A LECTURE

ON THE

HAYTIEN REVOLUTIONS;

WITH A

SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER

OF

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

Delivered at the Stuyvesant Institute,

(FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM,)

February 26, 1841.

BY JAMES McCUNE SMITH, M. A., M. D.

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PRELIMINARY NOTE.

The old French Colonial names are retained on the map which accompanies the lecture. The portion of the island, west of the dotted line, comprised the French Colonial Territory, and was the scene of the Revolutions.

The entire island is at present in possession of the free colored population, under a republican form of government; the President, JEAN PIERRE BOYER, holding office during life, with the privilege of nominating his successor.

The independence of this Republic has been acknowledged by France and Great Britain. Our Great Republic, which was signally aided by Haytien soldiers at the Battle of New Orleans, pitifully withholds a like acknowledgment of the independence of Hayti.

The population of the island was 935,335 in 1824.

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LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, when two continents were shaken by the struggles of physical force against the "divine right of kings," and when the civilized world tottered from the efforts made against its very foundations; the attention of the revolutionary age was suddenly arrested by a series of events, in keeping with the spirit of the times, indeed, yet so entirely unlooked for, as to excite a feeling of universal and unfeigned astonishment, not unmingled with exclamations of horror and detestation.

These events have been variously named, the "Horrors of St. Domingo," "The insurrection of Hayti," or "The Haytien Revolution."

That there was something startling in the nature, and fearful in the details of that revolution, cannot be denied: but these, so far from being reasons for mere exclamations of abhorrence, in reality form the strongest inducements to a calm and careful examination into the causes which gave rise to the revolution, and of their adequacy to produce such a result. For, since revolutions are the sudden developments of the slow and scarcely perceptible changes wrought by the conservative power, of his destiny over the evils which afflict man in his social state, they must therefore present to the philanthropist a field, from which he may gather truths beneficial to the human race; and the more extraordinary the revolution, the greater should be his care in dispassionately analyzing the events which constitute its history.

With these views, and endeavoring to avoid the whisperings of prejudice, I will lay before you,

1st. An enumeration of the causes which produced the revolution of Hayti; and,

2ndly. A concise history of the revolution, including a sketch of the character of Toussaint L'Ouverture.

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1st. The causes of this Revolution were, its peculiar domestic institutions, the topographical structure of the island, and the French Revolution.

The domestic institutions of Hayti* which tended to produce the revolution were slavery and caste.

The nature of slavery in that part of the island is best shown from the following statistics: "During the 96 years which preceded 1774, there were imported into the French territory 800,000 slaves: of these, there remained only 290,000 in 1774. Of these last, only 140,000 were Creoles, or natives of the island, i. e. of 650,000 slaves the whole posterity were 140,000.† In the sixteen years between 1774 and 1790, the slave population was nearly doubled, not by any favorable change in the treatment of the slaves, but by an increased importation from Africa; for Bryan Edwards states (p. 208) that in the year 1788 alone, 29,506 were imported.

The slave system in this portion of the island, therefore, destroyed upwards of 5,000 human beings per annum!‡

It is an axiom in political economy that the social condition of any people may be estimated by the ratio of its increase. The free population of these United States, for example, increase in the ratio of 34 per cent. every ten years; the state of a people, then, who, instead of increasing, actually decrease, must be unnatural in the extreme, and a violation of the laws of HIM who hath said "*increase*, multiply and replenish the earth." And such was the condition of the slaves in the portion of Hayti held by the French. They decreased at the rate of 5,000 a year; and since the laws of nature were violated in their condition, we have in this fact a latent cause for the revolution, for being in her essence conservative (of human existence) she was bound to overthrow the system.

"We were plunged," says one of these slaves, "in the most complete ignorance; we had no notion of human society, no idea of happiness, no powerful feeling; our faculties, both physical and moral, were so overwhelmed under the load of slavery, that I my-

* We now speak of the part of the island occupied by the French colonists.

† "Considérations sur la Colonie de St. Domingue." Published in 1777.

‡ This proportion is confirmed by St. Mery, Hist. Polit. et Topographique, vol. 2, p. 230, Philadelphia, 1796.

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self, who am writing this, thought the world finished at the spot which bounded my sight, and all my countrymen were as ignorant, and even more so than myself, if that were possible."*

The 480,000 slaves, ignorant, for the most part, as the individual we have quoted, outnumbered their masters in the proportion of seven to one, at the beginning of the revolution. That a majority held in thraldom by a minority, when they learn the secret of their strength, constitutes an *efficient cause* for a revolution, is a proposition which all history maintains.

The next "domestic institution which we shall enumerate was CASTE."

The local laws of this colony enforced four distinct classes or *Castes* among the inhabitants, separating each by a circumstantial minuteness of detail, which was the source of the bitterest and least reconcilable hatred. *First*, were the white planters, or noblesse, who constituted an almost irresponsible oligarchy. *Secondly*, were the free people of color, many of them planters, all of them intelligent, and some highly educated, being the offspring of the first class and the female slaves: this class, possessed of wealth and refinement, were the victims of an odious proscription from all the rights of citizenship, and were constantly subject to ill treatment without means of redress: from this class were selected the *trained soldiery* or militia of the colony, being armed in order to keep the slaves in subjection. The THIRD class, or "*petit blancs*," were, says an American writer,† "the scum of European society, who had emigrated to the West Indies with vague longings for a better condition in life; but they were held to their original state by the attachments of habitual vice, which had grown too strong to be sundered by any feeble effort. They were ignorant and filled with strong prejudices, and by being excluded from habitual fellowship with the class of great proprietors, they were thrown into an ambiguous situation, half between the white and negro * * they were tyrants to those beneath them * *. The mulatto planters scorned the '*petit blancs*' for their vices and ignorance, while

* Quarterly Review, vol. 21, page 458. Baron Vastey wrote the above remarks 25 years after he had obtained his liberty.

† History of St. Domingo, by J. Brown, M. D. vol. 1, page 112. Philadelphia, 1837.

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they were compelled to yield them an outward respect which was demanded by the tyranny of caste." "The *petit blancs* were employed in subordinate capacities on the plantations, or were idle and dissolute persons in town."

The FOURTH *Class were the slaves.*

These distinct classes or castes were the necessary and legitimate fruit of slavery. Some of them were of comparatively recent origin. For the 9th article of the "*Code Noir*" of Louis XIV, which became the law of the French colonies in 1685, exacted the penalty of 2,000 pounds of sugar from any planter living in an unlawful state with a female slave; rendered marriage between such parties lawful; and declared the offspring of such marriages free, legitimate and affranchised citizens of the colony. In case a master persisted in living in a state of concubinage with one of his slaves, that slave and the offspring were taken away from the master. The 59th article awarded to free colored persons "*liberty, the pursuits of happiness, and all the rights and privileges which belonged to all other free subjects.*"

During the 77 years which elapsed after 1685, the white and free colored population, living under equal laws, conjointly held the slaves in subjection. And marriages under the 9th article of the "*Code Noir*" were frequent, as attested by Col. Boyer de Peyreleau and Father Labat, in the first edition of his work. And the free colored population so rapidly increased as to rival the establishments of the white planters. But at length the envy of the white planters was excited by the rapid increase of the "*sang melés,*" or free colored population: and in 1762, only 27 years before the Haytien revolution, the first law establishing this one species of caste was enacted in the form of a local ordonnance, by the Judge of Police at Cape François, who "imposed a fine of 100 *livres* on any baker who should sell bread to any person of color before the whites had been supplied."

In 1764, through white creole influence, there was issued from Paris a royal ordonnance "prohibiting persons of color from practicing medicine or surgery in the colonies," and this law was

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passed at the time when M. Letheirs, a man of color, was a member of the Institute of France, the highest honor that could be obtained by a scientific man of that or of any subsequent time.

In May, 1765, an order was issued, prohibiting notaries from employing colored persons as clerks.

These laws had the effect of driving from employment large numbers of colored persons, whose places were supplied by the *petit blancs*. In other words, parents (the planters) took bread out of their own children's mouths and gave it to strangers; thus alienating all filial attachment, and replacing it with a double hatred, the hatred of children who for bread received a stone, and the hatred of outcasts against those *petit blancs* who supplanted them: and at the same time they nestled in their bosoms the serpent destined to inflict the deadly sting which, when excited, the poor inflict upon the rich.

In 1777 a local law was enforced, preventing free persons of color from embarking for France. This law had the double object of cutting off all appeals to the home government, and of depriving colored youth of the privileges of education in the French universities. Other local laws only imposed a fine on a white who struck a colored person, but condemned a colored person to lose his right hand if he should strike a white! And no person whose most distant ancestry could be traced to African origin, was freed from the rigid enforcement of these laws. And to such an extent had the bitterness of caste obtained, that immediately before the revolution, M. Lainé, a minister of state and peer of France, was excluded from their society by the creoles of the Cape, because his complexion was slightly *tinged!*

When I inform you, ladies and gentlemen, that the free colored population, at the period of the revolution, held nearly one fourth of the slaves with one third of the soil of the colony; and that they equalled the whites in numbers and intelligence, and were trained to arms, you will readily grant that the odium of caste under which they writhed was an efficient cause for the revolution.

And this cause was peculiar to this colony; for in the British West Indies the worst features of caste were abolished by a series of laws, the enactment of which began as early as 1762, in the island

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of Jamaica. In the Portuguese and Spanish colonies no such odious regulations existed.*

II. The topographical structure of the island was the second cause enumerated among those which produced the revolution. This island is nearly intersected by a lofty range of mountains thickly serried with primeval forests, amid which are many strongholds only approachable by narrow and easily defended passes.

To these lofty recesses, these altars which nature in all ages has consecrated to liberty, the more daring among the slaves, like other men writhing beneath oppression, fled for refuge; and having made themselves homes amid the wild and rugged haunts which they afforded, frequently descended upon the plains of the northern and southern parts of the island in marauding expeditions, carrying on a maroon war during eighty-five years. And at length, in 1777, after many vain attempts to conquer them, the French and Spanish colonists made a treaty with these maroons, granting to them liberty and a portion of the territory for their exclusive use.†

The mountainous regions of the island, therefore, were an elementary cause of the revolution, since amid their rugged passes slaves had learned that there was such a thing as successful resistance against their masters, and such a thing also as compelling their masters to yield to them their liberty. An interesting light is thrown upon the efficiency of this cause by the fact that these maroons, who had formed a drain for the more daring and restless spirits among the slave population during nearly a century, were not only rendered inactive by the above treaty, but bound themselves in the same, to return to their masters all runaway slaves, at the rate of twelve dollars per head. Hence, during the thirteen years which immediately preceded the revolution, all the wild and daring elements which slavery of necessity creates among the enslaved were pent up in the plains, eager, restless and panting for liberty and for access to those lofty heights on which experience had taught them she made her dwelling.

The causes I have enumerated, slavery, caste, and the topogra-

* Caste had no existence even in the Spanish part of Hayti, in which revolution was not attended with massacre.

† Brown, Vol. 1, page 126.

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phy of the island, were peculiar to this colony, in which alone these three elements concurrently existed. From an extraordinary combination of elements, extraordinary results may reasonably be expected. Briefly to state the case, there were 30,000 whites, unaccustomed to arms, divided among themselves by the hatred reciprocated by rich and poor, living in the unnatural state of society into which slavery had plunged them, placed in opposition to 504,000 people linked by such chains as oppression forges, having among them a considerable number trained to arms: for the laws of the colony compelled every free colored male, on attaining his 21st year, to serve three years in the militia; some of them were made officers, and had been trained in the schools which developed the genius of Napoleon.

But slavery, caste, and the mountains, were only predisposing causes, and, like a lurking fever, might have lain dormant in the colony for a length of time, had not a most extraordinary exciting cause, I mean the French Revolution, been added to them at the very moment of their concurrence. And this cause is so inseparably linked with the Haytien Revolution, that it will be necessary to weave it into the narrative of the latter.

HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION OF HAYTI.

Instead of one, as is usually believed, there were three distinct revolutions in the island during the fourteen years which elapsed from 1789 to 1803. The FIRST revolution was for the establishment of republican principles, and was confined to the whites. The SECOND revolution established the emancipation of the slaves. The THIRD revolution achieved the independence of the colony from the mother country.

In 1789, one month after the meeting of the National Assembly at Paris, there presented themselves at the bar of the assembly, eighteen men selected by chicanery from among the wealthy planters of Hayti, who claimed for themselves the representation of that island. After much objection, six of them were recognized and admitted, and they obtained for the Colonial Assembly of Hayti a system of representation in which only the white planters constituted the basis. When this law was announced in the colony, it

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roused the wrath of the *petit blancs*, or poor whites, who having suddenly embraced the republican revolutionary principles, were indignant at their exclusion from the representation. "In the first transport of their enthusiasm they mounted the new national cockade, and so deadly was their hatred against the rich proprietors, that in many parishes the more respectable people were forced to conceal themselves to escape being torn in pieces by the infuriate mob."*

In Aux Cayes, a respectable inhabitant having answered the reproaches of the mob for his appearing in the streets without the revolutionary cockade by some imprudent reflection on the movement, was immediately shot dead by the rioters, and his head cut off, and paraded by the mob; "*and the authorities were unable or unwilling to interfere against the murder and outrage.* (Lacroix.) A mob of the same class marched from Cape Francois to Port au Prince, to expel from the colony its Attorney-General and Intendant, both of whom fled. In the meantime these revolters formed Liberty Clubs in every village and hamlet, and acted independently of the colonial government, whose orders they entirely disregarded. And they organized themselves into an army, in which every officer became at least a general, and every soldier an officer.

Finding no real object against which they might exercise their prowess in arms, they forthwith imagined an insurrection of the slaves, and marched forth from the Cape, 3,000 strong, in search of servile insurgents, but found none. After a fruitless march, they returned to the camp with the loss of one man, wounded by himself.†

During this, the first revolution, the free people of color and the SLAVES were PERFECTLY QUIET. And in this revolution there was accomplished, before the eyes of the slaves, the entire overthrow of their masters, the planters. And there was enacted before them a scene in which the few whom they feared and respected, suffered entire defeat, with an infliction upon them of cruel barbarity by the many whom they despised: for the slaves had affixed the cognomen of *petit blancs*, in ridicule, upon the poor white population.

* Brown, vol. 1, page 136.

† The guides of this expedition were slaves; how far they profited by the hint was subsequently shown, for the same guides became leaders in the servile insurrection nearly two years afterwards!

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This revolution occurred in 1789 and the early part of 1790. The *petit blancs*, by refusing to obey the orders of the colonial government, and by holding at St. Marks an assembly independent of the established laws of the colony, became, in fact, rebels. Being successful against the white planters, they began to heap injury and violence upon the free colored population, who were compelled by the inefficiency of the protection afforded by the lawful government, to take measures to protect themselves.

The colonial government being void and powerless, the free colored people had a right to defend themselves against the rebellious violence of the *petit blancs*.

They took up arms and remained in considerable numbers under the command of the governor at Cape Francois.

At the same time when they remained in arms on the side of the lawful government, and in self-defence, they sought by peaceable means to obtain their rights as men. This attempt exasperated the *petit blancs* not only against the people of color, but against those supposed to be friendly to their inalienable rights. At Porte au Prince, M. Codere, on suspicion of being favorable to the interests of the colored people, was torn from the bosom of his family, beheaded, and his head paraded in civic triumph by the *petit blancs*. At Cape Francois, Lacomb, a man of color, being found with a petition for equal rights upon his person, was immediately hung by the same party.*

Their peaceable measures having been thus indignantly and barbarously rejected, a very few of the people of color had recourse to arms. On the 23rd October, 1790, a year after the commencement of the republican rebellion, Vincent Ojè, a man of color, having arrived from France, landed near his mother's estate at the Cape, (Francois) and was immediately joined by 300 colored men in arms. He shortly captured two dragoons, bearers of dispatches concerning his own capture. "I might put you to death," said he, addressing them, "but I have pity on your youth; and I offer you a safe passport to the Cape on condition that you carry these two letters thither." These letters were addressed to the governor-general, Count Penier, demanding that he should immediately put into

* The petition began, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

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practice that decree of the French Assembly, which, March 28th, 1790, declared that "*every person* of the age of twenty-five and upwards, possessing property, or having resided two years in the colony, should be permitted to vote in the formation of the colonial assembly."

These letters were addressed to the governor, who, supported by the united forces of the planters and free colored people, had recently compelled the revolutionary assembly of St. Marks to embark for France. On the reception of these letters, the governor did not act; but the assembly of the Cape, independently of him, and without his concurrence, sent a force of 600 men against Ojè, by whom they were furiously driven back. A larger force compelled Ojè to retreat into the Spanish territory, the governor of which gave up him and his lieutenant to the demand of the aforementioned assembly. They were tried at the Cape, convicted of an attempt to raise an insurrection among the free people of color, and condemned to undergo the following penalty. After penance and confession in public, "they are to be taken to the '*Place d'Armes*' and have their arms, legs, thighs and ribs broken alive, upon a scaffold erected for that purpose, and placed by the executioner on wheels with their faces turned towards heaven, there to remain as long as it shall please God to preserve life; after this, their heads to be severed from their bodies and exposed on stakes, and their goods confiscated &c."* "By this barbarous massacre," says Dr. J. Brown, "the breach between these two races" (they were distinct *castes*, not races) "were made irreconcilable." And at the time of this execution, March 9, 1791, the *slaves* were *perfectly quiet*.

The arrest and murder of Ojè were illegal and highly impolitic. The laws and usage of the colony vested the power of life and death in the governor.† The sanction of this functionary was neither sought nor obtained by the colonial assembly of the Cape, who, themselves in a state of rebellion, and without any legal right had ordered the execution of Ojè, for the simple reason that he demanded the rights which had been granted to him by the Home Government. But this execution was in the extreme impolitic as well as unlawful: for the massacre of Ojè alienated a class of peo-

* Brown, vol. 1, page 160. † Brown, vol. 1, page 108.

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ple who constituted the only effectual means—an acclimated soldiery—by which an insurrection of the slaves could successfully be resisted.

The account of the arrest and murder of Ojè created intense excitement in Paris. And in May, 1791, the National Assembly of France began the discussion of the rights of the free colored population of the colonies. The claims of these people for equal privileges were maintained by some men not unknown to fame. The illustrious friend of Washington had recently returned to France, his brows laden with laurels won in the American Revolution. He certainly was able rightly to estimate free colored men, having been an eye witness whilst such men proved themselves soldiers and patriots in the times "that tried men's souls."

Laden with such experience, and with the then enlightened policy of the American example—which had not yet been obscured by the scum of *petit blancs* from Europe—Lafayette arose in his place in the National Assembly and exclaimed, "After the decree of the National Assembly of France, I believe it to be clear that free men, proprietors, cultivators and tax-payers, are citizens! But men of color are proprietors, cultivators and tax-payers,—*are they men?* For my part I deem them such, and it is to express this opinion that I rose to speak."

In consequence of such reasoning, the National Assembly, May 15th, 1791, decreed that "all people of color, residing in the French colonies, and born of free parents, were entitled to all the privileges of French citizenship, and among others, the right of voting at elections, and of holding a seat in the Colonial Assemblies."

This decree, had it been adopted in the colony, would have terminated all its intestine commotions, and even the slaves would have continued quiet; for the sight of freedmen enjoying, as in former days, all the rights of citizenship, would have opened to their view a legitimate aim for their ambition, and a tangible object to which they might peaceably devote their energies. But the decree served only to excite the malignity of caste. The whites heard of it with execrations, and took a solemn oath to resist it by force of arms.* In consequence of this determination, the Governor, Blancheland,

* Brown, vol. 1, page 169.

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declared that he would defer the enforcement of the decree until the moment when it should be officially communicated to him, and immediately summoned a Colonial Assembly on the old basis, from which colored persons were excluded.

Whilst the planters had left their estates to attend this Assembly at the Cape, a report spread over the island, particularly among the slaves, that the Governor and Assembly were withholding the execution of the liberal decrees of the home government. And at this critical moment the *petit blancs*, who were overseers, left in the sole sway over the slaves, "in honest zeal to guard against danger, or with a recklessness of purpose truly diabolical, were more than ever lavish of their cruelty to the slaves, and of their insults and outrage towards the free colored people."* "Under pretence, or with a real design to watch over public safety, patroles were on constant duty, traversing the plantations, and penetrating by night the cabins of the negroes to search for indications of the *suspected* insurrection. The astonished slave, who had for a long time *shamed his betters* by continuing in peace to follow the routine of his industry, now sought to learn the causes of this inquietude, and became every day more filled with amazement and an undefined restlessness."†

Under this extraordinary concurrence of exciting causes, after an adequate initiation, and two years' instruction in the orgies of rebellion and revolution, by which their masters had been conquered and trampled upon by a mob whom they held in utter contempt; whilst the earth yet reeked with the blood of the martyred Vincent Ojè, and whilst their own blood freely followed the lash inflicted on them for the yet imagined crime of contemplating an insurrection, such were the circumstances under which the slaves first manifestèd a disposition to revolt.

In the course of June and July, 1791, some insurrectionary movements took place among the slaves about Port au Prince, which were easily checked. Fifty were beheaded on one plantation, (Aubry,) and their heads affixed upon poles set along the hedges in imitation of palm-trees.

So deeply enlisted were the passions of the white colonists in giving vent to their prejudice against the free colored people, that

* Brown, vol. 1, page 172. † Brown, page 171.

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their precautionary measures ended with simply arresting this revolt. In the words of Mirabeau, "The colonists slept upon a Vesuvius, nor were they awakened by the first jets of its eruption." And we should remark that in their massacre of one another, of Vincent Ojè, and of the fifty slaves beheaded on the plantation Aubry, the whites had distinctly intimated the kind of resistance which alone could be effectual against them.

On the 20th August, 1791, an insurrection broke out on the plantation Gallifet,* which was easily quelled. But again were the whites satisfied with merely punishing the few immediately connected with the disturbance, but they neglected to make any effort to trace out and *prevent* further movements.

On the 23d August the insurrection broke out in all its fury in the plain of the Cape, one third of which in four days was reduced to a heap of ashes, and nearly all the whites who fell into the hands of the insurgents were massacred without distinction of age or sex.

Be it remembered that this insurrection was the legitimate fruit of slavery, against which it was a spontaneous rebellion. It was not, therefore, the fruit of emancipation, but the consequence of withholding from men their liberty.

In the meantime the Colonial Assembly met at the Cape, and, refusing to send an official account of the insurrection to France, strove to drag the Governor into the same policy, and through their president, opened a correspondence with the Governor of Jamaica, from whom, in preference to the mother country, they sought succor. This was, on the part of the Assembly, a virtual declaration of independence; and taking advantage of this circumstance, the insurgent slaves declared themselves in arms to support the cause of Louis XVI!

In the conflict which ensued, both the planters and the revolters paraded the corses of their prisoners before their respective camps. The self-emancipated slaves were the first to relent in cruelty, and one of their leaders, Jeannot, was shot by them beneath the instruments of torture which he had erected for his prisoners. This

* The overseers on this estate were so cruel as to "render a constant purchase of new hands necessary." Edinburgh Review, vol. 8, page 57.

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Jeannot was one of the guides, who, one year before, had led the army of 3,000 strong in the search after insurrection. The leaders who remained were Jean Francois, who called himself Grand Admiral of France, and his lieutenant Biassou, who assumed the title of Generalissimo of the conquered country. Under these chiefs the insurgents were speedily organized.

Against the fearful odds in numbers which the slaves offered, the Governor, Blancheland, struggled with fettered arms: for the Colonial Assembly, in the spirit of its prototype, perplexed by their complaints and commands his every movement. "It was computed that within two months after the revolt began, upwards of 2,000 white persons had been massacred; that 180 sugar plantations, and about 900 coffee, cotton and indigo settlements had been destroyed; (the buildings thereon being consumed by fire;) and 1,200 christian families reduced from opulence to such a state of misery as to depend altogether for their clothing and sustenance on public and private charity. Of the insurgents it was reckoned that 2,000 had perished by the sword or by famine, and some hundreds by the hands of the executioner."*

In the meantime, the free colored people, who owned nearly all the south-western section of the island, organized a force, aided by 600 maroons, to assert and maintain their rights. They assembled at Croix de Bosquets, about thirty miles from Porte au Prince. Twice defeated in the attempt to subdue them, the Assembly at Port au Prince, on the 23d October, 1791, made with the free colored men in arms a *concordat*, granting them all the privileges—equal rights—accorded to them by the National Assembly in the decree of 15th May. Here, therefore, was an entire *abolition*, by law, of one of the forms of *caste*. But these free colored men, as soon as their own rights were secured, forgot the claims of their humble allies the maroons. These last *were given up by their companions in arms to the tender mercies of the white planters*, who butchered some of them in cold blood, and purposely suffered the rest to starve to death.†

This circumstance sank deeply into the minds of the slaves

* Quarterly Review, No. XLII, page 438.
† Quarterly Review, No. XLII, page 438.

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throughout the colony. At this time, in the same section, (the south-western,) the planters, both colored and white, placed in the enjoyment of equal privileges, by their combination maintained slavery in the south, whilst the slaves held entire possession of the plains of the north. The reason is plain, one form of caste had been abolished in the southern, whilst it maintained all its bitterness in the northern part of the colony.

In 1792, the National Assembly of France sent Polverel and Santhonax as Commissioners to this colony, having furnished them with a force of 8,000 picked men. On their arrival at the Cape, they sent back to France, as state prisoners, Governor Blancheland and his successor Desparbes. In 1793, the next Governor, Galbaud, having been thrown into prison by the Commissioners, for a similar fate, his brother, "a man of spirit and enterprise, gained over the militia, (*petit blancs,*) landed twelve hundred seamen, and being joined by a considerable number of volunteers, attacked the government-house, where the Commissioners were assembled under the protection of the regular troops *and the men of color.*"*

In the conflict which ensued, not considering their forces sufficient to repel their opponents, the COMMISSIONERS *dispatched agents to obtain assistance from the revolted slaves, offering an unconditional pardon for the past,* PERFECT FREEDOM *in future, and the plunder of the city!*"† This offer of plunder was *rejected* by Jean Francois and Biassou. But, after several days, on the 21st June, Macaya, a chief, with 3,000 men, entered the town of the Cape, and, in accordance with the invitation of the Commissioners, pillaged and burnt the town, and slaughtered as many of the inhabitants as they found in arms against the Commissioners. At their approach, thousands of the inhabitants fled towards the ships, where they were met by their recent foes the free colored men, who avenging their own wrongs and the murder of Vincent Ojè, massacred as many as fell in their way. A large proportion of the fugitives reached the ships, and many of them emigrated to these United States; and from their lips came the now traditional

* Quarterly Review No. XLII, page 439.

† The plunder of the town had already commenced; for the sailors brought to subdue the commissioners, had abandoned themselves to drunkenness, and then began to pillage and commit excesses which terrified the inhabitants. Brown, vol. 1, page 247.

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views entertained in this country, concerning the "Horrors of Emancipation in St. Domingo;" i. e. that the first use of their liberty made by the slaves, was, ruthlessly to imbrue their hands in their former masters' blood. Is this tradition true? Certainly not. For at the very moment, and for some time before the Commissioners declared them emancipated, there were in the plain of the Cape upwards of 100,000 people who held their freedom and the soil by *force of arms*, a title as good as, because identical with, that by which the planters had held it in their possession.

To these 100,000 people a proposal is made to pillage and sack a splendid and wealthy city; after considerable delay 3,000 or $\frac{1}{33}$ part of the whole number, accepting the proposition, march into the city. And as the massacre of the whites was the act of the free colored people, it must be attributed to the curse of *caste*, which, by causing the whites to murder Ojè, now brought upon them the deadly revenge of the class with whom he was identified. The massacre, therefore, was not the consequence of emancipation, because it was not the act of the emancipated slaves. And the sole charge which remains against these last, is the plunder of the city, an act which the most civilized armies of the time would, under like circumstances, have perpetrated; and which was the legitimate fruit of war in its generic sense.

We are now arrived at the conclusion of the second revolution, namely, "The Emancipation of the Slaves." This revolution presents a pure example of a servile war. It originated amongst the slaves, who were urged by their sufferings to battle for liberty. Servile wars have generally proved the most fierce and sanguinary of all wars. But if we compare this one with others of the same class, we find it distinguished for the small number of lives lost, especially on the part of the masters. In the servile war of Italy, 71 years before the christian era, Spartacus, at the head of 10,000 slaves, slew 40,000 Roman soldiers in all, and his resistance only ended with his life. In the servile war of Hayti, only 2,000 whites were slain by the insurgents, who numbered 40,000 fighting men, and of whom nearly 10,000 were slain by the whites.

THE THIRD REVOLUTION, which terminated in the independence of the colony, was not completed until ten years afterwards, 1802.

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The intervening time was distinguished by a series of events which formed a pleasing contrast to the war we have narrated—events over which TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE became the presiding genius.

Whilst the orgies of the French revolution thrust forward a being whose path was by rivers of blood, the horrors of St. Domingo produced one who was pre-eminently a peace-maker.

In estimating the character of Toussaint, regard must be paid, not to the enlightened age in which he lived, but to the rank in society from which he sprang—a rank which must be classed with a remote and elementary age of mankind.

Born forty-seven years before the commencement of the revolt, he had reached the prime of manhood, a slave, with a soul uncontaminated by the degradation which surrounded him. Living in a state of society where worse than polygamy was actually urged, we find him at this period faithful to one wife—the wife of his youth—and the father of an interesting family. Linked with such tender ties, and enlightened with some degree of education, which his indulgent master, M. Bayou, had given him, he fulfilled, up to the moment of the revolt, the duties of a christian man in slavery.

At the time of the insurrection—in which he took no part—he continued in the peaceable discharge of his duties as coachman; and when the insurgents approached the estate whereon he lived, he accomplished the flight of M. Bayou, whose kind treatment (*part of this kindness was teaching this slave to read and write*) he repaid by forwarding to him produce for his maintenance while in exile in these United States.

Having thus faithfully acquitted himself as a slave, he turned towards the higher destinies which awaited him as a freeman. With a mind stored with patient reflection upon the biographies of men, the most eminent in civil and military affairs; and deeply versed in the history of the most remarkable revolutions that had yet occurred amongst mankind, he entered the army of the insurgents under Jean Francois. This chief rapidly promoted him to the offices of physician to the forces, aid-de-camp, and colonel.

Jean Francois, in alliance with the Spaniards, maintained war at this time for the cause of royalty.

Whilst serving under this chief, Toussaint beheld another civil war

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agitating the French colony. On one side, the French Commissioners, who had acknowledged the emancipation of the slaves, maintained war for the Republic; on the other side, the old noblesse, or planters, fought under the royal banner, having called in the aid of the British forces in order to re-establish slavery and the Ancient Regime.*

In this conflict, unmindful of their solemn oaths against the decree of 15th May, '91, the whites of both parties, including the planters, hesitated not to fight in the same ranks, shoulder to shoulder, with the blacks. *Caste was forgotten in the struggle for principles!*

At this juncture Jean Francois, accompanied by his principal officers, and possessed of all the honors and emoluments of a captain-general in the service of his Catholic Majesty, retired to Spain, leaving Toussaint at liberty to choose his party. Almost immediately joining that standard which acknowledged and battled for *equal rights to all men*, he soon rendered signal service to the Commissioners, by driving the Spaniards from the northern, and by holding the British at bay in the eastern part of the island. For these services he was raised to the rank of general, by the French commander at Porte aux Paix, General Laveaux: a promotion which he soon repaid by saving that veteran's life under the following circumstances: Villate, a mulatto general, envious of the honors bestowed on Toussaint, treacherously imprisoned General Laveaux in Cape Francois. Immediately upon hearing this fact, Toussaint hastened to the Cape at the head of 10,000 men and liberated his benefactor. And, at the very moment of his liberation, a commission arrived from France appointing General Laveaux Governor of the Colony; his first official act was to proclaim Toussaint his lieutenant. "This is the black," said Laveaux, "predicted by Raynal, and who is destined to avenge the outrages committed against his whole race." A remark soon verified, for on his attainment of the supreme power, Toussaint avenged those injuries —by forgiveness.

As an acknowledgment for his eminent services against the British, and against the mulattoes, who, inflamed with all the bitterness of *caste*, had maintained a sanguinary war under their great leader Rigaud, in the southern part of the colony, the Commissioners in-

* History of St. Domingo, page 114, republished by Mahlon Day, New-York, 1824.

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vested Toussaint with the office and dignity of general-in-chief of St. Domingo.

From that moment began the full development of the vast and versatile genius of this extraordinary man. Standing amid the terrible, because hostile, fragments of two revolutions, harassed by the rapacious greed of commissioners upon commissioners, who, successively dispatched from France, hid beneath a republican exterior a longing after the spoils; with an army in the field accustomed by five years' experience to all the license of civil war, Toussaint, with a giant hand, seized the reins of government, reduced these conflicting elements to harmony and order, and raised the colony to nearly its former prosperity.

Sending his children to the French directory, at once as hostages for his good conduct and as pupils for education, he received the commissioners sent out by that body with respect; but, so soon as he found them likely to mar his own policy, he politely and skilfully procured their absence from the colony. His lofty intellect always delighting to effect its object rather by the tangled mazes of diplomacy, than by the strong arm of physical force, yet maintaining a steadfast and unimpeached adherence to truth, his word and his honor.

General Maitland, commander of the British forces, finding the reduction of the island to be utterly hopeless, signed a treaty with Toussaint for the evacuation of all the posts which he held. "Toussaint then paid him a visit, and was received with military honors. After partaking of a grand entertainment, he was presented by General Maitland, in the name of His Majesty, with a splendid service of plate, and put in possession of the government-house which had been built and furnished by the English.

"General Maitland, previous to the disembarkation of the troops, returned the visit at Toussaint's camp; and such was his confidence in the integrity of his character, that he proceeded through a considerable extent of country full of armed negroes, with only three attendants. Roume, the French commissioner, wrote a letter to Toussaint on this occasion, advising him to seize his guest as an act of duty to the Republic: on the route General Maitland was secretly informed of Roume's treachery, but in full reliance on the honor of Toussaint, he determined to proceed. On arriving at head quarters, he was desired to wait. It was some time before Toussaint made his appearance; at

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length, however, he entered the room with two open letters in his hand. 'There, general,' said he, 'before we talk together, read these; one is a letter from the French commissary—the other is my answer. I could not see you till I had written my reply, that you might be satisfied how safe you were with me, and how incapable I am of baseness.'"*

Buonaparte, on becoming First Consul, sent out the confirmation of Toussaint as commander-in-chief, who, with views infinitely beyond the short-sighted and selfish vision of the Commissioners, proclaimed a general amnesty to the planters who had fled during the revolutions, earnestly invited their return to the possession of their estates, and, with a delicate regard to their feelings, decreed that the epithet *emigrant* should not be applied to them. Many of the planters accepted the invitation, and returned to the peaceful possession of their estates.

In regard to the army of Toussaint, Gen. Lacroix, one of the planters who returned, affirms "that never was an European army subjected to a more rigid discipline than that which was observed by the troops of Toussaint." Yet this army was converted by the commander-in-chief into industrious laborers, by the simple expedient of *paying them for their labor*. "When he restored many of the planters to their estates, there was no restoration of their former property in human beings. No human being was to be bought or sold. Severe tasks, flagellations, and scanty food, were no longer to be endured. The planters were obliged to employ their laborers on the footing of hired servants."† "And under this system," says Lacroix, "the colony advanced, as if by enchantment, towards its ancient splendor; cultivation was extended with such rapidity that every day made its progress more perceptible. All appeared to be happy, and regarded Toussaint as their guardian angel. In making a tour of the island, he was hailed by the blacks with universal joy, nor was he less a favorite of the whites."

Toussaint, having effected a bloodless conquest of the Spanish territory, had now become commander of the entire island. Performing all the executive duties, he made laws to suit the exigency of the times. His Egeria was temperance accompanied with a constant activity of body and mind.

The best proof of the entire success of his government is contained

* Quart. Review, No. 42, p. 442, 443.

† History of St. Domingo, p. 118. published by Mahlon Day, New-York, 1824.

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in the comparative views of the exports of the island, before the revolutions, and during the administration of Toussaint. Bearing in mind that, "before the revolution there were 450,000 slave laborers working with a capital in the shape of buildings, mills, fixtures and implements, which had been accumulating during a century. Under Toussaint there were 290,000 free laborers, many of them just from the army or the mountains, working on plantations that had undergone the devastation of insurrection and a seven years' war."*

Average exports from the French part of Hayti, before the Revolution.†		*Exports in one year under Toussaint.*	
Sugar, . . .	145,192,043 pounds.	Sugar, . . .	53,400,000 pounds.
Coffee, ...	71,663,183 do.	Coffee, . . .	34,370,000 do.
Cotton, ...	6,698,858 do.	Cotton, . . .	4,050,000 do.
Indigo, ...	951,607 do.	Indigo, ...	37,600 do.
Molasses, ...	23,061 hhds.	Molasses, ...	9,128 hhds.
Taffia, (a sort of rum,) .	2,600 do.	Rum, ...	*none!*

"Another beneficial consequence of the new order of things was visible in the state of the population. While in Jamaica and the other West India islands, in the midst of peace and plenty, there was a constant diminution among the negroes, and the merchants and planters were confidently affirming the impossibility of keeping up their numbers without annual importations from Africa; in St. Domingo, on the contrary, such was the salutary result of the more moderate labors of the men, and the rest enjoyed (when required) by women, that the same race of people had CONSIDERABLY INCREASED, in spite of war both foreign and civil, of frequent massacres, and of all the wants and miseries thereon attendant."‡

Here is undeniable evidence, that the SLAVERY of the time was more destructive of human life than the *wars, insurrections,* and *massacres* to which it gave birth! For we have shown that slavery in this colony destroyed no less than 5,000 human beings per annum!

In consequence of the almost entire cessation of official communication with France, and for other reasons equally good, Toussaint thought

* *Quart. Ant. Slav. Mag. vol.* 1, *p.* 269.

† The first of these tables was drawn up by Bryan Edwards; the second is contained in Franklin's work on Hayti.

‡ History of St. Domingo, p. 119.

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it necessary for the public welfare to frame a new constitution for the government of the island. With the aid of M. Pascal, Abbe Moliere, and Marinit, he drew up a constitution, and submitted the same to a General Assembly convened from every district, and by that assembly the constitution was adopted. It was subsequently promulgated in the name of the people. And, on the 1st July, 1801, the island was declared to be an independent State, in which ALL MEN, without regard to complexion or creed, possessed EQUAL RIGHTS.

This proceeding was subsequently sanctioned by Napoleon Buonaparte, whilst First Consul. In a letter to Toussaint, he says, "We have conceived for you esteem, and we wish to recognize and proclaim the great services you have rendered the French people. If their colors fly on St. Domingo, it is to you and your brave blacks that we owe it. Called by your talents and the force of circumstances to the chief command, you have terminated the civil war, put a stop to the persecutions of some ferocious men, and restored to honor the religion and the worship of God, from whom all things come. The situation in which your were placed, surrounded on all sides by enemies, and without the mother country being able to succor or sustain you, has rendered legitimate the articles of that constitution."*

Although Toussaint enforced the duties of religion, he entirely severed the connection between church and state. He rigidly enforced all the duties of morality, and would not suffer in his presence even the approach to indecency of dress or manner. "Modesty," said he, "is the defence of woman."

The chief, nay the idol of an army of 100,000 well-trained and acclimated troops ready to march or sail where he wist, Toussaint refrained raising the standard of liberty in any one of the neighboring islands, at a time when, had he been fired with what men term ambition, he could easily have revolutionized the entire Archipelago of the west. But his thoughts were bent on conquest of another kind; he was determined to overthrow an ERROR which designing and interested men had craftily instilled into the civilized world, a belief in the natural inferiority of the negro race. It was the glory and the warrantable boast of Toussaint, that he had been the instrument of demonstrating that, even with the worst odds against them, this race is entirely capable of achieving liberty,

* History of St Domingo, p. 140.

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and of self-government. He did more: by abolishing caste he proved the artificial nature of such distinctions, and further demonstrated that even slavery cannot unfit men for the full exercise of all the functions which belong to free citizens.

"Some situations of trust were filled by free negroes and mulattoes, who had been in respectable circumstances under the old government; but others were occupied by negroes, and even by Africans, who had recently emerged from the lowest condition of slavery."*

But the bright and happy state of things which the genius of Toussaint had almost created out of elements the most discordant, was doomed to be of short duration. For the dark spirit of Napoleon, glutted, but not satiated with the gory banquet afforded at the expense of Europe and Africa, seized upon this, the most beautiful and happy of the Hesperides, as the next victim of its remorseless rapacity.

With the double intention of getting rid of the republican army, and reducing back to slavery the island of Hayti, he sent out his brother-in-law, Gen. Leclerc, with 26 ships of war and 25,000 men.

Like Leonidas at Thermopylæ, or the Bruce at Bannockburn, Toussaint determined to defend from thraldom his sea-girt isle, made sacred to liberty by the baptism of blood.

On the 28th January, 1802, Leclerc arrived off the bay of Samana, from the promontory of which Toussaint, in anxious alarm, beheld for the first time in his life so large an armament. "We must all perish," said he, "all France has come to St. Domingo!" But this despondency passed away in a moment, and then this man, who had been a kindly-treated slave, prepared to oppose to the last that system which he now considered worse than death.

It is impossible, after so long a tax on your patience, to enter on a detailed narration of the conflict which ensued. The hour of trial served only to develope and ennoble the character of Toussaint, who rose, with misfortune, above the allurements of rank and wealth which were offered as the price of his submission; and the very ties of parental love he yielded to the loftier sentiment of patriotism.†

On the 2d February, a division of Leclerc's army, commanded by

* History of St. Domingo, page 120.
† Vide History of St. Domingo, page 142.

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General Rochambeau, an old planter, landed at Fort Dauphin, and ruthlessly murdered many of the inhabitants, (freedmen,) who, unarmed, had been led by curiosity to the beach, in order to witness the disembarkation of the troops.

Christophe,* one of the generals of Toussaint, commanding at Cape Francois, having resisted the menaces and the flattery of Leclerc, reduced that ill-fated town to ashes, and retired with his troops into the mountains, carrying with him 2,000 of the white inhabitants of the Cape, who were protected from injury during the fierce war which ensued. (*Hist.* p. 134.)

Having full possession of the plain of the Cape, Leclerc, with a proclamation of liberty in his hand, in March following re-established slavery with all its former cruelties.

This treacherous movement thickened the ranks of Toussaint, who thenceforward so vigorously pressed his opponent, that as a last resort, Leclerc broke the shackles of the slave, and proclaimed "Liberty and Equality to all the inhabitants of St. Domingo."

This proclamation terminated the conflict for the time. Christophe and Dessalines, general officers, and at length Toussaint himself, capitulated, and, giving up the command of the island to Leclerc, he retired, at the suggestion of that officer, to enjoy rest and the sweet endearments of his family circle, on one of his estates near Gonaives. At this place he had remained about one month, when, without any adequate cause, Leclerc caused him to be seized, and to be placed on board of a ship of war, in which he was conveyed to France, where, without trial or condemnation, he was imprisoned in a loathsome and unhealthy dungeon.† Unaccustomed to the chill and damp of this prison-house, the aged frame of Toussaint gave way, and he died.

In this meagre outline of his life I have presented simply facts, gleaned, for the most part, from the unwilling testimony of his foes, and therefore resting on good authority. The highest encomium on his character is contained in the fact, that Napoleon believed that by capturing him he would be able to re-enslave Hayti; and even this encomium is, if possible, rendered higher by the cir-

* Vide History, p. 130, for his noble and spirited reply to Leclerc.

† First at Joux in Normandy, and afterwards to his "sepulchre," Besançon. Quarterly Review, No. XLII. page 447.

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cumstances which afterward transpired, which showed that his principles were so thoroughly disseminated among his brethren, that, without the presence of Toussaint, they achieved that liberty which he had taught them so rightly to estimate.

The capture of Toussaint spread like wild-fire through the island, and his principal officers again took the field. A fierce and sanguinary war ensued, in which the French gratuitously inflicted the most awful cruelties on their prisoners, many of whom having been hunted with blood-hounds, were carried in ships to some distance from the shore, murdered in cold blood, and cast into the sea; their corses were thrown by the waves back upon the beach, and filled the air with pestilence, by which the French troops perished in large numbers. Leclerc having perished by pestilence, his successor, Rochambeau, when the conquest of the island was beyond possibility, became the cruel perpetrator of these bloody deeds.

Thus it will be perceived that treachery and massacre were begun on the side of the French. I place emphasis on these facts in order to endeavor to disabuse the public mind of an attempt to attribute to emancipation the acts of retaliation resorted to by the Haytians in *imitation* of what the enlightened French had taught them. In two daily papers of this city there were published, a year since, a series of articles entitled the "Massacres of St. Domingo."

The "massacres" are not attributable to emancipation, for we have proved otherwise in regard to the first of them. The other occurred in 1804, twelve years after the slaves had disenthralled themselves. Fearful as the latter may have been, it did not equal the atrocities previously committed on the Haytians by the French. And the massacre was restricted to the white French inhabitants, whom Dessalines, the Robespierre of the island, suspected of an attempt to bring back slavery, with the aid of a French force yet hovering in the neighborhood.

And if we search for the cause of this massacre, we may trace it to the following source: Nations which are pleased to term themselves civilized, have one sort of faith which they hold to one another, and another sort which they entertain towards people less advanced in refinement. The faith which they entertain towards the latter, is, very often, treachery, in the vocabulary of the civilized. It was treachery towards Toussaint that caused the massa-

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cre of St. Domingo; it was treachery towards Osceola that brought blood-hounds into Florida!

General Rochambeau, with the remnant of the French army, having been reduced to the dread necessity of striving "to appease the calls of hunger by feeding on horses, mules, and the very dogs that had been employed in hunting down and devouring the negroes,"* evacuated the island in the autumn of 1803, and Hayti thenceforward became an independent state.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have now laid before you a concise view of the revolutions of Hayti in the relation of cause and effect; and I trust you will now think, that, so far from being scenes of indiscriminate massacre from which we should turn our eyes in horror, these revolutions constitute an epoch worthy of the anxious study of every American citizen.

Among the many lessons that may be drawn from this portion of history, is one not unconnected with the present occasion. From causes to which I need not give a name, there is gradually creeping into our otherwise prosperous state, the incongruous and undermining influence of *caste*. One of the local manifestations of this unrepublican sentiment, is, that while 800 children, chiefly of foreign parents, are educated and taught trades at the expense of all the citizens, colored children are excluded from these privileges.

With the view to obviate the evils of such an unreasonable proscription, a few ladies of this city, by their untiring exertions, have organized an "Asylum for Colored Orphans." Their zeal in this cause is infinitely beyond all praise of mine, for their deeds of mercy are smiled on by Him who has declared, that "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, shall in no wise lose her reward." Were any further argument needed to urge them on in their blessed work, I would point out to them the revolutions of Hayti, where, in the midst of the orgies and incantations of servile war, there appeared, as a spirit of peace, the patriot, the father, the benefactor of mankind—TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE, A FREEDMAN, WHO HAD BEEN TAUGHT TO READ WHILE IN SLAVERY!

* Quart. Review, No. XLII. p. 449.

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