TRIBUTE FOR THE NEGRO:

BEING

A VINDICATION

OF THE

MORAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND RELIGIOUS CAPABILITIES

OF

The Coloured portion of Mankind;

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE AFRICAN RACE.

ILLUSTRATED BY

NUMEROUS BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES,

FACTS, ANECDOTES, ETC.

AND MANY

SUPERIOR PORTRAITS AND ENGRAVINGS.

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1848.
After an imprisonment of ten months, during which nothing is known either of his thoughts or sayings, the Negro Chief was found dead in his dungeon. The severities of confinement in this inhospitable prison had killed him, as his foes doubtless intended it should, although no formal or reasonable charge had ever been brought against him. This melancholy termination to his sufferings took place on the 27th of April, 1803, when he was about 60 years of age. His death, which was announced in the French papers, raised a cry against the government which had chosen this dastardly method of destroying one of the best and bravest men of the Negro race.

We have now completed a brief history of this remarkable Negro. Reader, was not this a man in all respects worthy of the name? He was altogether African,—a perfect Negro in his organization, of a jet complexion, yet a fully endowed and well accomplished man. In no respect does his nature appear to have been unequal; there was no feebleness in one direction, as a consequence of unusual vigour in another. He had strength of body, strength of understanding, strength of belief, and, consequently, of purpose;—strength of affection, of imagination, and of will. He was, emphatically, a Great Man; and what he was, others of his race may equally attain to.

A GLANCE AT THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF ST. DOMINGO, OR HAYTI.

That Toussaint L'Ouverture, whose life we have just sketched, "was not a mere exceptional Negro, cast up as, it were once for all, but that he was only the first of a series of able Negroes, and that his greatness may be fairly taken as a proof of certain capabilities in the Negro character, will appear from the history of St. Domingo subsequent to his imprisonment and death."

The forcible suppression of Toussaint's government, and
his treacherous removal from the island, did not prove a happy stroke of policy. Le Clerc, with all the force committed to his care by Bonaparte, signally failed in his designs. The contemptuous and cruel manner in which he treated the Blacks, and the attempts made to restore them to Slavery, provoked a wide spread insurrection. Independent of the natural right of the Negroes to liberty, their freedom had been declared by the French government, who now attempted to enslave them again. Could it be for a moment expected that they would allow this without making any resistance? They had felt the rigours of Slavery, and endured them too long to be forgotten. They were now in possession of their freedom, and were not to be suddenly deprived of it without making one effort in its defence.

Toussaint’s old friends and generals, Dessalines, Christophé, Clervaux, and others, rose in arms, and all the resources of European military skill opposed to them were in vain. The French were soon driven out of several important positions. In 1802 Le Clerc died, and was succeeded in the command by Rochambeau, a determined enemy of the Blacks. Cruelties such as Le Clerc shrunk from, were now employed to assist the French arms. The Whites, regarding the Blacks as a species of brutes, had recourse to such methods of cruelty and death, as would be selected only for the purpose of exterminating a dangerous and destructive race of animals; to barbarities worse than had ever before stained the annals of any people pretending to the character of civilization. All the male Negroes and Mulattoes they could lay their hands on were murdered in the most shocking manner. Five hundred of these unfortunate beings were at one time shot near Cape François; and an equal number were, on another occasion, coolly massacred in view of the Negro army. Thousands were carried on board the vessels in the harbour, and were either suffocated in the holds, or thrown overboard in chains.
and drowned. Even these methods failed to accomplish the horrid purposes of blood-thirsty tyrants—till at length they had recourse to the dreadful expedient of hunting and destroying the unhappy victims of their rage by bloodhounds. These animals, pursuing the Negroes to the parts of the mountains inaccessible to their no less bloody employers, easily gained their retreats, and devoured all who were so unfortunate as to be discovered. Such of the Black prisoners as had evinced the greatest zeal and activity in defence of liberty, were selected from the rest, and on the Sabbath were dragged to a spot chosen for the purpose, and in sight of thousands of spectators, were thrown to these terrible animals and torn to pieces. In short, the attempt was founded in injustice, commenced by treachery, and conducted in a manner the most inhuman and barbarous.

To the arms, the treachery, and the cruelty of the French, what had the Negroes to oppose? By what means were a body of men, in a great measure ignorant of all that was necessary to a successful enterprise, trained in the school of Slavery, and knowing little except its rigors, frequently destitute of a sufficient number of leaders, and but ill-furnished with arms, to contend successfully with troops trained to every mode of warfare, and stimulated by a resolution to subdue, or to exterminate. However hopeless their case for some time appeared, they determined on resistance as long as there should be any left capable of opposing their enemies. They first united in one body and entered into a common vow, either to expel their oppressors, or to die in the attempt. "La Liberté où la mort!" was their rallying cry; and though there appeared little or no prospect of success, they ever felt animated by the conviction, that they fought in the best of causes—the cause of freedom and independence. Right and justice were on their side; they felt it so, and it rendered them unconquerable. In the early part of the contest, they were deprived by treachery of their ablest leader; but his loss
served only to increase their rage, and consequently to render them more formidable. During this severe struggle, they displayed a degree of courage and firmness, with a patient endurance of privations and sufferings, far above their condition and character. At the same time they sought and found opportunities of revenge; and the cruelties which they perpetrated were perhaps equal in number and atrocity to those committed by their oppressors. But it will be remembered that they were, in the first instance, compelled to take up arms in their defence, by the unjust designs of the French; and were then urged by their subsequent barbarities, to avail themselves of every occasion and mode of retaliation. They fought for liberty; and if they found that the only way to secure it was through blood, it was an alternative to which their enemies had reduced them. Nor will those who have paid attention to the circumstances of the war, hesitate to consider the French as chiefly chargeable with the horrors, cruelties, and massacres of this sanguinary contest.

After a doubtful and desperate struggle, success crowned the exertions of the Negroes. They expelled their foes, secured their rights, and took possession of the island, which their toils and sufferings had purchased; and in 1804, at an assembly of generals and chiefs, its independence was declared, and all present bound themselves by an oath to defend it. At the same time, to mark their formal renunciation of all connection with France, it was resolved that the name of the island should be changed from St. Domingo to Hayti, the name given to it by its original Indian inhabitants.

Dessalines was appointed Governor-General of the Island for life, but subsequently changed his title to that of Emperor. He was solemnly inaugurated under the name of James I., Emperor of Hayti; and the ceremony of his coronation was accompanied by the proclamation of a new constitution, the main provisions of which were exceedingly
judicious. Entire religious toleration was decreed, schools were established, public worship encouraged, and measures adopted, similar to those which Toussaint had employed for creating and fostering an industrial spirit among the Negroes. As a preparation for any future war, the interior of the Island was extensively planted with yams, bananas, and other articles of food, and many forts were built in advantageous situations. Under these regulations the Island again began to show symptoms of prosperity. Dessalines was a man in many respects fitted to be the first sovereign of a people rising out of barbarism. Born a Slave, he was quite illiterate, but had great natural abilities, united to a very ferocious temper. His wife was one of the most beautiful and best educated Negro women in Hayti. For two years Dessalines continued to govern the Island; but at length his ferocity provoked his Mulatto subjects to form a conspiracy against him, and in 1806 he was assassinated by the soldiers of Petion.

A schism now took place in the Island. Christophe, who had been second in command, assumed the government of the northern division, and Petion, the Mulatto general, assumed the government of the southern division. For several years a war was carried on between the two rivals, but at length, by a tacit agreement, Petion came to be regarded as a legitimate governor in the south and west, and Christophe in the north. Christophe, trained like Dessalines in the school of Toussaint L'Ouverture, was born a Slave, but was an able as well as a benevolent man; though, like most of the Negroes who had arrived at his period of life, he had not had the benefit of any systematic education. Petion, on the other hand, had been educated in the Military Academy of Paris, and was accordingly as accomplished and well-instructed as any European officer. The title with which Petion was invested, was that of President of the Republic of Hayti, in other words, President of the republican part of Hayti; the southern and western districts preferring
the republican form of government. For some time Christophe bore the simple title of chief magistrate, but was, in all respects the president of a republic like Petion. In 1811, by the desire of his subjects, he assumed the title of Henry I., king of Hayti. The coronation was celebrated in the most gorgeous manner; and the creation of an aristocracy took place, the first act of the new sovereign being to name four princes, seven dukes, twenty-two counts, thirty barons, and ten knights.

Both parts of the Island were well governed, and rapidly advanced in prosperity and civilization. On the restoration of the Bourbons to the French throne, some hope seems to have been entertained in France, that it might be possible yet to obtain a footing in the Island, and commissioners were sent out to collect information respecting its condition; but the conduct both of Christophe and Petion was so firm, that the impossibility of subverting the independence of Hayti became manifest. It was therefore left in the undisturbed possession of the Blacks and Mulattoes.

In 1818 Petion died, and was succeeded by General Boyer, a Mulatto who had been in France, and had accompanied Le Clerc in his expedition. In 1820, Christophe having become involved in differences with his subjects, shot himself; and the two parts of the Island were then reunited under the general name of the Republic of Hayti, General Boyer being President. In 1825, a treaty was concluded between him and Charles X. of France, by which the latter acknowledged the independence of Hayti, in consideration of a payment of 150 millions of francs (six millions sterling), which was afterwards reduced to 60 million francs (£2,400,000). In the political constitution of the island, no change of any importance has taken place till the present time; and the republic of Hayti continues to be governed by a president elected for life, and two legislative houses; one, a senate, the other, a chamber of representatives.
A Tribute for the Negra.

According to recent accounts of this interesting island, the annual exports amounted to upwards of thirty millions of pounds of coffee, six millions of pounds of logwood, one million of pounds of cotton, five millions of feet of mahogany, besides considerable quantities of tobacco, cigars, sugar, hides, wax, and ginger.

The Roman Catholic religion predominates, but all other sects are tolerated. In the principal towns there are government schools, some of them on the Lancasterian plan. In the capital there is a military school; and there are a number of private academies in the Island. In 1837 the revenue of Hayti was 3,852,576 dollars, and its public expenditure 2,713,102 dollars. The social condition of the island is one of advancement, and though many traces of barbarism remain, it contains a population of Blacks, who in the short space of fifty years, have raised themselves from the depths and the degradation of Slavery to the condition of a flourishing and respectable state.

Not many years ago, the master of an American vessel, who had visited different ports in Europe and America, stated to the writer, that the custom house at Cape Haytian was under as good regulation, if not better, than the custom houses of London and New York. "The officers of the custom were all Black men," said he, "and yet the order, correctness, and despatch of business, were remarkable, equalling any thing of the kind I ever saw."

"This interesting people have shown to the world," says a foreign writer, "for 50 years, that Black men can govern themselves, creditably maintain all the relations of civil society among themselves and with other states, and besides paying a large indemnity to France for their independence—which they never should have submitted to—place themselves in the enviable situation of having 'a happy peasantry, a country's pride,' and having an exchequer clear of debt, which many older states cannot boast."

The state papers of the Republic of Hayti, have ever
been distinguished for the ability with which they are written; and the gentlemen from that Island who have visited the United States on business, or for other purposes, have well supported the character which the people of Hayti have established among civilized nations, many of whom are men of refinement, education, and wealth.

NOTICE OF A SON OF TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

The following notice of a son of Toussaint L'Ouverture, is from a letter written by a member of the Society of Friends at Exeter, about the commencement of the present century.

A Bible Meeting being convened in that city, the audience were unexpectedly impressed by the powerful speech of "a young Black from St. Domingo, son of the late General Toussaint, a most interesting youth, who, having escaped from Napoleon, the murderer of his father, had, by a variety of providences, been brought to England, and to the knowledge of God. This knowledge he obtained through reading the Scriptures, and fervent prayer that they might be opened to his understanding. He seemed to be swallowed up in love to his Divine Protector, and to his creature man; desirous that all the inhabitants of the world might be brought to the same source of never failing consolation he himself experiences.

"The amiable Toussaint left Exeter next morning. As he returned from Honiton, after the meeting, when he had passed the door, we felt as we formerly did when we had parted with some of our dearest friends in the ministry; nor do I ever remember the presence of the Most High more evidently felt than when he was in our house for a short time, when he addressed the language of consolation to our aged parent, and afterwards poured forth his fervent supplications on her behalf. I was almost lost in amazement at this unexpected occurrence, for although we had been