

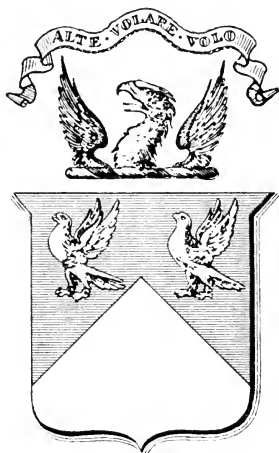
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THE EARLY YEARS
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION
IN
SAN DOMINGO.

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE CORNELL
UNIVERSITY AS A THESIS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY,
JULY, 1889.

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PREFACE.

The following pages are an attempt to extend the knowledge of the French Revolution in its phases out of Paris by a study of that movement in the chief colony of France at that time. The subject has some interest from the standpoint of American History. Ex-President Andrew D. White of Cornell University, while in San Domingo as United States Commissioner, in 1871, collected a large amount of material bearing upon the history of both the French and Spanish parts of the island. To this material many additions have since been made with generous purchases since I began to use it. This collection and the general sources upon the French Revolution in the White Library have provided me with abundance of material. My chief authority upon the political relations of the colony to France has been the *Archives Parlementaires* which, edited from the archives by Mm. Mavidal and Laurent, contains much not found in the reports of the proceedings of the National Assembly contained in the *Moniteur*. The latter has been of great assistance, giving many letters and news items from the colonies and the commercial cities of France. Both of these fundamental authorities I have used continually. The next great source has been Garran de Coulon's *Rapport sur les Troubles de Saint-Domingue, fait au nom de la Commission des Colonies des Comités de Salut Public, de Legislation et de Marine*. This work in four volumes, printed by order of the National Convention in the year VI of the Republic is a mine of material otherwise inaccessible. Garran had access to all the minutes and records of the various assemblies of San Domingo and of the organizations in Paris interested in one or another of the colonial factions. He quotes at length from many documents, cites his authorities continually, shows discrimination and a desire to be impartial. He had thorough personal knowledge of the men and events of his

time. He reveals some of the general prejudices of the extreme republican era, and from some of his conclusions I have dissented. Most of the general histories of the island were written in the early part of this century or the last of the last century, were based on Garran and have been of little use to me. Rainsford is utterly unreliable; Edwards and Madiou give little that is new; Ardouin and Madiou admit that their works are based on Garran for this period. After the three chief sources named, next in importance are the contemporaneous tracts, memoirs, speeches, newspapers and letters. The White Library contains several hundred pamphlets of this sort relating to this subject, all of which I examined. Among them I may mention as especially useful the numerous tracts and speeches of Gouy d' Arsy which throw light on the proceedings of the Colonial Committee in France up to the beginning of 1790. I have tried to use these authorities critically, to avoid being misled by the prejudices of the times, and to depend more upon the unconscious and unfortunate admissions of a man or party in his or its own statements than upon what these documents might say about the opposing party. As a slight excuse for unfortunate style and occasional apparent neglect to consider at length divergent views, I may be allowed to say that when submitted as a thesis for the doctorate, this study was nearly twice its present length, but that before printing I found it necessary to shorten by excising many long quotations from documents and to condense many discussions.

As have so many others, I must express my thanks to Ex-President White for the use of his Library and for his generous additions to it. The use of this library was made possible by the Librarian, Professor George L. Burr from whom I received many valuable suggestions.

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INTRODUCTION.

The great struggle between France and England for colonial supremacy was, when the French Revolution broke out, practically completed. Napoleon attempted to regain what had been lost, but never did he seriously endanger the position of England as the mistress of seas and colonies. A century had seen great changes in the relative powers of these great rivals and every war had cost France valuable possessions. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, India, Canada, are the names of the greater prizes only which were handed over to England; and in 1763 France, which had once promised to be unquestioned ruler out of Europe as well as in it, could point to but few colonies and these comparatively insignificant. By common consent San Domingo was placed first among French foreign dependencies, particularly on account of its wealth and enormous exports. "Immediately before the Revolution this island had attained a height of prosperity not surpassed in the history of European colonies. The greatest part of its soil was covered by plantations on a gigantic scale, which supplied half Europe with sugar, coffee and cotton. In 1788 it exported produce to the value of 150 million francs to France, four-fifths of which was re-exported to the north of Europe by the French dealers, who were always ready to support the planters, when necessary, with the whole power of their capital. The good fortune of the island had been still further enhanced by the passing of a measure in 1786 by which — contrary to the system of monopoly generally adhered to — the colony was allowed to trade directly with foreign countries. Since that time the planters had doubled their products and a large amount of French capital poured into the island for investment — a hundred millions from Bordeaux alone. The returns were already splendid and still greater were expected. The planters lived like Princes; all the luxuries of a tropical climate and of European civilization were at their command. On their vast estates they ruled over thousands of negro slaves without feeling any power above them; and since the emancipation of the American colonies, they had occasionally asked themselves why they still remained in dependence on the mother country."¹

¹ Von Sybel. *History of the French Revolution*. Translation. (London, 1867) i., 405, 406.

The successive steps by which this prosperous condition had been attained form a history which it would be both interesting and profitable to consider did our purpose allow. Founded by those roving spirits, scarcely better than pirates, who followed the Spaniards into the new world, the colony, which then centered on the little island Tortuga but gradually spread over the western half of San Domingo, had an exciting and precarious growth. The original settlers, the Spaniards, did their best to dispossess these bold buccaneers, three times, at least, driving them completely away. But the hardy enterprising plunderers, recognizing allegiance to no country and composed of various nationalities, although principally French and English, invariably returned to their old haunts which so well served their purposes. From their safe harbors they could easily sally forth to plunder the rich commerce of Spain; the great herds of wild cattle on the plains furnished not only beef but hides which were a profitable article of commerce. With rulers chosen from their own number and in absolute independence, the buccaneers lived a worthless, happy life, entirely free from restraint of either external power or moral consciousness. It was not until a fierce dissension between the French and English members compelled, that help from the outside was called in. Aided by the French governor at St. Christoph, the former succeeded in expelling the English, and from that time the Anglo-Saxons have never had control of either part of the island. Among the French governors, d'Ogeron merits the first place both for his energy and his wisdom. His efforts, always exerted for the improvement of the moral and social condition of the colonists, resulted in large immigration. It was not until the peace of Ryswick in 1697 that the Spanish recognized the French settlement by ceding the western half of the island. From that time the growth of the colony was rapid, the John Law scheme producing in 1722 the only important rebellion.³

The French colony, occupying the western end of the island, contained about one-third of its area, and was nearly coextensive with what is now Hayti. It was very irregular in shape, varying in width from twenty to one hundred and seventy miles. Its greatest extent in a north and south line was about one hundred and twenty-five miles. Its soil was

³ The authorities on the early history of San Domingo are Charlevoix *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole ou de S. Domingue* (Amsterdam, 1733), 4 vols.; and Raynal *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements des Européens dans les deux Indes*. (Genève, 1781), 10 vols. See vols. 6 and 7.

very fertile and for the most part arable. It was well watered and produced luxuriantly tropical fruits and woods. There were three provinces in the colony; namely, those of the North, of the West and of the South, of which that of the North was the richest and most important. Its principal towns were those of Cap Français (now Cape Haytien), Port de Paix, and Cap St. Nicholas. Cap Français, commonly known as the Cape, was the seat of the government in time of war, and, says Edwards, "would have ranked for beauty and regularity among the cities of the second class in any part of Europe." The Province of the West was second in importance and contained a number of towns, of which Port-au-Prince, the capital of the island, St. Marc, Leogane, Petit Goave, Gonaives and Croix-des-Bouquets were the largest. The Province of the South was small in area, possessed few towns of importance and no good harbors. Cayes was its chief mart.

In the eighteenth century the importance of a colony was estimated by the amount of its commerce, and particularly by the amount which was carried on with the mother country. From this standpoint France had every reason to be interested in promoting the welfare of San Domingo, for its trade was a constantly increasing source of wealth to her. The student of economic history would find it a profitable subject of investigation to attempt to ascertain the causes for the great disparity in the conditions of the French and of the Spanish parts of the island. The latter, that old Hispaniola of which Columbus gives such charming accounts in his letters, whose natural products and mines seemed to promise for the larger Spain inexhaustible wealth, had, during the eighteenth century, shown no growth and was in a wretched condition both as concerned production and commerce; while the French colony with precisely the same conditions of soil, climate, and distance from Europe had revealed in the seventy years before the Revolution wonderful progress.⁴ There were evident signs of increasing wealth, happiness and culture. Between 1716 and 1789 the annual imports of France from her American colonies increased from 16,700,000 livres to 185,000,000 livres.⁵

The total value of the exports of San Domingo in 1789

³ Edwards, *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo* being volume third in *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies*. 3 vols. (London, 1801), 159.

⁴ Garran, *Rapport sur les Troubles de Saint-Domingue*. 4 vols. (Paris, an VI de la Republique), i., 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i., 37, 38.

were 175,900,000 francs or about \$32,000,000.⁶ This was the legal trade, in addition to which there was considerable smuggling carried on. The principal articles of export were sugar to the value of 84,026,726 francs; coffee, 48,598,276 francs; cotton, 21,012,820 francs; indigo, 3,607,832 francs, and a large amount of other tropical products.⁷ Of the entire amount of imports from the American colonies France consumed only a little over two-fifths, re-exporting the remainder.⁸ The importance of the commerce with San Domingo for the business interests of France led the merchants of Bordeaux and other ports to take an active part in the subsequent struggle of the colony to preserve its commercial rights, and especially in their attempt to prevent any revolution in industry by emancipation of the slaves.⁹ A certain amount of trade, partly legal and partly illicit was carried on with the Spanish part of the island, with Jamaica and with New England.¹⁰

After the India companies had been dissolved in 1724, trade was in 1727 made free to all French merchants but forbidden to those of other nationalities. The superiority of England's navy during the wars that occupied the succeeding years made starvation inevitable in the island if the prohibition laws were enforced, so that smuggling was connived at. This was especially the case during the Seven Years' War when large numbers of slaves died of hunger. In 1767 two ports of entry were established by France in her American colonies, one of them being the Môle St.-Nicholas in San Domingo. Here foreigners could bring only rice, lumber, vegetables and live animals, the importation of salted meats and fish being forbidden. Little relief followed from this measure, owing to the difficulty of communication of the greater part of the island with this city, the coasting trade being dangerous. The expenses of carriage and the extortions of the merchants at this port often quadrupled the price of goods delivered on shipboard as compared with what the planter received. A great earthquake in 1770 brought terrible famine but no more legisla-

⁶ Placide-Justin, *Histoire Politique et Statistique de l'Isle d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), 505.

⁷ Table compiled by Wante and given in Dalmas, *Histoire de la Révolution de-Saint-Domingue*. 2 vols. (Paris, 1814). ii., 294. The figures are for the year 1789.

⁸ Raynal, vii., 140, 141.

⁹ *Archives Parlementaires*, xi., 698, 699, 761; xii., 7. 62. *Moniteur Universel*, 1791, 528.

¹⁰ Garran, i., 37.

tive relief. Then followed the American war, during which the prohibitions were somewhat relaxed in favor of the Anglo-Americans. The smuggling trade became so great that in 1784 the one port of entry was suppressed and the three ports of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince and St. Louis were opened to the free introduction of lumber, live cattle of all kinds and of salt beef. These regulations were strictly enforced although the governor seems to have been allowed, in case of famine, to open the ports for a short time for the admission of food, with the provision that any regulation to this effect made by him must at once be forwarded to the Minister of Marine for his approval.¹¹

The population of the colony in 1789 is variously stated by different writers, the estimates varying from that of Garran, who places it at 500,000¹² to that of Madiou,¹³ whose estimate is 812,000. It is probable that the real number was somewhere between 550,000 and 600,000, including 465,000 to 500,000 slaves, 30,000 whites and a third class of free people of color whose numbers probably amounted to from 25,000 to 30,000¹⁴ although there are the most diverse estimates. The number of slaves was eight or nine times as many as that of the whites. As a large share of the troubles that subsequently arose were caused by the opposing interests of the three castes just mentioned, some knowledge of their origin, characteristics and relations must be had.

First in influence, wealth and social rank were the white inhabitants of the island. But they were of various sets, whose characteristics and interests were so different as to forbid common description. Oldest in family and most aristocratic in feeling were the creoles, descended from Frenchmen who had early come to the colony. Although these families could have no pride in their origin, since they were, for the most part, descendants of criminals and women of the lowest character who early sought the island or were banished there, long residence, great wealth and almost unlimited power on their estates had given them the exclusiveness and haughtiness of bearing which are the distinguishing marks of aristocracies. There was a gulf not only between them and the colored people but also between them

¹¹ See *Arrêts* in references 51 and 53.

¹² *i.*, 13.

¹³ *Histoire d'Haïti*, 3 vols. (Port-au-Prince, 1847), *i.*, 29.

¹⁴ *Archives*, xxvi., 67, 71. Garran, *i.*, 16, 18; Madiou, *i.*, 29; Placide-Justin, 144, 145.

and the whites who had more recently come to the island to hold government positions or for the purpose of gaining a fortune. For the most part planters rather than merchants, living on their large estates with hundreds, even thousands, of slaves; amusing themselves with frequent fêtes at which entertainment was provided by musicians, dancers and actors brought from France; sending their children to Europe to be educated, after they had reached a stage where the services of European tutors were no longer sufficient; allying themselves with the noble families of the mother country; in short, enjoying all the luxuries and charms of life that the combined resources of Europe and the tropical isles could afford, it is not strange that they should have revealed traits of character marking a higher caste, or that the expression "c'est un créole" should have become in France a common means of designating a very wealthy man.

The common traits of the French people seem to have been intensified in the creoles by the climate and their manner of life. They possessed in a high degree love of pleasure, sociability, generosity, acuteness, frankness, bravery and fidelity, but they were lazy, frivolous, hot-tempered, impatient of restraint and toward their inferiors, especially their slaves, arrogant and even cruel. That genius, that love for science and that sense of order that mark the French were not theirs. The creole women, beautiful, voluptuous, jealous, shy with strangers but wholly unconstrained with their friends, were indolent and passionate even to old age.¹⁵ The position of the creoles in the colony was somewhat similar to that of the southern planters of the United States before the civil war, and in more than one respect the likeness extended to personal traits.

Another aristocratic class of whites rested its claim to superiority on a different basis from that of the creole. This was the official class sent out for the government of the island. They were charged with despotic rule, were frequently ignorant of the welfare of the colony and had all that cool assumption of superiority and that disdain for those around them which so commonly mark the man of the metropolis when in the provinces.

In the cities were to be found also the merchants who, impelled by a desire to make a fortune, came to San Domingo, since it was the only considerable colony left to France and because its immense commerce promised opportunities for

¹⁵ Hillard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'État Présent de la Colonie Française de Saint-Domingue*. 2 vols. (Paris, 1777), ii., 25 seqq.

amassing wealth which could no where else be found by a Frenchman. While the creoles lived in the country and were content to take life easily enjoying it from day to day, the more recent comers to the island made up the greater part of the city population. The merchants were, for the most part, young men who had lost fortunes and character in France, bankrupts, fugitive monks, retired officers, priests tired of their profession. In a class where a ruined set so greatly predominated we cannot expect to find many virtues. Their position was in some respects like that of the American miners of 1848 who in a strange country for the sake of making fortunes, had no reputation to sustain and subjected themselves to no restraint. But in San Domingo the environment both natural and social led to indulgence in vice that took other lines than among the gold hunters. Toward the slaves they exhibited the greatest harshness and cruelties; their slave girls were their concubines, but the position of these unfortunates was not accompanied by the ease and luxury which are to such women the usual compensation for their loss of virtue; they were made to work as long as the day lasted, were insufficiently clad and were deprived of the money which they earned by prostitution.¹⁶ Among a class which could tolerate such a low state of morals there could have been little of that strength of character so greatly needed in the ensuing years.

About equal to the planters in numbers, there was a third class of the whites, making up the bulk of the city population. They were commonly called the *Petits-Blancs*. They were largely artisans but among them were included inn-keepers, small merchants, slave overseers and many of no particular calling. The artisans who had first come to the island, had come bound to service for a term of years and were known as *engagés*. The memory of this forced service had begotten a kind of contempt for all whites who earned their living by manual labor, and they were despised not alone by the planters but by the people of color.¹⁷ In their number were also adventurers and many who had fled from Europe to escape punishment for their crimes. They were of different countries, for the most part without property, and ready for any revolution. In the scenes that followed they were conspicuous.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hilliard d'Auberteuil, ii., 33 seqq.

¹⁷ This expression is used not as a euphemism for negroes and mulattoes but as a technical definite term for all *free* negroes and mulattoes.

¹⁸ Garran, i., pp. 20, 21. La Croix, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Revolution de Saint-Domingue*. 2 vols. (Paris, 1819), i., 20, 21. Raimond,

The nature of the climate, and the disinclination and inability of the European whites to marry had led to a very universal cohabitation of the whites with the colored women. From these unlawful unions had sprung a large class of mulattoes of all shades of color and degree of blood mixture. As early as the time of Louis XIV, by the Black Code published in 1685, that monarch had attempted by heavy fines and manumission to put an end to this rapidly increasing concubinage. It was provided that in such cases the slave and her children should become free.¹⁹ But the edict seems to have been of little effect and at the outbreak of the Revolution, the number of free mulattoes and free negroes was nearly equal to that of the whites. Some of these had bought their freedom, others had received it as a reward for long and faithful service, but for the most part their liberty was simply a result of dishonor. "The sweet promptings of nature, which makes itself felt even by the harshest tyrants, have rarely allowed the whites to leave in slavery the fruits of their union with the negro race." The custom of manumission had become so common that Hilliard d' Auberteuil, who favored a recognized concubinage in order to escape the evils of public prostitution,²⁰ devotes a whole chapter to a discussion of this question and strongly advocates restriction or prohibition of manumission. He maintains that the good order of the colony and its success depends upon preserving the various ranks of the people and upon holding the people of color in subjection. However, no such regulation had been made and these unfortunate creatures had attained a considerable degree of material prosperity and of intelligence.

So strong has become the social prejudice against the colored people in our day that it may seem entirely unnecessary to say that such existed in the French colony of San Domingo. The separation between the races and the feeling against miscegenation are now so marked that we can scarcely imagine that the caucasian and negro once associated on terms of comparative equality, yet it is asserted by one whose statements are worthy of credence,²¹ that in the

Mémoire sur les Causes des Troubles et des Désastres de la Colonie de Saint-Domingue. (Paris, 1793) 8, 9.

¹⁹ *Code Noir*, article 9, as given in Madiou, iii., 443.

²⁰ ii., 48.

²¹ Raimond. *Observations sur l' Origine et les Progrès du Préjugé des Colons Blancs contre les Hommes de Couleur.* (Paris, 1791). Raimond was a mulatto, but one highly respected and, apparently, comparatively free from prejudice and unfairness.

early history of the colony there was no such prejudice, but that the white men married freely with the mulattresses and freely associated with the mulattoes. Even after white women began to come to the island the preference of the planters was rather for the colored women, who to certain charms of person, added considerable wealth. As time went on, the mulattoes who had been educated in France, began to return and to compete with the whites, while the wealth and importance of the island brought many white women there also. These women were very naturally jealous of their dusky rivals, and endeavored with much success, to relegate them to what seemed their appropriate place.²²

Whatever may have been the earlier feeling, it is certain that during the last half of the eighteenth century there was bitter hatred between the two classes of the free people. Measure after measure was passed directed against the colored inhabitants. The whites were forbidden to marry the colored women of however light a shade, even in order to legitimize their children, and whites who had married colored women were removed from office. The mulattoes had, before 1763, held office in the militia, but they were now deprived of their rank. They were forbidden to use carriages, to dress after the manner of the whites, to clothe themselves with the same materials or to wear jewels; to travel in France or to educate their children there; or even to practice surgery. Whites of noble birth who had married colored women were forbidden the privilege of recording their titles and for the same offence were even declared fallen from the class of whites. It was even proposed that the colored people be deprived of the European names which they bore and be compelled to assume African ones.²³ They were, according to Bryan Edwards, prevented from holding any public office or trust, and were not allowed to engage in the professions of priest, lawyer, physician, surgeon, apothecary or school master. The same writer also mentions an old law in which it was provided that if a free man of color should strike a white person, he should lose his right hand, while a white man, for a similar offense, should be dis-

²² See also Clausson *Précis Historique de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue*. This author was a white proprietor of the aristocratic party, but he agrees with Raimond.

²³ Raimond, as above, 8-10. Grégoire *Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur ou sangmêlés de Saint-Domingue . . . adressé à l'Assemblée Nationale* (Paris, 1789.) *Observations d'un Habitant des Colonies sur le Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur, etc.* (Paris (?) 1789). *Réponse aux Observations d'un Habitant des Colonies, etc.*, par M. Abbé de Cournaud.

missed on payment of an insignificant fine. Edwards, however, admits "that the manners of the white inhabitants softened, in some measure, the severity of the laws."²⁴ It is probable that none of the accounts of the relations between the whites and the people of color give an accurate, unprejudiced statement. All the writers were partisans of one side or the other, and the only testimony that is entirely trustworthy, consists of the admissions unconsciously made by the advocates of each side. Clausson, a planter, says there was a deep rooted prejudice against the people of color and that they could not be blamed for claiming their political rights, although he disapproved of the method in which this had been done. He illustrates the prejudice in saying: "Considered as the shameful offspring of the lust of their masters, ought they, in fact, to participate in this equality of rights which the enslaved negroes could claim with a juster title."²⁵ Hilliard d' Auberteuil, writing twelve years before the Revolution, declares that the number of the freedmen is too large.²⁶ He also maintains that although "among all peoples who have had slaves, the sons and grandsons of the freedmen have been held free by birth; yet at San Domingo, policy and safety require that we crush the race of the blacks by so great a contempt that whoever descends from it, even to the sixth generation, shall be covered by an indelible stain."²⁷ He reveals the feeling with regard to the punishment of the lower race for offenses toward their rulers in saying that "the superiority of the whites requires that the mulatto who commits a fault toward them shall be punished immediately, and there is a kind of humanity in allowing that they shall humiliate him by a chastisement, prompt and proportioned to the insult."²⁸ He would not allow them to bear witness against the whites except in case of necessity, or of a capital crime,²⁹ and would have a law passed preventing the blacks ever becoming free. He mentions a regulation which forbade the people of color taking the names of the whites, and says that a black who strikes a white ought to be punished with death.³⁰ Dalmas,

²⁴ iii., 35-38. The work of Edwards was fiercely attacked by Venault de Charmilly in his *Lettre d M. Bryan Edwards . . . en refutation de son ouvrage, etc.* (London, 1797.) This "letter" is some 234 quarto pages in length and takes up Edward's statements one by one. Edwards was a planter in Jamaica and while in San Domingo in 1791, after the negro outbreak, collected much material upon the history of the troubles. Charmilly was a planter of San Domingo and prominent in political affairs.

²⁵ *Précis Historique*, 19-21. ²⁶ ii., 72, ²⁷ ii., 73. ²⁸ ii., 75. ²⁹ ii., 76. ³⁰ ii., 81, 74.

an extreme royalist, writing after the Revolution, speaks of them as a "mixed caste, contemptible and ungrateful."³¹

There is no doubt that the people of color were comparatively unmolested in the exercise of their civil rights, and that they had in many cases amassed considerable fortunes; it is said, that they owned one-third of the landed property and one-fourth of the personal property in the island.³² They possessed large estates, travelled in Europe and frequently sent their sons there to be educated. There were among them some very intelligent persons, and but a very small percentage had ever been slaves. They were faithful, generous, and fond of their parents and children. It is probable that the oppression to which they were subjected had prevented the gain in mental powers and general culture which otherwise might have been expected, and that they possessed many of the weaknesses of the colored race. The women particularly were far from being what they ought. By a census taken in 1774 it was found that out of 7,000 free women of color in the colony, 5,000 were living as mistresses of white men, although very few were public prostitutes.³³ Since, of course, a large part of the free men of color were children of these women, and consequently brought up without that careful attention and benign influence to be found only in home life founded on marriage, it is natural that the great majority of this class should not have been of a high order of morality.

There was one more class in the community, that of the slaves, who, as has been said, outnumbered the whites in the proportion of eight or nine to one. The aborigines who had received Columbus and his companions as divinities from another world were early enslaved by the Spaniards. The Indian, however, seems incapable of enduring a life of captivity, and the drudgery in the mines and fields together with the harsh treatment of their masters, is said to have resulted, in the fifteen years after the coming of the Europeans, in a decrease of their numbers from one million to sixty thousand.³⁴ However much we may discredit the exactness of this statement, it undoubtedly points to a horrible diminution of the population and gives a sickening insight into the sources of the wealth of the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century. From the neighboring islands, thousands were enlisted or forcibly carried

³¹ i., II.

³² La Croix, i., 15.

³³ Placide-Justin, 145.

³⁴ Charlevoix, ii., 54.

to their fate.³⁵ Only among the monks was the voice of compassion raised. The name of one of these priests, Las Casas, has endured for his pure, unselfish devotion to the Indians. But it gives us considerable enlightenment upon the views and feelings of that century toward the Black Race to know that it was this priest, so nobly giving up his life for one unfortunate race of people, who also suggested the bringing of negroes from Africa as a means of relief to the Indians.³⁶ The slave trade at first was not great, but by the middle of the sixteenth century had become general, and from that time continued unchecked. It is said by one author that the annual importation of Negroes from Africa amounted, during the years preceeding the Revolution, to 30,000, and during the eighteenth century there had been brought 900,000 slaves. Still in 1789 in spite of the fact that the climate was favorable to their multiplication, there were in the island only a little more than half that number.³⁷ Garran says that there was not a plantation in the island where the number of slaves could be maintained without annual purchases, the annual death rate being one-ninth.³⁸ Of three hundred and eighty-four European ships engaged in the commerce of the colony, fifty were in the slave trade. "The mortality among the slaves brought to the island has been one-third,"³⁹ says a firm upholder of the island aristocracy, and "there perished every year nearly one-fifteenth of the entire number,"⁴⁰ after they had become acclimated. These facts concerning the great death rate are very suggestive with regard to the treatment to which they were subjected. Of the direct testimony upon this point we must be very suspicious for most of the works were written after the rebellions, and after the founding of the Black Empire, and are greatly biased. As the enslaved negroes play a very subordinate part in the period of which we are to treat, it will not be necessary to make a detailed examination of their condition. Here again we may, perhaps, most safely trust Hilliard d' Auberteuil, who, writing twelve years before the outbreak of the troubles and desirous of introducing reforms advantageous to the planters, was not likely to be biased in favor of the abolition of slavery. Indeed he expressly declares that it must

³⁵ Ibid, ii., 55.

³⁶ Ibid, ii., 155, 156.

³⁷ Placide-Justin, 147.

³⁸ Garran, i., 24.

³⁹ Hilliard d' Auberteuil, i., 67,

⁴⁰ Ibid, i., 69.

be maintained, and argues for the restriction of emancipation.⁴¹ The negroes were good-natured, easy to manage, industrious when not discouraged, sober and patient. He believes that their lot under a good master compares favorably with that of the peasants in France.⁴² "The negroes have not that atrocious character which ignorance and fear have attributed to them; they have almost never raised a murderous hand against their masters, and it is from us that they have learned the use of poison. *Nevertheless the majority of the whites live in continual fear. They nearly all recognize how much reason their slaves have to hate them and give them their deserts; the kind master does not experience any such terrors and his slaves are his friends.*"⁴³ In spite of the edict of 1685 "negroes perish daily in fetters or under the lash; they are beaten to death, choked, burned without formality."⁴⁴ "In San Domingo, whoever is white, maltreats with impunity the blacks. Their situation is such that they are slaves of their masters and of the public. Whenever an injury has been done a slave, the judges are accustomed to consider only the diminution of his value."⁴⁵ After such testimony it is unnecessary to present that of those writers who were advocates of emancipation. In San Domingo as in every community where slavery exists, the happiness or the misery of the slave depended very largely on the character of the owner. It is sad to know that the free people of color did not exert their influence for the amelioration of the lot of their less fortunate brethren.⁴⁶

The government of the colony vested ultimately in the Minister of Marine, representing the King.⁴⁷ M. de Pons, one of the Planters, a member of the General Assembly of San Domingo, and, of course, strongly prejudiced against the old form of administration, said: "During all time this

⁴¹ ii., 83 and elsewhere.

⁴² i., 132-135.

⁴³ i., 137-139.

⁴⁴ i., 144.

⁴⁵ i., 145.

⁴⁶ Garran, i., 24.

⁴⁷ The statements of the different writers upon the powers of the different departments of the government, and upon the evils of the administration are widely at variance. Most of the French writers, imbued with extreme democratic theories, could see no more good in the government of the colony than in that of France. To them it was totally bad. Bryan Edwards writes with all the British antipathy that was in his day so particularly manifested against the French. Venault de Charmilly convicts him of numerous errors and makes him doubtful authority. Charmilly is more trustworthy. He shows that whatever excesses might have been expected from the absolute power of the government were moderated by the wealth and influence of the Planters.

colony has been regarded as the patrimony of the Minister of Marine, his wishes were the only laws observed in its tribunals; and if any immediate orders of the King or Council of State should arrive at San Domingo, a simple letter of the Minister was sufficient to arrest their execution."⁴⁸ His edicts were laws, there being no bodies which could in any considerable way restrict the absolute power of the monarchy in the colonies.⁴⁹ The administration of affairs was placed in the hands of the Governor and an Intendant, both appointed by the Minister of Marine and both invariably residents of France. In common these officials possessed many powers such as nomination to the less important offices, the principal appointments being in the hands of the Minister, as was also the ratification of all nominations; control of police, of roads and of public works; presidency of the judicial councils of which the Intendant was actual president and the Governor honorary president. Individually the Governor had the military administration and represented the royal power, while the Intendant was more especially concerned with the finances and with justice.⁵⁰ An edict of the King's council published in 1789 shows that Edwards is wrong in attributing absolute powers to the Governors.⁵¹

Instead of the Governor's powers being unlimited they were very carefully restricted and defined. In case of a disagreement between the Governor and the Intendant, the latter had an appeal to the home government. Just before the troubles began in the island, this right of appeal had been very successfully used by the Intendant Marbois with regard to an act of the Governor which opened the ports of the island to the admission of foreign corn.⁵² This dual administration is represented on the one hand as having interfered with the proper carrying on of the government, and on the other as having been such a balancing of powers as to prevent excess. It is probable

⁴⁸ *Observations sur le Situation Politique de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1790), I. 2.

⁴⁹ Garran, i., 31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, i., 30, 31.

⁵¹ *Arrêt du conseil d'État du Roi qui casse et annule une Ordonnance du Gouverneur général de Saint-Domingue, du 9 Mai dernier, laquelle accordait aux Étrangers la liberté du commerce pour la Partie du Sud de Saint-Domingue* (Versailles, 1789), 2.

⁵² Dalmas, i., 20 also *Arrêt du conseil d'État du Roi portant cassation d'une Ordonnance de M. le Marquis du Chilleau, Gouverneur, Lieutenant général de Saint-Domingue, du 27 Mai dernier, concernant l'introduction des farines étrangères.* (Versailles, 1789) and the *arrêt* in note 51.

that there is truth in each statement, although Dalmas, a supporter of the old regime, admits that this two-fold headship did result in continual trouble and scandal. The powers of the Governors were not fixed definitely by law, but were described in the commission given to each appointee, and varied from time to time. To a governor possessing a greater degree of the king's confidence, especial power would be given. This uncertainty and change were a cause of discontent.⁵³ In each of the three provinces there was a deputy governor or commander *en second*.

Justice was administered in the first instance by local justices called *sénéchaux* with an appeal to a Superior Council. In earlier times there had been but one of these Superior Councils and it sat at Port-au-Prince. In 1701 a second one was established at Cap Français, which continued until 1787, when it was consolidated with that at Port-au-Prince. Garran says that the reason for this consolidation was the opposition manifested at times by the Superior Councils to the registration of laws.⁵⁴ It was thought that a single body would be more easily controlled.⁵⁵ This council was composed of the Governor, Intendant, Deputy-Governors, twelve councillors, chosen from the attorneys in the island, and some other officials.⁵⁶

Throughout the seventeenth century there were no general taxes, each community providing for its own necessities, but in 1698 a tax was placed on the exportation of indigo. The taxes were gradually increased by the royal authority, but always nominally voted by the local assemblies until 1763, when the royal government placed the amount of the taxes at 4,000,000 livres—to be collected as the Superior Councils might judge most expedient. Taxes were levied on negroes, on exportation and importation of commodities and on houses, the soil not being touched. There were certain other revenues which were turned into the royal treasury, such as the postal receipts, fines, percentages on judicial judgments and on sales in the markets, and sums which had to be paid on the enfranchisement of slaves.⁵⁷

It is scarcely necessary to say that there were many causes of dissatisfaction in the island and that its people

⁵³ Hilliard d' Auberteuil, ii., 116, 117.

⁵⁴ i., 33.

⁵⁵ Edwards, iii., 30.

⁵⁶ Ibid, iii., 30, and Hilliard d' Auberteuil, ii., 223 seqq.

⁵⁷ Garran, i., 39-41.

were far from considering their condition a happy one. Slavery was a volcano under the feet of the free people. The possession of civil rights only and the contempt with which they were regarded made the free colored people ready to welcome any movement which would bring a change. There was continual suspicion and even open discussion between these two classes of the free people. The planters further felt the burden of the colonial system, by which all commerce was supposed to be for the mother country, as grievously as our ancestors felt the burden of England's policy. They had the example of the English colonies in North America as an incentive to throw off the yoke that was on them. Rich and aristocratic they naturally were jealous of the officials sent to govern them for a few years and to fill their pockets with ill-gotten gains. Further the creoles did not consider themselves as Frenchmen and had not that attachment to France that less remote descendants of Frenchmen would have felt. They pointed to their original independence and to the fact that, far from having been conquered, they had given themselves to France, as reason why they should now enjoy some degree of self-government.⁵⁸

It is evident that only a spark was needed to put the colony into a blaze. Liberty was the cry of all classes of the people, each putting its own interpretation on the meaning of the word. Liberty from crushing slavery was the cry which Wilberforce and Clarkson had raised in England, which had found a ready response in France and which was a matter of life and death to half a million blacks in San Domingo. Liberty in its political sense and equal rights in everything was the cry of the free people of color. Liberty in commerce, freedom from the colonial policy, self-government were the cries of the other half of the free people — a universal desire for freedom, but the desires of the different classes completely irreconcilable. All were wishing for the prevalence of the very ideas which the Revolution was to bring, but each selfishly. To oppose the storm about to break out there was no class with even the weak strength of the French nobility — only a few hated officials and some thousands of troops, themselves all ready to join the universal cry.

Nor was there the moral strength which might moderate the fury of the forces at play and manipulate them for the

⁵⁸ Gastine, *Histoire de la Republique d' Haiti ou Saint-Domingue, l'Esclavage et les Colons*, (Paris, 1819), 78.

general good. The Planters were haughty, unaccustomed to self-restraint and even cruel. The *Petits-Blancs* were jealous, mean and corrupt. The people of color were mentally and morally weak.

But, perhaps, even more influential in shaping the course of events was the complete lack of ability for self-government. None of the inhabitants of the island had had any experience in administration or legislation. Even more significant was the absence of any latent capacity for wise political activity. To this political sense the North-American colonies owed their success, and the lack of it has played havoc in France for a century. In San Domingo its entire absence, the ignorance of many of the people, their immorality, their selfishness, the evils of long continued despotic government and the complete want of that noble, though in some respects mistaken, enthusiasm for liberty, equality, fraternity, which permeated the people of France, impelled many even of the old aristocracy to resign their privileges and produced a Fourth of August, were the forces guiding the colonial revolutionary movement into interesting but not inspiring courses.

CHAPTER I.

SAN DOMINGO SECURES REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

The striking ignorance as to what the immediate future was to bring forth that prevailed in France, when, on the eighth day of August, 1788, Louis XVI. summoned the States General, was paralleled in San Domingo. There, too, each faction thought only of the advantages which it expected to gain, and failed to observe that divergence of interest must result in a clash that would bring almost universal ruin. Each class in the island was alert and prepared to reap all the selfish benefit that it could from the prospective changes. But at first the Planters seemed to be the ones whose interests would especially be advanced. They thought that by gaining a representation in the newly-called States General they would secure a voice in the conduct of legislation, and that the administration of the government would fall into their hands rather than remain in control of officials from France. Hilliard d' Auberteuil had written at length to show that the chief grievances felt by the Planters were the weight of the military government with its constant interference in all affairs, and the lack of legislative freedom. Now that the States General was to meet and the old abuses in France were to be corrected, the Planters hoped to remove their causes for complaint. No one seemed to think that the Revolution would lead to emancipation of the slaves.⁵⁹

No sooner had the announcement of the approaching meeting of the States General been made than those planters of San Domingo who at the time were residents in Paris, began working to secure a representation of their interests, apparently under the authority and at the wish of some planters in the island. Such representation was a vital question to the colony, for, if it were recognized as a part of the nation it might expect to enjoy benefits flowing from the Revolution, while if its representatives were not given seats in the States General it would remain under the absolute government of the king and his officers. Some ninety of these colonial proprietors in Paris, nearly all of noble

⁵⁹ La Croix. i., 10.

rank, met and appointed a commission of nine to forward their interests.⁶⁰ The most prominent of their number and the only one who left much evidence of ability, was Jean Louis Marthe, Marquis de Gouy d'Arsty. He was their spokesman and the writer of their letters and memorials.

There is little doubt that this committee and the San Domingans in Paris who were in sympathy with it were cordially supported from the first by a large number of the planters in the island. There were, however, in Paris some planters not in accord with the objects of this *commission*. They were of such strength that the *commission* felt obliged to combat their arguments, notably in a paper of considerable length published in September, 1788.⁶¹ This was the germ of the later strong faction of the Club Massiac and had its supporters in the colony.

The colonial committee was very active in its agitation to secure the admission of colonial delegates to the States General. Great efforts were made to convert la Luzerne to their views and also to gain over Du Chilleau, the Governor of San Domingo, who then chanced to be in France. There was prospect of success so far as the latter was concerned until he had consulted with la Luzerne.⁶² This party claimed that the colony was a part of the nation. They professed great loyalty.^{62a} "Victims of the climate, we have braved death to increase your possessions, and when finally it was recognized that nature refused to the French the strength of body to cultivate a soil burning under a torrid zone, we preserved ourselves for the direction of the work and sought in Africa an entire people already acclimated; we ordered them to enrich the metropolis and our sovereign, and as a reward for their work have treated them, from reasons of humanity and interest, as our children, in despite of the erroneous assertions of innovating philosophers." They emphasized the union of the French nobility with the people of San Domingo—"your court has become creole by alliances."

The Council of State refused to recognize these commissioners on account of the irregularity of their powers and

⁶⁰ The minutes of the proceedings of the *Commission* are given in a pamphlet entitled *Lettre du Comité Colonial de France, au Comité Colonial de Saint-Domingue . . . par le Marquis de Gouy d'Arsty* [Paris? 1788?].

⁶¹ The above. 73-87.

⁶² *Ibid.* 21-29, 34.

^{62a} *Lettre Des Commissaires de la colonie de Saint-Domingue au Roi* (Paris? 1788). It was sent 4 September to la Luzerne to deliver to the King.

even to submit the question of their representation to the Assembly of Notables called in November, 1788, to deliberate on the composition of the States General and the election of its members.⁶³ In spite of this rebuff they did themselves petition the Assembly of Notables.⁶⁴

As soon as it was known in the island that the States General was called for May, 1789, the various classes of the whites were filled with enthusiasm, each hoping to derive some benefit from its meeting. Although the colonists had not been summoned to send representatives to the States General, demands were at once made on the Governor and Intendant for the convocation of assemblies for the election of delegates. Petitions with numerous signatures were sent in.⁶⁵ To all these requests the administrators returned an unfavorable answer — the only kind that was possible. It was out of the question for them to summon the colonists to elect delegates without orders from the home government. They said, also, that they did not know the real wish of the colony since many of the inhabitants were opposed to the incorporation of the colony in the nation, as was shown by petitions in opposition to representation.⁶⁶

In spite of the prohibition of the Governor, assemblies were formed for the election of representatives. There was much dispute as to the extent to which these assemblies really represented the people. Garran says that they represented the planters only, and that the gatherings were largely secret.⁶⁷ Edwards says that when the Governor attempted to prevent the provincial and parish meetings which were everywhere summoned, his proclamations were treated with indignity and contempt.⁶⁸ It is claimed by Charmilly, however, that many citizens doubted the advisability of being incorporated in the French nation; that there were few assemblies held; that lists came out from

⁶³ *Première Denunciation Solennelle d'un Ministre faite à l'Assemblée Nationale en la personne du Comte de la Luzerne . . . par le Comte de Gouy . . .* (Paris, 1790). There is an appendix *Extrait des pièces justificatives*, etc., 127.

⁶⁴ *Premier Recueil de Pièces Intéressantes, remises par les Commissaires de la Colonie de Saint-Domingue à Mm. les Notables, les 6 Novembre, 1788* (Paris? 1788?)

⁶⁵ *Lettre bien importante de la chambre d'Agriculture de Saint-Domingue, adressée aux Membres du Comité Colonial; séant à Paris* (Paris? 1788?) and Appendix to the *Denunciation* cited above, 23, 26, 27, 35. The number of signatures was put at 4,000.

⁶⁶ See *Lettre* quoted in reference 65: 15, 16; appendix to *Denunciation* of reference 63: 25, 29; Clausson, 26; Garran, i., 45, 46.

⁶⁷ i., 46.

⁶⁸ iii., 39.

Europe all made out and were signed in secret ; that many signatures were false and that many proprietors (of whom he was one) protested against the election.⁶⁹ There seems to be no doubt that the delegates elected did not represent all the planters although they were subsequently recognized by the provincial assemblies as representatives of the colony. Madiou says that even as early as this the planters began to talk of independence but I find nothing in the contemporary authorities to support this statement. It is possible that there may have been vague talk of a separation from France especially among the planters like Charmilly who were opposed to the sending of delegates to the States General.

However, there were elected eighteen delegates, being six for each province ; of these delegates a large number were colonists resident in France. From a letter written in San Domingo, 20 February, 1789, we can learn all the steps of this election. The basis of the proceedings was said to be "the imprescriptible rights, acquired by all men, of occupying themselves peaceably with their common interests." Primary assemblies were formed in the parishes which chose electors with full powers. The latter met in the capitals of the provinces, edited their cahiers and elected delegates to the States General.⁷⁰ Of the seven delegates who, according to this letter, were elected from the Province of the North,⁷¹ four were already members of the colonial committee in France ; one other was a resident of Paris but not a member of the Committee ; and two were at the time of the election residents of the island. The latter did not reach Paris until July.⁷² Those in Paris, however, continued their efforts to secure admission to the Tiers État.

Their cahiers show us that the object of the planters was not to spread the ideas which inspired the Revolution but to secure the erection of their caste into a privileged aristocracy. They demanded that no one should participate in the government except the great proprietors ; that France should leave to the colony the right of self-government ; that the administration should be in the hands of the planters ; that

⁶⁹ 48.

⁷⁰ This letter was printed in a pamphlet entitled *Que Ceux qui ont une Ame lisent ceci* (Cape [San Domingo] 1789). See also *Précis sur la Position actuelle de la Députation de Saint-Domingue, aux États Généraux* (Paris ? 1789 ?).

⁷¹ The number of delegates elected was usually stated to be six from each province. Probably an agreement was made after the elections to limit the number to six in each province and thus some retired.

⁷² Placide-Justin, 176.

they alone occupy the chief offices and have the proposal in the colonial assembly of laws which should subsequently be ratified by a colonial committee in France; that the courts of justice should be open to them and that a seat in these courts for a certain time should be rewarded by a title of nobility.⁷³

It was one thing to elect delegates to the States General but entirely different to secure their recognition by that body. All through the early months of 1789 they were presenting themselves at the electoral assemblies in Paris in order to bring their cause before the prospective members of the great representative body.⁷⁴ But their efforts do not seem to have resulted very successfully. I find only three cahiers which mention their claims in any way. The clergy of Paris *extra muros*,⁷⁵ the clergy of Paris *intra muros*⁷⁶ and the third estate in Paris⁷⁷ demanded that the representatives of San Domingo be given seats and the nation represented in its integrity. The nobility were opposed to the admission of the colonial delegates to their own body, naturally not recognizing the island aristocracy as a real nobility.

Not until the eighth of June did any degree of success crown the untiring efforts of the San Domingans. The minutes of the Commons relate that on that day the deputies of San Domingo presented themselves and demanded provisional admission. They were granted seats without votes until their rights and powers should be settled.⁷⁸ When the roll of the Commons was called on the twelfth and thirteenth, the colonial deputies called attention to the fact that their names were omitted but obtained no more satisfaction than had been given them on the eighth, being instructed to submit their credentials which would be considered at the proper time.⁷⁹

The twentieth of June was a great day not only for France but for the planters of San Domingo. The famous oath of the Tennis Court had scarcely been taken when President Bailly announced that the bureau of verification had reported unanimously for the provisional admission of twelve

⁷³ Garran, i., 47, 48. These cahiers were not published until the following October and then caused the downfall of the committee which drew them up.

⁷⁴ Garran, i., 48.

⁷⁵ *Archives*, v., 233, article 18.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 266 art. 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 282 art. 31 ; 302 art. 7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, viii., 81.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

delegates from San Domingo. The Assembly ratified this action and the delegates took the oath.⁸⁰ It is evident that the colonial representatives had shrewdly taken advantage of the tendencies of the time. We can easily understand how on that solemn and important occasion the *Tiers État* allowed their feelings to get the better of their judgments. In a few days their love of liberty and desire for emancipation of the enslaved wherever found made them examine more carefully the claims of the delegates of San Domingo who had been admitted provisionally to the number of twelve. On the twenty-seventh the chairman of the bureau of verification reported that careful examination of the questions relating to the admission of the delegates from San Domingo had been made. There were three points to settle, namely, had the colony the right to any representation; was the election of the delegates legal; and what number should be admitted. During this day's debate the tendency was strongly toward an increase of the delegation to twenty. On the third of July the debate was resumed, the first speeches being of the same tenor as those of the week before. But Mirabeau arose and in his eloquent and stirring manner argued that such action was utterly inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution. He pointed out that there was no law or tradition which would give the island a representation; that those presenting themselves as delegates did not represent the island since the free people of color had no share in the election; and that the number twenty was too large since the slaves were regarded simply as property. He thought the colony should be allowed a representation in the National Assembly but this would not be on account of an old right but by act of legislation. Four delegates were, in his opinion, all the colony was justly entitled to.

Gouy d' Arsy made an able reply pointing out that the people of France knew the colonies only very imperfectly; and that the colored people were not summoned because laws made in France excluded them from the franchise. But Mirabeau was too influential and the report was sent back to the committee which on the next day recommended that the number of delegates be two for each province or six in all. This report was adopted by a large majority, and on the seventh the San Domingans announced that Cocherel and Gouy d' Arsy would represent the province of the

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 138.

West ; Thebaudière and l' Archevêque Thibaut, that of the North ; and Pérrigny and Gérard that of the South.⁸¹

But, as Mirabeau said, these men did not really represent the colony. Not only were the slaves, making up nine-tenths of the population, and the free people of color who were one half of the remainder, unrepresented but many of the whites were greatly dissatisfied. There can be no doubt, however, that these delegates were continually recognized as such by the colonial assemblies however much discontent may have been felt.⁸² The chief opposition proceeded at first from another source, namely, some of the large body of colonial proprietors who were permanent residents in Paris.

A detailed account of the manner in which this opposition became organized would involve us in a discussion of the great anti-slavery agitation then going on in England and France. In France Montesquieu, Raynal and Neckar had exposed the evils of slavery, and in that country the movement assumed in 1789 large proportions, resulting in the foundation of the society "*Amis des Noirs*" whose object was to secure abolition. Among its members were Mirabeau, Rochefoucauld, Condorcet, Petion, Brissot, Lafayette, Robespierre and Grégoire. Clarkson gives an interesting account of his visit to Paris and his intercourse with these men.⁸³ The circulation of translations of Clarkson's writings and his plans of slave-ships aroused opposition to the society in Paris and the commercial towns. Clarkson was told that abolition of the slave-trade must wait for the Revolution, since agitation for enfranchisement of the slaves would turn some against the greater movement. Mirabeau and Lafayette were for immediate consideration of the question, but after canvassing the Assembly it was found that only one-fourth of the members would support the cause, so it was concluded that it would be inexpedient formally to introduce the matter at that time.

In the face of such danger for their cause many of the supporters of slavery were strongly opposed to the Revolution since they saw its progress promised to result in enfranchisement. Partly, then, from fear and partly from jealousy they opposed the colonial committee and the deputation

⁸¹ Ibid, 164 sqq., 186 sq, 189 sq, 205. The eighteen delegates voted to remain united, and agreed that the votes of the six should be governed by the decision of the eighteen. Garran, i., 50.

⁸² Garran, i., 51, 52. *Archives*, viii., 190.

⁸³ *History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament.* Chap. XXV.

of planters admitted to the Assembly. They were, in many cases, privileged persons and members of the nobility so that the adherence of the delegates to the Tiers État in the oath of the Tennis Court increased their hostility to them. This pro-slavery party was in sympathy with those planters in the island who like Charmilly opposed the sending of representatives to the States General. The deputies, on the other hand, wished that there be decreed by the Assembly for the colony a constitution by which local affairs should be in the control of colonial assemblies, while laws on commerce and external relations should be concerted with France. The other party saw safety from the radical ideas of the time only in absolute independence of the National Assembly. Only the king had rights of government over the colonies, for they were not a part of the nation. The Minister of Marine and the Court supported this view.⁸⁴ The headquarters of this party were at the Hotel Massiac. Their Club Massiac was at first known as *La Société des Colons Français Assemblées à Paris*. Not until the events of July and August seemed to threaten imminent danger to slavery did the two factions unite.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Garran, i., 53.

⁸⁵ Garran, i., 54, 55. Clausson, 27.

CHAPTER II.

THE PEOPLE OF COLOR BEGIN AGITATION.

In Paris the Revolution progressed rapidly. The Fall of the Bastille, the Fourth of August and the Declaration of Rights of the Twentieth of August marked its course. This declaration in saying that men are born and live free and equal in rights and that these rights are liberty, property, personal safety and resistance to oppression revealed the great changes that were being introduced. The slave owners were naturally disturbed by so sweeping a statement, and this famous declaration caused great disturbance in the colony.⁸⁶ Mirabeau's paper, the *Courrier de Provence*, commented upon it as follows: "We did not think that the moment was so near when the great cause of the liberty of the negroes wrapped up in that of general liberty of the human race would be solemnly established, avowed and sanctioned by the National Assembly. . . . After having grandly propounded this principle, the National Assembly will not shun the most just and most legitimate of consequences . . . which will say to the negroes, which will say to the planters, which will teach all Europe that there is not, there cannot be more in France or in any country under the laws of France other than free men."⁸⁷ Owing to the renewed efforts of Clarkson and his friends the cause of abolition was making rapid progress out of the Assembly as well as in it.

It was evident that those interested in the preservation of slavery must unite and, if possible, remove colonial affairs from the control of the National Assembly to that of some local body in which the slave interests would be safe.⁸⁸

Before this there had been some talk of a colonial assembly. On the twenty-ninth of July the deputies from San Domingo had declared that the colony wished to derive the power to organize such a body only from the National Assembly, and requested the king to take no steps in this mat-

⁸⁶ Dumourrier, *Sur les Troubles des Colonies et l'unique Moyen d'assurer la Tranquillité, la Prosperité et la Fidélité des ces Dependances de l'Empire* (Paris, 1791), 10. Edwards, iii., 43.

⁸⁷ Volume ii., No. 30.

⁸⁸ Clausson, 27; Garran, i., 56.

ter without the authority of the latter body. To these requests the king assented on August eleventh. On the other hand the Club Massiac had asked the king to convoke a colonial assembly without the recognition of any power in the National Assembly over the dependencies. On August twenty-ninth they petitioned the king to convoke the colonies to form provincial electoral assemblies which should choose delegates to a central assembly.

The two factions now came together and after consultation with the Minister of Marine a measure was drawn up, made a law by the Council and dispatched to the island. The colonial assembly was to consist of seventy-two members chosen by the proprietary planters owning twenty slaves or an estate worth a hundred thousand livres. Voting by proxy was allowed so that the planters in Paris could exert considerable influence. This assembly was not invested with final authority but was to advise with the king. The reconciliation between the Club Massiac and the deputies does not seem to have been thorough, for the latter opposed this measure and proposed another plan no more democratic in the basis of representation, but in other respects more in accordance with their wishes since it was to be summoned by provincial committees and not by the governor.⁸⁹ In all these measures there had been no recognition of the power of the National Assembly and it was not until October twenty-seventh that the government called its attention to colonial affairs.

There has been more or less obscurity and contradiction in the different accounts given of the manner in which the mulattoes endeavored to secure recognition and equality of rights with the white citizens of the island. The evidence seems very contradictory upon some points but the new materials in the *Archives Parlementaires* enable us to get a reliable and tolerably complete account of the proceedings of the people of color.

On the twenty-second of October, 1789 "a deputation of citizens, people of color, proprietors in the French colonies"⁹⁰ appeared at the bar of the National Assembly and demanded that they be allowed to enjoy all the privileges of citizenship, not as a favor, but as a natural right. M. de Joly acted as their spokesman and made an eloquent plea for his fellows. In behalf of the people of color he presented the state six millions of francs, and declared they

⁸⁹ Garran, i., 56-60.

⁹⁰ *Archives*, ix., 476.

were ready to mortgage their property to one-fifth of its value in order to pay the debts of the state. This address is signed by ten persons including Raimond and Ogé. The President responded that "no part of the nation would ask its rights from the Assembly in vain." The deputation was granted sittings as spectators and their petition laid on the table.⁹¹

Who were these delegates and how were they chosen? Madiou says that after the news of the admission of the six delegates had reached the island "the people of color . . . chose among themselves deputies who repaired to France and presented themselves to the Constituant."⁹² La Croix says; "Some men of color were . . . authorized to pass to the continent in order to plead their cause."⁹³ "There arrived in Paris men of color sent into France to defend their rights and interests" is the statement of Placide-Justin.⁹⁴ Clarkson gives a lengthy and interesting account of a dinner at Lafayette's where he met these men who, he says, had arrived only the preceding day from San Domingo. "Believing that the mother country was going to make a change in its political constitution, they had called a meeting on the island and this meeting had deputed them to repair to France." They had put on the dress of the National Guard and had induced Lafayette to accept an appointment as commander-in-chief over their fellow-citizens.⁹⁵

It might seem that this was fairly conclusive evidence of their having been duly elected in the island. But Madiou and Placide-Justin were not contemporary writers and La Croix knew personally only of the later part of the Revolution in the island. Clarkson's report is on the face of it open to suspicion as regards some details. It is improbable that, after a long voyage from San Domingo, the delegates should in twenty-four hours have put on the dress of the National Guard, been invited to dinner by Lafayette and induced him to accept the honor of commander-in-chief over them. Clarkson was especially interested in learning their attitude toward the slave trade and probably paid little attention to statements concerning the manner in which the delegates were chosen. It is probable that some of them had very recently come from the island unofficially. Clarkson might easily confuse statements made in a foreign lan-

⁹¹ Ibid, 476-478.

⁹² i., 35.

⁹³ i., 15.

⁹⁴ p. 178.

⁹⁵ His *History*, etc. 387, 388 of the edition (London, 1839).

guage and extend to all statements which applied only to individuals. The testimony to their having been elected in the island is then untrustworthy.

On the other hand the evidence that they were chosen from and by the people of color residing in Paris is conclusive. Their original address already mentioned evades any statement upon this point.⁹⁶ Ogé and Raimond, at least, were in Paris during all this period and could not have come there as representatives from the colony. A large number of colored colonists had resided in Paris for years, among whom Raimond had been very prominent in his efforts in behalf of his race, both free and enslaved.⁹⁷ Ogé had come to Paris that year, probably in the middle of the summer.⁹⁸ Although the petition of the people of color was sent to the committee of verification and was not reported back by them we have in the *Archives* several papers bearing upon this point, one of them being a letter addressed by the citizens of color who had appeared before the Assembly to the above named committee. The white colonists had made objection to the admission of these delegates on various grounds, and this letter attempts to answer the objections. After showing how circumstances and the prohibitions of the whites prevented more regular measures, they say: "From the lack of these primary and local assemblies, from the lack of a colonial meeting which it was not possible for them to summon, the citizens of color newly arrived and actually resident in France assembled to consider their interests; . . . they elected deputies and these presented themselves in the National Assembly."⁹⁹ The letter says that eighty colonists were present when these proceedings were taken. It is signed by six persons, all of whom were signers of the original address presented on the twenty-second of October.¹⁰⁰

To anticipate the course of events it may be said that the delegates were never admitted to the Assembly for several obvious reasons. Such admission would have been class legislation, would have implied that the delegates already

⁹⁶ *Archives*, ix., 477.

⁹⁷ Garran, i., 121.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, ii., 43; Madiou, i., 53.

⁹⁹ *Archives*, x., 331, 332.

¹⁰⁰ *Extrait du Procès-Verbal de l'Assemblée des Citoyens Libres et Propriétaires de Couleur . . .* (Paris, 1789). This gives an account of an attempt made by the colored people to arrive at some understanding with the planters of the Club Massiac. Also Raimond, *Véritable Origine des Troubles de S. Domingue et les différentes causes qui les ont produit* (Paris, 1792),¹⁵⁻¹⁸.

seated were not real representatives, and would have aroused the opposition of the commercial classes to the whole course of the Revolution.¹⁰¹ The committee of verification to which the letter was referred drew up a report favoring the admission of two deputies to represent the people of color; but their spokesman on attempting to present it to the Assembly was several times met by such an uproar that he was obliged to give up the attempt.¹⁰²

The representation of the colony in the National Assembly was then practically settled by the first of December, 1789, at six delegates who were really elected by a small proportion of the white inhabitants of the island. The extreme views with regard to equality and universal suffrage did not prevail. The colony was still regarded as a dependency entitled to a certain degree of self-government not to be assumed as a matter of course, but to be granted by the Assembly.

¹⁰¹ For argument against demands of the mulattoes see *Archives*, x., 333-335. On 329 is an interesting letter purporting to be from the free negroes claiming equal privileges with the mulattoes. "The negro is the issue of a pure blood; the mulatto on the contrary is the issue of a mixed blood; he is a compound of black and white, a sort of adulteration. Accordingly it is as evident that the negro is much above the mulatto as it is evident that the pure gold is above mixed gold."

¹⁰² Raimond, *Veritable Origin*, 19.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE COLONY.

The severity of the winter of 1788-9 in France, and the terrible evils that resulted from it, have been graphically set forth by two of the brilliant historians of our time.¹⁰³ The almost complete destruction of the harvest in the mother country threatened the island with famine unless corn could be obtained elsewhere. There was too little at home, and the Parliament of Bordeaux at least had forbidden the export of grain to the colonies.¹⁰⁴ To avert famine it seemed best to the Governor, Du Chilleau, to throw open the ports to the importation of food stuffs.¹⁰⁵ According to the existing laws only lumber, live cattle and salted beef could be imported, and these only in three ports of entry.

But the planters, always hostile to the existing trade regulations, made this scarcity of bread an excuse for an attempt to secure greater general freedom of trade. Relief from the threatening famine was secured by an *ordonnance* issued by Du Chilleau, 31 March, and duly registered 1 April, by the Superior Council, granting permission to import bread and foreign grains.¹⁰⁶ Du Chilleau had succeeded la Luzerne as Governor when the latter had been called to France to become Minister of Marine. He had been a military officer of some renown in the colonies and was much more in sympathy with the colonists than with the interests of French commerce. He lost the good will of the ministry but carried back to France the regrets of the planters.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Taine, *The French Revolution* (N. Y., 1878), i., 1-5. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (N. Y., 1878-87), v., 426, 427.

¹⁰⁴ Clausson, 31.

¹⁰⁵ There was much discussion as to the necessity of this measure. It would seem to have been imperative. See e. g., *Réplique des députés des manufactures et du commerce de France à Mm. les députés de S. Domingue, concernant l'approvisionnement de cette colonie* (Versailles, 1789 ?); *Dernière Réponse de M. de Cocherel député de S. Domingue à Messieurs les députés du Commerce* (Versailles ?); *Précis remis par M. le Marquis de Gouy d'Arisy aux Commissaires auxquels l'Assemblée Nationale a renvoyé l'examen . . .* (Versailles, 1789); and Appendix to Denunciation of la Luzerne, 87-90.

¹⁰⁶ *Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat du Roi Portant cassation d'une Ordonnance de M. le Marquis du Chilleau, Gouverneur, Lieutenant-général de Saint-Domingue, du 27 Mai dernier, concernant l'introduction des farines étrangères* 23 July, 1789, (Paris, 1789.)

¹⁰⁷ Clausson, 31, 32; Garran, i., 43; Dalmas i., 20, 21.

Barbé-Marbois had been Intendant since 1785, so that he had worked with la Luzerne when the latter was Governor. Before this he had been Consul-General to the United States and had married a daughter of Governor Moore of Pennsylvania. During the latter part of his life he played quite an important part in the political affairs of France. His administration of the finances was very successful not only in the introduction of system but in securing a surplus of receipts over expenditures.¹⁰⁸ By his strict execution of the colonial policy he gained the enmity of many.¹⁰⁹ La Luzerne's administration is said to have been weak and inactive.¹¹⁰ He certainly gained while Minister of Marine the intense dislike of the colonists, who made the most bitter accusations against him.

On the ninth of May Du Chilleau, having granted permission to foreign vessels to import bread and grain temporarily, went a step farther toward satisfying the wishes of the planters, by issuing an order granting permission to foreign ships to introduce into three ports of the southern province for the space of five years, slaves, grain and other articles of general value to this part of the island, to be paid for in sugar and other commodities produced in the island. In spite of Marbois' remonstrance¹¹¹ this Ordonnance was put in force. According to the laws governing the relations of the governor and intendant his remonstrance should have vetoed it.¹¹² On 27 May appeared another Ordonnance which really opened temporarily all the ports of the island to the importation of bread and foreign grains, and allowed free exportation of colonial products.¹¹³ There was much discussion at the time in regard to the danger of famine¹¹⁴ but Du Chilleau had certainly transcended his powers.

¹⁰⁸ Barbe-Marbois *État des finances de Saint-Domingue contenant le résumé des recettes et dépenses de toutes les caisses publiques, depuis le 10 Nov. 1785, jusqu'au 1er Jan. 1788* (Port-au-Prince, 1788). Also the same for the year 1788 (Port-au-Prince, 1789). Also *Mémoire laissé par M. Barbé de Marbois, Intendant de Saint-Domingue* (Bordeaux, 1789?). Other copies were printed at Port-au-Prince and at Paris.

¹⁰⁹ Dalmas, i., 25, 26; Garran, i., 42.

¹¹⁰ Dalmas, i., 25.

¹¹¹ *Rémonstrances de M. de Marbois, Intendant de Saint-Domingue contre l'arrêt d'enregistrement de l'acte intitulé; "Ordonnance de M. le Gouverneur Général concernant la liberté du commerce pour la partie du sud de Saint-Domingue."* (? 1789?)

¹¹² *Arrêt du Conseil d'État du Roi, qui casse et annule une Ordonnance du Gouverneur-général de Saint-Domingue du 9 Mai dernier . . .* (Paris, 1789).

¹¹³ See Reference 106.

¹¹⁴ See e. g., *Dernière Réponse de M. de Cocherel, etc.* (reference 105) and *Archives*, viii., 528, 553; x., 17.

Marbois was supported by the Minister of Marine, the governor's acts were annulled¹¹⁵ and Du Chilleau soon replaced by Count de Peinier.¹¹⁶ So the separation between the officials and the planters was increased by the recall of the Governor who had shown sympathy for the cause of the latter. The successor of Du Chilleau, Peinier, was a member of an old French family, an officer of some rank and distinction in the navy and a firm supporter of the monarchy. He reached the colony in September having received the decoration of the grand cross of the order of St. Louis before leaving France.¹¹⁷

Already the lines were sharply drawn between the parties in the colony. The *Petits-Blancs* were the real revolutionary party, desiring an overthrow of all privileged classes, and closely in sympathy with the radical wing in the National Assembly. The planters desired no social change and supported the existing order of things with one exception. They wished that the island should have self-government. The official class and those supporting it were strongly attached to the cause of the old regime and opposed to any measures that could bring even a degree of home-rule for the colony.

Either because it was a natural method of procedure or because some knowledge of the American institution had reached them, the colonial proprietors had organized Committees of Correspondence which kept up communication with each other and with their sympathizers in Paris. But these committees represented only a part of the planters. The Governor had made an attempt to prevent the extension of this secret organization by an order prohibiting more than five persons assembling at a time. Such a prohibition was of course completely useless. These committees had secured the election of the delegates accredited to the National Assembly. The people of color had begun secret correspondence among themselves and with their friends in Paris.¹¹⁸ As yet there were no excesses in the island and the old order of things was outwardly unshaken, as was the case in France. But the fall of the Bastille revealed in colony as well as mother country the weakness of the old regime.

As soon as the news of this event reached the colony, there were the same signs of the presence of the revolutionary spirit that had been seen in the metropolis. The

¹¹⁵ See *Arrêts* cited in references 106 and 112.

¹¹⁶ Appendix to Denunciation of la Luzerne, sq. 73-84.

¹¹⁷ Garran, i., 43. ¹¹⁸ Madiou, i., 34.

tri-color cocade was everywhere worn, even the officials being compelled to carry it ; some who expressed opposition to the new ideas lost their lives; the militia was remodelled in imitation of the National Guard. With feverish haste the people enrolled themselves in the companies, influenced greatly by their fondness for military display, decorations and titles.¹¹⁹ The abolition of feudal privileges on the fourth of August was celebrated in the city of St. Marc by a Te Deum. This fête resulted in considerable lawlessness.¹²⁰

It was the Declaration of Rights of the twentieth of August that first awakened people to a consciousness of the fact that diversity of interests might necessitate different methods of procedure in the metropolis and colony. They saw that slavery was threatened. The anti-slavery agitation, too, was at its height in Paris, where Mirabeau and Grégoire were exerting all their efforts for immediate emancipation. "We are in the greatest fear in this country," writes a colonist, "concerning the negroes. Is it possible that the nation can demand their liberty? It desires then to renounce the colonies."¹²¹ Both this letter and an earlier one¹²² threaten vengeance upon those who are reported to be on their way to the island to stir up revolt. Charmilly says, "the twentieth of August was the day when the destruction of San Domingo and of the other colonies was pronounced, and when three hundred thousand men of all colors were condemned to death."¹²³ Edwards¹²⁴ and Rainsford¹²⁵ agree with this view.¹²⁶ Dumourier insists that all other causes assigned for the disasters that came to the island were of no consequence and that the anti-slavery agitator, hasty and imprudent, was the sole cause of trouble. This movement alarmed not only the colonists but the inhabitants of the maritime cities, all interested in the commerce of France, and the friends of the constitution. A large number of petitions for a committee to consider the affairs of the dependencies was sent to

¹¹⁹ La Croix, i., 12.

¹²⁰ Garran, i., 74.

¹²¹ *Moniteur*, 1790, 146. Letter dated 5 Nov. 1789.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 46.

¹²³ 49.

¹²⁴ *iii.*, 42, 43.

¹²⁵ *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti; comprehending a view of the principal transactions of the Revolution with its ancient and modern state* (London, 1805), 110.

¹²⁶ La Croix, i., 15, says that the government officials in the island, after the Declaration favored the admittance of the people of color to the enjoyment of the provisions as the best means of opposing the pretensions of the planters. If this is true, it must have increased both the fear of a social reorganization and the hatred of the planters for the government.

the National Assembly.¹²⁷ To ascribe to the promulgation of this declaration of rights all the troubles that ensued is to overestimate its effect, but it hastened the conflict that opposing interests rendered inevitable.

The city of Cap Français, then the most influential place in the island, was especially under the influence of the revolutionary ideas. There originated the first definite movement against the representatives of royal authority. Marbois, by his careful administration, support of the colonial policy and fidelity to the king, had won the hatred of the planters.¹²⁸ Conscious of this he had planned his departure from the colony, when an adventurer named Chesneau, or Chesnaud, early in October arrived at the Cape from France and declared that Marbois had been recalled in disgrace by the National Assembly. Chesneau was protected by the people of the city against the attempts of the authorities to arrest him. He was subsequently proven to have robbed the mails.

The chief opponents of the royal authority in the city, led by Bacon de la Chevalarie, an unscrupulous intriguer, determined to take advantage of this occurrence for the accomplishment of their own ends. They increased the hostility to the officials by false reports, asserted that the slaves were to be freed, and then in the midst of all the excitement and disorder, suggested that a march be made to Port-au-Prince, the seat of the government, in order to seize Marbois. The commander of the royal troops at the Cape, by spreading reports of slave insurrections in the country, succeeded in delaying the expedition long enough so that Marbois could take ship for France on October the twenty-sixth.¹²⁹ Although a vigorous attempt was made to find irregularities in the intendant's accounts, none could be discovered and his published statement showed that the finances of the colony were in a satisfactory state.¹³⁰ Other officials at this time, thinking themselves in danger, after a time of concealment escaped to France.¹³¹

From participation in the proceedings following the news of the fall of the Bastille, the free people of color were ex-

¹²⁷ *Sur les Troubles des Colonies*, etc. (Paris, 1791), 10, 11.

¹²⁸ *Moniteur*, 1790, 46.

¹²⁹ *Moniteur*, 1790, 46; Garran, i., 75-77; Dalmas, i., 24-34.

¹³⁰ *Mémoire laissé par M. Barbé de Marbois, Intendant à Saint-Domingue* (Bordeaux, 1789). His successor published a statement showing not only that there was no irregularity in Marbois' accounts but that the finances had been admirably managed. *Moniteur*, 1790, 820.

¹³¹ Garran, i., 78.

cluded. A report that Moreau de Saint-Mery, a supporter of the anti-slavery ideas, had been appointed intendant aroused a storm of indignation.¹⁸²

All these proceedings were not without guidance and direction. Although the history of the committees and early assemblies which directed the course of events is quite obscure, and will probably remain so, on account of the lack of minutes of their transactions, which were, in a great degree, secret, the important facts about their organization are known. The electoral assemblies, which met in each province immediately after the calling of the States-General, late in 1788, had, upon their dissolution, appointed committees which should sit in the chief places of the provinces and have general control of the interests of the planters. They were to draw up *cahiers*, correspond with other committees and take such measures as might be necessary to forward the Revolution in San Domingo. They were called Provincial Committees, but did nothing publicly during the first half of 1789 on account of the laws against the formation of any such bodies. But when concealment became no longer necessary they usurped authority and announced their existence, that of Port-au-Prince, for instance, "sending notice to the administrators of the colony, 18 October, of its act of organization of the 25 January."¹⁸³ The provincial committee of the North with its seat at the Cape, was especially active until it ventured to publish its *cahier de doléances* which had been sent to the deputies at Paris. This document was so favorable to the interests of the planters and so contrary to the principles of the Revolution that a storm of indignation compelled the committee to promise to convoke the people for the election of delegates to a provincial assembly.¹⁸⁴

This assembly met on the first of November, 1789, including among its members many of the old committee. The committee continued to exercise a general control over the affairs of the province by request of the newly assembled legislature until the end of the month. Both bodies renounced the *cahier*¹⁸⁵ and the indignation aroused by its publication gradually died away, so that the assembly did not expel the members of the committee, as the people had

¹⁸² *Moniteur*, 1790, 146; Garran, i., 107-108.

¹⁸³ Garran, i., 71, 72.

¹⁸⁴ Gaterau, *Histoire des Troubles de S. Domingue depuis le mois d' October, 1789, jusqu'au 16 juillet, 1791* (Paris, 1792), 6. Dalmas, i., 30.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes of the Committee as quoted by Garran, i., 81. *Moniteur*, 1790, 243.

demand, but even passed them a vote of thanks for their general devotion to the interests of the colony. On the thirtieth of November the assembly declared itself permanent and formed an executive bureau which should supplant the old committee.

The real attitude of this assembly, many of whose leading spirits became later the most prominent members of the General Colonial Assembly, may be seen from an enumeration of some of its early legislative acts.¹³⁶ It took the oath of fidelity to the nation, the law and the king¹³⁷ and had the same administered to the civil authorities and troops without orders from France. It pronounced its members inviolable, and declared that the powers of government for the province of the North were vested entirely and exclusively in the body of deputies.¹³⁸ Allowing the constituted authorities to continue the exercise of their powers it declared that "these authorities could give no order concerning the public safety, or tending to deprive any citizen of his liberty except in concert with the Provincial Committee." It recognized the militia and gained complete control over it;¹³⁹ assumed control of the public moneys, whether purely local or those belonging to the national government¹⁴⁰ and asserted its "full powers in all that concerned the internal administration of the province."¹⁴¹ Books, papers and manuscripts could be imported and sold only with its consent.¹⁴²

In the other provinces the course of affairs was similar to that in the North. The province of the West was the seat of the royal government, which had a more or less repressive influence upon the revolutionary party. There were also objections in this province to the assumption of power by the provincial committee, composed, as it was, principally of residents of Port-au-Prince, but not until January, 1790, did a provincial assembly meet. It delegated supervision of provincial affairs to the reorganized committee of Port-au-Prince which played a part in this province similar to that of the assembly in the North. It further induced the governor and the troops to take the oath, and agreed to recognize the deputies at Paris as delegates of the

¹³⁶ Garran, 83 sqq ; *Moniteur*, 1790, 243.

¹³⁷ Minutes of the Assembly of the North, 2 Nov. 1789. Quoted by Garran.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 3 Nov.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 18 Nov.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 25 Nov. and 22 Dec.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 4 Jan., 1790.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 7 Dec., 1789.

province.¹⁴³ The province of the South followed the example of the others but much more slowly, its assembly meeting at Cayes, 15 February. It assumed control of the finances of the province and levied a tax of thirty sous for each slave.¹⁴⁴

With the example of the National Assembly before it, the colonial government could not take violent measures against the local assemblies and committees. The protests of the governor were of little avail. He implicitly recognized the authority of the National Assembly in declaring that many of the claims and proceedings of the local legislature were contrary to the early decrees of that body. The response shows the attitude of the colonists, for they rejected these laws as binding upon them on the ground that the "deputies of San Domingo were not yet at the National Assembly when the decrees had been passed."¹⁴⁵

The extravagances of the provincial assemblies and committees increased the number of those who supported the Governor, especially in the West. Here Peinier formed an organization called *Pompons Blancs*, to support the old authority.

There was great hostility between the Assembly of the North and the Superior Council which sat at Port-au-Prince. This Tribunal, it will be remembered, was the only higher court in the colony and the consolidation of the Council of the Northern Province with it in 1787 had caused much dissatisfaction. This island *Parlement* declared all the acts of the Assembly of the North null and void¹⁴⁶ and ordered it no longer to interfere in the administration. In return the latter body, 4 January, 1790, declared the acts of the Superior Council annulled and re-established the Superior Council of the Cape, on the ground that it had been illegally suppressed. The installation of this body was celebrated on the sixth by a fête in which, rather strangely, the officers of the royal regiment stationed in the city took part.¹⁴⁷ The Superior Council of Port-au-Prince sent to the Minister of Marine an indictment of its rival, but the National Assembly referred the matter to a committee which seems never to have reported it.¹⁴⁸ In a letter to Peinier,

¹⁴³ Garran, i., 89.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 90.

¹⁴⁵ *Lettre écrite à M. de Compté de Peynier, Général de St. Domingue par l'Assemblée Provinciale de la Partie du Nord* (1790?), 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Moniteur*, 1790, 243.

¹⁴⁷ Garran, i., 88.

¹⁴⁸ *Archives*, xi., 790.

30 December, 1789, the Assembly of the North defended its action on the ground that he, the governor, had failed to carry out his orders from France. It insisted that the colony had of its own free will attached itself to France under the express condition that it should be subject to no tax or change of government without its own consent.¹⁴⁹

On the seventh of January, Bacon de la Chevalarie, who was President of the Assembly of the North, wrote to Peinier that he would not be recognized as Governor until he should take the oath prescribed by national law, and that all that was necessary for the convocation of a colonial assembly was the agreement of the three provinces.¹⁵⁰ La Chevalarie was made captain-general of the national troops. In the West also there were signs of disaffection and on January thirteenth the electors of the West ordered the royal officers to delay the execution of every new law of the National Assembly until the convocation of a colonial assembly. Peinier consented to this.¹⁵¹ He seems to have been lacking somewhat in decision and constancy, and had lost his main support in Marbois. At this time he was more favorably disposed toward the people of the island, assisted several times in the sittings of the Provincial Committee of the West, and took an oath never to march the troops against the citizens except at the request of the municipal officers or of the committee.¹⁵²

During all this period the people of color were quiet; but as the planters resident in Paris perceived in August, 1789, the growing inclination to give all free citizens, regardless of color, equal rights, they stirred up their constituents to persecution and outrage. They instructed them to arrest suspected persons, seize writings "where even the word Liberty was mentioned," distrust people of color from Europe and hinder their re-embarking for France. These instructions were subscribed to by all the delegates except Gérard, who said the surest way to preserve slavery was to gain over the free people of color.¹⁵³ This despised class had been admitted to the primary assemblies which elected delegates to the

¹⁴⁹ See reference 145. From the first the colonial party maintained this view very strongly and constantly. All the memorials of the colonial committee of France and the writings of Gouy d' Arsy are full of this theory.

¹⁵⁰ *Moniteur*, 1790, 243.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Relation authentique de tout ce que s'est passé à St. Domingue avant et après le départ forcé de l'Assemblée coloniale* (9 Aug., 1790), 4.

¹⁵³ Raimond, *Veritable Origin des Troubles de S. Domingue et des differente causes qui les ont produits* (Paris, 1792), 6-11. Text of the letters.

provincial assemblies,¹⁵⁴ but the letter of the deputies so terrified the whites that the colored people were at once excluded from all participation in political matters and subjected to outrage.¹⁵⁵ The people of color of Petit-Goave presented to the local committee an address demanding their rights, but the feeling of the planters was so bitter that Ferraud de Baudières, a senechal of the place and president of the committee, who had drawn this address was murdered for favoring the pretensions of the lower caste. For similar offences Lacombe, a colored man of the Cape, and Labadie of Aquin were killed, while others were subjected to gross outrages. These murders occurred in November. Although a pretence was made of punishing those who committed them, nothing came of it and the Club Massiac approved of them.¹⁵⁶ Raymond says that the *Petits-Blancs* were responsible for these persecutions, and that on the receipt of news that mulattoes had arrived from Paris, the colored people were hunted in the woods like wild beasts.¹⁵⁷ The correspondence of the people of color was searched but was found free from fault.¹⁵⁸ The whites urged the Chambers of Commerce in France not to allow negroes and mulattoes to embark for the island.¹⁵⁹ The people of color could enter the militia or national guard but were forbidden by la Chevalarie to elect their own officers.¹⁶⁰ It was most unfortunate that the creoles were not more far-seeing and politic. Had the free people of color been given their political rights a strong opposition could have been made to all untimely efforts to free the slaves and the terrible blood-shed of later years avoided.

The chief leaders of the revolutionary party in the province of the North were Bacon de la Chevalarie, who aroused the jealousy of the people by his intriguing disposition and his assumption of office after office; and l'Archêveque Thibaut. The latter had taken part in the oath of the tennis court and was one of the delegates admitted to the National Assembly. He resigned, on 24 August, 1789, however, because of the changed state of affairs and because his constituents had sent him to the States General, not to

¹⁵⁴ Gaterau, 19. Raimond, *Veritable Origin*, II.

¹⁵⁵ Rallier, *Nouvelles Observations sur Saint-Domingue* (Paris) ? 8.

¹⁵⁶ For full description of these affairs see almost any of the histories, especially Garran, i., 109-113. Raimond, *Veritable Origin*, II-14.

¹⁵⁷ *Archives*, xxvi., 68.

¹⁵⁸ Garran, i., 113.

¹⁵⁹ Raimond, *Veritable Origin*, 20, 21, where the text of a letter written the Chambers is given.

¹⁶⁰ *Moniteur*, 1790, 243. Gaterau, 23, 24.

the National Assembly.¹⁶¹ On his return to the colony he was at once admitted to the assembly of the North and took an important part in its proceedings.

The rivalry between Chevalarie and Thibaut broke out soon after in a bitter dispute in the Assembly, in which each accused the other of murderous intentions. A bodily encounter was prevented by force. Thibaut secured the dissolution of Chevalarie's staff. The forts in the possession of the royal troops were by order of the Assembly handed over to the patriotic troops of Chevalarie. But soon tiring of this garrison duty, the citizen soldiers besought the regulars to resume control of the fortifications. By the loss of his staff and of the forts Chevalarie's influence was greatly diminished.¹⁶² Everywhere there was dissension and it was high time that an attempt should be made to establish some central authority. It was hoped that this would be brought about by the calling of the Colonial Assembly.

¹⁶¹ Garran, i., 119, 120.

¹⁶² Gaterau, 37, 38.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR THE COLONY.

The essential features of the plan for a Colonial Assembly concerted by the planters resident in Paris and la Luzerne were that planters alone should be regarded as citizens, that the Assembly should be convened by the orders of the royal governor, and that the authority of the National Assembly was in no way recognized. The colonial deputies had suggested a plan which did not recognize the authority of the colonial administration. Not until 27 October, 1789, did the question of the relations of the colonies to the mother country come before the National Legislature. On that date there was read to the Assembly a memoir from the ministers to the king, calling attention to certain subjects requiring consideration. Noting the great differences between France and her colonists, it points out that many laws passed are not suited to the colonies, although, being passed for the whole nation, they must be enforced everywhere; that temporary laws are frequently necessary for the colonies on account of the remoteness from France, and that the administration should be in the hands of those empowered to exercise it at once as necessity might arise.¹⁶³ The memoir was sent to the Committee on Commerce.

On the twenty-sixth of November, M. de Curt, deputy from Guadeloupe, in the name of the united colonies, moved that a committee of twenty, one-half deputies of the colonies and the other half deputies from the maritime cities especially interested in commerce and manufacturing, be appointed to consider all matters which related to these important possessions.¹⁶⁴ This motion was in the interests of the colonial delegates whose power would be greatly increased by the appointment of such a standing committee. Blin of Nantes, a member of the Club Massiac, opposed the measure, claiming that the delegates did not represent the colony. Cocherel, the only one of the six deputies from the island who supported the Club Massiac, maintained the view that

¹⁶³ *Mémoire adressé par les ministres du roi à l'Assemblée Nationale, le 27 Octobre, 1789.* (Paris, Royal Printing House), and *Archives*, ix., 592.

¹⁶⁴ *Archives*, x., 263-267. Printed separately as *Motion de M. de Curt, député de la Guadeloupe au nom des colonies réunies.* (Paris, 1789).

San Domingo was not a colony, having of its own accord and upon certain conditions, made an alliance with France.¹⁶⁵ Further he asserted that it was not a French province since its natural conditions and the existence of slavery (which he represented as a philanthropic means of transferring the negroes from the horrors of their native homes to the delights and safety of civilization) prevented its being governed by the same constitution as France. He called it a Franco-American province, and said that it should have a constitution composed partly of the constitution of France and partly of measures necessitated by the peculiar characteristics of the colony. He claimed that this constitution must be drawn up by the inhabitants resident in San Domingo, and that the National Assembly might accept but could not reject or radically amend; and that if it would not accept the constitution it might renounce all rights in the island but could do nothing that would conflict with the alleged original contract. The debate was resumed on the first of December.¹⁶⁶ Moreau de St.-Méry spoke in favor of the proposed measure. Blin spoke again for self-government in the colonies, and compared San Domingo to Ireland with its separate legislature although having a common monarch with England and Scotland. The colonists should make their own constitution and the proposed colonial committee should not be appointed. The debate was resumed on the second and third of December with speeches by Gouy de Arsy,¹⁶⁷ Abbé Grégoire, Abbé Maury and others. It was finally voted that the committee be not established.¹⁶⁸

Not until the second of March did the affair of San Domingo again come before the National Assembly. On that

¹⁶⁵ This claim was made first at least as early as the meeting of the Notables before the convocation of the States General. Garran, i., 147.

¹⁶⁶ *Archives*, x., 346-353.

¹⁶⁷ D'Artsy made a fierce attack on la Luzerne as hostile to the interests of the colony. La Luzerne felt called upon to defend himself, asking through Vicomte de Mirabeau that his administration be investigated. *Archives*, x., 356, 357, 362-364. These charges against la Luzerne were frequently made by the colonists and especially by d'Artsy. *Archives*, xvii., 211; xviii., 561; also *Lettre et déclaration des députés de Saint-Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale adressée à leur commettans*; also *Nouvelles extrêmement importantes arrivées hier à Paris* and *Opinion de M. le marquis de Gouy d'Artsy*. The formal denunciation of la Luzerne by the deputies of San Domingo was drawn up by Gouy d'Artsy and, with appendix containing much documentary evidence, covers three hundred printed pages. It has already been frequently cited. Charges of all kinds of tyrannical conduct were made. No man was more bitterly hated in San Domingo than the Minister of Marine who represented all that was distasteful in the old regime.

¹⁶⁸ It may be observed that the restrictions on colonial trade were an active cause of discontent. *Archives*, x., 17-37; xi., 2, 38, 40-42; viii., 553.

date were presented papers giving an account of the course of events in the island.¹⁶⁹ Colonial affairs were referred to a committee of twelve with orders to report on the eighth.¹⁷⁰ As the debate and action of that day mark an epoch in the history of San Domingo, it will be well to consider first the course of events leading to the calling of the Colonial General Assembly.

We have seen that there were as many factions in France as in the island: The extreme royalists wished the colony to remain under the absolute, exclusive authority of the king; the Club Massiac claimed that the king and a Colonial Assembly should govern and that the National Assembly had no concern with the dependencies; the colonial deputies bitterly opposed the idea that the king and his ministers should have any control over the colony and, although recognizing as yet the power of the National Assembly, they wished this to be surrendered to a committee composed of themselves and the delegates from the commercial cities so that they might support the power of the planters against the people of color. The greater part of the Assembly was suspicious of all these parties, judging that the interests of France as well as those of the free mulattoes demanded that the control of the island should fall into the hands of no faction. From reasons of humanity many favored the people of color, with whom the royal party was inclined to unite in order to gain strength against the planters, the bitter enemies of the royal prerogative.

The plan of the ministers for a Colonial Assembly approved by the Club Massiac had been sent to Peinier accompanied by a letter of instruction. A duplicate of this letter sent by the way of the Cape was seized by the Assembly of the North and opened. In it la Luzerne instructed Peinier "to influence, by way of persuasion the opinions of the members who compose the Colonial Assembly to prevent or to moderate any heated feeling."¹⁷¹ The publication of this letter and the proposed plan of convocation aroused a storm of opposition in the colony. The indignation was directed as much against the Club Massiac as the ministry. The denunciation of la Luzerne by the deputies was approved by the electors of the West and the Assembly of the North. The Club Massiac was censured and its members ordered to

¹⁶⁹ Partially described in the last chapter.

¹⁷⁰ *Archives*, xii., 2-6. This "colonial committee" should not be confused with one bearing that name appointed the year before by resident colonists to represent their interests.

¹⁷¹ Garran, i., 91; *Archives*, xii., 2.

return to the colony or suffer confiscation of their property. The Assembly of the North also protested against the National Assembly's passing measures for San Domingo, and declared that the local legislature must regulate the government and constitution of the colony.¹⁷²

The three provincial assemblies rejected the plan of a colonial assembly on the ground that the ministry had exceeded its powers, and the Assembly of the North declared the action of the Governor calling the colonial assembly for the fifteenth of March illegal. Correspondence followed looking to the calling of a general assembly by the provincial assemblies themselves. On the twenty-fourth of December, the Assembly of the North wrote to the committees of the South and West saying that as they all agreed on the necessity of an assembly, they ought to consider details. It declared that the colony was an "ally" not a "subject" of France and revealed no willingness to submit to the National Assembly.¹⁷³

The plan of the Assembly of the West, agreed to by the others declared that "the deputies should be elected by the primary assemblies of each parish by the citizens domiciled there for a year and paying taxes. No one should be permitted to vote by proxy." The North was to send eighty deputies, the West seventy-four and the South fifty-eight, a total of two hundred and twelve. In order to avoid the influence of the government at Port-au-Prince, the Assembly was summoned to meet at St. Marc, twenty-fifth of March, 1790.¹⁷⁴ Such were the views of the colonists. Let us now consider the action meanwhile taken by the National Assembly.

Among the members of the colonial committee appointed on the second of March was Barnave, who was its chairman. He favored the Club Massiac¹⁷⁵ and opposed the people of color. The committee drew up and reported on the *eighth of March* a measure which satisfied the colonial deputies, the commercial cities and the National Assembly generally. In his speech introducing the measure Barnave dwelt upon the importance of the colony to France, upon the injury done by the advocates of emancipation and upon the importance of avowing that the Declaration of Rights

¹⁷² Garran, i., 92, 93.

¹⁷³ Ardouin, i., 121, 122.

¹⁷⁴ Garran, i., 94, 95.

¹⁷⁵ Garran says that he resided with the Lameths (wealthy colonists), and implies that he may have been bribed by the planters, i., 128.

of the Twentieth of August did not mean the abolition of slavery or equal rights for the people of color. The decree, prefaced by a preamble declaring that the colonies are a part of the French Empire, but that it had never been intended to comprehend them in the constitution decreed for the kingdom, or to subject them to laws incompatible with their local circumstances, declares that each colony may make known its wishes in regard to constitution and administration by the existing colonial assemblies or such as may be immediately called; that the decree upon municipalities and administrative assemblies shall be sent to the colonies for their consideration; and that the colonial assemblies may suggest such amendments to the prohibitive laws on commerce as seem to them desirable, these not to become laws, however, until after an expression of opinion from the commercial cities and the approval of the Assembly. It closes with a declaration that no changes in slavery shall be made and that the nation relies upon the patriotism of the colonists.

The report was received with applause, and when Mirabeau attempted to speak his voice was drowned by cries of "aux voix! aux voix!" The decree was adopted nearly unanimously.¹⁷⁶

The planters had by skillful intrigues and alliances, and by Barnave's eloquence, won a great victory over the *amis des noirs*, the National Assembly having declared that the new order of things, so threatening to the castes in the colonies, did not extend to those places. Further by allowing existing assemblies to make representations upon the form of constitution best suited to the interests of the colonies, and by speaking of assemblies elected by the citizens, it excluded the people of color, for in the existing colonial assemblies they were not recognized, and it was strenuously maintained by the planters that the free colored people were not citizens.

The latter class knew that something must be done to protect their interests so seriously endangered. The people of color in the island had been quiet so far, because they thought that the ideas of the new era would secure them equality. If they were deceived a revolt might follow. The

¹⁷⁶ *Archives*, xii., 68-73. *Opinions* of Vicounte de Mirabeau and Petion de Villeneuve upon the slave trade are annexed to the minutes of that session, 75-94. Mirabeau advocates a retention of the existing order of things both as regards the slave trade and commercial restrictions with investigations and laws to correct abuses.

colored people of Paris petitioned the Assembly and made representations to the colonial committee, saying that in the instructions which were to accompany the Decree of the Eighth of March there must be some recognition of their rights of citizenship.¹⁷⁷ Raimond says, that from the first these instructions were so vague that interminable quarrels between the two classes of free people were inevitable. To the demands of the people of color, Barnave answered that the Assembly could use no words which would recognize class distinctions, but finally consented to change "citoyens" to "toutes personnes." The deputies, according to Raimond, wrote to the colony that these words should be interpreted to mean whites only.¹⁷⁸

The *instructions* were simply regulations which should govern the summoning of a colonial assembly or the continuance of such as might be found existing when the *instructions* should reach the island. As a general principle the colonial committee decided to make no innovations in the relations of the classes, but to allow the colonists to settle the question for themselves on the ground that they were most interested.

On the twenty-third of March Barnave reported this measure providing for the proper execution of the previous decree. The fourth article provided that "all persons twenty five years of age, owners of real estate, or, in default of such property, domiciled in the parish for two years and paying a tax should meet to form the parish assemblies." These parish assemblies should elect delegates to a colonial assembly. The twelfth article provided that if there should exist in the colony a previously called colonial assembly and this did not of itself dissolve, the primary assemblies might decide whether this should continue or a new one be elected; and if the majority decided for a new assembly, the governor should summon it.¹⁷⁹

In the debate¹⁸⁰ Abbé Maury resented the view that the colony was an ally and not a subject, insisting on the unity of the nation. He opposed the granting of a constitution. After one or two speeches came a very curious evasion of the most important question in colonial politics. Abbé Grégoire called attention to the fact that article four was ambiguous and said "the deputies of the colonies inform

¹⁷⁷ Garran, i., 136.

¹⁷⁸ *Veritable Origin*, etc., 23, 24.

¹⁷⁹ *Archives*, xii., 312-318.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, xii., 318-324.

me that they do not intend to deprive the people of color of their eligibility, and I forbear speaking on condition that they will renounce the aristocracy of color." Cocherel replied: "They did not say that and I protest against the assertion in the name of my province." After a little discussion in which it transpired that Arthur Dillon of Martinique, speaking for that island only, had made the statement referred to, the Assembly voted not to discuss the question. Grégoire at a subsequent time said that Barnave told him plainly that, the terms used in the article being general, the people of color were included.¹⁸¹ Garran accepts Grégoire's statement.¹⁸²

Thus the Assembly refused to consider the question above all others needing settlement. The decree literally interpreted would admit the free people of color to the exercise of the suffrage; but the traditions and customary law of the island were against any such concession. It is evident that the colonial deputies did not intend that the colored people should be admitted to full citizenship. The explanation of this evasive action of the Assembly is probably to be found in its unwillingness to do anything which might seem to be inconsistent with its Declaration of Rights and other enunciations of fundamental principles, while, at the same time, it was felt that no hasty action should be taken in settlement of a question affecting the commercial interests of France.¹⁸³ After further debate in which Gouy d'Arisy made another bitter attack on la Luzerne,¹⁸⁴ the measure was passed as presented by the colonial committee (28 March, 1790).¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ *Archives*, xxvi., 16,

¹⁸² i., 138.

¹⁸³ Garran, i., 137, says that Cocherel demanded formally that the people of color be excluded by name from the class of citizens; that Reynaud and Dillon asserted that they already enjoyed the rights of citizenship; that Grégoire insisted that they should be expressly included in article four; that Barnave and several colonial deputies answered him that "c'était le résultat nécessaire de l'article, qu'on ne devoit pas y mettre une énonciation qui pourrait faire supposer que le droit des hommes de couleur étoit contestable et contesté," and that the amendment was withdrawn. He cites contemporary papers but neither the *Archives* nor the *Moniteur* gives this account.

¹⁸⁴ In his speech he read letters showing the feeling in the colony. Bacon de la Chevalerie had become so unpopular that he had been obliged to resign the presidency of the Assembly of the North, in which place he was succeeded by Thibaud. He still retained command of the forces. Dalmas, i., 42; *Moniteur*, 1790, 474. The speech and letters were printed separately under the title *Opinion de M. le Marquis de Gouy d'Arisy, député de Saint-Domingue sur le rétablissement du Conseil Superior du Cap*, etc. *Mars*, 1790.

¹⁸⁵ *Archives*, xii., 381-387.

Thus far then the National Assembly had done nothing to offend the planters and nothing to make effective, out of France, the ideas of liberty and equality. It had declared that the Declaration of Rights did not apply to the dependencies; it refused to admit the people of color to citizenship. Far from giving the slaves their freedom, it refused the free people of color their political rights which even the Black Code of Louis XIV had granted.¹⁸⁶ The colonial deputies had won a signal victory and took the credit for it. In order to be able to protest against any measure that might be passed, they voted that no one of their number should belong to the colonial committee. When Gérard and Reynaud were elected members of it, Cocherel objected strongly to their acceptance. Gérard, however, always more moderate declared that his duty led him to accept. It is recorded that "M. le Chevalier de Cocherel réclame vivement" which he often did, but in this case his objections availed not.¹⁸⁷

In a letter to their constituents signed by all except Gérard the colonial deputies dwell upon the impossibility of "telling all the measures which they had been obliged to take" to secure the almost unanimous vote in favor of the Decree of the Eighth of March "nearly all the articles of which they had suggested to the colonial committee." They also claimed to have dictated the instructions of the Twenty-eighth of March. This great success they consider to be a result of having deputies in the National Assembly rather than envoys to it. It is thus they have secured a majority for a measure which "has forever removed the question of enfranchisement of the slaves, of the abolition of the slave trade and which has assured the happiness of their beloved country, by securing for it the right of making its constitution and of presenting it, *as a matter of form to the National Assembly* which will decree it and to the king who will sanction it."¹⁸⁸ So the deputies in Paris interpreted the decree.

¹⁸⁶ Articles 57-59. Placide-Justin gives this *Édit* in full, 153-174, as does Madiou, iii., 442-451.

¹⁸⁷ *Archives*, xii., 19.

¹⁸⁸ Garran, i., 140-143. The letter is given at length.

CHAPTER V.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

On the twenty-fifth of March, 1790, the colonial assembly met at St. Marc and organized provisionally, but the tardy arrival of the members delayed the final organization until the fifteenth of April. It was composed principally of planters, with some retired officers, some lawyers and a few merchants, the latter coming almost entirely from the cities of Cap Français and St. Marc. Of the two hundred and twelve members, twenty-four were from Cap Français, sixteen from Port-au-Prince, and eight from Cayes, each of the fifty-two parishes in the colony being represented by at least two delegates. Among their number were such men as Daugy, Advocate-General to the Superior Council, Attorney-General at the Cape and a leading spirit in all the revolutionary movements that had occurred in the North; Thibaud whose return from the National Assembly and prominent part in the proceedings of the Assembly of the North have been described; Bacon de la Chevalerie; Valentin de Cuillon, Borel and others who had been conspicuous in their insubordination to the National Assembly.¹⁸⁹ It has not been sufficiently noticed that into the new Assembly were gathered the most active and turbulent spirits from the provincial assemblies. It consequently took on much such a character as they had had before, while they, especially the Assembly of the North, changed in character.

The newly gathered body took the title *Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, thus repudiating the description "colonial"; called its acts "decrees"; had placed on the walls of its place of meeting the motto "*Saint-Domingue, la loi et la roi; notre union fait notre force*"; and took an oath to be faithful to the duties entrusted to it; but its members neglected to take the civic oath which had been decreed in France.¹⁹⁰ It ordered troops on the way from France to return.¹⁹¹ Motions were made without arousing any objection or remonstrance that the deputies of the colony be ordered to abstain from the meet-

¹⁸⁹ Garran, vol. i., 162, 163.

¹⁹⁰ Garran, i., 164, 165.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, i., 166, 167.

ings of the National Assembly until the General Assembly should have perfected its constitution and should be ready to present it to the National Assembly and the king for approval "if it should be expedient to do so."¹⁹²

It decreed that all letters and packages addressed to the governor and intendant, appearing to be from the ministers and to concern the administration should be opened in its presence.¹⁹³ It declared itself permanent, and its members inviolable¹⁹⁴ and organized committees to take charge of certain lines of business. For these acts they had no warrant and such measures were inconsistent with the recognition of the supremacy of the National Assembly.

The General Assembly was preëminently the representative of the planters who made up the bulk of its members. Their pecuniary interests were opposed to those of France, and the prohibitive commercial regime not only prevented their seeking an advantageous market for their productions but made it impossible to buy manufactured goods cheaply, threatening them at this very time with famine or such high prices for bread that slavery would be unprofitable. They had no interest, they thought, in maintaining the then existing relations with France. Beyond question the General Assembly was fully determined to recognize the power of the National Assembly as little as it could, and to make the royal government of the colony subordinate to itself.

The greater part of the population probably approved of this policy, but in the Province of the North there was a different feeling. Cap Français in this province was the chief port in the island and its merchants carried on an immense commerce, a source of wealth to the province. The commercial classes looked with fear on any movement that might unsettle trade. They were naturally conservative and a revolution meant ruin to them. So there arose a conflict of interests between the Provincial Assembly of the North, controlled by the merchants of the city, and the General Assembly, representing the planters of all the provinces. The way in which the two bodies received the Decrees of the Eighth and the Twenty-eighth of March first revealed this disagreement.

The first information of the decrees reached the island unofficially, having been sent to the Assembly of the North

¹⁹² *Adresse prononcée à l'Assemblée Nationale, séance du 30 Septembre au soir par les députés des paroisses du Port-au-Prince et de la Croix-des-Bouquets, (Paris, 1790?), 6.*

¹⁹³ Garran, i., 169, 170. *Archives*, xix., 547 sqq.

¹⁹⁴ *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 5.

by merchants of Nantes and the deputies of San Domingo. It was received by this Assembly with joy as great as that which its passage had given the merchants of France. Now it was felt that slavery was safe; fêtes and public ceremonies testified very generally to the relieved public opinion.¹⁹⁵ To be sure some claimed that the decree by saying "all persons" included the free people of color, but the universality of the expressions of satisfaction show that no such interpretation was made by the whites generally. The governor wrote subsequently to the inspectors of elections that the decree was not to be interpreted as admitting the people of color to the parish assemblies.¹⁹⁶

A courier was immediately dispatched to carry the news to St. Marc, and even there it aroused at first applause. It was voted at once that, on the same day, the twenty-sixth of April, an address of thanks should be sent to the National Assembly for having concerned itself about the French islands in America; but, before the official copy was signed, it was voted on the next day to delay this address of thanks. It was never sent. On this day also a member having moved that the decree be at once executed, it was voted inexpedient to take action.¹⁹⁷

The General Assembly passed all its acts as final decrees to be executed without the approval of governor or king. The basis of the constitution laid down by the National Assembly was disregarded, and laws were passed by the colonial legislature according to the forms it had itself prescribed. This body was to be a law unto itself. It passed laws against usury,¹⁹⁸ reorganized the judicial system,¹⁹⁹ and extended greatly the provisions of the act of the National Assembly upon municipalities.²⁰⁰ The act prohibiting usury was a direct blow at the merchants and favored the planters who were the borrowing class. The reforms of the judiciary were distasteful to the lawyers. Thus the General Assembly antagonized the two classes that were especially strong in the Assembly of the North. In recognizing the municipalities greatly increased police powers were put into the hands of supporters of the Assembly who thus were able to give that body great assistance.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ Dalmás, i., 50. Dumourier, 16.

¹⁹⁶ Ardouin, i., 130, citing *Rapport de Garran sur J. Raimond en 1795*, 14, 20, and *Rapport de Tarbe en 1791*, 9.

¹⁹⁷ Garran, i., 167, 168, quoting minutes of the Assembly.

¹⁹⁸ Placide-Justin, 186. La Croix, i., 39.

¹⁹⁹ 14 May.

²⁰⁰ Garran, i., 182.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, i., 182, 184.

On the Twenty-eighth of May the General Assembly passed an act setting forth the principles upon which the new constitution was to be based. In spite of opposition it was declared to have been passed unanimously.²⁰² It was called *Bases Constitutionnelles de l'Assemblée Générale*.²⁰³ The lengthy preamble declares "that the right of legislating on the internal regime belongs essentially and necessarily" to the colony, and that a new contract must be made between France and the colony concerning their common interests. It also declares that all decrees passed by the National Assembly without consulting the colony are not binding in the island. The first two articles declare that the legislative power in the internal affairs of the colony belongs to the General Assembly, and that decrees of the National Assembly have force only after having been accepted by the General Assembly. Article VI declares that acts of the National Assembly in regard to commercial and other common relations shall not have the force of laws until approved by the colonial assembly. The king was to approve acts passed by the assembly and the power of the governor general was denied. The last article said, "the preceding articles as forming part of the constitution of the French colony of San Domingo shall be immediately transmitted to France to receive there the sanction of the king and the National Assembly." Two members of the General Assembly resigned very soon after the passage of this measure on account of its unwarrantable provisions, and six deputies from the North refused to sign propositions which might be regarded as acts of revolt.²⁰⁴ The best commentary upon this document will be found in the narration of the subsequent proceedings of this assembly.

As has already been indicated Bacon de la Chevalarie had lost influence in the North on account of his policy, which was harmful to the interests of the merchant classes. He was elected president of the General Assembly, another evidence of the difference in policy between this body and the Assembly of the North.²⁰⁵ From the first the latter body, accepting the Decree of the Eighth of March, protested against the course of the General Assembly and its

²⁰² Ibid, i., 170. *Moniteur*, 1790, 1052.

²⁰³ *Décret de l'Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue rendu à la unanimité en sa séance du 28 Mai, 1790.* (Paris, 1790). The preamble is given by Garran, i., 171-177, and the body of the act by Placide-Justin, 183-186, and La Croix, i., 34-37.

²⁰⁴ Dalmas, i., 51, 52.

²⁰⁵ *Moniteur*, 1790, 490.

assumption of sovereignty. On the seventeenth of May it had refused to accept the act of May fourteenth on the judiciary, and declared "that henceforth no decree will be promulgated which has not been previously communicated to the provincial assemblies, sanctioned by the governor-general and closed by these words 'saving the definitive decision of the National Assembly and the sanction of the king.'" Thus the issue was squarely joined. The North opposed a policy leading to independence, supported the National Assembly and recognized the authority of the governor.²⁰⁶

That the Assembly of the North did not stand alone is shown by the fact that the provincial assembly of the South (16 May) passed a resolution of thanks to the National Assembly for its decree and entered into communication with the Assembly of the North. The act passed by this body on the seventeenth was ratified by several communities in the North, and parishes such as Croix-des-Bouquets, Arcaye, Petit-Goave, Fond-des-Nègres and Anse-à-Veau (23 May) passed resolutions calling upon the General Assembly to give literal adherence to the decrees of the National Assembly.²⁰⁷ Against the decree of the twenty-eighth of May the Assembly of the North issued (1 June) a protest declaring incidentally that independence was very undesirable.²⁰⁸

Some weeks after the first information of the decrees of the National Assembly reached the island the official notification and copies were received (31 May).²⁰⁹ In its letter of acknowledgement of the same date the General Assembly pretended to find sanction for its course in the fact that the initiative had been granted the colonies as regards their internal affairs.²¹⁰ On the next day it declared that it retracted none of the principles declared 28 May but as public opinion seemed hostile, the purity of its intentions should be shown by allowing the people to vote on the continuance of the Assembly. It adhered to the decree of March the eighth "in all that was not opposed to the rights of the French part of San Domingo already established in part by the decree passed by the General Assembly the twenty-eighth of the past month"! In accordance with the instructions of

²⁰⁶ *Arrêté l'Assemblée Provinciale du Nord de St. Domingue . . . au Cap Français, séance du 17 Mai, 1790. Sur l'extrait des registres des Deliberations de ladite Assemblée* (Cap Français et Bordeaux, 1790).

²⁰⁷ *Archives*, xix., 549.

²⁰⁸ Garran, i., 185-187. *Moniteur*, 1790, 957.

²⁰⁹ Garran is mistaken in saying June first.

²¹⁰ *Décret* referred to in reference 203, 16.

March 28th, "*sans rien préjugés sur lesdites instructions*," it invited the parishes to at once declare whether they desire the General Assembly to continue.²¹¹

In a letter to the National Assembly the General Assembly professes attachment to France²¹² but in its private dispatches to the deputies its tone is very different. It calls them "*commissioners*";²¹³ orders them to recognize only its own decrees of 28 May and 1 June; instructs them to present these acts to the National Assembly for its "*acceptation*" but to avoid all debate, and after the National Assembly has accepted them to present them to the king for his "*acceptation*." Then they are to present to the king the decrees passed in regard to the internal affairs of the island. If, however, the Assembly did not approve of its acts, they are to take no further steps except to inform the General Assembly.²¹⁴ Soon afterward it ordered the deputies to suspend their functions until it should be decided whether it was advisable for the colony to maintain delegates at the National Assembly.²¹⁵

The official news of these acts was given the National Assembly by Cocherel, 29 July. On motion of Barnave, who pointed out the illegality of these decrees, they were referred to the colonial committee in spite of Cocherel's protest that there was no such committee.²¹⁶ Much interest was felt in France about San Domingo and the *Moniteur* has much to say about the course of events there. There was apparently no doubt that the General Assembly was insubordinate and desired independence, but, said the *Moniteur*, "it is very important to prove that the colony of San Domingo is utterly opposed to the principles which its General Assembly has developed in its decrees of 28 May and 1 June."²¹⁷

There was evidence to show that in some measure this was true as we have indicated above. One parish is said to have recalled its delegates.²¹⁸ The Assembly scattered addresses throughout the colony, endeavoring to satisfy the people that it was in accord with the National Assembly. At Port-au-Prince it used force to influence a meeting called to con-

²¹¹ *Moniteur*, 1790, 911. *Archives*, xix., 551.

²¹² Garran, i., 192.

²¹³ This term is used in several letters at this time. Garran, i., 196.

²¹⁴ Garran, i., 194.

²¹⁵ *Moniteur*, 1790, 929. Letters from San Domingo, 23 June.

²¹⁶ *Moniteur*, 1790, 877.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1790, 903.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*. Same page as last reference and 911.

sider the continuance of the existing legislature, and in various ways is charged with having attempted to influence the people into making a favorable decision upon its policy and acts.²¹⁹ The opposition to the General Assembly was least in the West and greatest in the North. This body passed various measures directed against the provincial legislatures and the governor. It declared the Superior Council at the Cape dissolved and ordered d' Ogé, commandant for the king at Jacmel, to appear at its bar.²²⁰ A motion for non-intercourse with the Assembly of the North was made but not put to vote.²²¹

Finally it was decided to send commissioners to the Cape, nominally to attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the two bodies. Valentin de Cullion was chief of the four commissioners sent. The real significance of this visit will be perceived only when it is known that the municipal government of Cap Français was very hostile to the Assembly of the North and supported the General Assembly. The commissioners endeavored to arouse the municipal government to the destruction of its rival and by their inflammatory speeches excited the people. On one day such tumult was raised that the provincial assembly was driven from its hall but on the next it ordered the commissioners out of the province, and when they appealed to the municipality, drove them out, with the assistance of troops and citizens.²²² This embassy, then, had merely resulted in increasing ill-feeling.

During June the voting of the parishes upon the question of the renewal of the General Assembly occupied the attention of all; but the rival legislatures found a little time to fulminate against each other. Each ordered the people not to execute the other's decrees, and declared the other dissolved. The northern body threatened to send to France for trial²²³ any members of the General Assembly caught in the province and the Assembly at St. Marc ordered two prominent members of its rival to be sent to France for trial.²²⁴

Upon the relations of the governor, Peinier, to the General Assembly at this time light is thrown by his let-

²¹⁹ Ibid, 923.

²²⁰ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1179. In a speech of Barnave, 11 Oct.

²²¹ Garran, i., 198.

²²² Garran, i., 199-203, gives a full account. Dalmas, I., 53, 54. *Adresse de l'Assemblée Provinciale de la Partie du Nord de Saint-Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale*. (Paris, 1790), 6, 7.

²²³ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1015.

²²⁴ *Moniteur*, 1790, 997.

ters.²²⁵ He wrote (27 April) that he wished to join it and be one of the citizens. The assembly expressed joy at his sentiments and asked him to open its sessions. He consented and expressed a desire that they might work together along the lines marked out by the National Assembly. On the twenty-ninth polite letters passed between them. The early acts of the assembly alarmed the governor, for only about two weeks after its opening session (13 May) he charged them with illegal assumption of power in summoning royal officers before them for trial,²²⁶ and in ordering the intendant to come to St. Marc. The Assembly in its reply insisted that its acts and commands be obeyed.

The governor's reply was a moderate, creditable letter defending his course and stating his position. The old constitution was in force until a new one should be adopted. He was willing to make concessions so far as his duty to the king permitted and to put into execution such acts of the assembly as seemed to him proper.²²⁷ The assembly insisted that the decree in regard to municipalities be put into execution, but the governor refused and reminded it that it had no power until the parishes had voted to confirm and continue it.²²⁸ In many of the parishes municipalities were instituted without consent of the governor.

It has already been noticed that the Act of 17 May passed by the Assembly of the North, revealed more friendly feeling in that body toward the governor than had previously existed. Letters between them lead to a definite understanding.²²⁹ Cambefort and Mauduit, two officers of the royal troops, are said to have worked with much zeal to secure this result, being earnest supporters of the royal power.²³⁰ Henceforth the lines were more definitely drawn; the government officials, the Superior Councils and the Assembly of the North united in support of the king and National Assembly, in opposition to the General Assembly supported as will be seen by the greater part of the colony.

²²⁵ *Correspondence de M. le Général avec, l'Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*, etc. (Bordeaux, 1790). *Suite de la correspondance de monsieur le Gouverneur Général*, etc.

²²⁶ *Adresse*, cited in reference 192. Campan, captain in the regiment of Port-au-Prince, had been ordered to appear at the bar of the house for disobedience.

²²⁷ *Correspondence de M. le Général*, etc., 16. On pp. 17-22 is found an extract from the minutes of the Assembly of the South to the effect that the parishes had renounced its legislative authority.

²²⁸ Garran, i., 208.

²²⁹ *Suite de la Correspondence de Monsieur, le Gouverneur Général*, etc.

²³⁰ Dalmas, i., 44.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RATIFICATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The voting upon the question whether the General Assembly should be continued or a new one called, continued through June and was, as a general thing, orderly.²³¹ It was claimed that the election in Port-au-Prince was fraudulent, and some protests were made.²³² However the city voted for renewal by 486 to 84.²³³ The members of the assembly exerted themselves to the utmost to secure the perpetuation of this body. They issued addresses to show that they were in harmony with the National Assembly.²³⁴ Much interest was felt in France in regard to this struggle.

The General Assembly won against the combined strength of its adversaries. Its policy was popular with the classes who had suffrage. In the South and West all but three parishes were said to have voted for renewal²³⁵ and in Cayes the vote was unanimous, although one twentieth of the voters would have added the condition that the colonial legislature be required to conform to the decrees of the National Assembly.²³⁶ The total results are somewhat differently given by different authorities, but the following is perhaps as free from bias as any of the estimates. Of the fifty-two parishes, twenty with seventy-three deputies voted for unconditional renewal; seven, with seventeen deputies voted for renewal on condition that the assembly conform to the decrees of the National Assembly; thirteen, with forty-eight votes voted for a new assembly, and the remainder did not vote.²³⁷ Barnave gave different figures and claimed that the result was greatly misinterpreted and twisted.²³⁸ Others made

²³¹ *Moniteur*, 1790, 977.

²³² *Ibid*, 1790, 923; Garran, i., 212.

²³³ *Moniteur*, 1790, 977; *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 13. It is claimed that this result was obtained by fraud.

²³⁴ Garran, i., 213, 214; *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 12, 13; *Moniteur*, 1790, 923. This is very full.

²³⁵ *Moniteur*, 1790, 977.

²³⁶ The same as last reference.

²³⁷ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1035. The *Moniteur* was, of course, opposed to the General Assembly, so probably did not err in its favor.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 1790, 1185; *Archives*, xix., 552.

similar charges.²³⁹ But there can be no doubt that the colony supported the General Assembly and no explanation alters the simple fact that a *majority of those allowed to vote* favored the stand which the representatives at St. Marc had taken.

The *Instructions* provided that the governor should tabulate the returns and announce the result ; but, without this formality, the General Assembly, 6 July, in a decree full of contempt for the National Assembly declared its continuation by a vote of thirty for dissolution, fifteen for conditional confirmation, one hundred and thirty-five for unconditional confirmation and thirty-three not voting.²⁴⁰ It attacked la Luzerne and ordered a public celebration for the Fourteenth of July.²⁴¹ It ordered the troops to take an oath of fidelity to itself and transmitted this decree to the governor indirectly through the Committee of the West. Peinier refused to publish it, saying there should be no intermediary between the representative of the king and the General Assembly and that the latter had no right, as yet, to make laws for the colony.²⁴² The response of the assembly was a fierce denunciation of Peinier, which was printed and scattered through the colony although not formally passed.²⁴³

On the thirteenth of July Peinier formally declared the vote and proclaimed the assembly renewed.²⁴⁴

Besides the royal troops there were in the colony many volunteers. As they were composed of inhabitants it might have been supposed that they would adhere to the Colonial Assembly after the ratification. But many of the soldiers were *Petits-Blancs* and hostile to the planters. Certain it is that the attempt to administer the new oath of fidelity to "the nation, the law, the king and the French part of San Domingo" was not in all cases a success. On the occasion of the great celebration on the Fourteenth of July the volunteers at St. Marc, center of the power of the assembly, refused to take the oath at the command of de la

²³⁹ *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 13.

²⁴⁰ *Archives*, xix, 552.

²⁴¹ Garran, i., 216-218.

²⁴² *Archives*, xix., 553.

²⁴³ Garran, i., 220, 221.

²⁴⁴ *Archives*, xix., 552. His announcement of the result was substantially that already given from the *Moniteur*. As the answers returned were not simply "yes" or "no" but were variously qualified and conditioned, there was a chance for difference of interpretation. This accounts for the discrepancies in the statements of the result.

Chevalarie. They shouted "Vive le Roi et l'Assemblée Nationale!" and declared San Domingo to be forever inseparable from the mother country.²⁴⁵ The writer of this account thought their action very significant and said that the volunteer troops of St. Marc, Port-au-Prince and the Cape were in regular correspondence. In his opinion the union of the troops would prevent the evils threatening the colony through the General Assembly. The troops at Port-au-Prince supported the governor,²⁴⁶ as did the various volunteer organizations of the North. The people of the Cape had dissolved the municipal government which had been such a tool of the General Assembly. The people of that city would not listen to a decree from the General Assembly in regard to the matter.²⁴⁷ In the cities there were many opponents of the General Assembly; the *Petits-Blancs*, the merchants, the lawyers had different interests from those of the planters.²⁴⁸

The triumphant ratification of the legislature at St. Marc was not followed by the success one might expect. In its early days it contended with the Assembly of the North, but then the governor was favorable. Now the officials, the Assembly at the Cape and the volunteers, or part of them, were united against it. The Governor could do nothing but oppose it. There chanced to be in the island a man well fitted to act as Peinier's chief adviser, the chevalier Mauduit Duplessis, colonel of the regiment of Port-au-Prince and commandant of the city. He had served in the American war and won praise from Washington. He was devotedly attached to the king and bitterly opposed to the Revolution. He had recently been with the Count d'Artois. The soldiers were warmly attached to him although he was a stern disciplinarian.

The *Pompons-Blancs* still existed as an organization devoted to the old regime. The Committee of the West issued an order dissolving it, but de Peinier then interfered and protected it.²⁴⁹ The General Assembly then passed an act forbidding the existence of all corporations other than those permitted by the French constitution.²⁵⁰ In spite of

²⁴⁵ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1035.

²⁴⁶ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1035, 1039.

²⁴⁷ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1052.

²⁴⁸ Per contra see *Relation Authentique*, etc., cited in reference 152, pp. 11-13, where is given a proclamation of the commune of Petit Goa against Peinier.

²⁴⁹ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1039.

²⁵⁰ *Archives*, xix., 553, 554.

its claim to supremacy in internal affairs, it now appeals to the French constitution in regard to a purely local matter. Garran points to this as one piece of testimony to the weak and undecided course henceforth pursued by the assembly. It published addresses at this time showing the same lack of confidence.²⁵¹ Here we have another illustration of the principle that in a contest between a legislative body trying to wield executive power as well, and a well constituted executive, the latter will have the advantage. In San Domingo the struggle was very short.

The Assembly issued some decrees after this but they were of little effect. It ordered the intendant to turn over to its treasury 200,000 livres a month to be used in paying its members; but he declared this impossible.²⁵² They could not execute their decrees.²⁵³

Perceiving the weakness of the General Assembly, its enemies now began to take active measures against it. The Superior Council of Port-au-Prince investigated the murder of Ferraud-de-Beaudières and other similar crimes. The tribunals in the North brought charges against Bacon de la Chevalarie.²⁵⁴ The General Assembly ordered these judicial proceedings to be relinquished since they were not in accordance with the decrees of the National Assembly.²⁵⁵ It ordered the governor to come to St. Marc, with his officials and records.²⁵⁶ He, of course, refused. The commissioners from St. Marc who brought this order were received coldly with great display of power. They reported that the barracks of the royal troops were being fortified and that force was apparently to be used.²⁵⁷ The attendance upon the Assembly began to decrease rapidly from resignations and absences.

In the early summer there had been great scarcity of bread-stuffs.²⁵⁸ On the 17 July the Assembly passed a law providing that all ports should enjoy the same privileges then accorded to the Cape, Port-au-Paix and Cayes, namely, the free importation of provisions and articles of prime necessity. Both the governor and the Assembly of the North denied that there was necessity for any such action, the

²⁵¹ Garran, i., 229, 230.

²⁵² *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 17.

²⁵³ Garran, i., 231.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, i., 232, 233.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, i., 233.

²⁵⁶ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1039.

²⁵⁷ Garran, i., 237.

²⁵⁸ *Moniteur*, 1790, 889.

scarcity having been relieved.²⁵⁹ The former refused to approve of the bill. On the 25th July the Assembly passed a second decree providing that ships bringing provisions might take away in payment the products of the island, and that the municipalities should have charge of the execution of the law. This would have introduced the greatest possible freedom of trade.²⁶⁰ The passage of these permanent laws without the approval of the governor was entirely contrary to the *Instructions* of March twenty-eighth.²⁶¹

In San Domingo the old royal troops still remained under the control of the king's representative. The General Assembly now followed the example of the National Assembly in an attempt to gain over and reorganize the regular troops. After preliminary acts confiscating powder magazines and munitions of war, it passed, 27 July, a law declaring the troops of the line disbanded and establishing in their place *Gardes Nationales Soldées de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*. Officers and privates of the old organizations could enter the new by taking an oath of fidelity to the French part of San Domingo. Heavy bounties were promised and those who did not care to serve in the new regiments were promised transportation to France. The municipalities were to execute this law.²⁶² The troops at St. Marc accepted this arrangement, but elsewhere the troops remained true to their officers.²⁶³

The royal officers now determined to dissolve the Assembly at St. Marc by using the troops at Port-au-Prince and the crews of the men-of-war in the harbor, the *Léopard*, ship-of-the-line, and *l'Engageante*, frigate. The crew of the *Léopard*, however, was very favorably disposed toward the General Assembly and looked upon the ship's officers as upholders of the old regime. Becoming aware of the disposition of the crew, Peinier and the Marquis de la Galissonnière, commander of the naval forces, decided that the vessels should be removed from the vicinity.²⁶⁴ Learning of this the General Assembly ordered them not to leave the harbor of Port-au-Prince.²⁶⁵ The crew, hearing of this, refused to obey orders. La Galissonnier and some of his officers left the ship, and when they refused to return, at the

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 1790, 1277.

²⁶⁰ *Archives*, xix., 555, 556. Text of the act is given.

²⁶¹ Garran, i., 240-243.

²⁶² *Archives*, xix., 556, 557. Text of the act.

²⁶³ Garran, i., 248.

²⁶⁴ *Adresse*, cited reference 192, 21, 22.

²⁶⁵ *Archives*, xix., 557, 558.

dictation of the crew, the sailors made Santo Domingo, a lieutenant of the ship and creole proprietor in the colony, commander.²⁶⁶ The vessel soon sailed to St. Marc and was there received with most extravagant expressions of joy, being christened *Sauveur des Français*.²⁶⁷

On the day after the meeting the governor issued a proclamation arraiguing the General Assembly for its long-continued acts of rebellion; declaring it had allowed "formal motions of independence" to be made in its interest, and that independence was the end toward which it had been constantly working. He pronounced its members traitors and declared his intention of dissolving it by force.²⁶⁸

The Committee of the West with headquarters at Port-au-Prince was the most active assistant of the General Assembly. The Governor and Mauduit determined to arrest its members, who had fortified their place of meeting with artillery and collected an armed force of several hundred.²⁶⁹ In the early morning hours of 30 July the plan arranged the day before was put into execution. Quite a skirmish took place but the forces of the committee were defeated and one of the committee captured. The others had taken refuge elsewhere. Mauduit was charged with having trailed in the dust the flags of Port-au-Prince "in a manner insulting to the Nation whose colors they bore."²⁷⁰ This act was made much of later.

While the Assembly of the North refused to recognize the authority of the General Assembly even after the vote of renewal,²⁷¹ it had come to an agreement with Cambefort, commander of the regiment of the Cape. They had sworn to work together against the enemies of the nation. On the 30 July before news of the governor's proclamation had

²⁶⁶ *Rélation Authentique*, 15-19. *Conduite de M. Santo-Domingue, commandant le vaisseau le Léopard, lue par lui-même à l'Assemblée Nationale le 7 Octobre, 1790.* (Paris? 1790?)

²⁶⁷ *Rélation Authentique*, 41, 42. Garran, i., 253-255.

²⁶⁸ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1065; *Archives*, xix., 559, 560; also Peinier's account, *Moniteur*, 1790, 1277.

²⁶⁹ There are several accounts of this affair, agreeing substantially. *Archives*, xix., 660; *Moniteur*, 1790, 1065; *Adresse*, cited in reference 192, 22-25, Garran, i., 248-250; *Rélation Authentique*, 20-25. The latter is favorable to the adherents of the committee. The account to a friend written by Coustard, second in command in the colony and an intimate friend of Peinier is interesting and gives facts not in other accounts. It was printed in *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, No. 14, 1-4. This letter was dated 30 July. Mauduit told Coustard the details of which he was not personally aware.

²⁷⁰ Garran, i., 251.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, i., 257.

arrived, the Assembly of the North called upon Peinier to dissolve the Assembly at St. Marc and to call a new colonial assembly according to the *Instructions*. It sent a body of troops under Vincent to assist him, or, in case he did not see fit to proceed against their rivals, to seize the deputies from the North with all the papers and minutes and bring them to the Cape.²⁷²

When the news of the attack on the Committee of the West and of Peinier's proclamation reached St. Marc, 31 July, there was great excitement. The Assembly deposed and proscribed the royal officials and appointed M. de Fierville, commandant at Cayes, governor.²⁷³ Active measures were at once taken to fortify St. Marc. A number of parishes sent detachments of soldiers or promises of assistance in the first days of August, and among these were some from the Province of the North.²⁷⁴ The municipalities of some of the larger places approved the governor's policy.²⁷⁵

The General Assembly issued an appeal to arms written in the exclamatory style of the period.²⁷⁶ At a later time, however, it pretended to have been very unwilling to begin war, and in its *Relation Authentique* no mention is made of its proclamation. It passed some very absurd decrees and wrote to the colonial committee inveighing bitterly against its enemies. A sentence in their letter indicates that it had thought of a journey to France as a last resort.²⁷⁷

Although at Port-au-Prince all possible measures were taken to destroy the influence of the dissolved Committee of the West, Mauduit avoided the shedding of blood. By a court martial one hundred and twenty-seven soldiers of the regiment of Port-au-Prince, who at St. Marc had joined the forces of the Assembly, were condemned to death, but the sentence was never carried out.

²⁷² *Archives*, xix., 562-564.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 561, 562. *Relation Authentique*, 29-31. Garran, i., 263. *Adresse*, cited in reference 192, 29-32. Fierville had betrayed to the General Assembly letters from la Luzerne.

²⁷⁴ *Relation Authentique*, 36, 41, 43. This *ex parte* statement alleges that the Assembly of the North contained only representatives from the Cape and four or five other parishes in the province, and that the other twenty parishes supported the General Assembly. It is certain that not all the parishes in the North were in sympathy with the body at the Cape.

²⁷⁵ *Relation Authentique*, 59-71. *Adresse*, cited in reference 192, 32-34, 39-43.

²⁷⁶ *Adresse*, cited in reference 192, 27, 28; Garran, i., 264. *Archives*, xix., 561.

²⁷⁷ Garran, i., 265, 266.

The army from the Cape, under Vincent, landed at Gonaves. The Assembly at St. Marc, thus situated between the armies of Vincent and Mauduit, was in a dangerous position. Attempts to reach an understanding with Vincent were unsuccessful.²⁷⁸ Later the Assembly maintained that their position had been impregnable and that the course of action they pursued was dictated by a desire to save further bloodshed. But their decrees of the time show no such humane feelings.²⁷⁹ The merchants and many other citizens of St. Marc were in harmony with the Assembly of the North. An agent of the Club Massiac wrote that the city was well fortified but that "it was to be wished that it had been as sure of its internal safety. It is estimated that it had more enemies inside than without."²⁸⁰

Decreased in number from two hundred and twelve to eighty-five, surrounded by enemies within and without the city, the General Assembly decided to appeal to the National Assembly. A profound admiration is said to have taken possession of the citizens upon hearing of this decision, but they sent to Vincent a letter requesting him not to march against the city. They protested their devotion to the General Assembly.²⁸¹ On the afternoon of the eighth of August the deputies met in their old hall for a last session before embarking. Their families filled the seats reserved for substitutes; the streets were crowded with citizens, some filled with despair and fear, others with joy. Amidst long lines of troops with cries of *Vive la Nation! Vive la Roi! Vive l'Assemblée Générale* they marched to the shore and embarked on the *Léopard*. On the next day a session was held on ship board, addresses to the parishes were voted and a general proclamation declaring the reasons for the action of the Assembly and its devotion to the National Assembly was issued.²⁸² In the evening at eight having taken on board the archives, the soldiers of the National Guard who had deserted from the troops-of-the-line and a few of their most pronounced adherents, they set sail for France.²⁸³

²⁷⁸ *Relation Authentique*, 45-48.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 48-54. Garran, i., 265, 266.

²⁸⁰ Garran, i., 268.

²⁸¹ The Municipality wrote Vincent that they were faithful to the General Assembly. *Dépêches arrivées de Saint-Domingue, le 29 Septembre, 1790, à l'adresse de l'Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue à Paris.* (Paris (?) 1790 ?)

²⁸² *Décret de l'Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue, rendu à l'unanimité en sa séance du 28 Mai, 1790, 17-26; Archives, xix., 564-566.*

²⁸³ *Rélation Authentique*, 57-59.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN FRANCE.

"A courier officially come from Brest, the seventeenth of this month, at eight o'clock in the evening, informs us that the vessel the *Léopard* entered that port the fourteenth, having on board eighty members of the General Assembly of San Domingo, who embarked on her at St. Marc, the eighth of August, after the mustering of the troops-of-the-line and of the colonial volunteers, who marched under M. de Peinier, to dissolve the Assembly." Thus the *Moniteur*²⁸⁴ announced on the nineteenth of September, the arrival of the San Domingans. On the same day a similar announcement was made in the National Assembly, with the statement that the municipality of Brest had delayed the departure of a ship about to sail for the West Indies until further advices were received from the Assembly.²⁸⁵

The municipality of Brest gave the General Assembly a warm reception. A military procession, visits of deputations from learned societies, entertainment at private houses, the freedom of the theatres, enthusiastic applause aroused the hopes of the delegates. "I cannot recount to you all the evidences of affection which the city of Brest has given the colonists" wrote one of their number in a letter published in the *Moniteur*.²⁸⁶ The comment of the *Moniteur* is significant: "Their letter does not tell how this indiscreet enthusiasm has changed into disorder and insurrection. The landing from the *Léopard* is painted only in profile; but the other face is only too well known." This allusion is to a serious mutiny that broke out in the fleet at Brest, and for which the *Eighty-five* have generally been held responsible. From the papers presented to the National Assembly by la Luzerne, however, it appears that there had been much discontent among the sailors at Brest for two weeks before the arrival of the *Léopard*, on account of a new penal code governing discipline and because of alleged irregularities in pay.²⁸⁷ The arrival of the General Assembly with the news of the course of events in the island, including the revolt of

²⁸⁴ 1790, 1083.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1086.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1127.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 1790, 1063.

the crew of the *Léopard*, gave new fuel to the flames. Diplomas and medals had been given to the sailors of this ship.²⁸⁸ It was very natural that the crews of the vessels at Brest about to sail for San Domingo should look upon the General Assembly as a body of men persecuted by the privileged classes, and should conclude that they were being sent to the colony to uphold officers of the king. It is probable that the General Assembly desired to do all possible to prevent the sailing of vessels carrying reinforcements to Peinier and that they instigated the municipality of Brest to detain them;²⁸⁹ but the mere narration of their misfortunes and the account given by the sailors recently arrived from San Domingo were sufficient to excite renewed outbreaks among the turbulent sailors. The members of the General Assembly would hardly have been so foolish as to prejudice their cause by intentionally causing disturbances in the fleet.

On the twentieth of September after receiving a communication from la Luzerne charging the San Domingans with having excited the revolt, the National Assembly passed a decree providing for punishment of the mutineers, the disarming of the *Léopard*, the discharge of her crew and the removal from Brest immediately of the members of the regiment of Port-au-Prince. It ordered the General Assembly to report at Paris at once. In the debate Barnave expressed himself strongly against the colonial assembly.²⁹⁰

On the twentieth of September the *Eighty-five* held a public meeting at Brest which adjourned to meet in Paris the fifth of October. On the way some visited Nantes and other commercial cities to obtain money from their correspondents and to arouse public opinion in their favor.²⁹¹ The commercial cities had been very friendly to the planters in the early days,²⁹² but now the latter met everywhere a cool reception.²⁹³ Those who visited Nantes were ordered to depart within twenty-four hours. The belief that the colonial assembly plotted independence was the reason for this changed attitude. The island was said to be indebted to the merchants of France to the amount of 68,000,000

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 1790, 1154.

²⁸⁹ Garran tries to show, i., 284, that the General Assembly arrived at Brest before the first trouble in the fleet and that it was responsible for the outbreak. But the official reports of la Luzerne cited above show that the mutiny broke out on the sixth and that the colonists did not arrive until the fourteenth. He does the General Assembly an injustice.

²⁹⁰ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1093, 1096, 1097.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 1127.

²⁹² *Ibid*, 709.

²⁹³ Garran, i., 286.

livres, and the Planters were charged with plotting revolt in order to escape payment.²⁹⁴ There was also a rumor that the colonists wished to sell the island to the English for forty million livres.²⁹⁵

The opponents of the General Assembly were everywhere in great favor in France. The assembly of the North, Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets sent commissioners to the National Assembly to justify their course.²⁹⁶ They were everywhere received with honor.²⁹⁷

On the thirtieth of September the representatives of the two cities of San Domingo above named appeared before the National Assembly and defended the actions of the opponents of the General Assembly.²⁹⁸ The members of this body were not able to appear on that date²⁹⁹ but on the second of October the *Eighty-five* came before the National Assembly and through Valentin de Cullion as spokesman defended themselves from the charges against them. He insisted that the General Assembly represented the Planters who were the permanent population of the colony while the opposition was made up of merchants and lawyers temporarily in the island; that the General Assembly had accepted the decrees of the eighth of March and of the twenty-eighth of the same month; that the decree of the twenty-eighth recognized the fact that the colony needed laws different from those of France; that the members of the General Assembly were the real representatives of the colony which had ratified its acts; and that all the acts this body had passed were conformable to the decrees of the National Assembly.³⁰⁰ He avoids mention of those acts which were most reprehensible and the speech sounds like an excuse of those trying to twist their actions to suit the laws rather than the statement of men confident of the righteousness of their cause.

On the eleventh of October, Barnave, chairman of the colonial committee, began his report on the troubles in San Domingo. His speech was completed and final action taken on the next day. He praised de Peinier, Mauduit and the Assembly of the North. He declared that from the time of its formation the Assembly of St. Marc had

²⁹⁴ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1053.

²⁹⁵ Placide-Justin, 189.

²⁹⁶ *Lettre des membres de l'Assemblée Provinciale du Nord de St. Domingue à l'Assemblée Nationale*, (Paris, 1790); *Adresse* cited in reference 192, 39-48.

²⁹⁷ Garran, i., 287.

²⁹⁸ *Archives*, xix., 324-336. Printed separately; see reference 192.

²⁹⁹ *Archives*, xix., 322.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, xix., 422-424; printed separately as the *Discours prononcée à l'Assemblée Générale de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue*. (Paris, 1790?).

usurped legislative and executive power ; had accepted the acts of the National Assembly only provisionally ; had, 28 May, passed an act excluding the National Assembly from the regulation of the internal affairs of the colony and reducing the connection of the metropolis and the colony to a simple treaty of commerce ; had put this act into execution at once, although it now denied this ; had acted illegally and without reason in opening the ports, in reorganizing the troops, in seducing the crew of the *Léopard*, and in opposing the Governor.³⁰¹ The decree proposed by the committee declared that the Colonial Assembly had violated the laws of the realm ; and it reiterated the principles of the acts of March eighth and March twenty-eighth. It nullified the acts of the Colonial Assembly, deposed it, praised its opponents, approved of the proceedings of Peinier and the other officers, asked the King to summon a new assembly and to send troops to support the Governor, and ordered the members of the Colonial Assembly to wait the further pleasure of the National Assembly. A motion to adjourn was rejected, opportunity for discussion refused and the decree passed "by a very great majority."³⁰² It is evident that the Assembly accepted the view of Barnave as to the culpability of the legislature of St. Marc.

It was almost universally believed at the time that the General Assembly had intended to secure independence. It was the charge made against it in the colony, and this view obtained credence in France. It must not be forgotten, however, that it was for the interest of the enemies of the General Assembly to make such accusations, for in no way could they more easily arouse the merchants, the government, the National Assembly and every patriotic Frenchman to crush this body. That there were some in the General Assembly and among its adherents who desired independence must be admitted. Venault de Charmilly, a prominent member from the beginning to the end, said that there was talk of independence among a small number of the inhabitants, and among others of placing the island under the power of Great Britain.³⁰³ Vicomte Charles Lameth, as early as the twentieth of August, 1789, said to the Club Massaic, that, if, on account of the decrees of the National Assembly, the colony should be compelled to separate itself, it would be well to be prepared.³⁰⁴ Even here, however, separation is looked upon as an evil to be avoided.

³⁰¹ *Archives*, xix., 566, 567.

³⁰² *Ibid*, 570.

³⁰³ *Lettre à M. Bryan Edwards*, 52.

³⁰⁴ *Garran*, i., 130.

Garran says, after a consideration of the acts of the General Assembly, "there is then the continual exercise of the most marked characteristics of independence, the rejection of the constitutional bases prescribed by the Assembly to which the nation had entrusted the formation of a constitution for all the Empire, and the observation only of forms which the colonial assembly had itself decreed."³⁰⁵ His argument is that there were but two courses open to the General Assembly, either entire acquiescence in the decrees of the National Assembly with the admission that the French part of San Domingo was a subject colony, or complete independence. But between these two extremes was another course. The planters recognized the sovereignty of the French king but not the supremacy of the French people. They claimed that as a matter of expediency this view was the one best suited to the interest of France and of San Domingo, and that as a matter of history this was the real relation of the two.

Almost from the first the deputies from San Domingo had been instructed to act as commissioners from the colony, and to avoid any admission that the colony was a part of France. Recognizing the power of the king, the General Assembly further admitted that as a matter of fact there was a certain connection between France and San Domingo. It provided that its decrees, even that of the Twenty-eighth of May, should be submitted to the National Assembly for "*acceptation*" and admitted that in external affairs the voice of the mother country must be paramount, although demanding a hearing upon these matters. The circumstances of the colony were so different from those of France that the National Assembly could not legislate for it wisely, a point that this body had admitted in its decrees. In short it seems certain that the General Assembly desired home rule similar to that now possessed by Canada and demanded by Ireland. It frequently stated that the relationship existing between France and San Domingo should be similar to that then existing between England and Ireland. But instead of allowing this new relation to be established regularly and gradually, it interpreted the Decrees of March eighth and twenty-eighth broadly, and acted as if legislative independence had been granted it. The National Assembly had good reason to decide as it did, for the colonial legislature had disregarded its instructions and acted upon the assumption that *legislative* independence belonged to the colony.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, i., 181, 182.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PEOPLE OF COLOR BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF THE ACT OF THE TWELFTH OF OCTOBER.

The decree of the Twelfth of October reiterated the statement of the National Assembly "that no laws upon the status of persons could be decreed for the colonies, except upon the definite formal demand of their colonial assemblies." The people of color were not to be regarded as citizens and could expect concession of rights from the colonists only. The rival legislatures in the colony were perfectly agreed in opposing the claims of the free colored people to a share in the government.

During the early weeks of the revolution there had been evidences of a disposition in Paris to grant to this class citizenship. The principles of the revolution really included such extension of rights, and some of the colonists, as Charles Lameth, thought that slavery could be best maintained by uniting the people of color to the cause of the Planters. The colonial commission in Paris favored this view and in some parishes the free mulattoes had been called into the primary assemblies. The government favored the people of color and sought their support. In the Spanish part of the island the free colored people were politically on an equality with the whites. The Provincial Committee of the West was strongly in favor of giving this class full political and civil rights.³⁰⁶

But the agitation for emancipation of the slaves, carried on so vigorously by the *Amis des Noirs* soon caused the Planters to look with distrust upon everything that might arouse the slaves to a sense of their manhood. Among the causes for fear was the granting of political rights to the free blacks. This would have made the slaves more discontented, it was thought. The colonists fought bitterly all concessions to the colored people; and the merchants and deputies of the great commercial cities of France gave the colonists the heartiest support.

³⁰⁶ Dalmas, i., 49; La Croix, i., 23; Garran, i., 106; ii., 7, 8.

There were many outrages committed upon the people of color and the whites who favored their cause. Some mention has already been made of these. It is difficult to secure reliable accounts of the relations of the two races in the island, but of the fact of such outrages there can be no question.³⁰⁷ The Assembly of the West voted (21 May, 1790) that in taking the civil oath the colored people must promise to "remain submissive to the whites, to observe the respect which they owed them and to shed their blood for them."³⁰⁸ The Baron de Beauvais of the Superior Council of the North and very prominent in the political affairs of the colony wrote a book to prove the negroes nothing but a higher order of orang-outang, and no more worthy of political rights than these animals. The mulattoes were an unnatural species.³⁰⁹

In the colony the Assembly of the North was bitterly opposed to the proposition to give political rights to the people of color.³¹⁰ The Assembly at St. Marc was, in general, opposed to any extension of suffrage to this class, but granted them some amelioration of their hardships.³¹¹ Charmilly says that the Assembly fixed a method by which mulattoes of illegitimate birth could inherit of their mother; that it considered the question of granting them representation; and that it was strongly moved in favor of the men of color.³¹² Thomas Millet, another member of the General Assembly, says it had good intentions in regard to the people of color, but as Garran says, "all that one finds about them in its acts is very astonishingly inconsistent with this assertion." It would not allow them to come near the place of meeting; it searched their correspondence; it refused to recognize as a white man any white man who should marry a mulattress; it refused to allow enfranchisement of slaves without its approval.³¹³

The president of the Assembly of the South told them they should be obedient and show respectful deference to the whites and never to expect to share in public duties and

³⁰⁷ Space and our purpose do not admit an account of these persecutions. See Garran, ii., 8-32; 30-37; Gaterau, 42-48; Madiou, i., 39, 40, 48-51; Madiou follows Garran.

³⁰⁸ Garran, i., 113; ii., 14: La Croix, i., 23, 24.

³⁰⁹ Garran, ii., 23-25.

³¹⁰ *Adresse de l'Assemblée Provinciale de la Partie du Nord de Saint-Domingue, à l'Assemblée Nationale* (Paris, 1790), 15.

³¹¹ Edwards, iii., 50, 51.

³¹² 53, 54.

³¹³ Garran, ii., 27-30. *Adresse* cited in reference 192, II, 12.

public rights.³¹⁴ They were, of course, not allowed to vote in the assemblies that decided upon the continuation of the General Assembly. Just before its end this Assembly saw how short-sighted its policy had been and attempted to win the support of the colored people by certain measures. It was too late, and the people of color joined Mauduit's army against the Assembly. Some of the people of color in Paris protested against the acts of the General Assembly.³¹⁵ As a class they were faithful to the king and National Assembly until after the twelfth of October.

³¹⁴ Garran, ii., 36.

³¹⁵ *Lettre des Citoyens de Couleur à M. le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale du premier août 1790* (Paris, 1790).

CHAPTER IX.

SAN DOMINGO AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The departure of the General Assembly from the island did not mean that its cause was lost there; on the contrary its very absence seemed to arouse its supporters to new life and to divide its opponents. Within a short time such parishes as Dondon, Limbe, Petit-Goave, Petite-Rivière, Verettes, Port-de-Paix, Port Margot, Saint Rose, Grand Rivière, Borgne, Cayes, the commune of Port-au-Prince, Ouanaminthe, Fort Dauphin, Trou, Cotteaux, Torbeck, Cayes-du-Fonds, Saint Louis, Cavaillon, Aquin, Grand-Goave, Boynet, Léogane, Jacmel, Cayes-des-Jacmel, Petit-Trou, Limonade, Marmelade,³¹⁶ in one way or another declared their sympathy with the General Assembly. This list, although not complete, embraces more than one-half of the parishes of the colony and many of the North. Incontestably the voters in these parishes supported the General Assembly, that is, the Planter class adhered to their representatives. The *Moniteur* points out that many of these provinces recognized the supreme power of the National Assembly; but protestations of fidelity at this time were probably dictated by policy.

After the departure of the General Assembly the rivalry between the governor and the Assembly of the North, which had disappeared for a time, broke out. It was charged that Peinier, as early as August sixteenth, sent orders to have the Assembly dissolved³¹⁷ and that he and Mauduit were plotting a counter revolution in sympathy with the *émigrés* and the royal princes. They certainly acted in a peremptory manner, regardless of the National Assembly, arresting prominent enemies, as Caradeux, a member of the General Assembly, and seizing private property.³¹⁸ By order of the governor, Mauduit (18 August) invited the

³¹⁶ *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, Nos. 6, 7, 11, 12, 15. [The *Nouvelles* was published by the Eighty-five in Paris to represent their cause. It contains much documentary and epistolary evidence regarded by the *Moniteur* (1791, 26) as valuable]; *Moniteur*, 1790, No. 316, supplement; 1791, 26.

³¹⁷ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1237; La Croix, i., 52.

³¹⁸ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1237; *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, No. 6.

mulattoes and free negroes to join the troops.³¹⁹ Soldiers brought from the Cape had refused, on arrival at Port-au-Prince, to fight against the citizens and had riots with the regular troops.³²⁰

The "patriotic army" gathered at Léogane to protect the Assembly of St. Marc had been collected mainly from the South, and in this part of the colony much hostility to the established authorities was revealed. The government was too weak to assert its authority there.³²¹ After the departure of the General Assembly there was nothing to be gained by continuing the war since the quarrel must be decided by the National Assembly. The proposition looking toward the conclusion of a peace proceeded from the supporters of the General Assembly.³²² After negotiations in which the rebels were obliged to yield nearly all demands of the governor,³²³ an agreement was reached, and on the twenty-third the Treaty of Léogane was ratified. This was strictly a truce or suspension of hostilities. The confederation of the South strengthened itself and did not cease to regard the governor as its bitter enemy. Within three days after the ratification of the treaty, charges and countercharges of non-fulfillment of its conditions were made by the leaders of the two parties.³²⁴

On the day after the conclusion of the treaty a number of parishes, chiefly of the South, formed a confederation for the advancement of their common interests and the combatting of oppression. Until the National Assembly should give a decision it would forego a part of its rights and it consented to negotiate with "M. Peinier." An executive council of sixteen members had authority to levy taxes, raise an army and concert with the municipalities necessary measures.³²⁵

In spite of a protest from the Assembly of the North against this body, many parishes joined the confederation of the South, which continued to exercise the power which had been in the hands of the General Assembly, although its

³¹⁹ *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, No. 13; No. 6, p. 2.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, No; 6, p. 4.

³²¹ Garran, 276; *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, No. 14, No. 28, pp. 4, 5.

³²² *Nouvelles de Saint-Domingue*, No. 12, p. 6; Garran, i., 278. Many letters bearing on these negotiations may be found in the *Nouvelles*, No. 28, pp. 1-12; and *Moniteur*, 1790, 1245.

³²³ *Nouvelles*, No. 14, p. 19; *Moniteur*, 1790, 1265.

³²⁴ *Nouvelles*, No. 13, pp. 2-11.

³²⁵ *Moniteur*, 1790, No. 316, supplement.

attention was confined to matters of practical importance rather than to constitutional questions.³²⁶

On the twenty-ninth of August de Peinier ordered the primary assemblies to elect delegates to a new colonial assembly. A large majority refused outright, others paid no attention to the matter and others simply re-elected their delegates to the General Assembly.³²⁷ The departure of this body for France had discredited the charges of a desire for independence and had strengthened its position. The Assembly of the North was weak. Gerard declared (25 Nov.) in the National Assembly that he had official information from eleven parishes of the withdrawal of their delegates from this Assembly and that he had reliable authority for saying that nineteen of the parishes of the North had disavowed its acts. Barnave admitted that many parishes did not recognize it.³²⁸ Many excesses were committed in this time of confusion. The courts instead of restoring order seemed rather to assist in creating anarchy.³²⁹

The president of the National Assembly and the Minister of Marine seem to have been inexcusably slow in rendering official news to the colony. The letter accompanying the decree of the twelfth of October was dated November the third and reached the island not until the middle of February. The first unofficial information of this decree was not received until December the seventh³³⁰ but then aroused great enthusiasm in all opponents of the General Assembly.³³¹

Had the Assembly of the North and the governor shown any willingness to conciliate those who wished to unite with it the troubles might have been settled, but both factions were very arrogant over their victory. Peinier, tired of the strife, resigned and returned to France. He had tried to carry out the wishes of the National Assembly. Although he was not a strong man his character on the whole commands respect and his administration our approval, until the arrival of Mauduit. Under the influence

³²⁶ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1333; *Nouvelles*, No. 6, 7; No. 12, 5; Garran, i., 298, 299.

³²⁷ *Nouvelles*, Nos. 11, 6, 12, 11; Placide-Justin, 191.

³²⁸ *Nouvelles*, No. 6, 7, and 7, 7. *Archives*, xx., 744; Garran, i., 302, 307.

³²⁹ *Nouvelles*, Nos. 7, 12, 28; *Moniteur*, 1781, 25. Garran, i., 307-309; *Adresse à Messieurs de l'Assemblée Nationale* (Paris, 1790?), written by Imbert.

³³⁰ Garran, i., 309, 322.

³³¹ *Moniteur*, 1791, 197, 225, 371.

4 of this aggressive adherent of the royal power his course became severe and despotic. His successor was Rouxel de Blanchelande, an officer who had had some successful experience in the army. He soon fell under the influence of Mauduit.

The military power of the governor was strengthened; and interference with personal liberty and the mails continued. At one time there were rumors that he intended to dissolve the Assembly of the North but all complaints ended in professed friendship. The Assembly sent commissioners to reside near him; and he urged the refractory parishes of the North to send delegates to it.³³²

³³² Garran, i., 313-318; *Moniteur*, 1791, 371.

CHAPTER X.

OGÉ'S REBELLION.

During the last three months of 1790 the colony was much alarmed by a rebellion of the mulattoes which, although speedily checked, threatened at one time to result in a general rising of that class. Among the numerous young mulattoes in Paris was a San Domingan by the name of Ogé.³³³ Brought up and educated in the island he had, in 1789, gone to Paris and had become attached to Raimond, with him had heard Mirabeau, Lafayette, Grégoire and other ardent friends of the negroes set forth the rights of man and expose the wrongs of the negroes. In the attempts to secure from the National Assembly the extension of political rights to the free people of color, he took an active part, but all seemed in vain and he brooded over the idea that a great step must be taken—that some one must be a Moses to his people. Lacking the moderation of Raimond, who tried to convince him that their cause must finally triumph, and that any attempt to gain their ends by arms must result in a postponement of the day of liberty for their race, he resolved after the passage of the decrees of the Eighth and Twenty-eighth of March that force must be used and that he must lead his people. The latter of these decrees said that "all persons" were entitled to political rights and, in his opinion, that meant all free people of color. To him the subtle argument that, since the decree of the Eighth of March said that no change was intended in the status of persons in the island, since the second decree was expressly stated to be instructions for the carrying out of the first and since instructions could not contradict that which they were designed to explain, these decrees intended to include only whites in the list of citizens, was merely the chicanery of the Club Massaic and its adherents, designed to cheat the people of color of those rights so long fought for and so hardly won. With the ardor of youth and a burning desire to correct evils, impetuous and impressed with the great story of

³³³ General authority on Ogé and this revolt are Garran, ii., 42-73; Madiou, i., 52-62.

wrongs endured so long by his race, he felt that he was called to be a deliverer.

His plans became known and every effort was made to prevent his departure. It was next to impossible for any colored man to leave France, for in every part were those who were on the watch to hinder all such from embarking. In league with these planters were the merchants and ship captains of France, so that had a mulatto succeeded in getting on board as a stowaway, he was certain to be discovered and either handed over to the authorities on reaching the colony or returned to France. When it was known that Ogé was planning some movement for his people, particular pains were taken to prevent any such enterprise. All precautions were redoubled and so successfully that he was unable to get passage for the island. Finally under an assumed name he succeed in reaching England and, after an interview with Clarkson, from whom he secured money and letters, Ogé sailed for Charleston, S. C., whence he secured passage to his native island, reaching the Cape October the twelfth. At night he landed safely, for it seems that no one had anticipated his coming from "New England" as the writers of the times sometimes called the recently emancipated colonies, and was at once off for his old home at Dondon, close to the Spanish border. Here with his friends he spent the last quiet days of his life in preparation for the venture he was about to make. He collected a small force of mulattoes—even his enemies do not put the number at over three hundred—arranged with his brethren of the South for a rising there and then boldly declared himself and his purpose.³³⁴

On the twenty-eighth of October, with his little army and with his friend Jean Baptiste Chavaune as second in command, he attacked the village of Grande-Rivière, refusing to adopt the urgent suggestions of his friends that he arouse the slaves to rebellion. From that step he recoiled, the time was not ripe. Only for what he considered legal and constitutional rights, wrongfully withheld, did he struggle. Noble and simple were the words in which he announced to Peinier his object: "No! No! Monsieur, le comte, we will not remain under the yoke as we have for two centuries; the rod of iron that has beaten us is broken; we demand the execution of this decree; avoid then by your prudence an evil which you cannot allay. My profession of faith is to secure the execution of the decree which I helped ob-

³³⁴ *Moniteur*, 1790, 1475, 1479.

tain, to repel force by force and finally to bring to an end a prejudice as unjust as it is barbarous." Nor did his actions belie his words. Always he restrained his followers from murder and cruelty. Two dragoons were brought before him as prisoners but he dismissed them saying "no evil will be done you, we are not men of blood; in that we do not resemble men of your caste." In his letters he insisted that he came only to secure the execution of the decree of March twenty-eighth, and that he did not include in his demands the amelioration of the lot of the slave.³³⁵

Throughout the province his appearance caused fear. The governor issued a proclamation calling upon the people to combine against the common foe, forgetting their sources of dissension for the while.³³⁶ An extraordinary session of the Assembly was called, a price set on Ogé's head and Vincent sent against him with six or eight hundred men. But the mulattoes repulsed this force, three times the size of their own. Finally this little handful was scattered by an army six times its size, with artillery, and under a skillful general.

With a few followers Ogé and Chavaune fled across the Spanish line for refuge, but they were hunted down and after the interchange of letters with Blanchelande,³³⁷ who had meanwhile become governor, Don Garcia, governor of the Spanish colony surrendered them to the French authorities.³³⁸ It was a great day at the Cape when the corvette *La Favorite* brought into the harbor these high traitors, and a profitable voyage the gifts of the citizens made it for Negrier, her captain. In the South an insurrection under the lead of Rigaud was quelled by Mauduit.³³⁹

The Superior Council of the Cape and the Assembly of the North quarreled over the question who had a right to try the criminals. The former was victorious and accused them of sedition, robbery, murder and intention to arouse the slaves to revolt. Through the months of January and February the trial dragged along, although the accused were not heard and were not allowed counsel. On the twenty-third of February the verdict was given that these two men "shall be conducted by the Chief Executive before the parish church of this city, and there bare-headed and in their shirts, with a rope around their necks, on their knees, and

³³⁵ Ibid, 1495.

³³⁶ Ibid, 1791, 45.

³³⁷ Ibid, 1791, 45, 181.

³³⁸ Ibid, 1791, 249, Ardouin, i., 150-157.

³³⁹ *Moniteur*, 1791, 53; Edwards, iii., 70, 71.

having in their hands each a torch of burning wax of the weight of two pounds, they shall apologize and declare in a high and intelligible voice that it was wicked, rash and ill-advised, that they have committed the crimes of which they were convicted, that they repent and ask pardon of God, of the king, and of justice; this done they shall be conducted to the *place d'armes* of this city, to the side opposite to the part designed for the execution of the whites, and there have arms, legs, thighs and back broken alive, upon a scaffold to be arranged for this purpose, and then shall be placed on wheels, faces turned toward the sky, to remain there so long as it shall please God to preserve their lives; this done their heads shall be cut off and exposed on posts." Another companion of Ogé was broken alive, twenty-one were hung and thirteen sent to the galleys for life, while the rest suffered penalties of less severity. How much the whites feared the blacks is evident.

After Ogé's death a document was produced purporting to be his testament in which he confessed to having shared in a plot for a great uprising on the plantations.³⁴⁰ That such a document should be so contrary to all his declarations while alive and to his actions is sufficient to render it worthy of suspicion, especially as it was not produced until nine months after his death. In a long discussion Garran shows that both the circumstances of Ogé's trial and death, and the statements made in the document itself render it very certain that the paper is a forgery.³⁴¹ Even were it really written by Ogé, any statement made by him in the hope of escaping death and under severest torture could not be regarded of great value.

The charge has also been made against him that he was an agent of la Luzerne and other reactionists sent out to bring about a counter-revolution.³⁴² Such an incredible story could have obtained even the slight credence it had only during the Reign of Terror, when anything was believed of the monarchy and its adherents. Instead of desiring to overthrow the National Assembly and its decrees, Ogé desired to secure their recognition. Neither he nor his race could have expected anything from a restoration of monarchy, and the government authorities were too far-sighted not to see that a slave insurrection or a revolt of the free

³⁴⁰ Edwards, iii., 235-244.

³⁴¹ Garran, ii., 54-65.

³⁴² Page, *Discours Historique sur les causes et les désastres de la partie française de Saint-Domingue*, etc. (Paris, 1793) 7-9; Edwards, iii., 244.

people of color would simply result in a union of all the colonists and all the commerce of France against it. However much Ogé's imprudence may be condemned, it must be admitted that he was a sincere martyr to the cause of liberty. That justice and order demanded his death for inciting rebellion and for taking the execution of the law into his own hands is incontestable, but his name must be placed with those of the John Browns and Charlotte Cordays.

CHAPTER XI.

THE POWER OF THE GOVERNMENT OVERTHROWN.

On the second of March a squadron of five ships, containing regiments of Artois and Normandy, arrived at Port-au-Prince. During the voyage there had been many evidences of insubordination, so that de Villages, the commander, said he would probably not have been able to land his troops elsewhere than at the capital, where they wished to go.³⁴³ This mutinous spirit was due to the spread of the revolutionary spirit, to a feeling that in coming to San Domingo they were to support the old regime, and to the influence of the mutiny at Brest a few months before.

The colony was not unprepared for the coming of these republicans. The *Eighty-five* still maintained that the General Assembly was the representative of the people and some of them had returned to the island and were active in opposing the Governor. Cocherel had resigned his seat in the National Assembly after the decree of the Twelfth of October, and devoted himself in the colony to the cause of the dissolved Assembly.³⁴⁴ Continual agitation against the existing administration was kept up by these men. Toward the end of February a false decree, of considerable celebrity subsequently, was spread among the soldiers. It purported to have been passed by the National Assembly in December, and declared the decree of the Twelfth of October revoked.³⁴⁵ On account of this agitation Blanchelande feared to have the disaffected troops come and tried to have the regiments landed at the Môle, but unsuccessfully. After a hurried consultation de Villages and Blanchelande decided to send the squadron and troops back to the North. They addressed the soldiers, and at first the regiment of Normandy showed no discontent, but having communicated with that of Artois it joined the latter in refusing to go and in requesting that they be allowed to send delegations of four men from each company into the city.³⁴⁶ This request was granted. After these delegations had seen Blanchelande's

³⁴³ Garran, i., 325.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 328.

³⁴⁵ *Moniteur*, 1791, 476; Garran, i., 329-331.

³⁴⁶ *Archives*, xxv., 335 sq. Official report of de Villages, de Courvoyer

instructions from the home government and had learned that he was empowered to send them where he deemed it expedient, they consented to go to the Môle if they might have three or four days rest at Port-au-Prince. They had communicated with the city and knew they would have a warm welcome from the citizens. Blanchelande did not dare refuse. He also yielded to some demands of the Committee of the West with regard to the enrollment of the *Pompons Blancs* in the volunteers and the wearing of cockades.³⁴⁷

On the ships the sailors mutinied on the third of March, and although at first reduced to obedience by de Villages, they, with the soldiers of the two regiments, were so influenced by citizens and soldiers from the city that it was impossible to control them after Blanchelande had shown himself so lacking in firmness. They all went ashore, and as de Villages said "finally everything was in confusion." On shore the citizens had taken things into their own hands, opening the prisons. The people of color released Rigaud and others prominent in the mulatto rebellion contemporaneous with that of Ogé.³⁴⁸

The commander of the regiment of Port-au-Prince says that his regiment remained faithful until the false decree was spread about.³⁴⁹ This made them discontented; but discipline was entirely destroyed in the local regiment as a result of the conduct of the regiments recently arrived. These new comers not only were in sympathy with the people but refused to fraternize with the regiment supporting the governor until it should restore the popular assemblies and atone for the wrong done the National Guard of the island by Mauduit on the twenty-ninth of July, by restoring the colors then seized.³⁵⁰

It should be remembered that the regiment of Port-au-Prince had really remained a part of the old troops of the line, not having undergone the renovation which resulted in the National Guards.

Mauduit advised Blanchelande to flee and the state of affairs was such that the governor followed this advice. Mauduit was seized by his own soldiers. To the demand of the officers of the district that the flags taken in August be re-

who succeeded Mauduit and of the Municipality of Port-au-Prince are given.

³⁴⁷ Garran, i., 336-338.

³⁴⁸ Madiou, i., 63.

³⁴⁹ *Archives*, xxv., 337.

³⁵⁰ Garran, i., 339, 340.

stored he assented and sent soldiers to make public restitution to the commune. He even consented to surrender personally the colors before the house in which they were seized. When there, however, he refused to kneel and apologize for the insult done the people. He was instantly murdered, and among the assassins were many of his own soldiers. His body was horribly mutilated.³⁵¹ His anti-republican sentiments, his arbitrary conduct in San Domingo, the intrigues of his enemies, the arrival of the new regiments tinged with the most advanced republicanism, the circulation of the false decree which had a remarkable effect,³⁵² all conspired to bring about the final result. The regiments of Artois and Normandy are said not to have participated in or approved of this butchery and they did what they could to restore order.³⁵³

The supporters of the General Assembly had triumphed. The government of Port-au-Prince was intrusted to a municipality, composed largely of the old members of the Committee of the West. It abolished the office of intendant, organized a new Superior Council and formed an armed force.³⁵⁴ De Villages had to recognize the supremacy of the new government. It requested the governor to return, assuring him of safety, and sent addresses to the king and National Assembly declaring its submission to the decree of the twelfth of October.³⁵⁵

The success of the movement in the capital led the parishes very generally to approve the course of the municipality of St. Marc. All but one or two came into union with it. The history of April and May reveal little that is of importance. The air of the island seemed to breed discord. The most important of the minor quarrels was between the regiments of Artois and Normandy on the one hand and that of Port-au-Prince on the other. The latter was inclined to support the old regime, but was sent back to France and afterward did good service.³⁵⁶

Blanchelande refused to return to Port-au-Prince and remained at the Cape. He tried to secure troops to restore

³⁵¹ Edwards, iii., 81, 82; Dalmas, i., 95-100; Garran, i., 341-343; Madiou, i., 63, 64; Chotard, *Précis de la Revolution de Saint-Domingue depuis le fin de 1789 jusqu' au 18 Juin, 1794* (Philadelphia, 1795), 36-40; *Archives*, xxv., 338.

³⁵² *Moniteur*, 1791, 476; Garran, i., 343-348.

³⁵³ Chotard, 41.

³⁵⁴ Madiou, i., 65; Garran, i., 349.

³⁵⁵ Garran, i., 351.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, i., 355-358.

his authority.³⁵⁷ He seems to have been at times on the best of terms with the Assembly of the North and then again to have quarrelled with it. He was received by it with great honor and afterwards charged with counter-revolutionary projects. Garran thinks there is reason for believing that Blanchelande was endeavoring to overthrow the power of the National Assembly and to restore the old regime.³⁵⁸ But the adherents of the former General Assembly had full sway until the breaking out of the rebellion of the mulattoes followed by one on the part of the slaves introduced a worse state of anarchy than had hitherto existed.

³⁵⁷ *Discours justificatif de Philibert-François Rouxel Blanchelande, ancien Gouverneur des Isles François sous le Vent de l'Amérique* (Paris, 1793), 7.

³⁵⁸ *l.*, 360-362.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DECREE OF THE FIFTEENTH OF MAY, 1791.

After the passage of the decree of the Twelfth of October the affairs of the colonies were not before the Assembly much for some months. Commissioners were in November sent to Martinique to settle troubles similar to those in San Domingo, and were given full authority. On the first of February, 1791, the Assembly voted to send to San Domingo three civil commissioners, authorized to maintain order and the public tranquility, with power to suspend judgment in criminal cases begun on account of the troubles in the island. The Assembly had also voted to send six thousand troops to the Antilles.³⁵⁹

During all this time the members of the General Assembly had remained in Paris. With the Club Massaic and the delegates of the commercial cities they tried to secure the passage of an act which should place the control of commercial relations in the hands of a joint committee.³⁶⁰ Although the General Assembly had been dissolved the fate of the *Eighty-five* had not been decided and they had been kept in France as a measure of safety. Barnave stated that many recognized and repented of their errors. He read a letter from this faction in which they confessed their errors, admitted the authority of the National Assembly and promised obedience to it. This letter was signed by forty-six old members, including several who had been prominent in the agitation. But a large proportion of the original *Eighty-five* did not subscribe to the views contained in this document.³⁶¹

On the thirteenth of March, 1791, a letter was read to the National Assembly from the former General Assembly demanding that some decision be made as to their fate, or that they be allowed to return to their homes. They were granted permission to appear the next day, as individuals, but not as members of any body.³⁶² Linguet

³⁵⁹ *Archives*, xxv., 127 ; xxii, 666. The officially printed copy of the law is dated 11 February.

³⁶⁰ Garran, ii., 77-79.

³⁶¹ *Archives*, xxiii., 679, 680 ; xxv., 340, 341.

³⁶² *Ibid*, xxiv., 463, 464.

acted as their spokesman, but some of their treasonable utterances made after the twelfth of October could not be explained away. On motion of Barnave the Assembly voted to refer the instructions drawn up for the government of the colony, together with the petition from the members of the former General Assembly, to a committee composed of the committees on the Constitution, on the Marine, on Agriculture, on Commerce, and on the Colonies.³⁶³

The ultra-republicans of a later period who secured Barnave's death on the revolutionary scaffold, made many animadversions on his connection with the colonies. Garran intimates that he was bribed and that he was trying to secure the separation of the administration of the Colonies from that of the Marine, and the appointment of himself as minister in charge, although he admits there are only more or less vague presumptions to support the charge. He also charges him with having proposed to the different factions a kind of coalition which might work a general reconciliation and save the colony.³⁶⁴ He did accomplish much in the way of harmonizing divergent parties, but there is no reason for charging him with a selfish motive for doing this. Page, Brulley and le Grand, commissioners sent to San Domingo in 1793, also make charges against Barnave and say that he confessed to having been deceived.³⁶⁵

But there is no reason to doubt the honesty and high-mindedness of Barnave. The proclamations and acts of the Colonial Assembly alone are sufficient to convict this body of having acted in opposition to the National Assembly and are sufficient to justify Barnave's course. The charges were brought against him in a later, more radical period, when any one who had tried to retain royalty, introduce a limited monarchy, and harmonize conflicting interests, was looked back upon as an ultra-royalist. The evidence for the charges against Barnave is insignificant and general presumption strongly in his favor.

On the seventh of May, Delattre, in the name of the committee appointed on the thirtieth of March, introduced an act which should be a constitutional law for the colony. The committee desired first of all to secure the safety and continued existence of the colony. In accordance with the

³⁶³ Ibid, xxiv., 486-491 ; 580-597.

³⁶⁴ Garran i., 128 ; ii., 76, 82-86.

³⁶⁵ *A la Convention Nationale, réponse de Page et Brulley, commissaires de St. Domingue, députés près la convention nationale aux colonies qu' on a fait signer au citoyen Belley* (Paris ?), 1, 2.

act of the Twelfth of October, it held that the right of making laws upon personal status should remain with the colonies. The first article of the decree was: "The National Assembly decrees as a constitutional article that no law upon the status of persons may be made by the legislative body except upon the precise and formal demand of the colonial assemblies." It also provided that a congress of delegates of the principal West Indian colonies should meet at St. Martin to consider the status of the colored people and that its decision, when approved by the Assembly, should be a final settlement of this question.³⁶⁶

The debate that followed was a brilliant one and all the leading members of the Assembly participated. It occupied six days (7, 11-15 May). Deputations and petitions from all the contending interests were received. Ogé's death had aroused much interest throughout France in the cause of the people of color.³⁶⁷ The newspapers and theatres assisted in the agitation. The debates in the Assembly were stormy. The supporters of the measure argued that every people should have the initiative in matters pertaining exclusively to themselves; that to give the free people of color suffrage would incite the slaves to revolt; that if the measure were not passed the colonists would revolt and surrender the colony to England; and that the passage of the act was necessary as a protection to French commerce. The friends of the mulattoes, on the other hand, represented that refusal to allow the free colored people to vote was not consistent with the Declaration of Rights; that by the strict wording of the Instructions of March Twenty-eighth they were entitled to the suffrage; that by the Edict of 1685 they had enjoyed equal rights with the whites;³⁶⁸ that there would be no more danger of disaffection among the slaves by reason of giving the people of color political rights than there had been in giving them civil rights; that in the Spanish part of the island the free mulattoes had political rights without endangering the existence of slavery; and that mere justice entitled them to rights they were qualified to enjoy.

As the days passed it was evident that the party favoring the people of color was gaining ground. On the fifteenth Rewbell proposed the following amendment, really a substitute for the bill: "The National Assembly decrees that the

³⁶⁶ *Archives*, xxv., 638 sq.

³⁶⁷ Dalmas, i., 109, 110; Edwards, iii., 85; Ardouin, i., 158 sqq.

³⁶⁸ True *stricti juris* put in practice far from true.

legislative body will never deliberate on the political state of the people of color who are not born of free father and mother without the previous desire, free and spontaneous, of the colonies; that the colonial assemblies actually existing shall continue; but that the people of color born of free father and mother shall be admitted to all the future parish and colonial assemblies, if they have in other respects the required qualifications." This was passed after much opposition.⁸⁶⁹

With the passage of this act a new period in the history of the colony begins. During the first two years of the French Revolution, the history of the French part of San Domingo was largely the history of its white inhabitants. The questions of slavery and of the political status of the free blacks were important political factors, but during this time the negroes were not the chief actors. Since the fifteenth of May, 1791, the history of the colony has been the history of the blacks, either in their struggle for freedom or in their life after its acquirement.

On the sixteenth of May the deputies of the colony withdrew from the National Assembly;⁸⁷⁰ all parties of whites from the colony united to oppose the decree; many treasonable letters were sent to the island;⁸⁷¹ the white colonists went there to oppose the execution of the decree; in the island there were bitter attacks on the National Assembly and preparations were made for resistance. Blanchelande refused to carry out the provisions of the law and a new assembly was chosen to which the blacks were not admitted. In July, convinced that their rights could be gained in no other way, the mulattoes rose in armed insurrection. In the fall the slave revolts followed. For years after the island was a scene of bloodshed and horror.

⁸⁶⁹ *Archives*, xxv. and xxvi., under 7, 11-15, 21, 27-29 May.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid*, xxvi., 122.

⁸⁷¹ Garran, ii., 91-105, gives many extracts from such letters.



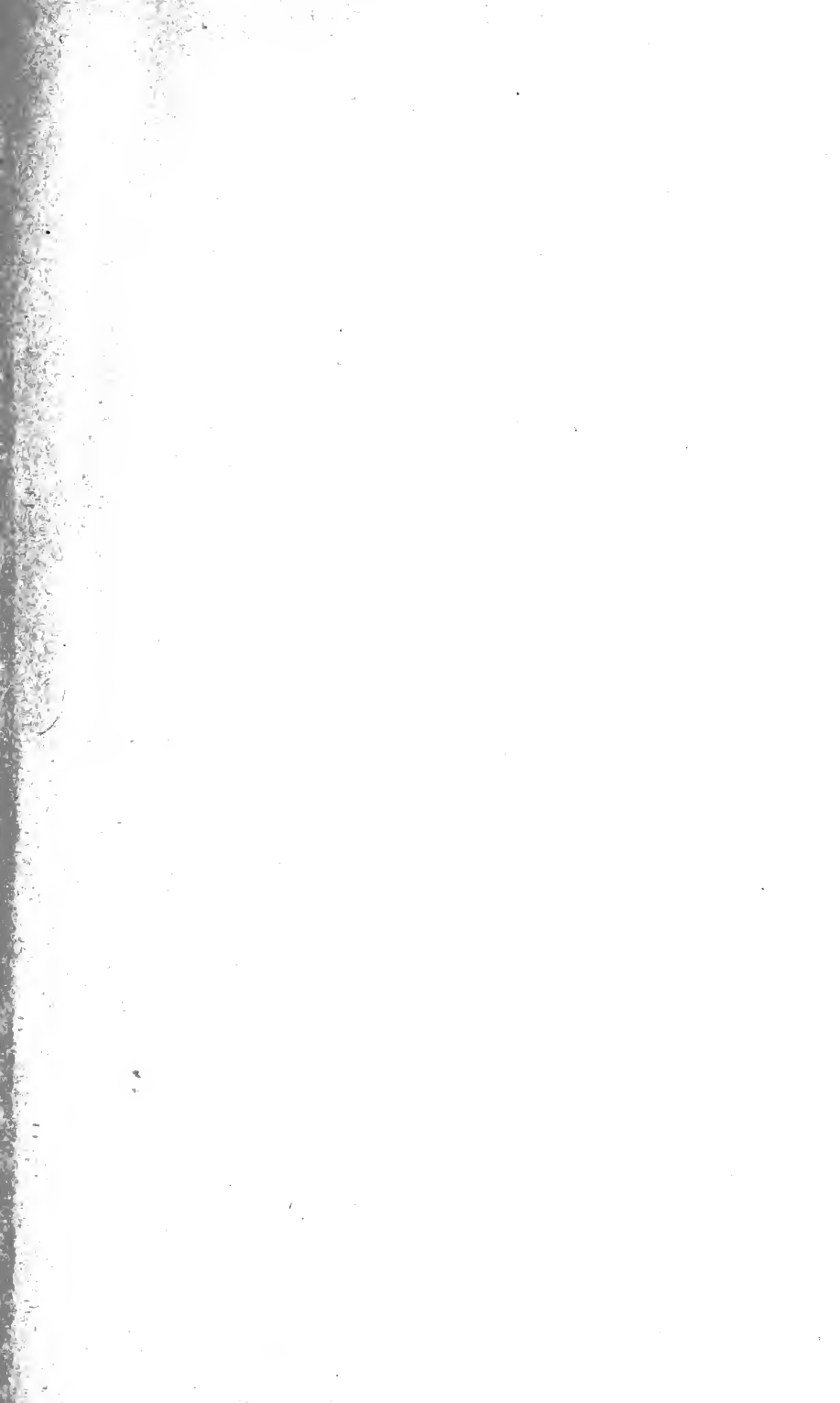


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