An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti

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AN
Historical Account
of the
BLACK EMPIRE OF HAYTI:
comprehending a view of
the principal transactions in the revolution
of
SAINT DOMINGO;
with
its ancient and modern state.

BY
MARCUS RAINSFORD, Esq.
late captain third west-india regiment,
&c. &c.

"Tros, Tyriusve, mihi nullo discrimine agetur."
Virgil.

"On peut dire avec vérité qu'il y a peu de traits de barbarie qui
puissent leur (les noirs) être imputés."
De Charmilly.

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1805.
The Author in Conversation with a private Soldier of the Black Army on his Excursion in St. Domingo. Reproduced with the permission of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Special Collections Library, the Pennsylvania State University Libraries.

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As all that is necessary to preface the following work will be found in the Introduction, nothing more is intended in this place than to advertise the reader of some circumstances which could not be so well communicated under any other head.

The sedentary attention so necessary to the production of a literary work, but ill comports with the character of a soldier; this, with other temporary inconveniences, and frequent migrations during their composition, will, it is feared, give occasion for apology in regard to some parts of the following sheets, where an inequality of style and occasional confusion of persons are perceptible, which must be attributed to the want of that tranquillity, the desire of the enlightened in all ages, so necessary to a correct view of men and things, and which polishes, while it imparts the utmost reach of intellect. A deficiency may, perhaps, be found in the part confessedly compilation: but it may, at the same time, be said, that to make a book nothing unnecessary is obtruded: and the writer may truly assert, that “he sat down to write, what he thought, (and saw) not to think what he should write.”

It is pleasing to contemplate the kind attentions of those who disinterestedly communicate what information they possess. Of these, the writer would wish to have mentioned many, who, with a delicacy equal to their intelligence, refused to be thanked in public: yet he resolves, without permission, to acknowledge his obligations to Admiral Smith, whose local information, had it not been for the distance between them, might have conferred much more interest upon his work;—to John Campbell, Esq. of his Majesty’s navy, whose name will be found hereafter, and whose absence at sea he has never ceased to regret;—to William Curtis, Esq. of Cavendish-square, for the liberal communication of his plans, of which he is anxious to avail himself further, in future;—to an American resident, at St. Domingo, of whose assistance he was proud in that island: and to another friend to whom he is indebted for the highest literary obligations.

The work is now committed to the indulgence of the public “with all its imperfections on its head;” if truth be at all elucidated—if virtue derive one more friend from its aid,—or policy, quitting the frail basis of expedience, be further grounded on justice and humanity, the writer will not have recorded, in the first empire of the world, the simple annals of Hayti, in vain.