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John Candler
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Brief Notices of Hayti

John Candler (1787–1869), a Quaker Abolitionist, visited the West Indies between 1839 and 1841, to study the situation of ex-slaves since they had obtained their freedom. He spent three months in Haiti, and appears to have been generally impressed by what he found. The former slaves had become smallholders, growing crops on small plots of land, though they were not interested in producing more than they needed for their basic livelihood. The export of coffee, cotton and tobacco had declined since the end of slavery, and the sugar trade had ended. Whites were barred from owning land, or from marrying Haitians, and were restricted in trading activities, reducing available investment capital. The compensation demanded by France to the former plantation owners was also crippling the economic development of the island. Candler's book gives much valuable detail about an important former colony at a time of transition.

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Brief Notices of Hayti

With its Condition, Resources, and Prospects

JOHN CANDLER



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B R I E F N O T I C E S

O F

H A Y T I :

W I T H I T S

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B Y

J O H N C A N D L E R .

L O N D O N :

T H O M A S W A R D & C O . , 2 7 , P A T E R N O S T E R R O W ;

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INTRODUCTION.

IN bringing before the public a view of the present state of Hayti, it seemed desirable to prefix to the narrative, a brief sketch of the history of the island. The Author had intended to prepare such a sketch; but upon examining those works, both French and English, which are considered as authorities, he found so many discrepancies and counter statements, involving the character of several of the leaders in the late revolution, that he abandoned the attempt in despair. The history of Hayti has yet to be written, nor can it be written impartially, so as to establish the truth, and the whole truth, till the present generation shall have passed away. The literary public of France and England may yet look for an accession of historical materials, that will throw great light on the late contests between the free and the servile classes, and between the whites and the men of colour. The present Secretary of State for Hayti, General Inginac, who is now advanced in age, and who was engaged in the wars of the revolution, almost from his boyhood, has prepared a narrative of the passing events of the period, both civil and military, which is intended for publication at his decease. This nar-

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rative, when published, will, no doubt, illustrate many circumstances that are now obscure, and serve to unfold more clearly the character and motives of some remarkable men, his contemporaries. It is the delight of the lovers of liberty to dwell with enthusiasm on the talents and exploits of *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, undoubtedly the greatest man that took part in the revolution of St. Domingo, and one of the ablest Generals of his age; but it is very doubtful whether his character, as a leader in the great struggle, will come out of the crucible of impartial history, with all that brightness and purity that some modern narratives, half history, half romance, seem to assign to it. The opinion of many persons in Hayti, whether well or ill-founded, we stop not to inquire, is certainly adverse to such high pretensions: these individuals represent *Toussaint* as one of the best men of his day; but not as free from many of the blemishes which generally attach to warriors. The lines of Pope are become an axiom, and are often quoted as decisive with regard to men who are engaged in the dismal work of slaughtering their fellows:

“ All heroes are alike : the points agreed ;
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede.”

and it is remarkable to observe, as a confirmation of the poet's doctrine, which is true to a certain extent, that the character of Hannibal, as penned

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by the severe and vigorous hand of Juvenal, has been accommodated by Dr. Johnson in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," to represent the life and exploits of Charles the Twelfth; and that the portrait drawn of the latter, might, with the omission of a line or two, and the change of half a dozen words, be made literally to apply to Napoleon Buonaparte. If there be any exception to the truth of Pope's apothegm in modern days, that exception may undoubtedly be made in favour of *Washington* and *Toussaint*. But those great men who act in a public contest, where the passions of a whole people are stirred up and roused into revengeful activity, however mild they may be by nature, and however disposed to act with mercy, often contract the stains that attach to the party they embrace, or the cause in which they embark, and exhibit in their conduct more than a common frailty. The civil wars of Hayti are now ended; and happy would it be for humanity's sake, if we could draw the curtain of night on the many dark transactions that disgraced the period of their progress! The people of that country, however, have learned from them an awful lesson; and this one good consequence has resulted, that the Republic, weary of contending with the sword, is now desirous of keeping it sheathed in the scabbard, and of maintaining an honourable and lasting peace.

The author of the following "brief notices" declines the task of an historian; but if his pages,

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which are intended to exhibit the present state of Hayti, with its resources and prospects, should afford amusement or instruction, in any degree, to those who read them, his end will be fully answered, and he will receive all the reward he desires or looks for.

York, Third Month, 1842.

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