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 as good as the negroes, in the hazardous and cruel service of the navy. They were probably, however, not picked out for the purpose, for the French troops in general were 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, when they have the audacity 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, who was the hero of the West Indies, for his hatred of slavery and freedom, and Tonti, the famous Cartier, whose name was as famous as his as early as he had done every thing else, that he had done over his brother Jerome in the fleet, to have a place 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 fairer means than force, the great point of 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 general man always wins the game by tricks rather than by honour; and upon the present occasion, as upon others, he trusted more to his little Negroes than to his firelocks. He was resolved first indeed to set upon the chief places on the sea-coast by surprise and violence, and hoped afterwards to subdue his enemies by bribery and cunning, rather than by war. He very well knew the great talents of Toussaint, who had his power over the minds of the negroes, and that there was something belonging to that great man, of which the Conflit had no fort of action, 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 Consul was as wise an anybody that said, "In his heart, there is no God." But, but the poor man being bred an atheist, till he became a revolutionary soldier, and having known nobody, that had left from the same school, can have no more taste 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 Conflit to peep into a window, as the man of genius to Toussaint. I am ready 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 sufficient to attract the negro general for treachery to his brethren. He therefore set 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 better conduct. These youths had been sent to Toussaint for their education. He had trusted them to French honour and gratitude; and it would 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 first glance at the fine words of his letter, that the genius of the negroes should be 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 bringing a trap-cage with her young ones, seemed no doubt a bright thought to the Consul. He has no children, or his heart, cold and hard though it is, might have checked him in that purpose. To feel its baleful influence, 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 those dear born 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; with the treatment of Pelagie, the Toussaint of Guadaloupe, who joined the French general Richemont, and by procuring of valor 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 for the blacks, yet his reward was to be seized by force, with all his property, and either sold as slaves for the Spanish mines in Peru, or is more probable, drowned at sea; and if it is they were carried by ship-loads to sea, flowed 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 things to his bow. He took extreme pains, therefore, and with too much success, to take the negro chief unawares, to show that if found faithful, and clear fought in the cause of freedom, he might be the more easily crushed by arms.

To this end the Conflit 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 old 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 gazette a plan which he pretended he had 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 was established, and he accused himself for not immediately putting on the same footing the free soil 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 sets too much," said this marchand impudent, "to humanity!!"