

20,000
1 men

Consul
bro in law
Le Clerc

Rochambeau
brother
Jerome B.

his sister
Madame Leclerc
infant

Toussaint's
honesty

he put his
two sons
on board
the fleet as
hostages for
father's conduct

On board this famous fleet the Consul embarked at least 20,000 men. I cannot add, all good men and true, but they were at least good at cutting throats in cold blood, and true to their old practices at Jaffa. They were probably, however, not picked out for the purpose, for the French troops have in general been so well trained to that kind of service, that you might safely choose them in the dark; especially when the object is to slaughter a people, whether white or black, who have the insolence to defend their freedom. At the head of this army was placed general Leclerc, the Consul's brother-in-law; and he was assisted by several generals of great note, especially Rochambeau, well known in the West Indies, for his hatred of freedom, and fondness for the cart-whip: and so sure did the Consul make himself of speedily subduing liberty in the colonies, as easily as he had done every where else, that he sent over his brother Jerome in the fleet, to have a pluck at these new laurels, and his sister Madame Leclerc, with an infant in her arms, to receive them in her lap.

He hoped indeed to carry, by safer means than sieges and battles, his grand point at St. Domingo, which was nothing else than to force all the negroes to become slaves, and private property again, to his and Madame Buonaparte's very good friends, the planters. This little great man always wins the game by tricks rather than honours; and upon the present occasion, as upon others, he trusted much more to his falsehoods than his firelocks. He was resolved first indeed to seize upon the chief places on the sea-coast by surprise and violence, but hoped afterwards to subdue his enemies by bribery and cunning, rather than by war. He very well knew the great talents of Toussaint, and his power over the minds of the negroes; but there was something belonging to that great man, of which the Consul had no sort of notion, and that was his honesty. He thought, therefore, that Toussaint was to be bought, and determined if possible to buy him.

Now, do not think I point out this mistake out of spite to Buonaparte, in order to disgrace his judgment. I admit the Corsican to be as wise as any body that "says in his heart, there is no God" can be; but the poor man being bred an atheist, till he became a revolutionary foldier, and having known nobody but lads from the same bad school, can have no more notion of the principles of a moral and religious mind, than that chubby boy driving the plough yonder, with the broad nails in his shoes, has of the manners of my lady's drawing-room. It would be as easy for the little Consul to peep into a window six feet from the ground, as into the heart of a man like Toussaint. I am sorry to lose time with such remarks, but it is right to do justice to every man.

As our hero, however, was already the head man in St. Domingo, and had long been commander in chief and governor, by commission from the government of France, Buonaparte felt that the honours and rewards which he had to offer might perhaps not be a sufficient price to the negro general for treachery to his brethren. He therefore hit upon what seemed a surer snare for this great man's feelings; and this was to put his two beloved sons on board the fleet, as hostages for the father's conduct.

These youths had been sent by Toussaint to France for their education. He had trusted them to French honour and gratitude; and it would

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move any but French hearts to read the letter in which he anxiously recommended them to the care and protection of the government. You would think at every line you saw the fond father's tears dropping on the paper; but what was much more to be admired, his chief request was to have them brought up in the fear of God, and the knowledge of religion. Poor Toussaint! little did he then know the country to which they were going.

To take these youths from their studies, and send them out to catch their father, as you would catch a bird, by stripping her nest, and baiting a trap-cage with her young ones, seemed no doubt a bright thought to the Corsican. He has no children, or his heart, cold and hard though it is, might have checked him in so vile a purpose. To feel its baseness fully, a fact should be known, which is true beyond all reach of doubt, though this is not the place for its proof, that if Toussaint had yielded to the temptation, it would have been immediately fatal to him: the fixed design in that case, was to tear him in a few days from these dear bought children, and put him to death.

The Consul had fully resolved, that when he should have got the chiefs of the free negroes in the West Indies into his power, either by force or fraud, they should not live to oppose his tyranny in future; witness his treatment of Pelage, the Toussaint of Guadaloupe, who joined the French general Richepante, and by prodigies of valour at the head of his black troops, reduced the island to submission, relying upon the solemn promises of the Consul to maintain the general freedom of the blacks, yet his reward was to be seized by surprise, with all his brave officers, and either sold as slaves for the Spanish mines in Peru, or as is more probable, drowned at sea. Certain it is they were carried by ship-loads to sea, stowed like sheep in a pen, and heard of no more. But the history of the Consul's unparalleled wickedness at Guadaloupe may be the subject of a separate book.

Strong though Buonaparte's hopes were of succeeding by these virtuous means at St. Domingo, and making of Toussaint, first a vile instrument of his tyranny, and afterwards its certain victim, he was resolved to have two strings to his bow. He took extreme pains, therefore, and with too much success, to take the negro chief unawares, so that if found faithful, and clear sighted in the cause of freedom, he might be the more easily crushed by arms.

To this end the Consul loudly professed for our hero and his negroes the utmost admiration, gratitude and esteem, wrote him letters full of praises and promises, and confirmed the commission of commander in chief, which he held under the last and former governments of France. Far from avowing himself an enemy to the liberty of the negroes, this vile hypocrite pretended to be as fond of it as Toussaint himself. He went so far as to lay before his mock parliament, after the peace, and to publish in his gazettes, a plan which he pretended to have formed for the government of the French colonies, in which he solemnly declared, that the freedom of the negroes should be maintained in every colony wherein it then existed; and excused himself for not immediately putting on the same footing the slaves of Martinique and other places just restored to him by the peace, on account of the great and unavoidable evils of such a sudden revolution. "It would cost too much," said this matchless impostor, "to humanity!!!"

treatment
of Pelage
the Toussaint
of Guadaloupe
joined to
Genl Riche-
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sent to
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XX
Bonaparte
confirmed
Toussaint
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for liberty
of negroes

For