1791. They were broken on two pieces of timber placed crosswise. One of them expired on receiving the third stroke on his stomach, each of his legs and arms having been first broken in two places; the three first blows he bore without a groan. The other had a harder fate. When the executioner, after breaking his legs and arms, lifted up the instrument to give the finishing stroke upon the breast, and which, (by putting the criminal out of his pain,) is called *le coup de grace*, the mob, with the ferociousness of cannibals, called out *arretez*, (stop,) and compelled him to leave his work unfinished. In that condition, the miserable wretch, with his broken limbs doubled up, was put on a cart-wheel, which was placed horizontally, one end of the axle-tree being driven into the earth. He seemed perfectly sensible,

sible, but uttered not a groan. At the end of forty minutes, some English seamen, who were spectators of the tragedy, strangled him in mercy. As to all the French spectators, (many of them persons of fashion, who beheld the scene from the windows of their upper apartments,) it grieves me to say, that they looked on with the most perfect composure and *sang-froid*. Some of the ladies, as I was told, even ridiculed, with a great deal of unseemly mirth, the sympathy manifested by the English* at the sufferings of the wretched criminals." †

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Having mentioned the residence of Mr. Edwards at the Cape, it may not be amiss to repeat in this place the account he gives of the appearance of the island, to a stranger, at that time. He had returned from Jamaica with the commissioners, who had been sent thither, and to the different neighbouring powers, to request the assistance of troops, arms, ammunition, and provisions; when Admiral Affleck ordered the Blonde and the Daphne frigates to repair to that place to overawe the insurgents.

* Will the present writer merit censure if he ventures to observe in this place, for the honor of a sex, of whom he feels a difficulty in recording a slander, that there was not, perhaps, one of these unhappy fair spectators who had not lost, through the means of the victims before them, a *father*, a *mother*, *brother*, or *sister*, or some of the tenderest connexions in human existence; and that despair, mingled with revenge, assumed the place of a sensibility too exquisite for their loss. This place need not be occupied with instances in the memory of every one, of the change effected in the best dispositions under such circumstances as these; and, while he eagerly joins his tribute of praise to the sympathy of his brave countrymen in this instance, he cannot forget that the inhabitants of St. Domingo, may not always have seen them in a light equally amiable; so that the contrast, added to the accompanying circumstances, may have excited a risibility, perhaps, convulsive. It is necessary to view all sides of a question which affects the character of a nation.

† Edwards's Hist. ch. vi. p. 78.

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"We arrived," says he, "in the harbour of Cape François, in the evening of the 26th of September, and the first object which arrested our attention, as we approached, was a dreadful scene of devastation by fire. The noble plain adjoining the Cape was covered with ashes; and the surrounding hills, as far as the eye could reach, every where presented to us ruins still smoking, and houses and plantations at that moment in flames. It was a sight more terrible than the mind of any man, unaccustomed to such a scene, can easily conceive.—The inhabitants of the town, being assembled on the beach, directed all their attention towards us, and we landed amidst a crowd of spectators, who, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, gave welcome to their deliverers, (for such they considered us, and acclamations of *vivent les Anglois* resounded from every quarter.

"The governor of St. Domingo, at that time, was the unfortunate Blanchelande, a *marechal de camp* in the French service, who has since perished on the scaffold. He did us the honor to receive us on the quay. A committee of the Colonial Assembly, accompanied by the governor's only son, an amiable and accomplished youth, had before attended us on board the Blonde, and we were immediately conducted to the place of their meeting. The scene was striking and solemn. The hall was splendidly illuminated, and all the members appeared in mourning. Chairs were placed for us within the bar, and the governor having taken his seat on the right hand of the president, the latter addressed us in an elegant and affecting oration, of which

the following is as literal a translation as the idiom of the two languages will admit:

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‘ We were not mistaken, Gentlemen, when we placed our confidence in your generosity; but we could hardly entertain a hope, that, besides sending us succours, you would come in person to give us consolation. You have quitted, without reluctance, the peaceful enjoyments of happiness at home, to come and participate in the misfortunes of strangers, and blend your tears with ours. Scenes of misery (the contemplation of which, to those who are unaccustomed to misfortune, is commonly disgusting) have not suppressed *your* feelings. You have been willing to ascertain the full extent of our distresses, and to pour into our wounds the salutary balm of your sensibility and compassion.

‘ The picture which has been drawn of our calamities, you will find has fallen short of the reality. That verdure with which our fields were lately arrayed, is no longer visible; discoloured by the flames, and laid waste by the devastations of war, our coasts exhibit no prospect but that of desolation. The emblems which we wear on our persons, are the tokens of our grief for the loss of our brethren, who were surprized, and cruelly assassinated by the revolters.

‘ It is by the glare of the conflagrations that every way surround us, that we now deliberate; we are compelled to sit armed and watchful through the night, to keep the enemy from our

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sanctuary,

CHAP. III.
1791. sanctuary. For a long time past our bosoms have been depressed by sorrow; they experience this day, for the first time, the sweet emotions of pleasure, in beholding you amongst us.

‘ Generous islanders! humanity has operated powerfully on your hearts;—you have yielded to the first emotion of your generosity, in the hopes of snatching us from death; for it is already too late to save us from misery. What a contrast between your conduct, and that of other nations! We will avail ourselves of your benevolence; but the days you preserve to us, will not be sufficient to manifest our gratitude; our children shall keep it in remembrance.

‘ Regenerated France, unapprized that such calamities might befall us, has taken no measures to protect us against their effects; with what admiration will she learn, that, without your assistance, we should no longer exist as a dependency to any nation.

‘ The commissioners deputed by us to the island of Jamaica, have informed us of your exertions to serve us.—Receive the assurance of our attachment and sensibility.

‘ The governor-general of this island, whose sentiments perfectly accord with our own, participates equally in the joy we receive at your presence, and in our gratitude for the assistance you have brought us.’

At

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" At this juncture, the French colonists in St. Domingo, however they might have been divided in political sentiments on former occasions, seemed to be softened into perfect unanimity. All descriptions of persons joined in one general cry against the National Assembly, to whose proceedings were imputed all their disasters. This opinion was indeed so widely disseminated, and so deeply rooted, as to create a very strong disposition, in all classes of the whites, to renounce their allegiance to the mother country. The black cockade was universally substituted in place of the tri-colored one, and very earnest wishes were avowed in all companies, without scruple or restraint, that the British administration would send an armament to conquer the island, or rather to receive its voluntary surrender from the inhabitants. What they wished might happen, they persuaded themselves to believe was actually in contemplation.

" The ravages of the rebellion during the time that I remained at Cape François, extended in all directions. The whole of the plain of the Cape, with the exception of one plantation which adjoined the town, was in ruins; as were likewise the parish of Limonade, and most of the settlements in the mountains adjacent. The parish of Limbé was every where on fire; and, before my departure, the rebels had obtained possession of the bay and forts at L'Acul, as well as the districts of Fort Dauphin, Dondon, and La Grande Rivière.

" Destruction every where marked their progress, and resist-

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ance seemed to be considered by the whites, not only as unavailing in the present conjuncture, but as hopeless in the future. To fill up the measure of their calamities, their Spanish neighbours in the same island, with a spirit of bigotry and hatred which is, I believe, without an example in the world, refused to lend any assistance towards suppressing a revolt, in the issue of which, common reason should have informed them, that their own preservation was implicated equally with that of the French. They were even accused, not only of supplying the rebels with arms and provisions, but also of delivering up to them to be murdered, many unhappy French planters who had fled for refuge to the Spanish territories, and receiving money from the rebels as the price of their blood.

“ The merchants and importers of European manufactures, apprehending every hour the destruction of the town, as much from incendiaries within, as from the rebels without, offered their goods, for ready money, at half the usual prices; and applications were made to Captain Affleck, by persons of all descriptions, for permission to embark in the Blonde for Jamaica. The interposition of the Colonial Government obliged him to reject their solicitations; but means were contrived to send on board consignments of money to a great amount; and I know that other conveyances were found, by which effects to a considerable value were exported both to Jamaica, and the states of North America.”*

* Edwards's St. Domingo, Preface, p. v.

From

From the northern province the rebellion, rapidly spread to the west; in which quarter it assumed a new appearance; for the revolters being chiefly men of colour, to whom about six hundred negroes had attached themselves, it tended to confirm the opinion and the prejudices of those who conceived the men of colour to have been the original cause of the rebellion. A detachment sent against them from Port-au-Prince was repulsed, and the enemy advanced to set fire to the city; when, happily, some of the mulatto chiefs obtained its redemption, and began to express sentiments of amity, which was attributed, with some reason, to the tardiness of the negroes, at their head-quarters, in joining them. Anxious to embrace any opportunity of quelling the disturbance, a planter of eminence, M. de Jumecourt, undertook to mediate between the two parties, and immediately obtained attention. The effect of this interference was a treaty, called the *Concordat*, which was determined upon the 12th of September, between the insurgents of the neighbourhood, and the white inhabitants of Port-au-Prince. The principal provisions were, an amnesty for the past, and an engagement by the whites to admit the full force of the decree of the 15th May. The honourable conduct of the mulattoes in Cape François, precluded any objection in the General Assembly to the ratification of this agreement; from the most rational policy, they extended their care to those who had been born of enslaved parents; military companies of mulattoes were formed, in which men of colour, under certain regulations, were permitted to hold commissions.

Treaty of the
Concordat.

Thus

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Repeal of
the decree of
15th May.

Thus circumstances, as far as respected the mulattoes, began to wear a promising appearance, when with that eagerness with which we supplant the remembrance of evil, by the prospect of good, the return of general quiet was contemplated. But a fresh and most tremendous blow was about to fall on this devoted colony, when least intended, by the mother country; whose regard, in this instance, similar to that of some animals, was not less fatal than its vengeance. This was the information, which at this time arrived in the colony, of the repeal of the decree of the 15th of May, which had been the original cause of the present disturbance, and which the white inhabitants had just agreed to allow.

On the accounts arriving in France the beginning of September of the dreadful consequences attendant on this fatal decree, it excited general consternation throughout the trading districts; the loss of the colonial commerce by a civil war between the whites and the mulattoes, was an event to be dreaded from the probable issue; still they never apprehended any interference of the negroes; so blind are we to the approach of political danger. The idea of immense losses, and all the accompanying considerations, produced such an effect upon the merchants principally concerned, that they, with their connections, did not fail to press the National Assembly by every mode of appeal and remonstrance, for the immediate relief of the planters from the restrictions then operating so destructively upon the interests of the mother country. There is in every thing a cer-

tain satiety, resulting from attainment or enjoyment, which produces relaxation; in the present instance it appears to have had a remarkable effect; for, of all the violent members of the society, "Amis des Noirs," but few appear to have exerted themselves on the present occasion, and that few to have been as little attended to. In fact, the popular opinion seemed changed to another direction, and the Constituent Assembly being on the point of dissolution, the obnoxious decree was annulled by the sanction of a large majority, at the moment in which it was becoming the medium of peace in the colony.

When it became known in the colony none would believe, (nor indeed was it reasonable they should,) that it had not been brought about at the instance of the planters, and that in consequence they were unsafe with such deceptive negotiators. They had already required repeated ratifications of the Concordat, but now every idea of amity vanished. The people of colour charged the whites with horrid duplicity, and came to the determination that one party or the other must be exterminated; accordingly, throughout the western and southern provinces, they immediately had recourse to arms, and became masters of Port St. Louis, but from Port-au-Prince having been lately reinforced, they could effect nothing more than a dreadful conflagration, which destroyed, at least, one third of the buildings. They established themselves at La Croix des Bouquets in considerable force. The contest here, assumed a more furious cha-

racter.

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racter; the negroes in several places joined the mulattoes, and in every action a dreadful slaughter ensued. At Cul de Sac two thousand negroes were left dead on the field, from being placed, as was frequently the case, in the front of the mulattoes. If there remained any invention in cruelty unexerted on former occasions it was now practised, with re-iterated vigor, and each party strove how they could convince the other of the fertility of their cruelty, rather than of superiority of power.

Arrival of
the commis-
sioners,
Roome, Mir-
beck, and
St. Leger.

At length, about the middle of December, the three commissioners, who had been long before appointed at Paris, for the civil affairs of the colony, arrived, and every one began to hope from them a cessation of the accumulated horrors which every where made their appearance. They were named, Mirbeck, Roome, and St. Leger, the former two had been advocates in the parliament of Paris, and the latter (a native of Ireland) a surgeon by profession. They were neither of them in a situation of life which warranted the appointment, but had arisen through accident, in the confusion of the revolution. They were received with every degree of submission, on the part of the governor and inhabitants, by military honors, and a procession to the cathedral.

No sooner were these men in full possession of their offices, than, after announcing the new French constitution, and the decree of the 22d September, (as if every step was to be marked

marked by some additional misfortune,) they proclaimed a general amnesty and pardon to every description of revolters who should lay down their arms, come in within a prescribed time, and take the oaths. This measure lost the desired effect with the mulattoes, from being accompanied by the repeal of the decree in their favour; in the opinion of the whites, it justified their enormities; and, tempted the negroes who yet remained faithful, to join those who experienced such an indemnification. The commissioners could not expect to obtain the confidence of the inhabitants, as Mirbeck resigned himself to every kind of low debauchery, while St. Leger employed himself in levying contributions wherever he found an opportunity. The third exerted himself with honesty to the duties prescribed to him, but wanting ability, and acting with colleagues of the character already described, could accomplish very little. The effect of these circumstances, which rendered them contemptible (and being without means to enforce authority), was their return to France, separately, after a residence of three months only.

It was, however, during the stay of the commissioners, or immediately before their arrival, that, in consequence of a resolution of the General Colonial Assembly, copies of the deposition of Ogé, given during the twenty-four hours he was respite, were obtained from the Register of the Council of the Cape; but not till they had been imperiously demanded. By these it was found, that, if instead of being suppressed, as beforementioned,

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the evidence had been promptly and decisively acted upon, all the horrors which had blackened the colony for the last nine months might have been to a great degree, if not entirely prevented. He asserts upon oath as follows:

The neglect-
ed dying tes-
timony of
Ogé.

“ That in the commencement of the month of February preceding, if the rivers had not overflowed their banks, there would have been a rising of the people of colour, who were to have fallen upon the town of the Cape in considerable numbers; that they were then re-united to the number of 11,000 men, from Mirebalais, Artibonite, Limbé, Ouanaminthe, Grand Riviére, and other parts of the colony: that, at the same time, one hundred men of colour left the Cape for the purpose of joining this band: that he was certain that the authors of this revolt were the Declains, free negroes of Grande Riviére, now under accusation; Dumas and Yvon, free negroes; Bitozin, a free Spanish mulatto; Peter Godard, and John Baptiste, his brother, free negroes; Legrand, and Toussaint Mazeau, free negroes; Peter Mauzi, Ginga Lapaire, Charles Lamadieu, the Sabourins, John Peter Goudy, Joseph Lucas, free mulattoes; and Maurice, a free negro, all under accusation.

“ That the grand movers of rebellion down the coast were, Daguin, under accusation, rebel, of Mirebalais; Pinchinat and Labastille, under accusation: that the most violent partizans of the revolt, who had moved in large parties, were those who had shone in the environs of St. Mark, and who were endeavouring to

to excite it again: that there were at that moment many people of colour in different quarters, who were very resolute to maintain their projects, notwithstanding the number of those who had lost their lives by engaging timidly in the cause: that he remembered at present the name of one only, the son of La Place, a free quadron, whose sister he had seen in the prisons, and quitting Limbé to go and raise recruits in the quarter of Ouanaminthe; that these recruits, and risings of people of colour, were continued there under the countenance of Fleury and Hirondelle Viard, deputies of the people of colour to the National Assembly, the one residing at Mirebalais, and the other in the quarter of Grand Riviére.

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" That assemblies were yet held in the subterraneous passages near La Crête à Mareau, and the district of Gironen, in the parish of Grande Riviére; and that if he could be conducted to these places, he would strive hard to take the chiefs of the rebellion: that the agitation in which he found himself under his present circumstances, did not permit him to enter into more circumstantial details: that he would acquaint us with the remainder when he became a little more tranquil: that it occurred to him at the moment, that Castaing, a free mulatto of this dependency, is not concerned in any manner in the present affair, but that if his brother Ogé had followed the persuasion of Castaing, he would have been brought into much greater extremities."

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The commissioners for taking the deposition then stated, that Ogé having heard the above read on the day after it was made, and being again sworn, he confirmed it in every respect, adding, "That the two Didiers, brothers, free mulattoes, whom he had seen but that time, and that John Peter Gerard and — Caton, free mulattoes of the Cape, were employed to gain a party of the Grande Riviére; that they kept together by the day, and dispersed at night."

They mention, that on being confronted with James Lucas, who had accused him, of threatening to hang him, he said, "it was necessary to tell them why Lucas had not insisted upon his explaining the reason of that threat, lest it should cost him his life: that the said Lucas had been always foremost in every perpetration of horror, the most active seducer of the blacks, and promoter of massacre, and had of necessity been restrained by him several times, on occasions which he repeated.

"That Fleury, Perisse, and L'Hirondelle Viard, arriving in the colony, the two former were landed at Acquin, and left at the house of Dupont, but that L'Hirondelle Viard proceeded to the Cape.

"That La Place, whose father was then in prison for raising recruits at Ouanaminthe, was of the number of those who marched from Limbé against the Cape; that to avoid suspicion, he

he went to Port Margot, where he lay concealed for several days; that the senior La Place had told him that he knew his neighbour, who was a white man, would not inform against him, though he knew all his proceedings; that he was sure Girardeau, then in prison, would declare nothing, because he was too much his friend to betray him; and that, if he were denounced, he should be forced to denounce many others, both in Limbé and other quarters.

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“ That he had omitted to mention, on the subject of Lucas seducing the slaves, that Peter Maury had brought thirty slaves to Lucas, whom Ogé and his brother sent away again, the people of colour saying that it was a future supply; that he had on the same occasion a dispute with the tallest of the Didiers, whom he wished to fight with pistols, on account of his treasons; that he had seen a short note written by Peter Maury to John Francis Tessiers, by which he signified, that he continued to collect together, and that the negro Coquin and the widow Castaing, armed with pistols mounted with silver, and a short sword which Maury had furnished, watched every thing that passed, and gave an account every night to Maury; which was all that the accused could declare at present, conjuring the commissioners to be persuaded, that if it were possible to obtain mercy, he would willingly expose himself to every danger, to arrest the chiefs of the rebellion, and that in all circumstances he should prove his zeal and respect for the whites*.

* See the original paper in the Appendix.

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1792.

He was, however, as before stated, immediately at the close of the confession, hurried to execution, and the whole suppressed, without any proceeding upon it whatever.

The matter of the deposition has been particularly given, for this reason, it exhibits the *manner* of the rebellion, and the quality of its leaders, who appear to have been well acquainted with its various manœuvres; and if the principal persons mentioned, particularly Pinchinat, Castaing, and Viard, had been arrested at that time, they would have been prevented forming their attack of the 25th August.—Thus does party, which, as before described, in dividing the colony of St. Domingo, unconsciously act against itself, and a want of political foresight ruin the best intentions.

January.

To add to the effects of the disclosure of this extraordinary error, the talents of the black leaders began to appear in an instance in the conduct of one, Jean François, whose followers having destroyed all the provision grounds, and devoured all the cattle on the plain, he compelled them to plant in the mountainous districts provisions for their future subsistence; thus judiciously preparing for an indeterminate prolongation of the war.

February.

In the mother country fresh changes continuing to take place, new horrors were prepared for this unhappy colony from that quarter. The jacobin party, and the society of Amis des Noirs, were, at this period, resuming a powerful ascendancy, and on

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the 29th of February, Garan de Coulon proposed an abrogation of the last decree, (of September 24,) and a general amnesty throughout the French colonies; the formation of new colonial assemblies, whose opinions were to be submitted to them, and who should particularly aid in the abolition of negro slavery. This inconsistent plan fell immediately to the ground; but it gave birth to another, about two months after, which was considered little more beneficial to the miserable inhabitants of the colony.

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The decree of the 4th of April consisted, as related to St. Domingo, of the following items; after an acknowledgment of the political equality of the free negroes and people of colour with the whites:

I. A re-election of colonial and parochial assemblies, after the mode of the decree of the 8th March 1790, and the subsequent instructions.

II. The eligibility of free negroes and people of colour to votes and seats in the legislature, upon certain qualifications mentioned in the fourth article of these instructions.

III. IV. V. VI. VII. Three civil commissioners to be named, to enforce the decree, to dissolve the present colonial assemblies; to take every measure for convoking the others, and establishing peace and order; to determine provisionally upon all questions relating thereto, conditionally reserving an appeal to the National Assembly; to procure correct information of the authors of the troubles; to send the guilty to France for accusation,

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1792.

cusation, transmitting constantly minutes of their proceedings, and of the evidence they collect; to call forth the public force to their protection, or the execution of orders.

VIII. A sufficient force of National Guards to be sent to the colonies for the various purposes.

IX. X. The Colonial Assembly to transmit their sentiments on all subjects to the mother country; and to send delegates with them proportional to the population.

XI. All former decrees, not hostile to the present, to continue in force.

D'Esparbes,
governor.

September.
Arrival of
the commis-
sioners, San-
thonax, Pol-
verel, and
Ailhaud.

To perform its functions, three commissioners, named Santhonax, Polverel, and Ailhaud, were appointed, (who were of the most violent of the jacobin party,) and with them a force of eight thousand men, under officers whose principles were well known. M. Blanchelande was superseded by M. D'Esparbes, under the title of commander in chief. The commissioners arrived at Cape François on the 13th of September. They found the governor and the Colonial Assembly involved in disputes, and therefore sent him prisoner to France, and prepared for the first article of their decree to be carried into effect..

The arrival of these men, (from the unfavourable impressions produced by their predecessors,) instead of causing peace in the colony, which appears to be the first intention of the new decree, produced an effect entirely opposite. Amidst such a contrariety of enactments as had agitated them

from the mother country the result of men coolly sitting down to provide remedies for the worst of circumstances, at so great a distance from the scene of action, and unaffected by its immediate difficulties, the people were in doubt what was intended by the new commission, they sent delegates from all quarters to inquire their intentions; some had concluded that they were merely come to exact money, but all had an indifferent opinion of their projected operations. The commissioners answered generally, and certainly with dissimulation, that their views went no farther than to enforce the decree of the 4th of April, in favor of the people of colour, and to settle the future state of the colony, so as to ensure its permanence.

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1792.

Notwithstanding this declaration, the inhabitants were not perfectly satisfied of their probity, and, when they found that the commissioners corresponded with the mulatto chiefs in all parts of the colony, they did not conceal their mistrust. In consequence the commissioners immediately avowed their intentions, and, strengthened by the co-operation of the people of colour, declared themselves the protectors of the negroes, and mulattoes, and seized the persons and effects of those who were most eager to oppose their measures. Many were sent to France, among whom were the superior officers of the regiment of the Cape.

When the white inhabitants denied the election of the new Colonial Assembly, they instituted an intermediate commission

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(commission

CHAP. III. (commission *intermediaire*) as a legislative council, formed of twelve persons, six of whom had been members of the last assembly, and six mulattoes. To these they delegated a part of their power, chiefly for financial purposes. With that promptitude for which the reign of the jacobins in France was distinguished, when the governor D'Esparbes claimed a share of dominion, he was arrested, and conveyed to France as a state-prisoner: when four of the white members of the intermediate commission objected to a financial measure of M. Santhonax, he commended their frankness, invited them to supper; and, when they came, they were surrounded by a detachment of military, and conveyed on board of ship as state-prisoners. One of them was taken prisoner in the ship in which he was confined, and brought to England, where Mr. Edwards saw and rendered him service. Another of the triuivirate dissenting from the union, more timely seceded from his situation, and returned voluntarily to the mother-country.

1793. The affairs of France, now drawing towards an apparent crisis, occupied the Executive Government so fully, as to leave the two commissioners, Santhonax and Polverel, absolute masters of the colony. They eagerly embraced every advantage of such enormous power, which was increased by the attachment of the military, and a considerable portion of the revolters, whom they had found means to secure to their interest. The same scenes which occupied the whole of France at this period, were acted again in St. Domingo. The inhabitants complained
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in the bitterest manner of their wrongs, but it produced no other amendment, than the appointment, as governor, of M. Galbaud, a respectable officer of artillery, and a proprietor in the colony, whom they dispatched (on the declaration of war against Great Britain and Holland), with directions to put the colony in a proper state of defence against a foreign enemy.

Again was the arrangements of the French government respecting this unhappy colony, the cause of commotion and bloodshed. When M. Galbaud arrived with his suite at the Cape, they were received with transport by the municipality and the inhabitants, immediately took the oaths, and entered on his government; but when the commissioners, who (at the time of his landing) were quelling an insurrection in the western province, found he was invested with powers independent of their authority, they immediately set about disrobing him; and the readiest way being, by an existing decree, which prohibited any proprietor of an estate in the colony from holding the government, they attacked and defeated his claims on that score. They ordered him to depart on board the sloop *La Normande*, for the purpose of returning to France, and invited M. de la Salle, whom they had previously made commandant at Port-au-Prince, to receive the command of the colony in the name of the French republic.

The indignity thus offered to Galbaud was not tacitly re-

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ceived by his brother, who collected from the inhabitants, the Cape militia, and the seamen in the harbour, a strong party to support his authority. At the expiration of seven days the two brothers landed, at the head of a powerful party, and proceeded in array towards the government house, where the commissioners were prepared, with a greater force, to receive them; being defended by the people of colour, a body of regulars, and a piece of cannon. A bloody contest ensued; but, in consequence of the seamen getting possession of a wine-cellar, the governor's party were compelled to retire and take refuge in the royal arsenal, where they remained the whole of the night. In the ensuing morning the governor issued a proclamation, inviting all good citizens to join him, and several skirmishes took place between the two parties, but without any remarkable occurrence, till Galbaud's brother being taken prisoner by the commissioners, and the son of Polverel by the party of Galbaud, it was proposed by the governor to exchange the one for the other. "My son," replied Polverel, "knows his duty, and is prepared to die in the service of the republic!"

Jane 20.

The fatal stroke still remained to be put to the fate of St. Domingo, as a colony of France. The white inhabitants had, from the time of the arrival of the commissioners, anticipated the measure; yet with that want of discernment which had led them into their difficulties; thereby creating a degree of stupor amongst them, inasmuch that they had not been able to attempt any method to divert

divert the blow.*” This was *the emancipation of all the slaves in the colony*. When the intentions of Galbaud became known to the commissioners, and that he was supported by so large a body of seamen, they immediately dispatched agents to call to their assistance the revolted negroes, with the offer of a free pardon for the past, the plunder of the city at present, and perfect freedom in future. The first to whom they applied among the leaders, and those of the most conspicuous eminence amidst the blacks, refused the invitation; but another, named Macaya, formerly a negro slave, accepted it, and on the 21st, about noon, entered the town with upwards of three thousand slaves, and begun an indiscriminate slaughter. M. Galbaud and his adherents had, despairing of success, on the same morning, retired to the ships, to which the whole of the whites endeavoured to follow, when their retreat being interrupted by the mulattoes, all that could not escape were immediately murdered. This confusion and slaughter continued through the whole of the two succeeding days, at the end of which they set fire to the principal buildings, and more than half of the city was consumed. The commissioners themselves, astonished at the devastation they had occasioned, and intimidated by the conduct of the allies they had chosen, sought protection under the cover of a ship of the line.

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* “ J'avoit écrit dans la colonie, des 1792, que c'étoit le plan confié aux commissaires : On pouvoit employer des mesures vigoureuses pour l'empêcher, elles étoient indiquées, &c. Mais l'esprit de vertige qui accompagné tout a qui s'est fait pour empêcher les maux de la révolution eut lieu dans cette circonstance, &c.” *Charmilly, Let. p. 65.*

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1793.

Nor, were the mulattoes less amazed and vexed, when they found that the exertions against the whites, which they supposed confined to their interest only, extended to the liberation of their own slaves, on whose labour their fortunes depended; they now perceived that they had been made the tools of the Amis des Noirs, in obtaining their darling object, the emancipation of the whole body of negroes. There is an enthusiasm and a fanaticism in polities, as well as religion, equally dangerous in both, which, with an unaccountable bigotry to their projects, must have led the society to urge such excesses; they could not have originally desired the effusion of human blood only, as hath been asserted, however strongly they might afterwards have imbibed a spirit of revenge against their opponents.—Such is the spirit of Jacobinism, endless, and undirected by any social principle.

The effect of the declaration of freedom to the slaves themselves, was such as might be naturally expected from a people of their character and condition. A considerable part remained in their former situation with their masters, in preference to a change; a greater number joined the party of the commissioners, who manumitted them; and, perhaps, the greatest number, fearful their liberty would not be permanent, RETIRED IN SAVAGE BODIES TO THE MOUNTAINS.

During the four years, in which divisions and tumult had reigned in St. Domingo, many emigrations took place to the continent of North America, and to the several neighbouring

islands. These, of course, increased as security grew less, and more particularly since the first revolt of the slaves in the northern province. To them were now added Galbaud and his party, who met, as the others had done, an asylum wherever they fled. The principal planters, however, still remained behind, attached to the colony, either lingering with hopes of returning tranquillity, or planning schemes for the independence of the island. Among them were some, conversant with the economy of politics, more active and able than those who had hitherto been distinguished; who looked forward from the year 1791, to some arrangement with the crown of Great Britain, that should place the island, and its proprietors of their description, under the government, and protection of that puissant nation; and there were a few others desirous of attaching the colony to Spain. They all saw, in the last desperate proceeding of the commissioners, nothing left to hope for from the judgment of the mother country. The latter, therefore, employed a party to apply to the government of Spanish St. Domingo, who were unsuccessful. The former, with more judgment, determined upon making a formal application to Great Britain on the same subject: for this purpose they commissioned their colleague, M. de Charmilly, a man of strong mental powers, and of great activity, to communicate with the British ministry, and to bring their plans, so long in agitation, to an issue.

This gentleman, it will have appeared from the preceding part of this chapter, possessed a considerable interest in the island,
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M. de Char-
millly com-
missioner to
the British
goverment.

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and an extensive knowledge of its concerns, which had given him a share in several of its legislative bodies, where he appears to have long communicated his inclination towards the measure now confided to him.

The British ministry, hitherto deaf to any proposition of attempting the capture of St. Domingo, became rather more disinclined from the occurrence of a war, which was commenced against the new government of France. More than a negative consent it could scarcely be called, for the arrangement was left to the option of the government of Jamaica, and, in fact, whether any thing should be ventured in its attainment. An intercourse of the most honorable nature to the British character, had already taken place between the unhappy colonists of St. Domingo and those of Jamaica, who raised considerable subscriptions for their aid, and applied them in the way best calculated for their benefit, under the friendly auspices of General Williamson, the governor; and when allured by the professions of the governor of Spanish St. Domingo, they thought they could succeed better there, they were forwarded according to their wishes, Captain Rowley undertaking their safe convoy. Mr. Henry Shirley, of the House of Representatives, appears to have exerted himself in a manner which deserves the highest eulogy. When the government afforded them an asylum in their island, M. de Charmilly lost no time in setting off for Jamaica, and by his representation of the state of St. Domingo, of the disposition of the planters towards

the British nation, and the facility of obtaining some ground with a very small force, he prevailed upon General Williamson to grant him the aid he required; a force certainly inadequate to the invasion of such an island under any circumstances.

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The French commissioners, Santhonax and Polverel, who still retained a disputable power in St. Domingo, were quickly acquainted with the intended invasion, and began to prepare for it accordingly. Their force consisted of the remnant of the troops they brought with them from France, a body of whites who continued attached to their cause, and the slaves which had joined them, of which power little could be judged, being dispersed throughout the provinces. To render themselves in a better state to repel the invaders, they had recourse to a still more determinate step, that of procuring the aid of the whole of the negro slaves. They,* therefore, declared by proclamation, "That every kind of slavery was abolished, and that the negroes were thenceforward to consider themselves, and to be considered as free citizens †.

The inhabitants of St. Domingo, at this period, might be be considered under the following classes:—

* It was signed only by Polverel, who was alone at Port-au-Prince, from whence it was issued. Santhonax was in the northern province.

† It has been asserted that they were still to exercise the same labour, but in the condition of annual servants. Those acquainted with the proclamation, recollect no such exceptions, which would, in fact, have rendered the abolition a nullity.

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1. The principal, and most intelligent of the planters, who desiring tranquillity, and the renovation of their property, (which they could not expect from the distracted state of France,) looked to the protection of a powerful nation, and perhaps most to that of England.

2dly. The remainder of the white planters, who had become republicans, and chose rather to support the commissioners as the representatives of the republic, probably from principle, than to adopt any other country, and to sacrifice their immediate interest to their allegiance:—the impartiality of history demands that this class should not receive any harsher description.

3dly. A number of those persons, to be found in all countries, particularly when under embarrassed circumstances, who, having nothing to lose, and frequently without principle, are ripe for enterprize; many of whom, by stratagem, or other means, had obtained the property of absent planters, availing themselves of the state of the colony, to their own aggrandizement. The mulattoes I consider as partaking of each of these characters: and,

4thly. The emancipated slaves, the most important body of the whole, in whom were comprised almost every description of character. Some of them had already exhibited talents of a superior nature, both in civil and military government, among the revolters; others had proved themselves equal to many of the

the higher purposes of life, and they were possessed at least of CHAP. III.
eminent physical power. 1793.

If we might pause for a moment, to consider the propriety, or impropriety of the accession of the British government to the proposition of M. de Charmilly, we might lavish censure on those who could, with such small hopes of success, enter into a plan of such extent, with so little information on its nature, and such small means for its execution; but we will leave it for the partizan, with every local or supposed advantage of judging, to condemn those without; and who, in the complex dominion of a country with many dependencies, and with as many jarring interests to reconcile, must be sometimes hurried into arrangements which may not prove ultimately successful, notwithstanding their discrimination. Sometimes, too, ambition may be supposed to intrude; nor will the brave and intelligent De Charmilly complain of having also attributed to him, in no slight degree,

"The glorious fault of angels and of gods!"

That those who had determined on adopting the British government, were prepared to sustain their engagements, there is no doubt, but they formed one class only of the numerous remains of a vast population; while the remainder had the strongest motives for opposition—interest, party, and relief from slavery. If, even the two former ideas could have been overcome, every

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colonist, or other individuals acquainted with colonial affairs might have known, from the example of the black Charibes of St. Vincent, or the Maroons in Jamaica, that the last was not to be easily subdued.* Retaining all the adyantages they had derived, in many instances, from the partiality of favorable masters, and particularly in the experience of the different controversies, and conflicts that had taken place, they had become, what is impossible, without an intercourse with them to conceive; an unique people:

It was hoped, however, that interest might assimilate the whole of the whites; that the hostility of the people of colour might be nearly exhausted; and that the negroes were not so far alienated from their duty, as never to be expected to return; still much was left, with great reason, to the bravery and ability of those who were to conduct the enterprize.

British invasion of St. Domingo, under Lieut. Colonel Whitlocke and Commodore Ford.

Under such circumstances, an armament was formed at Jamaica, composed of the 13th regiment of foot, seven companies of the 49th regiment, and a detachment of artillery, under Captain Smith, furnishing about 870 rank and file. With the first division of these, consisting of about 679 rank and file, Lieutenant-Colonel Whitlocke† arrived at Jeremie on the 19th of

* See Dallas's History of the Maroons, also Edwards's British West Indies.

† Now Major-General Whitlocke.

September,

September, and took possession of the town and harbour on the following morning. Agents from M. de Charmilly had already arranged every point, the troops therefore disembarked without the smallest opposition. British colours were hoisted on the forts, with royal salutes, and the inhabitants immediately swore allegiance to the king of Great Britain. Commodore Ford having at that time the command on the Jamaica station, accompanied in the Europa man of war, the transport of the troops, and assisted in the necessary formalities of receiving the submission of the place. The Mole of Cape St. Nicholas, (the Gibraltar, or key of the Antilles,) immediately followed. To it, on the next day, according to the pre-arrangement, the commodore directed his course, and, on the 22nd, landing the marines only, took possession of the fortress and harbour. This port was soon after supplied by the grenadier company of the 13th regiment, to which was added the second division of the armament, comprising five companies, of forty men each. The town of St. Nicholas, however, did not capitulate, for its inhabitants were hostile to the British, and immediately joined the republican army.

The great extent of important coast thus coming into the possession of the English, excited the most sanguine prospects, and determined all parties in the prosecution of an enterprize which promised such brilliant success. We shall quit the exertions of the commissioners, who were at present employed in defensive operations about the capital, while their new allies, the slaves, were forming a separate interest in the interior,

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Jeremie and
Cape St.
Nicholas
surrendered.

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1793.

to follow the new possessors of the south-east and north-west districts of the colony in their united movements with the brave colonists, by whom they appear to have been cordially and respectably joined.

The neighbouring port to Jeremie, first attracted the attention of Colonel Whitlocke, who was instructed, that it would be of importance to the security of Le Grand Anse. He therefore sailed for Tiburon with his whole force, and arrived in the bay on the 4th day of October; a planter, named Morin Duval, was to proceed by land with five hundred colonial troops, and to form a junction at an appointed spot; but, unfortunately, a piece of cannon compelled Colonel Whitlocke to disembark three miles distant, and the wind intercepted the signal of Duval, who in consequence wandered about the whole of the day, in imminent danger, with a faithful and intelligent negro called John Vina, whose men formed a part of the five hundred. At the same time, a reinforcement of cavalry from Aux Cayes joining the enemy, Colonel Whitlocke was obliged to return, with a loss of twenty men, without effecting his purpose.

Meet a small
check.

A small check is sufficient to turn the tide of joy when it is full set in, consequently this defeat was magnified in the opinion of those, who had before only to step into possession of wealthy towns, and with well-filled magazines. It had the effect of disheartening the troops; to whom General Williamson sent as encouragement,

encouragement, till reinforcements, which were expected from England, should arrive, the remaining part of the 49th regiment, the 20th regiment, and the 1st battalion of the Royals. This addition not only served to cheer the drooping spirits of the soldiery, but to increase the confidence in the planters, as to the intention of Great Britain following up the enterprize; accordingly, the parishes of Jean Rabell, St. Marc, Arcahaye, and Boucassin, became attached to the territory of Great Britain. From this period until the middle of January, no farther advance was made; when the colonists, who had established a port at Irois, a few miles distant from Tiburon, in order to overawe that place, having, for security, erected a fort in the centre of a marsh, which considerably affected their health; they became impatient to re-attempt that port, and the Privy Council of Le Grand Anse eagerly solicited Colonel Whitlocke for the purpose. On the 21st of January, therefore, the commodore received the troops on board at Jeremie; and on the 2d of February, in the evening, they arrived off Cape Tiburon. The commodore stood out to sea, and Capt. Rowley, a brave and sensible officer, had the management of the attack; while Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer,* no way inferior in any quality, commanded the troops, which consisted partly of colonists, and a detachment of the British army. The enemy appeared in considerable force, but the fire of the ships cleared the beach; they came forward again, and directed their musquetry at the boats; when the troops landing, and forming

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Capture of
Tiburon.

* Now Major-General Spencer.

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instantly, with the gallant Colonel Spencer at their head, entirely dispirited the defenders. Their line was routed with considerable slaughter, and one hundred and fifty surrendered prisoners of war. In this, as in the former instance, they found the magazine well stored with ammunition. The loss, on the part of the victors, was extremely small.

By this victory the whole of the bay, or bight of Leogane, became under the command of the British squadron; and nothing was wanting but an additional armament, which was constantly expected, to secure Port-au-Prince, the capital of the colony, to which every one looked with an anxious eye.

In the interim, however, it was conceived expedient to obtain the possession of the ancient town of Port-Paix, an important post on the northern side of the island; and Colonel Whitlocke was induced to attempt procuring its surrender by the offer of a sum of money to the general who commanded in it. This was M. Laveaux, a man of broken fortune, though of a good family, who had been long in the service, and had a troop of dragoons before the revolution. Whether Colonel Whitlocke formed his calculation alone upon this circumstance, or, as hath been mentioned, his orders were improperly executed, cannot, at present, be determined; but, it is certain, that General Laveaux possessed considerable confidence from the republican army, and that he did not abuse it. The offer was made in a letter sent with a flag, and 5000*l.* the sum stipulated. He silently read the

letter

letter, and asked the officer, upon his honour, if he knew its contents; upon being answered in the negative, he told him, that, if he had known them, he should have immediately been hung on a gibbet. He then read the letter aloud to those around him, and returned the following answer:—

“ You have endeavoured to dishonour me in the eyes of my troops, by supposing me so vile, flagitious, and base, as to be capable of betraying my trust for a bribe: this is an affront, for which you owe me personal satisfaction, and I demand it, in the name of honour. Wherefore, previous to any general action, I offer you single combat until one of us fall; leaving to you the choice of arms, either on foot, or horseback. Your situation as my enemy, on the part of your country, did not give you a right to offer me a personal insult; and, as a private person, I ask satisfaction for an injury done me by an individual.”*

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Answer of
the republi-
can General
Laveaux, to
a compro-
mise for his
post.

Of the character of Gen. Laveaux, a midst the conflicts of party, in which he was situated, it is difficult to judge. But he certainly possessed talents; and, if there were no other cause for this proposition than his circumstances, the misfortunes of a brave man should be respected. The situation and character of Col. Whitlocke, however, demanded an attention to every expedient object.†

* This answer is copied from Edwards, who is not contradicted by De Charmilly, though its terms differ from another copy in the possession of the author.

† Though the impartiality we wish to preserve on all occasions demands that the preceding facts should be fairly stated, we wish to offer a sincere tribute of respect to the conduct of Major-General Whitlocke, as an officer of undoubted bravery, honour, and talents of the highest order.

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The fortress of L'Acul, in the vicinity of Leogane, was next invested, and carried on the 19th of February, but with the loss of two valuable officers. At four in the morning, the flank-companies, a detachment of the royal artillery, and of the 13th regiment, with some colonial troops, two five half-inch howitzers, and two four-pounders, marched from Leogane, under the command of Colonel Whitlocke; while two hundred colonial troops, and a few British artillery, under the orders of the Baron de Montalembert, which were previously embarked, were to land and attack the fort from the sea at an hour appointed. Colonel Whitlocke moved forward on the great road, and took post just without cannon-shot; while Capt. Vincent, with the light infantry of the 49th, and about 80 colonial troops, were dispatched by a higher road to combine their effects with those of Montalembert, in favour of the main body. But, unfortunately, from the intoxication of the captain of one of the transports, notwithstanding the ability and propriety of the other, the *King*, Montalembert could not be landed, and all the service they could perform, was that of diverting the attention of 200 negroes and mulattoes, who were kept on the beach to receive them. The enemy cannonaded from seven till eleven, when Colonel Whitlocke ordered Captain Smith, with the howitzers and cannon, to advance, and fire upon the fort, supported by the light-infantry of the royal, and 13th regiments, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer. On the discovery of a failure on the sea-side, it was determined to storm the fort, and Colonel Spencer, with the grenadiers of the 49th, and light-infantry of the 13th, proceeded to join Captain Vincent on the

Mountain-Road. Between four and five the two columns proceeded, and the main-body immediately received a heavy fire of cannon and musquetry. It was ordered to advance and gain the fort, which it executed with the utmost rapidity, and with more effect than could have been expected, by so small a party. After obtaining possession of the fort, considerable damage was sustained from the explosion of one of the buildings, which had been filled with combustibles by the commander, on finding he could no longer defend it. It was fired by a negro recently from the coast of Africa, who is supposed not to have known what he did, or, the use of powder; he set fire to an artillery-waggon on the spot, and perished, with thirteen privates of the besiegers and two officers, Capt. Morshead, of the 20th grenadiers, who had been previously wounded in the body, and Lieutenant Caulfield, of the 62d. They were buried with military honours, attended by the British garrison. Lieutenant M'Kerras, of the engineers, and Captain Hutchinson, of the royals, though both wounded in the attack, continued on duty till the fort was carried. Lieutenant Tilnin, of the 20th grenadiers, was wounded, but recovered.

Thus the first sharp action that was fought, ended successfully; but the same was not the case with the second, which occurred immediately after, though of less importance. This expedition was intended to punish the treachery of the German inhabitants of Bombarde, before described. It was composed chiefly of English de-feat at Bom-barde. marines from the different ships, who were performing the gar-

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rison-duty of the Mole with the regular troops, under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer, and Lieutenant-Colonel Markham; two Frenchmen accompanied them, M. Deneux, the major of artillery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Charmilly, who was necessary every where, not only on account of the great responsibility under which he lay to all parties, but from the general want of knowledge, in the language of the country by the commanders.

The detachment set off at nine o'clock at night, and arrived at the redoubt about three in the morning, having marched fifteen miles in the woods and mountains. It was defended by 150 German soldiers, intrenched, with three pieces of cannon. They were relieving guard at the moment, when the troops were discovered, and the alarm-gun fired. Colonel Markham, with half the detachment, attacked the redoubt in flank, while the remainder approached the gate. The enemy suffered them to arrive within half-gun shot, when having challenged three times, calling—“*Qui vive?*” Colonel Spencer answered, “England!” and immediately the assailants received a fire, perfectly well directed, and kept up with so much order and briskness, that the enterprize was obliged to be immediately abandoned. Several of the officers advanced as far as the ditch, supported by some grenadiers, but not being sufficiently numerous; all retired in confusion. M. De Charmilly (who recounts the affair) was at the side of the ditch, ten feet from the entrenchments, which served as a rampart, and was wounded by several

musquet-shot: one ball struck the plate of his belt, and another CHAP. III.
the barrel of a brass-pistol in his pocket, either of which must
have killed him. There were sixteen men killed, and twenty-
six taken prisoners; the remainder retreated without any further
misfortune than the hardships experienced by a small party, which
I shall describe from the authority of the officer just mentioned;*
the retreat being very precipitate, there was no signal to indicate it, so that many of the people strayed from the main body.

A young and brave officer, Lieutenant Garstin, of the first regiment of royal English infantry, who was with his detachment, found, at day-break, that he had strayed from the road with eight men belonging to his company. All his endeavours to find it led him farther from it; when, towards the middle of the day, he fell in with a German patrole, consisting of six men, who desired him to surrender. He answered by threatening to fire upon them if they attacked him. Seeing him so determined, they contented themselves with following, while he continued to stray still farther from his intended point. They acquainted him with it, and again pressed his surrender, which was as constantly refused. The Germans, fatigued with following him over the dry and sandy plains, on the approach of night retired; they continued to wander, fainting with hunger, thirst, and

Singular distress of Garstin and his men.

* M. De Charmilly, though extremely and often justly severe with Mr. Edwards in the errors which crept into his Historical Survey, is occasionally, rather incorrect himself in his descriptions: an instance of which, it is apprehended, occurs in the affair of Lieut. Garstin, as it also did in a transport which he calls the *King Grey*.

fatigue;

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fatigue ; at the end of two days and a night, during which time two of the number died of want and weariness, having found nothing but the fruit of Indian fig-trees and aloes, they arrived, by a fortunate chance, at the landing place of the Platform, a republican port, which had been destroyed three weeks before by Captain Rowley. Here they found an old abandoned fishing-boat, in which they embarked without provisions, fresh water, or a sail, with very bad oars. They arrived on the morning of the third day at the entrance of the bay of the Mole St. Nicholas, from whence the fishermen brought them into the town.

During this retreat from the enemy in one quarter, they were giving a repulse in another of considerable importance. One of the lieutenants of Rigaud, with 1500 men of different colours, had prepared to attack the important post of L'Acul de Leogane; on the day preceding the intended attack, they were intercepted by 400 men, (only 150 of whom were of the British legion, and the remainder of the militia of Leogane,) under the command of the Baron de Montalembert, who completely routed them, and took a piece of cannon. They charged with fixed bayonets, and upwards of 300 of the enemy lay dead upon the field.

The same success occurred in the attack which was made by the mulatto officer Rigaud, of Aux Cayes, on the fort of Tiburon, the possession of which had cost so dear. His force consisted of

of 2000 men, chiefly revolted negroes, with two pieces of cannon, four-pounders. They surrounded the fort about three in the morning, and it was defended with much spirit till a quarter before nine, notwithstanding the great battery being entirely dismounted, and a number of men killed and wounded by the explosion of a quantity of gunpowder, when the besieged (a party of whom, under the command of Jean Kina, had before made a sortie on one side,) quitting the fort, routed the assailants with great slaughter, 170 of their number being left dead on the field. The pleasure of the victory, was damped, when it was found that out of the small number of British that were in the fort, 28 had fallen, besides 100 of the colonial troops. This affair, notwithstanding, was one which conferred equal honor on all the forces, and the Chevalier de Sevré, in his dispatch on the occasion to Colonel Whitlocke, pays a tribute to the May. small garrison, which so distinguished itself on the occasion.

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Still, during these occasional successes, the general spirit of the colony began to droop, on perceiving, that during a period of eight months, not the smallest re-inforcement had arrived from Great Britain, nor was it only in fears, that this despondency and diffidence began to shew themselves, for a parish which, a few months before, had voluntarily adopted the protection of England, (that of Jean Rabell,) compelled the officers of the garrison to deliver up their post to Laveaux; and it was much feared, that many others would follow their example. This defection was less felt, as between four and

CHAP. III.
1794. five thousand persons had returned to the plantations from their different asylums.

Reinforced
under Brigadier-General
Whyte.

At this moment, so temporarily inauspicious, when the British interests seemed devoted to contempt, on the 19th of May, the Belliqueux, the Irresistible, and the Fly sloop, cast anchor in the harbour of Cape St. Nicholas, with the 22d, 23d, and 41st regiments of infantry, under the command of Brigadier-General Whyte. All spirits were now resumed, the despondency which overwhelmed the colony disappeared, and all seemed, as from a general impulse, to expect the reduction of the capital of Port-au-Prince, and a considerable share of wealth from the capture.

These troops were detached by General Sir Charles Grey from Guadaloupe, after the reduction of the French Windward Islands, where they had experienced a severe campaign, and where their services were yet wanted. Great evils were ascribed to the circumstance of withdrawing them—the loss of the island they left, and the occasion of the largest and most expensive armament that ever sailed from England to the West Indies, with other misfortunes.*

Expedition
against the
capital of
the island.

Commodore Ford had, for a considerable time, blockaded the harbour of Port-au-Prince, to the great discouragement of the

* Colonel Chalmers's Remarks on the late War in St. Domingo, p. 21.
commissioners;

commissioners; on the arrival of this re-inforcement, although inferior to what had been hoped, it was considered best that the expectation of the inhabitants should not be disappointed. General Whyte, therefore, having landed his sick at St. Nicholas, received in their place 160 of the garrison, and proceeded to the rendezvous, in the road of Arcahaye, on the 23d of May, to concert the enterprize with the Commodore, and receive such of the colonial troops as were to co-operate. On the 30th they sailed again, and arrived off Port-au-Prince in the evening. Notwithstanding the operations, in a warlike view, may not be of the first importance, it should be mentioned that the squadron comprised four ships of the line, the Europa, the Belliqueux, the Irresistible, and the Sceptre, three frigates, and four or five smaller vessels, the whole under the command of Commodore Ford. The British land-forces, under the orders of General Whyte, consisted of 1,465 rank and file, fit for duty, to whom were added 2,000 colonial troops. It is proper to remark, that at this period the French inhabitants composing the latter corps, likewise chiefly supplied the Mole, St. Marc, Leogane, Jeremie, the camps Des Rivaux and Du Centre, and Tiburon, (on which place an attack was projected, by the mulatto chief Rigaud, from Aux Cayes.)

The necessary preparations being made, the next morning a flag was sent, demanding the surrender of the town, which, not being admitted, it was determined to cannonade the fortress

Expedition
against the
capital of
the island.

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1791.

May 31.
Fort Bizotton
taken.

of Bizotton, which defended the great carriage road leading from Leogane to Port-au-Prince, which protected one part of the Bay, and in which were 500 men, eight pieces of heavy artillery, and two mortars. The fort was dismantled on the side next the sea in the course of the day, (May 31,) by two line of battle ships and a frigate, but on the land side remaining perfect, an assault became necessary. Colonel Spencer, with 300 British, and 500 colonial troops, were accordingly landed in the evening, within a mile of the fort, and night soon approached, accompanied by the horrors of a most tremendous thunder-storm, and deluge of rain. A council of war was held, consisting of the Commander, the Baron de Montalembert, Colonel de Charmilly, and the brave Captain McKerras of the engineers; when it was suggested by Colonel de Charmilly, who was best acquainted with the nature of the country, to attack with fixed bayonets, as the torrents from the elements would render the cannon and musquetry in the fort useless, and drown the sound of the approaching assailants. Captain Daniel, of the 41st regiment, led the advanced guard, of only sixty men, and executed the plan with such vigor and judgment, that entering a breach, and bearing down all before them, (except those who begged and obtained mercy,) the fort was carried directly, to the astonishment even of the brave Colonel Spencer. Captain Daniel was severely wounded, and his second in command, Captain Wallace, died on the glacis, as he had lived, full of bravery and honor.

It is a subject of deep regret to the writer, from the nature of this work, not to be able to adorn his pages with the account of numerous actions which, could he have transmitted to posterity, would immortalize many whose names and heroism the various chances of war frequently consign to oblivion. It is sometimes necessary that the historian should select his characters with a view to dramatic effect, yet a place on the roll of fame should not be denied to any; as that is often considered the noblest reward for a life of perseverance and sorrow; and the most honorable incentive to future services of danger and national glory.

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The capture of Bizotton determined the fate of Port-au-Prince. The party remained in the fort till joined by the main body of the army from L'Arcahaye, which, one part by land, and the other by sea, made its approach on the side next the rich plain of Cul de Sac. On the 4th of June they arrived within three miles of the town, and, at ten in the morning, the detachment of Colonel Spencer marched to occupy a post on the heights behind the capital. When they had advanced about half way they were met by a mulatto woman, who acquainted them, to their surprize, with its evacuation. Colonel de Charmilly, with fifty of the colonial cavalry, were dispatched to ascertain the fact, which they found as she had stated; and they immediately took possession of the fort of the Gate of Leogane. About half an hour after, a cry was heard from a cellar in a very concealed situation, and upon the door being broke open, a negro was dis-

Capture of
Port-au-
Prince.

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covered, surrounded by barrels of gunpowder. The unhappy wretch had been placed there, according to the opinion of M. de Charnilly, the preceding night, to blow them up at a certain time, but his match being extinguished, his own life, as well as that of those who surrounded him, were thus spared by mere accident.

The fort De L'Hôpital was the next to be taken possession of, which was accomplished in the same manner, but with the appearances of imminent danger they escaped with their lives; for here the commissioners had planned their principal blow to destroy the new masters of the place, which had been defeated by the rain just mentioned. A train of powder was found reaching from the magazine, (where several of the barrels had their bottoms knocked out, and the powder strewed about the floor,) to the thickets behind the fort; the whole, fortunately, was wet, and by precaution every accident was prevented.

Fort Robin, in which were between two and three hundred men, who had refused to fly with the commissioners, readily surrendered to M. de Charnilly. The Baron de Montalembert was sent to take possession of Fort St. Joseph, which commanded the gate of the town leading to the Cul de Sac, and a detachment of troops from Leogane went to the Fort de St. Claire. Thus, in a few hours, the English were in full possession of Port-au-Prince. The commodore, who had entered the road, took possession

possession of Fort de l'Islet, and sent in a British flag, which CHAP. III.
De Charmilly hoisted at Port Robin, with sensations that are
easier to be felt than described. "I considered," says he, "this
happy event as a recompense accorded me by Fate for all my
labours, and all my troubles in the salvation of St. Domingo."
At six o'clock General Whyte arrived.

Such was the capture of this important capital, whose character and wealth had tempted every person employed in the intended conquest of the island. Within the compass of its lines were one hundred and thirty one pieces of cannon regularly mounted in batteries. In the harbour were twenty-two vessels laden with sugar, indigo, and coffee, of which thirteen were from three to five hundred tons burthen, besides seven thousand tons of shipping in ballast, in value amounting to 400,000l. A booty much more considerable was conveyed away by the commissioners, who loaded two hundred mules with their riches, and carried away near two thousand persons in their train. Having previously arranged their affairs, and finding the people of colour, (of whose aid, they had only intended to avail themselves temporarily,) possessed of the whole natural strength of the island, under the mulatto Rigaud, and a negro named Toussaint L'Ouverture, they soon after quitted the colony, consigning immense wealth both to America and France, leaving General Laveaux in the character of commander in chief; and returned to France, where they received from the government presiding at that time a sanction of their proceedings. Polverel soon after died, the victim

Return of
the French
commis-
sioners, San-
thonax and
Polverel, to
France.

CHAP. III. of a life of dissipation, but Santhonax lived to pay the colony a
1794. triumphal visit.

Much controversy has existed on the idea of some private arrangement having taken place between them and the commodore, with whom several flags of truce passed during the three days in which the detachment from the army was kept inactive. How this was, has never been explained, but from the situation of the road from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel, it is clear, that their retreat might have been interrupted, and, according to some, the fate of the colony determined. Immediately after Port-au-Prince came into the possession of the British, more than three thousand armed inhabitants assembled in the town, ready to undertake any enterprize for the further reduction of the colony. Unfortunately, no use was made of the present advantages, but what they afforded in profit; thus an opportunity was lost, which, as is often the case, never occurred again.

The capture of Port-au-Prince, so much desired, seems to have formed the height of British power in St. Domingo. "From that period the affairs of its possessions," says an old English officer employed on the spot,* "began to decline in proportion, as it were, to the vast accumulation of expence; and

* Colonel Chambers, inspector-general of colonial troops in St. Domingo. "Remarks," p. 41.

all was languor, disease, or peculation!" As soon as the general satisfaction gave way to the necessary considerations for defence, the soldiery were compelled to assist in raising intrenchments on the side of the town next the mountains by day, and to perform military duty at night, thereby suffering the effects, alternately, of the sun and the dew. Many of these men had been six months on ship-board, and the season was unfavorable to them. At this unfortunate juncture, arrived the Experiment frigate, with the remainder of the troops ordered from the Windward Islands, under the command of the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel Lennox,* consisting of eight flank companies belonging to the 22d, 23d, 25th, and 41st regiments. Now commenced in St. Domingo the ravages of that contagion, which, with a power more terrible than ordinary death itself, has bereft so many families of their hopes, and cut off the flower of a promising army, without the gratification of an honorable conflict.

It has been a melancholy object of dispute, whether or not the yellow fever had been generated, or even made its appearance in St. Domingo, previous to the arrival of the Experiment at Port-au-Prince. That sickness, and perhaps fevers incidental to all the colonies, had before been experienced by our troops, is certain, none of whom had gone directly from Europe, and might have been expected to be accustomed to the climate; yet it is to be remembered, that many of them had occasionally been

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1794.

Commence-
ment of the
yellow fever
in St. Do-
mingo.

* Now General Lennox.

kept

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1794.

kept long in the transports, that they had been sometimes posted on the burning sands of the Mole, and at others seated in marshes, which the colonists themselves could not long endure; and what was little better than either of these, they had opportunities of indulgence, which required more prudence to withstand, than could be expected from soldiers under their circumstances. They had been already harassed by new modes of warfare with the blacks, who, particularly those under Toussaint, a negro general of uncommon ability in the interior, had been trained with singular care. From the sickness arising from the former causes, the colonial troops were entirely free, in consequence of their different habits.

This pestilence is described as having been brought first to Grenada by the Hankey, from Bulam in Africa, where she had staid so long, crowded with passengers who could not be accommodated on shore for some time, as to contract a disease *sui generis*, similar to the jail distemper. The greater part died, and two only of the ship's company arrived at Grenada. The circumstances that follow, are scarcely to be conceived by those who do not know the numerous instances that occur, to prove the necessity of an establishment of a Board of Health in all the British colonies. The clothes and bedding of the deceased victims, were *sold by auction*, distributed among a variety of persons, and the contagion with which they were infected, consequently spread, not only throughout that island, but the other Antilles, and a considerable part of the continent.

It

It is unnecessary to enter into a description of this distressing malady in a medical view, as sufficient accounts of its nature and treatment may be found in the works of several medical writers of the present day.—Forty officers, and six hundred rank and file, fell victims to the fever within two months after the surrender of Port-au-Prince.

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It is impossible for the best of generals to distinguish, and to avail themselves of every opportunity; but it is unfortunate, that so many troops should have been suffered to collect in the capital, thus increasing the means of disease, when they might have served with utility elsewhere. The same omission can now be perceived on the part of the navy, which suffered the southern coast to be open to communication with Curaçoa and the continent, from whence supplies of stores of all kinds were constantly received by the enemy, unregarded by a single ship. With common precaution even of this kind, the commissioners could not have escaped with the immense wealth with which they loaded themselves from the colony, nor could innumerable privateers have been equipped, which, for, a time, intercepted every vessel in our trade that passed through the Windward passage.

At this period the indefatigable De Charmilly, who was the soul of the British enterprize at St. Domingo, was again commissioned by his drooping countrymen to return to Europe, for the purpose of soliciting additional aid, to complete the business thus far advanced.

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1794.

September.
Brigadier-
General
Horneck,
commander.

General Whyte resigned the command in St. Domingo, on account of ill health, and was succeeded by Brigadier-General Horneck, a man qualified to ensure success in a situation of difficulty. Only fifty men followed General Horneck from Jamaica, and no reinforcement was received to enable them to make any movement for several months after; he had, therefore, to remain on the defensive for that time, and to preserve the territory already gained, from the defection which was beginning to appear.

Town of St.
Marc taken
by men of
colour, and
regained.

The first success which encouraged the revolters, who were chiefly mulattoes, under Rigaud, to farther exertions and attainments, was the seizure of Leogane, where they put to death all the French planters who fell in their way. This was followed in the beginning of September, by a perfidious violation of the neutrality which had been entered into by the men of colour in the town of St. Marc. Lieutenant-Colonel Brisbane, a valuable young officer, who held that rank from the French legion of St. Marc, being a captain in the 49th regiment, had been pursuing, with only eighty British in addition to the colonial troops under his command, the most rapid successes in the neighbourhood, and had induced a large number of the rebels to submit unconditionally. In the pursuit of these successes, the town was left without troops, which afforded an irresistible temptation; they accordingly seized upon it, putting to death, as before, all who fell in their way. The garrison took refuge in a fort on the seashore, from whence they were relieved by the arrival of a fri-

gate from the Mole of Cape St. Nicholas. Colonel Brisbane returned, and, at the expence of all the advantages he had obtained on the plain, regained the town, making upwards of three hundred of the insurgents prisoners. It had the effect, however, of inspiriting the whole of the people of colour, and of exciting them to greater excesses. Rigaud, who commanded in the south, made apparent arrangements for an attack upon the capital, by investing Fort Bizotton with three columns of his troops, consisting of two thousand men. They began their attack at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 5th of December, and were defeated with great slaughter. Captain Grant, who commanded, and Lieutenants Clunes* and Hamilton, though wounded severely in the commencement of the attack, continued at their posts, and earned an honorable fame, of which General Williamson bore a handsome testimony.

Not discouraged by this repulse, Rigaud immediately prepared for a more formidable attack in another quarter, the recapture of Tiburon. His intentions were known, but, as in the escape of the commissioners, it again happened, that not a ship could be spared to intercept his armament, then lying off Aux Cayes. It sailed on the 23d of December, consisting of a brig of sixteen guns, and three schooners of fourteen guns each. His military force was composed of three thousand men, of different colours and descriptions, and the attack commenced on Christ-

* Now Lieutenant-Colonel Clunes.

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1794.

mas day. The garrison contained only four hundred and eighty men, the majority of whom were colonists, and the rest British convalescents; it held out four days, till three hundred of that number had fallen. The survivors, with Lieutenant Bradford of the 23d regiment, who commanded under the Chevalier de Sevré, commandant of the district, fought their way, with astonishing bravery, for five miles through the enemy, till they reached Irois. An unfortunate officer, Lieutenant Baskerville, who was from some circumstance left behind, perished by his own hands, as is supposed, to prevent a dishonourable death, or falling into those of the enemy. It is unpleasing to withhold approbation from an act which evinces the most determined bravery, yet it is to be lamented, that he did not find some other means more compatible with the institutes of society, and on which history could dwell with more pleasure.

Tiburon, Leogane, Jean Rabell, La Petite Riviére, and L'Artibonite, were in possession of the people of colour and the negroes; and the latter retaining the whole of the northern province, except the Mole and Fort Dauphin, were increasing in power and independance throughout the colony. The British army, on the contrary, was weakened every day, and the colonists viewed with anxiety and distrust, the delay which took place in the furnishing additional forces. They required them in a body capable of some grand operation, which might complete the conquest of the colony, and suppress the designs of the people of colour; a hope which nothing but the

the lingering fondness of these unhappy proprietors for their delightful possessions, could have retained to this period. The entire power having been confided to the British commander, the whole of the French colonists submitted themselves to him, as passive agents; but, from the neglect which they experienced, owing to the ample employment of the British government at home, they were still desirous of resuming some share of authority. There will always be found dissatisfied persons under all circumstances, and dissolute characters ever ready to fall in with their designs, for the sake of the treachery itself. Thus, while Colonel Brisbane, who was admired for his bravery, ability, and personal qualities, was quelling the disturbance of the mulattoes, whom he had particularly favored, and restoring tranquillity to the whites under his protection, a party of the latter were conspiring against his valuable life, which even war and disease had spared. They were, however, detected and their purpose defeated. But a more extensive conspiracy was soon after discovered at Port-au-Prince, where it was intended, by a similar party, to seize the garrison, and put the English to death. Twenty of the conspirators were seized, and tried by a council of war, composed of the principal commanders, among whom were five French field officers; they were found guilty, and adjudged to death. Fifteen of the number were accordingly shot on the 18th of February.

Shortly after this narrow escape, however, the amiable Colonel Brisbane fell, while out on a reconnoitring party. By

Death of
Colonel Bris-
bane.

his

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1795.

1795.
January,
Conspiracy
against the
English at
Port-au-
Prince disco-
vered.

February.

CHAP. III. his death the British affairs in St. Domingo lost one of the most
1795. indefatigable, and generous of their advocates. He acquired the affections of every one, and of those who were anxious to deprive him of life he was the decided friend, insomuch, that his constant intercourse with the mulattoes excited a degree of disapprobation in the whites: they, nevertheless, confided in his courage, and were never disappointed. He died universally lamented.

March 2.
Death of
Colonel
Markham.

The commencement of this eventful year was clouded by the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Markham, who, to use the language of the orders issued by General Horneck, "lived universally respected and beloved, and died, leaving a bright example of military, social, and private virtue." He fell in the attack of an out-post, the enemy having again determined on besieging Fort Bizotton. Victory, however, crowned his fall, and his life was revenged upon six hundred of the enemy, who were slain on the spot. Their colours, and five pieces of cannon, were also taken.

April.

About the latter end of April a reinforcement arrived, consisting of the 81st and 96th, and a few of the 82d regiments, which, upon landing, met the fate of so many of their predecessors, and could not but consider their destination as so many graves open for their reception.

In the month of May, 1795, when the colony had become, in the

the estimation of the British government, a splendid object of enterprize, General Williamson, the governor of Jamaica, to whom it had been ostensibly confided, arrived at Port-au-Prince, having been appointed commander-in-chief of all the British possessions with the honour of the Order of the Bath.

CHAP. III.
1795.
Major-General Sir Adam Williamson, K. B. Commander-in-Chief.

The first exertions of the new commandant were directed to strengthen his position at Port-au-Prince, and to establish and strengthen a cordon from a village called Thomaseau, and from Grande Bois, at the extremity of the Cul de Sac, to Saint Mark, across a ridge of mountains, which divide the plain of L'Arca-haye from that of Artibonite, besides a chain of posts extending from thence to the Cape of Tiburon. For this purpose it became necessary to enlarge the plan, which had already taken place, of embodying corps of negroes; and many slaves were purchased for the purpose from the French planters and others, and placed under the command of officers who had been in the service of the old government, or of planters most likely to ensure their utility by proper attention. Of these, the corps of De Source, De Pyster, De Grass, La Serre, D'Alsun, and Cocherel were the most respectable; but they were, with many other of the arrangements that now took place, extremely expensive, and not always efficient.

In the month of August arrived the 82d regiment, completing August.
the quantum of the reinforcement, (a small part of which was
received

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1795.

received in April). It was nine hundred and eighty men strong on landing, of which number three hundred and fifty only remained alive in six weeks.

Major-General
Forbes

With troops thus arriving in divisions, and distressed with disease, where a combined body was required to form a decisive power, little could be done; and General Williamson, already embarrassed by the most difficult circumstances, was but ill prepared for those circumstances so dispiriting as the present; neither did his beneficence and complacency, qualities so amiable in private life, contribute to his assistance on the occasion. He was open to imposition from designing persons, and was led to countenance a system of expence fatal to the British interest; he was shortly succeeded in command by Major-General Forbes.

This spirited and active officer commenced his career by an attentive review of the different posts, and an augmentation of the forces by every means that presented; he strengthened the cordons already established, and secured the frontiers of Miraballais and Banica, to preserve a communication with Spanish Saint Domingo, for procuring cattle, and other purposes. The garrison of Banica, consisting, as usual, of a few British troops, colonials, and some Spaniards in British pay, he placed under the command of an officer of considerable merit, Sir William Cockburn, who was directed to keep in view the free access to the plain of Cape François, which it commanded.

Towards

Towards the close of this year, in consequence of the intrigues of a negro-general, whose character will form a prominent feature in this history, the Spanish government ceded its interest in a colony, it could no longer hold, to the representatives of the French republic.

CHAP. III.
1795.

Spanish St.
Domingo
ceded to
France.

In May, 1796, after a disastrous passage, about 7000 troops, under the command of Brigadier-General Howe, who had sailed from Cork near seven months before, arrived at the Mole of Saint Nicholas, where, as if to complete the destruction the elements had left unfinished, they were obliged to remain some weeks on board the transports. The same number of men, at any former period, would have changed the whole affairs of the colony; but they were too far gone; they, with the troops already at the disposal of General Forbes, (to use the language of an old experienced officer,) "were not such as those commanded by General Wolfe."* Among the effects of this insufficiency may be remembered the following disastrous circumstances.

1796.

The town of Leogane having been left in an unprotected state by the British troops, the republicans immediately enclosed it with a palisaded ditch, and began to strengthen the harbour, which General Forbes conceiving necessary to prevent, determined on attacking the enemy with a considerable force. Ad-

Leogane lost
by the En-
glish.

* Col. Chalmers's Remarks, p. 44.

CHAP. III.
1796.

miral Parker, after disembarking the troops, attacked the fort at the entrance of the creek, but was obliged to abandon it with loss. General Forbes carried no artillery with him, intending, by the advice of his engineer, Major M'Kerras, to take it without regular approaches. A few light pieces of cannon were placed to cover those who filled up the ditch, by which means the besiegers were to cross to the assault. The impolicy, however, of despising an enemy, was soon, as it is always, evinced. The besieged perceiving the contemptible consideration in which they were held, from the church-tower directed a twenty-four pounder against the assailants, with such effect, as enabled them to cross the ditch, and take their cannon, while they were glad in the opportunity afforded, by the weakness of their opponents, to re-embark without further injury.

Bombarde
taken and
evacuated by
the English.

Bombarde, which had been so unsuccessfully attempted to be surprized before, became particularly necessary to the garrison and fleet, at the Mole, for the supply of vegetables, &c. A strong body of troops were sent to attack it, but many of them died on the road from the difficulties of the march, undertaken in the middle of the day. The fort was, however, immediately surrendered by capitulation; and soon after evacuated by its possessors.

Encouraged by these circumstances, Rigaud became confident of his prowess, and attacked Major-General Bowyer at Irois. He

was repelled, at the expence of near an hundred men killed and wounded; among the latter of whom was the general himself.

CHAP. III.
1796.

In short, so languid became the progress of the British arms, that the republicans commenced operations in every quarter round the capital; besides, compelling General Forbes to fortify the mountain called Grenier, and to occupy all the surrounding heights, they employed some months in the erection of batteries, and on the fortification of two posts at St. Laurent and Le Bouilliere, within four miles of Port-au-Prince, without the smallest molestation from the English.

Affairs becoming desperate, with misfortune and expence incurring daily, government determined on sending General Simcoe to endeavour to recover the British character; and, if experience and skill were all that were wanting, little doubt could have been entertained of success. He arrived at St. Nicholas Mole in the beginning of March 1797, and immediately proceeded through the British possessions to discover the evil, before the application of remedies with which he was well acquainted. But, alas! no ordinary remedies were applicable to the desperate circumstances with which he had to encounter; for, instructed in the science of government, and the relations of empires, by the inconsistency of one power, and improved in the art of war by the impolicy of others, the Blacks had arrived at a degree of per-

1797.
March.
General
Simcoe
commander
in chief.

CHAP. III.

1797.

Toussaint
L'Ouverture
appointed
general in
chief by the
French.

fection in both, that, notwithstanding the inveteracy of prejudice, compelled itself to be accredited by its effects. An acknowledgment of this fact, incontestibly took place the same month, in which the command of the English army was confided to the wisdom and activity of General Simcoe, by the appointment of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the celebrated negro officer, by the French government, to be general in chief of the armies in St. Domingo.

General Simcoe felt the effect of the powerful situation of his opponent, to whom this nomination was but an honorary sanction of the command he had long possessed. He commenced several economical arrangements, which, even if his cause was hopeless, could not fail to render it a desirable service. He compelled a surrender of all private leases obtained of the vacated property of French absentees, to the public use; and he reformed the colonial corps, from the number 42 to 14, placing on a temporary half-pay, the officers necessarily withdrawn, and rendering more eligible the situation of those, who were the fittest for service: yet, with any other person than General Simcoe, these arrangements must have been of short duration, for Toussaint adopted every mode to harass him, and turn the war in his own favor, by every stratagem that could be devised. He menaced the important frontier post of Mireballais, which had been erected with stone at considerable expence: the commandant immediately evacuated it, and retired to Port-au-Prince, leaving

the rich plain of the Cul de Sac open to the enemy, thereby impeding the communication of the English with Banica and Spanish St. Domingo.

CHAP. III.
1797.

With somewhat of spirit, and better success, the batteries which had insulted the capital were carried; they required, however, a body of two thousand blacks, besides a reserve of British troops, and some artillery, and cost the life of a brave officer of colour, as he was leading the charge at St. Laurent, Major Pouchet. An attempt to cut off the retreat of Toussaint to Gonave, failed, from a variety of incidents.

While these operations employed the vicinity of the capital, Rigaud was as active in his quarter. With one thousand two hundred men he attacked the post at Irois, and gave the first notice of his approach, by his fire on the fort. The post was composed of a battalion of black troops under Colonel de Grasse, a company of British under Lieutenant Talbot, and twenty black artillery under M. de Brueil. Fortunately, the artillery of Rigaud was interrupted by Captain Rickets of the Magicienne frigate, which caused him to retire precipitately. To increase the eclat of this repulse, another immediately followed, of Toussaint, from the town of St. Marc: it was a repulse, nevertheless, dearly bought.

Rigaud's
attempt at
Irois defeat-
ed.

Wearied with the kind of warfare in which he was thus unavailing engaged, General Simcoe returned to England in August, gust,

CHAP. III. gust, to procure a force, sufficient to pursue a career of glory, or to abandon a scene, furnishing at best but negative honors.

1797.

Major-General Whyte
commander
in chief.

General
Maitland
commander
in chief.

1798.

April.

The same causes which had before operated with respect to this ill-fated colony, yet continued.—The ministry of Great Britain were employed in the complicated affairs of Europe too much, to give more attention to St. Domingo, and General Whyte supplied the place of General Simcoe*, with no additional means of success. Before the end of the same year, this gentleman was superseded by Major General Nesbit, who did not live to arrive at a command of which, he would have had no occasion to boast†. His place was supplied by his second in command, the Honourable Brigadier-General Maitland, to whom little remained, but to perform the humiliations of his country, with the grace which that country demanded, and which no one could have better executed, in all that appertained to the gentleman. He arrived in April, 1798, at Port-au-Prince, and commenced strenuously an attention to circumstances, with which he was well acquainted, from his service under General Simcoe, by whom he had been appointed to several difficult commands.

* The writer cannot omit in this place paying his tribute of respect to this excellent and gallant officer. If all the abilities of the general, the suavity of the gentleman, and the vigorous powers of a manly understanding may be expected to unite in one person, it is in Lieutenant-General Simcoe. When commanding the Queen's Rangers, in the American war, he distinguished himself on every occasion, and in a variety of important battles crowned himself and his corps with the highest military glory.

† By the death of General Nesbit, (whose memory deserves his grateful recollection) the writer lost a very sincere friend in many respects, though he cannot regret the appointment of his Brigade Major, with which he was to have been honoured by him on this expedition.

By

By the orders of General Nesbit, the British property in St. Domingo ceased to be valued at more than the annual sum of 300,000*l.*, which General Maitland soon found inadequate to the purpose of their maintenance, as the colonial revenues had decreased to 100,000*l.* The evacuation of the capital and its dependencies, was therefore the first step that occupied his attention, and his arrangements were as honorable to his sensibility, as the proudest victory could have been to his courage.—After every consideration for their peculiar circumstances, he effected a truce for a month, and stipulated for the protection in person and property of all the adherents of Great Britain. He then withdrew with the remainder of his force to Jeremie, which he had formerly commanded.

With his concentrated force at this point, he acquiesced in the wishes of Admiral Parker, to reduce Tiburon, for the purpose of its retention, with the Mole, the object so much desired for the security of the Windward passage: but the tide was now turned, the troops could not disembark for tempestuous weather, and other causes; and even the brave De Source, who marched across the peninsula to meet him, lingered on his way.

The Mole at length only remained, to which General Maitland retired, for the purpose of his last negotiation with the triumphant black General, Toussaint. The possessions of the English were here given up, as well as their colonial black troops, and some commercial stipulations being entered into, which recognized

The English
possessions
surrendered.

CHAP. III.
1798.

cognized the island as a neutral power, England resigned all her pretensions to St. Domingo for ever!

Such was the end of this disastrous enterprize, which had for five years fed the hopes and vanity of the British empire, to which had been latterly sacrificed many valuable lives, and an extravagant portion of the public money. That it was undertaken with too little consideration, must be always acknowledged: for, if the British ministry only meant, by finding employment for the French commissioners in St. Domingo, to prevent the seat of war from being carried to Jamaica, they might have effected this purpose, without entering upon so large a field, or sacrificing the lives and interests of a number of brave and unfortunate colonists; and if the conquest of the island was sincerely intended, the means furnished were contemptible, in comparison even with the exertions of the inhabitants. It is, however, probable, that no force which could have been furnished, would have been sufficient to cope with the power of the revolted negroes, and if the British colonies in the Antilles have been saved by these means, it is only to be lamented that their salvation cost so dear, in proportion to their advantages to the country.

Having recounted the progress and termination of the British affairs, it is necessary to recur to the circumstances of those who were left in sole and uninterrupted power in St. Domingo. It will be recollectcd, that the first consequence of the appearance of the English,

English, was the entire abolition of negro slavery by the French commissioners, who therefore recognized all who enlisted under their standard, as free citizens, and perfected them in the knowledge of arms: likewise, that immediately after the first onset of the insurrection in the plain of the Cape, the negro, Jean François, who was then principal in command, had evinced a foresight which exhibited the determined intentions of his followers, in employing the time of those who were unoccupied, with the women and children, in the cares of agriculture, for their future preservation. To this general was soon added several others, not inferior in ability, of whom the most conspicuous were Biassou, Boukmant, and Toussaint; but, although the last of those who declared himself, the latter soon eclipsed all the others by his conduct in a regular warfare. While Spain yet ranked among the coalesced powers who avowed the restoration of royalty in France, the first and last of the black chiefs had arrived at such consideration from their acknowledged merit, as to be presented (perhaps as an inducement to declare on the side of royalty, to which they appeared to lean, as the enemies of the commissioners, whose invitation they had not accepted) with the rank of general in the Spanish army, and the ancient military order of that country.

CHAP. IV.
1793.

The departure of the French commissioners in 1794, and the conclusion of peace between France and Spain, which ceded its territory to the republic, a year after, had placed Toussaint in almost absolute power: (for his colleague preferred retiring on

CHAP. III. his rank to Cadiz); the brave, but cruel Rigaud, afterwards fled from the island; and every occurrence had contributed to his aggrandizement; till the whole was sanctioned, in 1797, by the executive power of the French government in their commission as the general in chief of the armies, and of the whole island of St. Domingo. This consequence was now enlarged in his acknowledgment as a neutral power by the most important of all his enemies.

Such was briefly the progress of Toussaint, which was marked by many circumstances that reflected the highest credit on his character, and gave dignity to his dominion. He had throughout been the moderator of all the different factions in the island, and was every way fitted for its legislator, as well as its chief. He was, indeed, one of those characters who invite the principle of an elective monarchy, but which are too rarely found to advise its universal adoption. His character will be more fully given in the ensuing part of this work; it is at present sufficient to say, that, although he detested the conduct of the French commissioners, he protected their office from indignity, and shielded them from vengeance; he relieved the planters from the intolerable tyranny of the commissioners; he saved the French army from punishment too often not greater than their guilt; and would not permit the increased cruelty of retaliation on the British forces, for the conduct of allies, which even the colonists regretted to adopt. He saved the life of General Laveaux, who acknowledged the fact with gratitude;

and his intercourse with general Maitland was of the noblest kind. Notwithstanding these exertions, in which he had to combat with the natural prejudices of many of his followers, he preserved their confidence in his integrity, and their obedience to his wishes, and was hailed, with great justice, by common consent, as the perfector of *the independence of St. Domingo.*

CHAP. III.
1798.

