A

VINDICATION

OF THE

CAPACITY OF THE NEGRO RACE

FOR

Self-Government, and Civilized Progress,

AS

DEMONSTRATED BY HISTORICAL EVENTS

OF THE

HAYTIAN REVOLUTION;

AND THE

SUBSEQUENT ACTS OF THAT PEOPLE SINCE THEIR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

A

LECTURE BY REV. JAS. THEO. HOLLY.

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Elliot
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ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1857,
BY JAMES THEODORE HOLLY,
IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF CONNECTICUT.

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DEDICATION.

To REV. WILLIAM C. MUNROE,

RECTOR OF ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, DETROIT, MICHIGAN.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :—Permit me the honor of inscribing this work to you. It is a lecture that I prepared and delivered before a Literary Society of Colored Young Men, in the City of New Haven, Ct., after my return from Hayti, in the autumn of 1855 ; and subsequently repeated in Ohio, Michigan, and Canada West, during the summer of 1856.

I have permitted it to be published at the request of the Afric-American Printing Company, an association for the publication of negro literature, organized in connection with the Board of Publication, which forms a constituent part of the National Emigration Convention, over which you so ably presided, at its sessions, held in Cleveland, Ohio, in the years 1854–6.

I dedicate this work to you, in token of my appreciation of the life-long services you have so sacredly devoted to the cause of our oppressed race ; the ardor of which devotion has not yet abated, although the evening of your life has far advanced in the deepening shadows of the approaching night of physical death.

And as the ground-work of this skeleton treatise is based in the events of Haytian History, it becomes peculiarly appropriate that I should thus dedicate it to one who has spent three of the most valuable years of his life as a missionary of the cross in that island ; who there deposited the slumbering ashes of his own bosom companion a willing sacrifice to her constancy and devotion ; and who yet desires to consume the remainder of his own flickering lamp of life by the resumption of those labors in that island, under more favorable and better auspices, in the service of Christ and his church.

Finally, I dedicate this work to you as a filial token of gratitude, for that guidance which under God, I have received from your fatherly teachings; by which I have been awakened to higher inspirations, of our most holy religion ; aroused to deeper emotions of human liberty and quicker pulsations of the universal brotherhood of man ; and thereby animated with a more consecrated devotion to the service of my suffering race than might otherwise have fallen to my lot.

Deign, therefore, I beseech you, to accept this dedication as the spontaneous offering of a grateful and dutiful heart.

I have the honor to remain,

Rev. and Dear Sir,

Your most Devoted Friend and Servant,

In the cause of God and Humanity.

JAMES THEODORE HOLLY, *Rector of St. Luke's Church.*

NEW HAVEN, CONN., AUGUST 1st, 1857.

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LECTURE.

The task that I propose to myself in the present lecture, is an earnest attempt to defend the inherent capabilities of the negro race, for self-government and civilized progress. For this purpose, I will examine the events of Haytian History, from the commencement of their revolution down to the present period, so far as the same may contribute to illustrate the points I propose to prove and defend. Permit me, however, to add, in extenuation of this last comprehensive proposition, that I must, necessarily, review these events hastily, in order to crowd them within the compass of an ordinary lecture.

REASONS FOR ASSUMING SUCH A TASK.

Notwithstanding the remarkable progress of philanthropic ideas and humanitarian feelings, during the last half century, among almost every nation and people throughout the habitable globe; yet the great mass of the Caucasian race still deem the negro as entirely destitute of those qualities, on which they selfishly predicate their own superiority.

And we may add to this overwhelming class that cherish such self-complacent ideas of themselves, to the great prejudice of the negro, a large quota also of that small portion of the white race, who profess to believe the truths, "That God is no respector of persons;" and that "He has made of one blood, all the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth." Yes, I say, we may add a large number of the noisy agitators of the present day, who would persuade themselves and the world, that they are really christian philanthropists, to that overwhelming crowd who openly traduce the negro; because too many of those pseudo-humanitarians have lurking

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in their heart of hearts, a secret infidelity in regard to the real equality of the black man, which is ever ready to manifest its concealed sting, when the full and unequivocal recognition of the negro, in all respects, is pressed home upon their hearts.

Hence, between this downright prejudice against this long abused race, which is flauntingly maintained by myriads of their oppressors on the one hand; and this woeful distrust of his natural equality, among those who claim to be his friends, on the other; no earnest and fearless efforts are put forth to vindicate their character, by even the few who may really acknowledge this equality of the races. They are overawed by the overpowering influence of the contrary sentiment. This sentiment unnerves their hands and palsies their tongue; and no pen is wielded or voice heard, among that race of men, which fearlessly and boldly places the negro side by side with the white man, as his equal in all respects. But to the contrary, every thing is done by the enemies of the negro race to vilify and debase them. And the result is, that many of the race themselves, are almost persuaded that they are a brood of inferior beings.

It is then, to attempt a fearless but truthful vindication of this race, with which I am identified—however feeble and immature that effort may be—that I now proceed to set forth the following address:

I wish, by the undoubted facts of history, to cast back the vile aspersions and foul calumnies that have been heaped upon my race for the last four centuries, by our unprincipled oppressors; whose base interest, at the expense of our blood and our bones, have made them reiterate, from generation to generation, during the long march of ages, every thing that would prop up the impious dogma of our natural and inherent inferiority.

AN ADDITIONAL REASON FOR THE PRESENT TASK.

But this is not all. I wish hereby to contribute my influ

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once—however small that influence—to effect a grander and dearer object to our race than even this truthful vindication of them before the world. I wish to do all in my power to inflame the latent embers of self-respect, that the cruelty and injustice of our oppressors, have nearly extinguished in our bosoms, during the midnight chill of centuries, that we have clanked the galling chains of slavery. To this end, I wish to remind my oppressed brethren, that dark and dismal as this horrid night has been, and sorrowful as the general reflections are, in regard to our race; yet, notwithstanding these discouraging considerations, there are still some proud historic recollections, linked indissolubly with the most important events of the past and present century, which break the general monotony, and remove some of the gloom that hang over the dark historic period of African slavery, and the accursed traffic in which it was cradled.

THE REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY OF HAYTI,

THE BASIS OF THIS ARGUMENT.

These recollections are to be found in the history of the heroic events of the Revolution of Hayti.

This revolution is one of the noblest, grandest, and most justifiable outbursts against tyrannical oppression that is recorded on the pages of the world's history.

A race of almost dehumanized men—made so by an oppressive slavery of three centuries—arose from their slumber of ages, and redressed their own unparalled wrongs with a terrible hand in the name of God and humanity.

In this terrible struggle for liberty, the Lord of Hosts directed their arms to be the instruments of His judgment on their oppressors, as the recompense of His violated law of love between man and his fellow, which these tyrants of the new world had been guilty of, in the centuries of blood, wrong, and oppression, which they had perpetrated on the negro race in that isle of the Carribean Sea.

But aside from this great providential and religious view

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of this great movement, that we are always bound to seek for, in all human affairs, to see how they square with the mind of God, more especially if they relate to the destinies of nations and people;—the Haytian Revolution is also the grandest political event of this or any other age. In weighty causes, and wondrous and momentous features, it surpasses the American revolution, in an incomparable degree. The revolution of this country was only the revolt of a people already comparatively free, independent, and highly enlightened. Their greatest grievance was the imposition of three pence per pound tax on tea, by the mother country, without their consent. But the Haytian revolution was a revolt of an uneducated and menial class of slaves, against their tyrannical oppressors, who not only imposed an absolute tax on their unrequited labor, but also usurped their very bodies; and who would have been prompted by the brazen infidelity of the age then rampant, to dispute with the Almighty, the possession of the souls of these poor creatures, could such brazen effrontery have been of any avail, to have wrung more ill-gotten gain out of their victims to add to their worldly goods.

These oppressors, against whom the negro insurgents of Hayti had to contend, were not only the government of a far distant mother country, as in the case of the American revolution; but unlike and more fearful than this revolt, the colonial government of Hayti was also thrown in the balance against the negro revolters. The American revolters had their colonial government in their own hands, as well as their individual liberty at the commencement of the revolution The black insurgents of Hayti had yet to grasp both their personal liberty and the control of their colonial government, by the might of their own right hands, when their heroic struggle began.

The obstacles to surmount, and the difficulties to contend against, in the American revolution, when compared to those of the Haytian, were, (to use a homely but classic phrase,) but a "tempest in a teapot," compared to the dark and lurid thunder storm of the dissolving heavens.

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Never before, in all the annals of the world's history, did a nation of abject and chattel slaves arise in the terriffic might of their resuscitated manhood, and regenerate, redeem, and disenthrall themselves: by taking their station at one gigantic bound, as an independent nation, among the sovereignties of the world.

It is, therefore, the unparalelled incidents that led to this wonderful event, that I now intend to review rapidly, in order to demonstrate thereby, the capacity of the negro race for self-government and civilized progress, to the fullest extent and in the highest sense of these terms.

PRELIMINARY INCIDENTS OF THE REVOLUTION.

I shall proceed to develop the first evidence of the competency of the negro race for self-government, amid the historical incidents that preceded their terrible and bloody revolution; and in the events of that heroic struggle itself.

When the cosmopolitan ideas of "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," which swayed the mighty minds of France, toward the close of the 18th century, reached the colony of St. Domingo, through the Massaic club, composed of wealthy colonial planters, organized in the French capitol; all classes in that island, except the black slave and the free colored man, were instantly wrought up to the greatest effervescence, and swayed with the deepest emotions, by the startling doctrines of the equal political rights of all men, which were then so boldly enunciated in the face of the tyrannical despotisms and the immemorial assumptions of the feudal aristocracies of the old world.

The colonial dignitaries, the military officers, and other agents of the government of France, then resident in St. Domingo, the rich planters and the poor whites, (these latter called in the parlance of that colony "*Les petits blancs*,) were all from first to last, swayed with the intensest and the most indescribable feelings, at the promulgation of these bold and radical theories.

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All were in a perfect fever to realize and enjoy the priceless boon of political and social privileges that these revolutionary ideas held out before them. And in their impatience to grasp these precious prerogatives, they momentarily forgot their colonial dependance on France, and spontaneously came together in a general assembly, at a small town of St. Domingo, called St. Marc; and proceeded to deliberate seriously about taking upon themselves all the attributes of national sovereignty and independence.

And when they had deliberately matured plans to suit themselves, they did not hesitate to send representatives to propose them to the national government of France, for its acknowledgment and acquiescence in their desires.

Such was the radical consequence to which the various classes of white colonists in St. Domingo seized upon, and carried the cosmopolitan theories of the French philosophers and political agitators of the last century.

But from all this excitement and enthusiasm, I have already excepted the black and colored inhabitants of that island.

The white colonists of St. Domingo, like our *liberty loving* and *democratic* fellow citizens of the United States, never meant to include this despised race, in their glowing dreams of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Like our *model Republicans*, they looked upon this hated race of beings, as placed so far down the scale of humanity, that when the "Rights of man" were spoken of, they did not imagine that the most distant reference was thereby made to the negro; or any one through whose veins his tainted blood sent its crimsoned tide.

And so blind were they to the fact that the "Rights of Man" could be so construed as to recognise the humanity of that oppressed race; that when the National assembly of France, swayed by the just representations of the "Friends of the Blacks" was led to extend equal political rights to the free men of color in St. Domingo, at the same time that this National body ratified the doings of the General Colonial

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assembly of St. Marc: these same colonists who had been so loud in their hurrahs for the *Rights of Man*, now ceased their clamors for liberty in the face of this just national decree, and sullenly resolved "To die rather than share equal political rights with a bastard race." Such was the insulting term that this colonial assembly then applied to the free men of color, in whose veins coursed the blood of the proud planter, commingled with that of the lowly negress.

THE SELF-POSSESSION OF THE BLACKS;

AN EVIDENCE OF THEIR CAPACITY FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The exceptional part which the blacks played in the moving drama that was then being enacted in St. Domingo, by their stern self-possession amid the furious excitement of the whites, is one of the strongest proofs that can be adduced to substantiate the capabilities of the negro race for self-government.

The *careless reserve* of the seemingly dehumanized black slave, who continued to toil and delve on, in the monotonous round of plantation labor, under a cruel task master, in a manner so entirely heedless of the furious hurrahs for freedom and independence; the planting of Liberty poles, surmounted by the cap of Liberty; and the erection of statues to the goddess of Liberty, which was going on around him: this apparent indifference and carelessness to the surging waves of freedom that were then awakening the despotisms of earth from their slumber of ages, showed that the slave understood and appreciated the difficulties of his position. He felt that the hour of destiny, appointed by the Almighty, had not yet tolled its summons for him to arise, and avenge the wrong of ages.

He therefore remained heedless of the effervescence of liberty that bubbled over in the bosom of the white man; and continued at his sullen labors, biding his time for deliverance. And in this judicious reserve on the part of the blacks, we have one of the strongest traits of self-government.

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When we look upon this characteristic of cool, self-possession, we cannot but regard it as almost a miracle under the circumstances. We cannot see what magic power could keep such a warm blooded race of men in such an ice bound spell of cold indifference, when every other class of men in that colony was flush with the excitement of *liberty;* and the whole island was rocked to its center, with the deafening surges of EQUALITY, that echoed from ten thousand throats.

One would have supposed, that at the very first sound of freedom, the 500,000 bondmen in that island, whose ancestry for three centuries had worn the yoke of slavery; would have raised up, at once, in their overwhelming numerical power and physical stalwartness, and cried out LIBERTY! with a voice so powerful as to have cleft asunder the bowels of the earth, and buried slavery and every negro hater and oppressor who might dare oppose their just rights, in one common grave.

But as I have said, they did no such thing; they had a conscious faith in the ultimate designs of God; and they silently waited, trusting to the workings of His over-ruling Providence to bring about the final day of their deliverance. In doing so, I claim they have given an evidence of their ability to govern themselves, that ought to silence all pro-slavery calumniators of my race at once, and forever, by its powerful and undying refutation of their slanders.

And let no one dare to rob them of this glorious trait of character, either by alledging that they remained thus indifferent, because they were too ignorant to appreciate the blessings of liberty; or by saying, that if they understood the import of these clamors for the "Rights of Man," they were thus quiet, because they were too cowardly to strike for their disenthralment.

The charge that they were thus ignorant of the priceless boon of freedom, is *refuted* by the antecedent history of the servile insurrections, which never ceased to rack that island from 1522 down to the era of negro independence. The

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negro insurgents, Polydore, Macandel, and Padrejan, who had at various times, led on their enslaved brethren to daring deeds, in order to regain their God-given liberty, brand that assertion as a libel on the negro character, that says, he was too cowardly to strike for the inheritance of its precious boon.

And the desperate resolution to be free, that the Maroon negroes of the island maintained for 85 years, by their valorous struggles, in their wild mountain fastnesses, against the concentrated and combined operations of the French and Spanish authorities then in that colony; and which finally compelled these authorities to conclude a treaty with the intrepid Maroon chief, Santiago, and thereby acknowledge their freedom forever thereafter: this fact I say, proves him to be a base calumniator, who shall dare to say that a keen appreciation of liberty existed not in the bosom of the negroes of St. Domingo.

But again, as to the plea of cowardice, in order to account for the fact of their cool self-possession amidst the first convulsive throes of Revolutionary liberty, permit me to add in refutation of this fallacy, that if the daring incidents of antecedent insurrections do not sufficiently refute this correlative charge also; then the daring deeds of dreadless heroism performed by a Toussaint, a Dessalines, a Rigaud, and a Christophe, in the subsequent terrible, but necessary revolution of the negroes; in which black troops gathered from the plantations of slavery, met the best appointed armies of France, and at various times, those of England and Spain also: and proved their equal valor and prowess with these best disciplined armies of Europe—this dreadless heroism, evinced by the blacks, I say, is sufficient to nail the infamous imputation of cowardice to the wall, at once and forever.

Hence nothing shall rob them of the immaculate glory of exhibiting a stern self-possession, in that feverish hour of excitement, when every body around them were crying out Liberty. And in this judicious self-control at this critical juncture, when their destiny hung on the decision of the hour, we have a brilliant illustration of the capacity of the race for self-government.

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SIMILAR EVIDENCE ON THE PART OF THE FREE MEN OF COLOR.

But additional and still stronger evidence of this fact crowd upon us, when we see that the free men of color remained entirely passive during the first stage of this revolutionary effervescence. This class of men, as a general thing, was educated and wealthy; and they were burthened with duties by the State, without being invested with corresponding political privileges. From such unjust exactions they had every reason to seek a speedy deliverance. And this great tumult that now swept over the island, offered them a propitious opportunity to agitate with the rest of the free men of the colony for the removal of their political disabilities.

They had greater cause to agitate than the whites, because they suffered under heavier burdens than that class. Nevertheless, in the first great outbreak of the water-floods of liberty—tempting as the occasion was, and difficult as restraint must have been; yet the free men of color also possessed their souls in patience, and awaited a more propitious opportunity. Certainly no one will attempt to stigmatise the calm judgment of these men in this awful crisis of suspense, as the result of ignorance of the blessings of freedom, when it is known that many of this class were educated in the seminaries of France, under her most brilliant professors; and that they were also patrons of that prodigy of literature, the Encyclopedia of France.

Neither can they stigmatize this class of men as cowards, as it is also known that they were the voluntary compeers of the Revolutionary heroes of the United States; and who, under the banners of France, mingled their sable blood with the Saxon and the French in the heroic battle of Savannah.

Then this calm indifference of the men of color in this crisis, notwithstanding the blood of three excitable races mingled in their veins with that of the African, viz: that of the French, the Spanish, and the Indian; and notwithstand-

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ing, they had glorious recollections of their services in the cause of American Independence, inciting them on—this calm indifference, on their part, I say, notwithstanding these exciting causes, is another grand and striking illustration of the conservative characteristics of the negro race, that demonstrate their capacity for self-government.

THE OPPORTUNE MOVEMENT OF THE FREE COLORED MEN.

The tumultuous events of this excitement among the white colonists rolled onward, and brought the auspicious hour of negro destiny in that island nearer and nearer, when Providence designed that he should play his part in the great drama of freedom that was then being enacted. Of course the propitious moment for the free men of color to begin to move would present itself prior to that for the movement of the negro slaves.

The opportunity for the men of color presented itself when the general colonial assembly of St. Marc's (already referred to) sent deputies to France, to present the result of its deliberations to the National Assembly; and to ask that august body to confer on the colony the right of self-government.

At this time, therefore, when the affairs of the colony were about to undergo examination in the supreme legislature of the mother country, the free men of color seized upon the occasion to send deputies to France also, men of their own caste, to represent their grievances and make their wishes known to the National Assembly. This discreet discernment of such an opportune moment to make such a movement divested of every other consideration, shows a people who understand themselves, what they want, and how to seek it.

But when we proceed to consider the most approved manner in which the representations were made to the National Assembly, by the colored delegates in behalf of their caste, in the colony of St. Domingo, and the influences they brought to bear upon that body, as exhibited hereafter: we shall

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perceive thereby that they showed such an intimate acquaintance with the secret springs of governmental machinery, as demonstrated at once their capacity to govern themselves.

This deputation first drew up a statement in behalf of their caste in the colony, of such a stirring nature as would be certain to command the national sympathy in their cause, when presented to the National Assembly. But previously to presenting it to that assembly, they took the wise precaution to wait upon the honorable president of that august body, in order to enlist and commit him in their favor, as the first steping stone to secure the success of their object before the Supreme Legislature.

They prevailed in their mission to the President of the Assembly; and succeeded in obtaining this very emphatic assurance from him: "No part of the nation shall vainly reclaim their rights before the assembly of the representatives of the French people."

Having accomplished this important step, the colored deputies next began to operate through the Abolition Society of Paris, called "*Les Amis des Noirs*," upon such of the members of the assembly as were affiliated with this society, and thus already indirectly pledged to favor such a project as theirs, asking simple justice for their race. They were again successful, and Charles De Lameth, one of the zealous patrons of that society, and an active member of the National Assembly, was engaged to argue their cause before the Supreme Legislature of the nation, although strange to say, he was himself a colonial slaveholder at that time.

And at the appointed moment in the National Assembly, this remarkable man felt prompted to utter these astounding words in behalf of this oppressed and disfranchised class of the colony: "I am one of the greatest proprietors of St. Domingo; yet I declare to you, that sooner than lose sight of principles so sacred to justice and humanity, I would prefer to lose all that I possess. I declare myself in favor of admitting

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the men of color to the rights of citizenship; and in favor of the freedom of the blacks."

Now let us for a moment stop and reflect on the measures resorted to by the colored deputies of St. Domingo, in Paris, who, by their wise stratagems, had brought their cause step by step to such an eventful and auspicious crisis as this.

Could there have been surer measures concocted for the success of their plans, than thus committing the president of the assembly to their cause in the first place; and afterwards pressing a liberty-loving slaveholder into their service, to thunder their measures through the National Assembly, by such a bold declaration?

Who among the old fogies of Tammany Hall—that junta of scheming politicians who govern this country by pulling the wires of party, and thereby making every official of the nation, from the President of the United States down to the Commissioners for Street Sweeping in the City of New York, dance as so many puppets at their bidding—I repeat it—who among these all powerful but venal politicians of old Tammany, could have surpassed these tactics of those much abused men of color, who thus swayed the secret springs of the National Assembly of France? And who, after this convincing proof to the contrary, shall dare to say that the negro race is not capable of self-government?

But to return to the thread of our narrative. When the secret springs had been thus secured in their behalf, they had nothing to fear from the popular heart of the nation, already keenly alive to the sentiments of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; because the simple justice of their demands would commend them to the people as soon as they were publicly made known in France.

In order to make the very best impression on the popular heart of the nation, their petition demanding simple justice to their caste was accompanied with a statement very carefully drawn up.

In this statement they showed that their caste in the col-

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ony of St. Domingo possessed one-third of the real estate, and one-fourth of the personal effects of the island. They also set forth the advantages of their position in the political and social affairs of St. Domingo, as a balance of power in the hand of the imperial government of France, against the high pretensions of the haughty planters on the one hand, and the seditious spirit of the poor whites on the other. And, as an additional consideration, by way of capping the climax, they offered in the name, and in behalf of the free men of color in the colony, six millions of francs as a loyal contribution to the wants and financial exigencies of the National Treasury, to be employed in liquidating the debt of their common country.

Thus, if neither their wire-working maneuvers, the justice of their cause, or the conservative influence which their position gave them in the colony, had not been enough to secure the end which they sought; then the tempting glitter of so much cash, could not be resisted, when its ponderous weight was also thrown in the scale of justice. They succeeded, as a matter of course, in accomplishing their purpose; and the National Assembly of France promulgated a decree on the 8th of March, 1790, securing equal political rights to the men of color.

The very success of this movement, and the means by which its success was effected, the opportune moment when it was commenced, and the immense odds that were against those that sought its accomplishment—all these things must hereafter be emblazoned on the historic page as an everlasting tribute to the genius of the negro race, and remain an ineffaceable evidence of their capacity for self-government; that may be triumphantly adduced and proudly pointed at in this and every succeeding generation of the world, until the latest syllable of recorded time.

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THE CRISIS PRODUCED IN THE COLONY BY THIS DECREE.

THE MEN OF COLOR ON THE SIDE OF LIBERTY, LAW, AND ORDER.

It was when this decree was made known in the colony of St. Domingo, that the General Assembly of the colony, then sitting at St. Marc's, expressed the malignant sentiments of the white colonists, in a resolution that I have already quoted, viz: they resolved that they would "Rather die, than share equal political rights with a bastard race."

Vincent Oje, a man of color, and one of the delegates to Paris, in behalf of his caste, anticipated a venomous feeling of this kind against his race, on the part of the white colonists, when these decrees should be made known to them. He however, resolved to do whatever was within his power, to allay this rancorous feeling. He did not therefore hasten home to the colony immediately after the decree was promulgated. He delayed, in order to allow time for their momentary excitement as expressed in the resolution above, to cool off, by a more calm reflection on their sober second thought. He also tarried in France, to secure a higher political end, by which he would be personally prepared to return to St. Domingo, to make the most favorable impression in behalf of his race, and the objects of that decree, on the minds of the white colonists.

To this end he succeeds in getting the appointment of Commissioner of France, from the French government, to superintend the execution of the decree of the 8th of March, 1790, in the island of St. Domingo.

Certainly, he might hope, that being invested with the sacred dignity of France, his person, his race, (thus honored through him by that imperial government,) and the National decree itself, with which he was charged, would now be respected.

But not content with accumulating the national honors of France; fearing lest the pro-Slavery colonists would disregard these high prerogatives, by looking upon them as having been

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obtained through the *fanatical* "Friends of the Blacks" at Paris, by those partisans exerting an undue influence on the National Government: he further proceeds to gather additional honors, by ingratiating himself into the favor of a potentate of Holland—the Prince of Limbourg; from whom he received the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and the order of the Lion. Thus he wished to demonstrate to the infatuated colonists, who regarded his race as beneath their consideration, that he could not only obtain titles and reputation in France, by means of ardent friends, but that over and above these, and beyond the boundaries of France, he could also command an European celebrity.

This was indeed a splendid course of conduct on his part; and by thus gathering around him and centering within himself these commanding prestiges of respect, he demonstrated his thorough knowledge of one of the most important secrets in the art of governing; and so far made another noble vindication of the capacity of the negro race for self-government.

But as we proceed to consider the manner that he afterwards undertook to prosecute his high National Commission in promulgating in St. Domingo, the decree of the 8th of March, 1790, we shall see additional evidence of the same master skill crowd upon us.

He had now delayed his return from Europe in order to allow time for the allaying of hasty excitement, and for the purpose of making the most favorable advent to the island.

He comes a commissioned envoy of the French nation, and an honored chevalier of Europe. Nevertheless, with that prudent foresight which anticipates all possible emergencies, he landed in St. Domingo in a cautious and unostentatious manner, so as not to provoke any forcible demonstration against him. Having landed, he gathered around him a suite of 200 men for his personal escort, which his station justified him in having as his cortege; and which might also serve

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the very convenient purpose of a body guard to defend him against any attempt at a cowardly assassination from any lawless or ruthless desperadoes of oppression in the colony.

At the head of this body of men, he at once proceeded to place himself in communication with the Colonial Assembly, then in session; to inform it officially of his commission and the national decree which he bore; and to require that assembly, as the legislative authority of the island, to enforce its observance, by enacting an ordinance in accordance with the same.

In this communication of Oje, being aware of their pro-slavery prejudices, he endeavored to conciliate them by a peace offering. That peace offering was the sanctioning of Negro Slavery; for he stated to the assembly that the decree did not refer to the blacks in servitude; neither did the men of color, said he, desire to acknowledge their equality.

This specific assurance on the part of Oje, although it does not speak much for his high sense of justice, when abstractly considered; yet it shows as much wisdom and tact in the science of government, as is evinced by the sapient or *sap* headed legislators of this country, who make similar compromises as a peace offering to the prejudice and injustice of the oligarchic despots of this nation.

Oje, however, failed to make the desired impression on the infatuated colonists, either by his National and European dignities, or by his peace offering of 500,000 of his blacker brethren. He fell beneath the malignant hate of the slave-holding colonists, after defending himself with his little band of followers, against the overwhelming odds of these sanguinary tigers, with a manly heroism, only equalled by the Spartans at the pass of Thermopylæ, and thus has cut for himself an enduring niche among the heroes in the temple of fame.

He was captured; and after a mock trial, illustrative of pro-slavery justice; something similar, for instance, to our Fugitive Slave Law trials in Boston, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati—(though more merciful in its penalty than these)—

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this mock court of St. Domingo condemned Vincent Oje and his brave lieutenant, Jean Chevanne, with their surviving compatriots, to be broken alive on the wheel.

We forget the error of the head committed by this right hearted, noble, and generous man, towards his more unfortunate brethren, in order to weep over his ignoble and unworthy fate, received at the hands of those monsters of cruelty in St. Domingo.

I cannot better close this notice of Oje, than by repeating the concluding lines from a Poem dedicated to him, by that distinguished man of color, our own fellow countryman, Prof. George B. Vashon, of McGrawville College:

"Sad was your fate, heroic band,
Yet mourn we not, for yours the stand
Which will secure to you a fame,
That never dieth, and a name
That will, in coming ages be
A signal word for Liberty.
Upon the Slave's o'erclouded sky,
Your gallant actions traced the bow,
Which whispered of deliverance nigh—
The need of one decisive blow.
Thy coming fame, Oje! is sure;
Thy name with that of L'Ouverture,
And the noble souls that stood
With both of you, in times of blood,
Will live to be the tyrant's fear—
Will live, the sinking soul to cheer!"

THE HOUR OF DESTINY FOR THE BLACKS.

This untimely death of the great leader of the men of color, served only to develop how plentifully the race was supplied with sagacious characters, capable of performing daring deeds—it served to show how well the race was supplied with the material out of which great leaders are made, at any moment, and for any exigency.

Now came the hour for the patient, delving black slave to begin to move. He has manfully bided his time, whilst the white colonists were rampant in pursuit of high political pre-

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rogatives; and he has remained quiet, whilst his brother—the freed man of color, has carried his cause demanding equal political rights, triumphantly through the National Assembly of France.

But most intolerable of all, he has been perfectly still, whilst his more fortunate brethren have offered even to strike hands with the vile oppressor in keeping the iron yoke on his neck.

Nevertheless, he has lived to see both of these classes foiled by the over-ruling hand of Providence, from interpreting the words "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," to suit their own selfish and narrow notions. He finds these two parties now at open hostilities with one another. He sees, on one hand, the despicable colonists inviting foreign aid into the island, to resist the execution of the National decree and to prop up their unhallowed cause by the dread alternative of treason and rebellion. Whilst on the other hand, he beholds the men of color fighting on the side of the nation, law, and order, against the white colonists. Amid this general commotion his pulsations grow quick, and he feels that the hour of destiny is coming for *even* him to strike.

Yet he still possesses his soul in patience until the destined moment. At last he hears that France now vacillates in carrying out the tardy measure of justice that her National Legislature had enacted. The mother country, that had so nobly commenced the work of justice, by the national decree, enfranchising the free men of color, now begins to recede from the high position she had assumed, in order to favor the frenzied prejudice of the infatuated colonists. The negro slave had hoped that by this national act of justice to the free man of color, that a permanent step had been taken towards universal emancipation, and consequently his own eventual disenthralment. With this hope he was willing to continue quietly to wear his galling chains, rejoicing in the newly acquired boon of his more fortunate brethren, as the earnest and pledge of his own future deliverance, by a sim-

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ilar act of national justice. Thus the way seemed already paved for a peaceful termination of his servitude.

But, I repeat it again, the toiling black slave at last hears that the National Government of France vacillates in her judgment, quails before the storm of pro-slavery invectives, hurled by the insensate bigots of St. Domingo against the men of color, and finally, she recedes from her high position by the National Assembly repealing the decree of the 8th of March, 1790. Thus the slaves dawning ray of hope and liberty is extinguished, and there is nothing ahead but the impenetrable gloom of eternal slavery.

This, then, is the ominous moment reserved for the chained bondmen to strike; and he rises now from his slumber of degredation in the terrific power of brute force. Bouckman, (called by a Haytian historian the Spartacus of his race,) was raised up as the leader of the insurgents, who directed their fury in the desperate struggle for liberty and revenge, until the work of devastation and death was spread throughout the island to the most frightful extent. He continued to ride on the storm of revolution in its hurricane march, with a fury that became intensified as it progressed, until the colonists, by some fortuitous circumstances, were enabled to wreak their vengeance on this negro hero.

But when this first hero of the slaves was captured and executed by their oppressors, like Oje, the first hero of the free men of color; the capacity of the race to furnish leaders equal to any emergency, was again demonstrated.

A triumvirate of negro and mulatto chieftains now succeeded these two martyred heroes.

Jean François, Biassou, and Jeannot, now appeared upon the stage of action, and directed the arms of the exasperated insurgents against a faithless nation, the cruel colonists and their English allies, whose aid these colonists had invited, in their treasonable resistance to the National decree, which Oje came from France to promulgate in the name of the nation.

In order to contend against such overwhelming odds effect-

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ually, and for the purpose of obtaining the necessary supply of arms and ammunition, the insurgents went over, for a time, to the service of Spain. This government had always regarded the French as usurpers in the island; and the Spaniards were therefore glad of any prospect of expelling the French colonists entirely from St. Domingo. Hence they gladly accepted the proffered service of the blacks as a means to effect this end.

However, we have no reason to regard the Spanish government as being more favorably disposed towards the blacks than that of France. We may rather conclude that Spain was willing to use the blacks to subserve her end, and afterwards would doubtless have endeavored to reduce them to a state of slavery again.

Nevertheless the black slaves and free men of color went over to the cause of Spain, and used her to subserve their purpose in driving France not only to re-enact her previous decree in relation to the men of color; but also to proclaim the immediate emancipation of the blacks, and to invest them with equal political rights. For this purpose, three National Commissioners of France were sent to the island, bearing these decrees of the Supreme Government.

When this glorious result was thus triumphantly effected, they left the service of Spain and returned to the cause of France again.

During the struggles that took place while the insurgents were in the cause of Spain, the three leaders who headed them when they united with the Spaniards, were shifted, by the fortunes of war, from their chieftainship, and replaced by Toussaint and Rigaud—one a black, and the other a mulatto, when they returned to the service of France.

These two leaders, at the head of their respective castes in the service of France, fighting on the side of liberty, law, and order, compelled the turbulent and treasonable colonists to respect these last national decrees; drove their English allies from the colony, and extinguished the Spanish domin-

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ion therein, and thus reduced the whole island to the subjection of France.

When we duly consider this shrewd movement of the blacks in thus pressing Spain in their service at that critical moment, when every thing depended upon the decision of the hour, by which they were enabled to accomplish such a glorious result, we have thereby presented another strong and convincing proof of the capacity of the negro to adopt suitable means to accomplish great ends; and it therefore demonstrates in the most powerful manner, his ability for self-government.

THE AUSPICIOUS DAWN OF NEGRO RULE.

Toussaint, by his acute genius and daring prowess, made himself the most efficient instrument in accomplishing these important results, contemplated by the three French Commissioners, who brought the last decrees of the National Assembly of France, proclaiming liberty throughout the island to all the inhabitants thereof; and thus, like another Washington, proved himself the regenerator and savior of his country.

On this account, therefore, he was solemnly invested with the executive authority of the colony; and their labors having been thus brought to such a satisfactory and auspicious result, two of the Commissioners returned home to France.

No man was more competent to sway the civil destinies of these enfranchised bondmen than he who had preserved such an unbounded control over them as their military chieftain, and led them on to glorious deeds amid the fortunes of warfare recently waged in that island. And no one else could hold that responsible position of an official mediator between them and the government of France, with so great a surety and pledge of their continued freedom, as Toussaint L'Ouverture. And there was no other man, in fine, that these rightfully jealous freemen would have permitted to carry out such stringent measures in the island, so nearly verging to

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serfdom, which were so necessary at that time in order to restore industry, but one of their own caste whose unreserved devotion to the cause of their freedom, placed him beyond the suspicion of any treacherous design to re-enslave them.

Hence, by these eminent characteristics possessed by Toussaint in a super excellent degree, he was the very man for the hour; and the only one fitted for the governorship of the colony calculated to preserve the interests of all concerned.

The leading Commissioners of France, then in the island, duly recognized this fact, and did not dispute with him the claim to this responsible position. Thus had the genius of Toussaint developed itself to meet an emergency that no other man in the world was so peculiarly prepared to fulfil; and thereby he has added another inextinguishable proof of the capacity of the negro for self-government.

But if the combination of causes, which thus pointed him out as the only man that could safely undertake the fulfillment of the gubernatorial duties, are such manifest proofs of negro capacity; then the manner in which we shall see that he afterwards discharged the duties of that official station, goes still further to magnify the self-evident fact of negro capability.

The means that he adapted to heal the internecine dissensions that threatened civil turmoil; and the manner that he successfully counteracted the machinations of the ambitious General Hedouville, a French Commissioner that remained in the colony, who desired to overthrow Toussaint, showed that the negro chieftain was no tyro in the secret of government.

He also established commercial relations between that island and foreign nations; and he is said to be the first statesman of modern times, who promulgated the doctrine of free trade and reduced it to practice. He also desired to secure a constitutional government to St. Domingo, and for this purpose he assembled around him a select council of the most eminent men in the colony, who drew up a form of constitu-

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tion under his supervision and approval, and which he transmitted, with a commendatory letter to Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul of France, in order to obtain the sanction of the imperial government.

But that great bad man did not even acknowledge its receipt to Toussaint; but in his mad ambition he silently meditated when he should safely dislodge the negro chief from his responsible position, as the necessary prelude to the re-enslavement of his sable brethren, whose freedom was secure against his nefarious designs, so long as Toussaint stood at the helm of affairs in the colony.

But decidedly the crowning act of Toussaint L'Ouverture's statesmanship, was the enactment of the Rural Code, by the operation of which, he was successful in restoring industrial prosperity to the island, which had been sadly ruined by the late events of sanguinary warfare. He effectually solved the problem of immediate emancipation and unimpaired industry, by having the emancipated slaves produce thereafter, as much of the usual staple productions of the country, as was produced under the horrible regime of slavery; nevertheless, the lash was entirely abolished, and a system of wages adopted, instead of the uncompensated toil of the lacerated and delving bondman.

In fact, the island reached the highest degree of prosperity that it ever attained, under the negro governorship of Toussaint.

The rural code, by which so much was accomplished, instead of being the horrible nightmare of despotism—worse than slavery, that some of the pro-slavery calumniators of negro freedom and rule would have us believe; was, in fact, nothing more than a prudent government regulation of labor—a regulation which made labor the first necessity of a people in a state of freedom,—a regulation which struck a death blow at idleness, the parent of poverty and all the vices—a regulation, in fine, which might be adopted with advantage in every civilized country in the world, and thereby extin-

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guish two-thirds of the pauperism, vagrancy, and crime, that curse these nations of the earth; and thus lessen the need for poor-houses, police officers, and prisons, that are now sustained at such an enormous expense, for the relief of the poor and the correction of felons.

This Haytian Code compelled every vagabond or loafer about the towns and cities, who had no visible means of an honest livelihood, to find an employer and work to do in the rural districts. And if no private employer could be found, then the government employed such on its rural estates, until they had found a private employer. The hours and days of labor were prescribed by this code, and the terms of agreement and compensation between employer and employed were also determined by its provisions. Thus, there could be no private imposition on the laborers; and, as a further security against such a spirit, the government maintained rural magistrates and a rural police, whose duty it was to see to the faithful execution of the law on both sides.

By the arrangement of this excellent and celebrated code, every body in the commonwealth was sure of work and compensation for the same, either from private employers or from the government. No body need fear being starved for want of work to support themselves, as is often the case among the laborers of Europe, and is fast coming to pass in the densely populated communities of this country, where labor is left to take care of itself under the private exploitation of mercenary capitalists. Under this code nobody need fear being exploited on by such unprincipled and usurious men, who willingly take advantage of the poor to pay them starvation prices for their labor; because, against such, the law of Toussaint secured to each laborer a living compensation.

By the operation of this code, towns and cities were cleared of all those idle persons who calculate to live by their wits, and who commit nine-tenths of all the crimes that afflict civilized society. All such were compelled to be engaged at active industrial labors, and thus rendered a help to themselves and a blessing to the community at large.

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By this industrial regulation, every thing flourished in the island in an unprecedented degree; and the negro genius of Toussaint, by a bold and straight-forward provision for the regulation and protection of his emancipated brethren, affected that high degree of prosperity in Hayti, which all the wisdom of the British nation has not been able to accomplish in her emancipated West India colonies, in consequence of her miserable shuffling in establishing Coolie and Chinese apprenticeship—that semi-system of slavery—in order to gratify the prejudices of her pro-slavery colonial planters; and because of the baneful influence of absentee landlordism, which seems to be an inseparable incident of the British system of property.

Thus did the negro government of St. Domingo, show more paternal solicitude for the well being of her free citizens, than they ever could have enjoyed under the capricious despotism of individual masters who might pretend to care for them; and thus did it more truly subserve the purposes of a government than any or all of the similar organizations of civilization, whose only care and object seem to be the protection of the feudal rights of property in the hands of the wealthy few; leaving the honest labor of the many unprotected, and the poor laborer left to starve, or to become a criminal, to be punished either by incarceration in the jails, prisons and dungeons provided for common felons; or executed on the gallows as the greatest of malefactors.

The genius of Toussaint by towering so far above the common ideas of this age in relation to the true purposes of government; and by carrying out his bold problem with such eminent success, has thereby emblazoned on the historic page of the world's statemanship a fame more enduring than Pitt, who laid the foundation of a perpetual fund to liquidate the national debt of England.

I say Toussaint has carved for himself a more enduring fame, because his scheme was more useful to mankind. The negro statesman devised a plan that comprehended in its

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scope the well being of the masses of humanity. But Pitt only laid a scheme whereby the few hereditary paupers pensioned on a whole nation, with the absurd right to govern it, might still continue to plunge their country deeper and deeper into debt, to subserve their own extravagant purposes; and then provide for the payment of the same out of the blood and sweat, and bones of the delving operatives and colliers of Great Britain. Thus, then Toussaint by the evident superiority of his statesmanship, has left on the pages of the world's statute book, an enduring and irrefutable testimony of the capacity of the negro for self-government, and the loftiest achievements in national statesmanship.

And Toussaint showed that he had not mistaken his position by proving himself equal to that trying emergency when that demigod of the historian Abbott, Napoleon Bonaparte, first Consul of France, conceived the infernal design of re-enslaving the heroic blacks of St. Domingo; and who for the execution of this nefarious purpose sent the flower of the French Army, and a naval fleet of fifty-six vessels under command of General Leclerc, the husband of Pauline, the voluptuous and abandoned sister of Napoleon.

When this formidable expedition arrived on the coast of St. Domingo, the Commander found Toussaint and his heroic compeers ready to defend their God given liberty against even the terrors of the godless First Consul of France. Wheresoever these minions of slavery and despotism made their sacrilegous advances, devastation and death reigned under the exasperated genius of Toussaint.

He made that bold resolution and unalterable determination, which, in ancient times, would have entitled him to be deified among the gods; that resolution was to reduce the fair eden-like Isle of Hispaniola to a desolate waste like Sahara; and suffer every black to be immolated in a manly defense of his liberty, rather than the infernal and accursed system of negro slavery should again be established on that soil. He considered it far better, that his sable countrymen should be DEAD FREEMEN than LIVING SLAVES.

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The French veterans grew pale at the terrible manner that the blacks set to work to execute this resolution. Leclerc found it impossible to execute his design by force; and he was only able to win the reconciliation of the exasperated blacks to the govenment of France, by abandoning his hostilities and pledging himself to respect their freedom thereafter. It was then that the brave Negro Generals of Toussaint went over in the service of Leclerc; and it was then, that the Negro Chieftain himself, resigned his post to the Governor General appointed by Napoleon, and went into the shades of domestic retirement, at his home in Ennery.

Thus did Toussaint, by his firm resolution to execute his purpose, by his devotion to liberty and the cause of his race, so consistently maintained under all circumstances, more than deify himself; he proved himself more than a patriot; he showed himself to be the unswerving friend and servant of God and humanity.

Now, with the illustrious traits of character of this brilliant negro before us, who will dare to say that the race who can thus produce such a a noble specimen of a hero and statesman, is incapable of self-government. Let such a vile slanderer, if there any longer remains such, hide his diminutive head in the presence of his illustrious negro superior!

I know it may be said that, after all Toussaint was found wanting in the necessary qualities to meet, and triumph in, the last emergency, when he was finally beguiled, and sent to perish in the dungeons of France, a victim of the perfidious machinations of the heartless Napoleon.

On this point I will frankly own that Toussaint was deficient in those qualities by which his antagonist finally succeeded in getting him in his power.

So long as manly skill and shrewdness—so long as bold and open tactics and honorable stratagems were resorted to, the black had proved himself, in every respect, the equal of the white man. But the negro's heart had not yet descended to that infamous depth of subtle depravity, that could justify

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him in solemnly and publicly taking an oath, with the concealed, jesuitical purpose, of thereby gaining an opportunity to deliberately violate the same. He had no conception, therefore, that the white man from whom he had learned all that he knew of true—religion I repeat it—he had no conception that the white man, bad as he was, slaveholder as he was—that *even* HE was really so debased, vile, and depraved, as to be capable of such a double-dyed act of villainy, as breaking an oath solemnly sealed by invoking the name of the Eternal God of Ages.

Hence, when the Captain General, Leclerc, said to Toussaint, in presence of the French and Black Generals, uplifting his hand and jewelled sword to heaven: "I swear before the face of the Supreme Being, to respect the liberty of the people of St. Domingo." Toussaint believed in the sincerity of this solemn oath of the white man. He threw down his arms, and went to end the remainder of his days in the bosom of his family. This was, indeed, a sad mistake for him, to place so much confidence in the word of the white man. As the result of this first error, he easily fell into another equally treacherous. He was invited by General Brunet, another minion of Napoleon, in St. Domingo, to partake of the social hospitalities of his home; but, Toussaint, instead of finding the domestic civilities that he expected, was bound in chains, sent on board the Hero, a vessel already held in readiness for the consummation of the vile deed, in which he was carried a prisoner to France.

That magnanimous man bitterly repented at his leisure, his too great confidence in the word of the white man, in the cold dark dungeons of the castle of Joux. And the depth of this repentance was intensified by a compulsory fast ordered by that would-be great and magnanimous man, Napoleon Bonaparte, who denied him food, and starved him to death.

Great God! how the blood runs chill, in contemplating the ignoble end of the illustrious negro chieftain and statesman, by such base and perfidious means!

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A BLOODY INTERLUDE FINALLY ESTABLISHES NEGRO SOVEREIGNTY.

But if the godlike Toussaint had thus proved himself deficient in those mean and unhallowed qualities that proved his sad overthrow, nevertheless, the race again proved itself equal to the emergency, by producing other leaders to fill up the gap now left open.

The negro generals, who had gone over to the service of France, on the solemn assurances and protestations of Leclerc, soon learned to imitate this new lesson of treachery, and accordingly deserted his cause, and took up arms against France again.

And, if afterwards, the heroic but sanguinary black chief, Dessalines, who had previously massacred 500 innocent whites (if any of these treacherous colonists can be called innocent) at Mirebalais; 700 more at Verettes, and several hundred others at La Riviere—I say again, if we now see him resume his work of slaughter and death, and hang 500 French prisoners on gibbets erected in sight of the very camp of General Rochambeau, we may see in this the bitter fruit of the treachery of the whites, in this dreadful reaction of the blacks.* These were the roots springing up, which Toussaint spoke of so sorrowfully on the ship's deck, as he was borne away a prisoner to France, from the coast of St. Domingo. The captive hero, on this occasion, compared himself to a tree, saying: "They have cut down in me the trunk of the tree; but the roots are many and deep." The furious Dessalines was, therefore, one of the foremost and firmest of these roots left in St. Domingo by the fallen chief, Toussaint, who soon sprung up into a verdant and luxurious growth of sanguinary deeds, by which the independence of his Island home was baptized in a Sea of Blood.

Finally, if we see Dessalines with red hot shot, prepared

* General Leclerc had now fallen a victim to the ravages of yellow fever, and Rochambeau had succeeded to the supreme command of the invading forces.

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to sink the squadron of general Rochambeau, as it departed from France, although the negro chief had solemnly stipulated to allow it to sail from the harbor unmolested, we find in this determination of the blood-thirsty man, how well he had learned the lesson of treachery and perfidy from the example of the white man.

Thus, if shocking depravity in perfidiousness and covenant breaking, is needed as another evidence of the negro's equality with the white man, in order to prove his ability to govern himself, then the implacable black chief, Dessalines, furnishes us with that proof.

I think, however, we may thank God, that the last act of destruction contemplated by Dessalines was not consummated, in consequence of an English fleet taking Rochambeau and his squadron as prisoners of war in the harbor of Port-au-Prince; and thus, by this providential interposition, saved the race from a stigma on the pages of history, as foul as that which darkens the moral character of their antagonists.

Having now arrived at the epoch when the banners of negro independence waved triumphantly over the Queen of the Antilles; if we look back at the trials and tribulations through which they came up to this point of National regeneration, we have presented to us, in the hardy endurance and perseverance manifested by them, in the steady pursuit of Liberty and Independence, the overwhelming evidence of their ability to govern themselves. For fourteen long and soul-trying years—twice the period of the revolutionary struggle of this country—they battled manfully for freedom. It was on the 8th of March, 1790, as we have seen, that the immortal man of color, Vincent Oje, obtained a decree from the National Assembly guaranteeing equal political privileges to the free men of color in the island. And, after a continued sanguinary struggle dating from that time, the never-to-be-forgotten self-emancipated black slave, Jean Jacque Dessalines, on the 1st of January, 1804, proclaimed negro freedom and independence throughout the island of St. Domingo.

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That freedom and independence are written in the world's history in the ineffaceable characters of blood; and its crimsoned letters will ever testify of the determination and of the ability of the negro to be free, throughout the everlasting succession of ages.

EVIDENCES OF SELF-GOVERNMENT SINCE 1804.

I will now proceed to give a hasty synopsis of the evidences that the Haytians have continued to manifest since their independence in demonstration of the Negroes' ability to govern themselves.

Dessalines the Liberator of his country was chosen as a matter of course the first Ruler of Hayti. During his administration, the efficient organization of an army of 60,000 men to defend the country against invaders—the erection of immense fortifications, and the effort to unite and consolidate the Spanish part of the Island in one government with the French portion over which he presided, showed that he understood the precautionary measures necessary to preserve the freedom and independence of his country; and so far he kept up the character of the race for capacity in self-government.

In the succeeding administrations of the rival chiefs, Christophe and Petion, we have indeed the sorrowful evidence of division, between the blacks and the men of color or mulattoes, the seeds of which was planted in the days of slavery. Nevertheless in that mutual good understanding that existed between them by which it was agreed to unite together whenever a foreign foe invaded the island; and in the contemptuous manner that both chiefs rejected the perfidious overtures of Bonaparte, we have still the evidence of that conservative good sense which fully exhibits the negroes ability to take care of himself.

In the next administration of Boyer where we find these divisions in the French part of the island happily healed; and the Spanish colony also united in one government with the

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French, as Dessalines ardently desired in his time; we have the most astonishing evidence of the perfection the Black race could make in the art of self-government, during the short period of twenty years independence.

After Boyer's administration there were some slight manifestations of disorder, arising from the smouldering feud between the blacks and men of color that the ancient regime of slavery had created among them; the baneful influence of which the work of freedom and independence has not yet had time to entirely efface. In this disorder we find the Spanish part of the island secede and set up a separate nationality.—But we find every thing in the French part soon settling down into order again, under the vigorous sceptre of the present ruler, Faustin I.

And in his known sentiments to harmonize all classes of his people, and to unite the whole island under one strong government, to secure which end he has exerted every influence within his power, we have the continued evidence of those large and extended views of national policy among the rulers of Hayti, that proves their ability to govern themselves in a manner that will compare favorably with the statesmanship of any existing government of modern civilization.

Here we shall rest the evidence in proof of the competency of the negro race for self-government which we have drawn out to rather a protracted length for the space assigned to a single Lecture; and turn our attention now to some of the evidences of civilized progress evinced by that people. We shall be brief in the elucidation of this point, because as their ample competency to govern themselves, has now been firmly established from the highest point of view, this fact of itself demonstrates that the soundest elements of civilized progress are inherent among such a people. Nevertheless it will be well to particularize some of the proofs on this point also.

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EVIDENCES OF CIVILIZED PROGRESS.

NATIONAL ENTERPRISE.

Under the administration of Dessalines aside from the Military preparations we have noticed; he continued the Code Rural of Toussaint as the law of the land, thereby demonstrating that the negro in independence could carry forward measures of industry for his own benefit as well as for the whites when he governed for and in the name of France; for such was the case during the Governor Generalship of Toussaint. He also established schools in nearly every district of his dominions, and the people seeing what advantage was possessed by those who had received instruction, attached great importance to its acquisition; and as the result in a short time there were but few who did not learn to read and write.

In the constitution that he promulgated, it was declared that he who was not a good father, a good husband, and above all a good soldier, was unworthy to be called a Haytian citizen. It was not permitted fathers to disinherit their children; and every person was required by law to exercise some mechanical art or handicraft.

Thus fundamental measures were taken to make education, well regulated families and the mechanic arts, those three pillars of civilization, the basis of Haytian Society.—And in this fact where such high necessities were recognized and appreciated, we have the most undoubted evidence of civilized progress.

The overthrow of the government of Dessalines, by the spontaneous uprising of the people in their majesty, when it had become a merciless and tyrannical despotism, may also be noted here as another evidence of progress in political freedom of thought that made the race scorn to be tyrannized over by an oppressive master, whether that master was a cruel white tyrant, or a merciless negro despot.

Passing on to the two-fold government of Petion and Christophe, we not only discover the same military vigilance kept

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up by the construction of the tremendous fortification called the Citadel Henry that was erected by Christophe, under the direction of European Engineers, mounting 300 cannons;—but we also find both of these chiefs introducing teachers from Europe in their respective dominions; and establishing the Lancasterian system of schools.

We discover also during their administration, Protestant Missionaries availing themselves of the tolerant provision in regard to religious worship that had been maintained in the fundamental laws of the country since the days of Dessalines. These Missionaries commenced their work of evangelization with the approbation of the negro and mulatto chieftains;—and Christophe went so far as to import a cargo of Bibles for gratuitous distribution among his people.

Thus do we find that progress continued to make its steady steps of advancement among these people, notwithstanding the political divisions that had now taken place among them.

The succeeding administration of General Jean Pierre Boyer, under whom these divisions were happily healed, was fraught with stupendous projects of advancement.

The whole of the laws of the island were codified and made simple, under six different heads, viz: The Code Rural, the Civil Code, the Commercial Code, the Criminal Code, and the Code of Civil and Criminal procedure, regulating the practice in the several courts of the island. Thus, by this codification of her laws, did Hayti execute over thirty years ago, that which the States of this Union are just arousing to the necessity of doing Boyer also set on foot a project of emigration, for the purpose of inducing the colored people of the United States to remove to Hayti, in order to replenish and accelerate the growth of the Haytian population. This project resulted in the removal of 6,000 colored people to that island from this country.

In addition to this important movement, various enterprises were undertaken by men of public spirit, during this administration, to promote industry among the people of Hayti.

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A company was formed to carry on a mahogany saw mill, which expended $20,000 in the purchase of the necessary machinery from France. The mill was erected at St. Marc's. Judge Lespinasse, chief justice of the Court of Cassation, was President of the Company; and it was under the special patronage of General Boyer, the President of the Republic.

Another company was also formed, under the presidency of Senator Jorge, for tanning purposes, and expended $10,000 in preparations for carrying on the business. A saw mill was also erected at Port-au-Prince, by a private individual, at the cost of $15,000.

Thus were the most vigorous efforts of progress manifested during the administration of Boyer.

In the subsequent administration of Guerrier, Pierrot, and Riviere, which followed each other in quick and rather chaotic succession, the work of industrial progress did not abate. Two steamers were purchased by the government, a model agricultural farm was established under a scientific director from France; and English architects, carpenters, and stone masons were hired to come in the country to improve the style of building.

Finally, we also discover the same evidences of gradual progress, when we come down to the present administration of Faustin I. A navy of about twenty armed vessels has been created. Thirteen steam sugar mills have been erected. The system of education improved and extended. And a house of industry erected at Port-au-Prince, for the purpose of instructing boys in the mechanic arts.

And here let me add, that during the whole period of these successive administrations, that we have thus summarily passed under review, a thrifty commercial trade has been maintained between that island and the maratime nations of Europe and America, amounting in the aggregate, to several millions of dollars per annum.

Hence, these evidences of educational and industrial devel-

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opment, expanding continually as years roll onward, we regard as the most irrefragable proof of true civilized progress on the part of the Haytian people.

STABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

But in addition to these facts, we may adduce the general stability of the government they have maintained, as another evidence of civilized progress. There have been but eight rulers in Hayti since 1804, counting separately, Christophe and Petion, who ruled cotemporaneously. This is a period of fifty-three years down to the present time. And in the United States, since 1809, there have been ten different chief magistrates—a period of forty-eight years. Thus, this country has had two more rulers than Hayti, within a period five years less than the Haytian sovereignty.

The fact is, there is no nation in North America, but the United States, nor any in South America, except Brazil, that can pretend to compare with Hayti, in respect to general stability of government. The Spanish Republics of America will have as many different rulers in eight years as Hayti has had in a half century.

And the colonial dependencies of European nations change governors at least three times as often as that negro nation has done. This political stability, therefore, on the part of the Haytians, indicates a vast remove from Barbarism. It is far ahead of the anarchy of some so-called civilized nations. And it therefore indicates a high degree of civilization and progress.

Some exceptions might be taken, by the over scrupulous partizan of popular institutions, at the tendency manifested to vacillate between a Republican and Monarchial form of government, that has constantly been exhibited in Hayti, since the days of Dessalines.

The desire for Republican institutions has its rise in the Cosmopolitan ideas and example of France, at the time of the Haytian Revolution. The proximate example of the

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United States may also influence this desire for republicanism to some extent.

On the other hand, Monarchy is an ancient traditionary predilection of the race derived from Africa, which ancient continent maintains that form of government in common with the rest of the old world. The gorgeous splendor and august prestige of aristrocratic rank and title, always attendant on this form of government, hold an imperious sway over the minds of this race of men who have such a keen appreciation of the beautiful. With these monarchical instincts on the one hand, and those powerful republican influencies on the other, Hayti has continually oscillated between a republican and a monarchial form of government. But be it ever remembered to her credit, this oscillation has not unsettled the permanent stability of her national administration, as the facts previously adduced, abundantly prove.

Permit me, however, to urge with due deference to the republican ideas which surround me, that it matters not in the eternal principles of morality, what the form of government may be, so long as the ruling powers of a nation maintain the inviolability of personal liberty, exact justice and political equality among all of its honest citizens and subjects. If these things are not so maintained, a republic is as great, nay a greater despotism that an autocracy.

If there is but one despot to oppress the people, then there is but one neck to be severed in order to rid the earth of such a loathesome pest. But if the petty despots are numbered by the millions; then woe to that prescribed class that may fall under their tyranny, for it will need more axes and more executioners than can be supplied, in order to get this countless brood out of the way.

A popular despotism therefore, whose rulers are composed of political gamblers for the spoils of office and burglarious plunderers of the public treasury that tyranizes over any class of its citizens and subject, is less tolerable than a monarchical or an aristocatic despotism, even though its rulers are a he-

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reditary class of blood-titled paupers pensioned from generation to generation, on the public bounty of the nation. Among this latter class of rulers there is not to be found such a desperate and reckless set of lawless adventurers as will be found among the former. And should such monsters present themselves, they are in a more tangible shape to be got at and disposed of in a government of the few, than in that of the many. Hence the sacred purposes of government in securing the welfare of the whole people will always be more nearly arrived at in the one than in the other.

The Haytian people when governed by the crowned and imperial Dessalines testified their love of liberty, by destroying the tyrant when he violated the constitution and overstepped the laws of his country.

The American people under a republican form of government manifest their want of a love of true liberty, when they permit a vagabond set of politicians, whose character for rowdyism disgraces the nation, to enact such an odious law as the Fugitive Slave bill, violating the writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and other sacred guarantees of the Constitution;—and then tamely submit to this high handed outrage, because such unprincipled scoundrels voted in their insane revelry, that it must be the Supreme law of the land.

If there was one-half of the real love of liberty among even the people of the professedly free northern states, as there is among the negroes of Hayti, every one of their national representatives who voted for that infamous bill, or who would not vote instantaneously for its repeal, would be tried for his life, condemned and publicly executed as accessory to man stealing. Thus would a free people, determined to preserve their liberties, rid themselves of a brood of petty tyrants who seek to impose their unhallowed partizan caprices upon the country, as the supreme law of the land, over-riding even the Higher Law of God. And thus in time would they exhibit an equally jealous regard for their rights, as the Haytians did, when they rid themselves of the tyrant Dessalines.

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If such was the real love of liberty among the northern people of this vain-glorious Republic, we should soon annihilate that morally spineless class of politicians, who need decision of character, when they get to Washington, to legislate for freedom. All such as were thus morally destitute of spinal vertebræ to resist the aggressions of the slave power, in the National Halls of legislation, would also soon be physically deficient in their cervical vertebræ, when they returned home, to meet the extreme penalty of an outraged and indignant constituency.

But such a determined spirit of liberty does not exist here, and honest men must submit therefore with lamb-like patience to this republican despotism of irresponsible political partizans who violate every just principle of law, because these unrighteous decrees are perpetrated in the name of the sovereign people.

Hence there is far more security for personal liberty and the general welfare of the governed, among the monarchical negroes of Hayti where the rulers are held individually responsible for their public acts, than exists in this bastard democracy.

The single necked despot is soon reached by the keen avenging axe of liberty, for any acts of despotism among the Haytian blacks; but here its dull and blunted edge lays useless; for it might be hurled in vain and fall powerless among a nameless crowd of millions.

CONCLUSION.

But our historical investigations are at an end, and we must hasten to bring our reflections to a conclusion. I have now fulfilled my design in vindicating the capacity of the negro race for self-government and civilized progress against the unjust aspersions of our unprincipled oppressors, by boldly examining the facts of Haytian history and deducing legitimate conclusions therefrom. I have summoned the sable heroes and statesmen of that independent isle of the Carib-

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bean Sea, and tried them by the high standard of modern civilization, fearlessly comparing them with the most illustrious men of the most enlightened nations of the earth;—and in this examination and comparison the negro race has not fell one whit behind their contemporaries. And in this investigation I have made no allowance for the negroes just emerging from a barbarous condition and out of the brutish ignorance of West Indian slavery. I have been careful not to make such an allowance, for fear that instead of proving negro equality only, I should prove negro superiority. I shun the point of making this allowance to the negro, as it might reverse the case of the question entirely, that I have been combatting and instead of disproving his alledged inferiority only, would on the other hand, go farther, and establish his superiority. Therefore as it is my design to banish the words "superiority" and "inferiority" from the vocabulary of the world, when applied to the natural capacity of races of men, I claim no allowance for them on the score of their condition and circumstances.

Having now presented the preceding array of facts and arguments to establish, before the world, the negro's equality with the white man in carrying forward the great principles of self-government and civilized progress; I would now have these facts exert their legitimate influence over the minds of my race, in this country, in producing that most desirable object of arousing them to a full consciousness of their own inherent dignity; and thereby increasing among them that self-respect which shall urge them on to the performance of those great deeds which the age and the race now demand at their hands.

Our brethren of Hayti, who stand in the vanguard of the race, have already made a name, and a fame for us, that is as imperishable as the world's history. They exercise sovereign authority over an island, that in natural advantages, is the Eden of America, and the garden spot of the world. Her rich resources invite the capacity of 10,000,000 human

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beings to adequately use them. It becomes then an important question for the negro race in America to well consider the weighty responsibility that the present exigency devolves upon them, to contribute to the continued advancement of this negro nationality of the New World until its glory and renown shall overspread and cover the whole earth, and redeem and regenerate by its influence in the future, the benighted Fatherland of the race in Africa.

Here in this black nationality of the New World, erected under such glorious auspices, is the stand point that must be occupied, and the lever that must be exerted, to regenerate and disenthrall the oppression and ignorance of the race, throughout the world. We must not overlook this practical vantage ground which Providence has raised up for us out of the depths of the sea, for any man-made and utopian scheme that is prematurely forced upon us, to send us across the ocean, to rummage the graves of our ancestors, in fruitless, and ill-directed efforts at the wrong end of human progress. Civilization and Christianity is passing from the East to the West; and its pristine splendor will only be rekindled in the ancient nations of the Old World, after it has belted the globe in its westward course, and revisited the Orient again. The Serpentine trail of civilization and christianity, like the ancient philosophic symbol of eternity, must coil backward to its fountain head. God, therefore in permitting the accursed slave traffic to transplant so many millions of the race, to the New World, and educing therefrom such a negro nationality as Hayti, indicates thereby, that we have a work now to do here in the Western World, which in his own good time shall shed its orient beams upon the Fatherland of the race. Let us see to it, that we meet the exigency now imposed upon us, as nobly on our part at this time as the Haytians met theirs at the opening of the present century. And in seeking to perform this duty, it may well be a question with us, whether it is not our duty, to go and indentify our destiny with our heroic brethren in that independent isle of

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the Carribean Sea, carrying with us such of the arts, sciences and genius of modern civilization, as we may gain from this hardy and enterprising Anglo-American race, in order to add to Haytian advancement; rather than to indolently remain here, asking for political rights, which, if granted a social proscription stronger than conventional legislation will ever render nugatory and of no avail for the manly elevation and general well-being of the race. If one powerful and civilized negro sovereignty can be developed to the summit of national grandeur in the West Indies, where the keys to the commerce of both hemispheres can be held; this fact will solve all questions respecting the negro, whether they be those of slavery, prejudice or proscription, and wheresoever on the face of the globe such questions shall present themselves for a satisfactory solution.

A concentration and combination of the negro race, of the Western Hemisphere in Hayti, can produce just such a national development. The duty to do so, is therefore incumbent on them. And the responsibility of leading off in this gigantic enterprise. Providence seems to have made our peculiar task by the eligibility of our situation in this country, as a point for gaining an easy access to that island. Then let us boldly enlist in this high pathway of duty, while the watchwords that shall cheer and inspire us in our noble and glorious undertaking, shall be the soul-stirring anthem of GOD and HUMANITY.

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