

"REPUTATION SERVES TO VIRTUE WHAT LIGHT DOES TO A PICTURE."

After a long period of matchless horrors, during which the most fearful atrocities were perpetrated on both sides—for in many instances the courage and discipline of the Europeans prevailed—Toussaint succeeded in placing himself at the head of affairs, and by a series of wise and vigorous measures managed not only to restore peace, but to revive in some degree the prosperity of the colony, which, during the rebellion, had suffered severely. Beneath his stern yet able administration, the island began once more to assume its former cultivated and flourishing aspect; and the chiefs of the country, recognising his capacity as a ruler, assembled at Cape Town, drew up a new constitution conferring upon him unlimited authority under the title of President and Governor for life. Like most Africans, Toussaint was vain to excess, and nothing flattered him so much as being styled "the Bonaparte of St. Domingo." He now informed Bonaparte that he had been proclaimed First Consul of Hayti—his letter commencing with the words—"The first of blacks to the first of whites." This close imitation irritated the First Consul of France, and hurt his very susceptible pride. "This comedy of government must cease," he exclaimed. "We must not permit military honours to be worn by apes and monkeys!" The intelligence was as unexpected as it was unwelcome to the First Consul, who perceived that unless a blow was instantly struck, the valuable colony would be for ever lost to the French nation. Accordingly, an immense fleet was fitted out in December, 1801, having on board twenty-one thousand troops, under the command of General Le Clerc. L'Ouverture was in total ignorance of the formidable preparations for his subjugation, and had not the expedition lost fifteen days in the Bay of Biscay, he would have been surprised before he had begun to make the slightest preparation for his defence. No sooner, however, was he warned of the impending invasion, than he commenced to assemble all his available forces, announcing, in heroic language, his intention of defending the independence of St. Domingo to the last. "If I must die," he said, "I will die as a brave soldier and a man of honour! I fear no one!" And when Toussaint saw the immense armament that had been sent against him he said—"We must die! France in a body has come to St. Domingo! We have been deceived; they are determined to enslave the blacks!"

On Feb. 4, 1802, the French troops effected a landing,* and it was not long before their superior skill and discipline placed them in possession of the sea-coast—the negro forces being driven with great slaughter into the mountain-fastnesses of the interior. From these strongholds the blacks kept up a murderous guerilla warfare against the invaders, who, without making any perceptible progress, really sustained serious diminution. Well aware of the great difficulty of bush-fighting, General Le Clerc tried conciliatory measures, and for that purpose sent to Toussaint his two sons, who had been to Paris for their education, as bearers of a letter from Bonaparte, in which he offered the African chief the command of the island if he would only submit to the laws of the Republic. The boys succeeded in reaching the habitation of their father at Ennery; their mother wept for joy on seeing her long-lost sons—and Toussaint, who was absent on their arrival, was overjoyed to see them, and was for a moment shaken in his resolution to uphold the freedom of the island by the force of parental love. His sons implored him to accede to the request, but in vain! Toussaint was firm in his patriotic determination, nor could the tears of his wife and family swerve him from that which he thought was the path of duty. He sent back his sons to Le Clerc with an evasive letter, proposing an armistice. The French general consented, allowing him four days, again returning his children to him, but as at the end of that period no answer was forthcoming, Toussaint (who had retained his sons) was declared a rebel, and the French prepared to carry on the war to the last extremity.

* The landing was not effected without difficulty, on account of not being able to procure a pilot to guide them into the harbour. The harbour-master, a mulatto, was captured, when the French admiral put a rope round his neck, and threatened him with instant death if he did not show the way, and a bribe of two thousand pounds if he would; but nothing could induce him to betray his country.

After a sanguinary campaign of upwards of two months, General Le Clerc entered into secret negotiations with the leaders of the enemy, and in the end Toussaint was deserted by his principal subordinates, and left with a few thousand followers, who, though devoted to his cause, were wholly unable to cope with the immense forces brought against them. There was no other course open to Toussaint but to submit, which he did with dignity—refusing the rank and emoluments offered him—and retired to his farm at Ennery, there to enjoy the pleasures of rural life. But his seclusion did not last long. Two months had scarcely passed away when an imaginary charge was concocted against him, and a most artful snare was concocted, which, trusting to French honour, the unsuspecting African fell into, and he was taken prisoner. His last wailing moans; the tree remains; they will shoot forth afresh, for they are profound and numerous." By the imperative order of Bonaparte he was conveyed to France, and confined in the castle of Joux, situated on a rocky defile between Besançon and Lausanne. He died very shortly afterwards, in the year 1803, but whether by violent or natural means is unknown: and with him ceased to exist one of the greatest, after Hannibal, of African heroes.

The fate of Toussaint L'Ouverture has formed a theme for a sonnet by Wordsworth—

— "Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and
skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And Love, and man's unconquerable mind."

Additional Notes to April.

ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE LORD PALMERSTON.

(8.)—The attempt of Lieutenant Davis to assassinate Lord Palmerston is thus related in a letter from the Rev. A. Harris to Lord Fitzharris, given in the *Malmesbury Correspondence* :—

"April 8th, 1818.

"I have just seen Palmerston after this horrible attempt to assassinate him. He has received a contusion upon the backbone, but not a very severe one, and there is not the least reason for alarm. His escape was a very narrow one. The assassin, whose name is Davis, and who had been an officer in Spain, met him upon the staircase at the War Office, and was quite close to him when he fired; the ball penetrated his coat and waistcoat about the middle of his spine, and glanced off. Palmerston walked on to the room where his secretary was sitting, and told him that he had been shot at, but did not know what injury he had received. Astley Cooper, and another surgeon of the name of Lynn, came immediately, and found the flesh upon the backbone contused, but that the ball had not penetrated the skin. The ball was found upon the staircase. The surgeons conveyed Palmerston home. Meanwhile the assassin was seized by two messengers and put into safe custody. Palmerston told me that he knew him to be mad, and for that reason had declined seeing him, having received two letters lately asking him to do so."

Lord Palmerston thus jocularly refers to the occurrence in a letter to Lord Malmesbury a few days afterwards :—

"After all, I am not half so sore as either Don Quixote or Sancho, upon many occasions in their adventures. . . . One comfort is that I shall be recorded in illustrious company, as having had the same escape as the Duke of Wellington and the Regent; but I have so far the advantage of the latter that my bullet has been found, though, luckily, not in me."

Lieutenant Davis was found to be insane, and was sent to Bedlam, where he passed the remainder of his life.