





William Draper Bolton

CHAPTER I.

FIRST DISCOVERY AND OCCUPATION : — THE

PORTUGUESE AND THE DUTCH.

The Island of Mauritius is situated within the Tropics, three degrees from Capricorn, about a hundred miles N.E. of Bourbon, now Réunion Island, and almost due East of Madagascar; and its circumference is, according to the Abbé de la Caille, who visited it in 1733, about 90,668 toises French.

It was not until the beginning of the Sixteenth Century that the existence of such a spot was known to the Civilised World. Don Pedro de Mascaregnas in 1503, the first year of the Administration of Alméida, Governor General of the Portuguese possessions in India, extending his researches in these seas, fell in with this and the sister Island, the latter of which he named after himself. The name he adopted for the former was taken from the most remarkable object he found upon its shores: a bird, either a «Dodo» or something very similar, which, so great was its natural stupidity, could be approached and knocked down without making an attempt to escape.

The Portuguese, however, showed no anxiety to render of value their new acquisition: they contented themselves with ascertaining its geographical position and landing on it some deer, goats, monkeys and pigs, some of whose progeny are still found in the retired parts of the island.

Although the Portuguese retained possession until 1598, they do not appear to have viewed it in any other light than as a mere station of refreshment, weakly yielding to the belief that the secret of their route to the Indies would be permanently preserved, and that they would suffer no molestation from the powers of Europe in their monopoly of Indian commerce.

On the first of May 1598, a squadron consisting of eight vessels under Admiral Wybrand Van Warwick, left the Texel for the Dutch possessions at Bantam. These vessels were dispersed by a violent tempest at the Cape of Good Hope. Three of them put in at Isle Saint Marie, and thence proceeded to Bantam; the rest under Admiral Wybrand Van Warwick, taking a different course, fell in, on the 17th September, with this Island, hitherto called *Cerné*.

Ignorant of every thing, except its name, the Dutch despatched two boats to reconnoitre the shore, one of which discovered the South East Port. The Vice Admiral, not knowing that the island was uninhabited, was compelled, owing to the sickly state of his crew, to adopt the most

cautious measures. On the 20th, he ordered a large party to land and take up a position, by which a surprise might be prevented. On several successive days he ordered out boats to examine other parts of the island, to discover if it was inhabited.

The parties met with an astonishing variety of birds, which surprised them by their tameness, and their submitting to be taken by the hand. They discovered also abundance of water and the most luxurious vegetation. On the shore was found about three hundred weight of wax, impressed with Greek characters, a banging stage, the spar of a capstan, and a large yard, evidently the relics of some unfortunate vessel that had been wrecked in the neighbourhood. No trace of human beings was, however, discernible. After returning thanks, the Vice Admiral named the island «Mauritius,» after Count Maurice of Naussau, then Stadtholder of Holland, and the port «Warwick Haven,» after himself. He however formed no establishment upon it, but, contenting himself with blazoning the Dutch Arms on an escutcheon affixed to a tree, and planting a plot of ground surrounded by an enclosure, after refreshing his crew, he took his departure.

The island does not appear to have been visited from this period till the 12th August 1601, when Hermansen, being off the island, sent a yacht to take a more minute survey of it. The yacht returned with a Frenchman on board, who after escaping with some comrades from Malacca in an open boat, had arrived at the island, where he was subsequently abandoned by his companions, on his refusing to continue the hazardous voyage.

The date at which the Dutch formed a permanent establishment must ever remain unknown; by some it is given as 1638,—from numerous authorities it would appear, however, to have occurred in 1644. At this date they are stated to have fixed upon the South Eastern Port for their first Colonization of the island.

Their first Governor was Vander Mester, who, resolving upon an earnest application of the resources of the island, and conceiving that the new Colony was cramped in its energies by the deficiency of labour, sent a vessel to Madagascar to purchase a number of slaves to supply the want. The request was acceded to by Pronis, the French Governor there, who kidnapped a number of Malegaches, who had settled under his protection. This breach of faith, which proved the ruin of both Colonies, was considerably enhanced in the eyes of the natives on the discovery that sixteen women of the race of the Lohariths were among the captives. No sooner were they landed at Mauritius, than a large party fled to the woods, and the others, stung by the harsh treatment they received, soon followed the example. Thus was raised up a body of men call-

ed marons, who, urged by the pangs of hunger, or the desire of revenge, were ever on the watch to insult and attack their oppressors.

Harrassed on one side by these depredators, and checked in all progress by the parsimony of their E. I. Company, the Dutch were compelled to abandon the island. The marons fearing their return molested every vessel that visited the island for refreshments, and frequently surprised and cut off the crews.

To remedy such disasters the Dutch resolved on the re-settlement of the island. Three establishments were immediately formed. One on the North West, another on the South East side, and a third at Black River. Mr. La Mocius was appointed Governor. State criminals from Batavia and other Dutch Colonies were now banished to Mauritius.

Mr. La Mocius was succeeded by Mr. Rodolphe Diodati, a native of Geneva, but a man of very indifferent character.

According to François Leguat,—who arrived in the island in an open boat from Rodrigues during the administration of Diodati, and received barbarous treatment from the latter,—the principal building of the Dutch consisted of a fort at the S.E. port, named Frederick Henry, built in stone in 1694, after having been burned down by the blacks. This fortress was armed with 20 pieces of cannon, garrisoned by about 30 soldiers, and surrounded the Governor's house, the magazines and principal buildings of the Company.

The inhabitants consisted of about forty families scattered over the present Flacq district, where a garden was established from which the Company obtained the vegetables and fruit it required for the support of the garrison; a few at the North West harbour called the Camp; and three or four families near Black River, in the district of that name, whose principal occupation was the cultivation of tobacco.

About the commencement of the eighteenth century, the Dutch, being unable to render their Colony of any advantage, resolved upon its second withdrawal, which being brought off, and with the troops conveyed to the Cape of Good Hope, Dutch connexion with Mauritius was altogether terminated.

CHAPTER II.

FRENCH E. I. COMPANY.

To whatever cause the abandonment by the Dutch may be attributed, it appears clear that the Island was totally deserted, except perhaps by a band of maroon Negroes, who concealed themselves, when Mr. Dufresne, Captain of the *Chasseur*, arrived and took possession of it under the name

of Isle of France, on the 20th September 1713. But in spite of the formal act of possession drawn up by the French who then visited it, no regular settlement was made till towards the end of 1721. On the 23rd September of that year, the Chevalier Jean Baptiste Garnier de Fougeray, Commanding the « Triton » of St.-Malo, repeated in the name of the French East India Company, the act of possession, probably ignorant of the existence of a previous act on the part of his countrymen.

Mr de Beauvilliers, the Governor of Bourbon, which the French had possessed since 1664, at this time sent several Colonists from that island, which had become populous; and on the 11th October of the same year Mr. de Nyon, a knight of the order of St.-Louis, was formally invested with the Lieutenant Governorship of the new Colony, in which he arrived in January 1722, and commenced his administration by the establishment of a provincial Council, composed of six of the principal inhabitants.

The only residents he found consisted of a few families from Bourbon, and a party of French who were saved from the massacre at Fort Dauphin, in Madagascar, who without any form of Government had gradually assembled together at the South East Port. In order to assure a prompt and more general settlement, the East India Company held out as a means of inducement, an offer of assistance to all respectable families who would resort to the Island. The measures adopted were successful, several respectable families emigrated from St.-Malo and permanently established themselves.

This object being attained the next point to which the Government turned its regard was the cultivation of spice plants; and in the acts of all concessions of lands, the obligation to carry out its views in this respect formed the principal stipulation.

The first settlement of a country offers few details of real interest. The only events which marked the Government of Mr. de Nyon, were an attempt on sedition by a part of the troops, which was soon appeased, and the penalties which were attached to « Marronage » increased in its violence by the addition of the slaves recently imported to the marons, who had been left by the Dutch.

Mr. Dumas was appointed on the 26th August 1726, Governor-General of both islands; but as he selected Bourbon for his place of residence, the sources of the Isle of France still remained undeveloped. Indeed, the company long scrupled to retain an island, which, as affairs were conducted, brought nothing but expense with it, and had more than once determined to leave it to the marons, as the Dutch had done before; but some event or other had always occurred to hinder the design. Mr. Dumas was succeeded in October 1728, by Mr. de Maupin, who, like his predecessor, was Governor of both islands.

The most violent hurricane, as yet experienced by the Colonists, happened during his administration, and its horrors were in no degree diminished by an unexpected irruption of the marons, who drove the inhabitants from the district of Flacq.

During the administration of Mr. de Maupin, the East India Company, advising themselves to render the island of some utility, directed Mr. de Cossigny, an officer of the Engineers, to make a minute inspection of it.

Upon the account rendered by this officer, the Company at once perceived the advantage to Eastern commerce of the position of the island; and in November 1734, Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who had already visited the island, was appointed Governor of it and Bourbon, with full power to carry out the views of the Company.

On his arrival in June 1735, his first object was to ascertain its resources. Finding the disadvantages of the South East port as a seat of Government and centre of external commerce, he at once determined upon the abandonment of it.

The example of the Dutch had been followed by the subsequent settlers in establishing themselves on that portion of the Island, although the inferiority of its port as compared with that of the North West was practically obvious.

Once settled at the latter place, Mr. la Bourdonnais displayed to the fullest extent his wishes to meet the views of the Company.

Instead of an enterprising, energetic, and a rising Colony, he found the inhabitants in a state of apathy—the island without commerce. The Company had attached so much importance to Bourbon from its being longer established, and the benefit derived from its coffee plantations, that the new acquisition was, as it were, forgotten.

During the twelve years of La Bourdonnais' administration the whole aspect was changed. Previous to his arrival the different districts of the Island could with difficulty communicate with each other, or the town. Land transport was almost impracticable. There were no barracks; the army lived in cottages which could afford no resistance; nor were there any means in the island for withstanding a hostile attack. The commercial shipping had no place for repairing disasters at sea. Under his energetic endeavours, these serious inconveniences were almost immediately removed; roads were established, forts raised, and from an ingenious invention of his fertile mind, a mode of repairing vessels was resorted to, the most simple and most effective that could be devised.

He established a «Conseil Supérieur,» re-organized the administration, and purged the Colony of the marons which were its bane. By

his example and assistance, he aroused the inhabitants from the apathy into which they were fallen. The sugar cane and indigo plant were now first grown, and manioc, brought by him from Brazils, was naturalized in the island.

The only hospital in the island was a large hut, built of stakes and palisadoes, which could not contain more than thirty beds. He ordered the erection of a large and commodious one in which from four to five hundred beds might be conveniently placed.

It would be needless to enter into a detail of all the various buildings and works erected by M. de Labourdonnais in the course of his Government; suffice it to observe that they consisted not only of magazines, arsenals, batteries, fortifications, hospitals, and barracks for the officers and soldiers, but also of mills, quays, offices, shops, canals, and aqueducts.

Previous to his arrival, water (an article so indispensable both for existence and cleanliness) had to be sought at a distance of a league from the town, and when discovered, the means of conveying a quantity sufficient for the supply of the inhabitants were so inadequate, that there was a constant deficiency for the most necessary uses. The aqueduct which he constructed was nearly six thousand yards in length, and the ruins which exist to this day bear testimony to the superiority of the work. It conveyed water to the port and hospitals, and was of inexpressible advantage to the inhabitants and the shipping.

All the gigantic enterprises and all the energetic endeavours of Mahé de La Bourdonnais only served, however, to raise up the voice of calumny against him, and misrepresentations were made against him on all sides.

The death of his wife occurring in 1740, he left the Government in the hands of Mr. de St.-Martin, and sailed for France; but instead of meeting with gratitude on the part of the Company, he observed an unaccountable prejudice prevailed against him in the minds of all, and soon after his arrival he was called upon to justify his conduct! Being fully exonerated, he was next charged with the Naval Command of a squadron destined for India, and set sail on the 3th April 1741, for the Isle of France, where he arrived on the 14th August, and used his best endeavours for its perfect fortification.

In 1742 he executed the project of a minute visit of the dependencies. The principal of the Seychelles Islands was during this expedition named after him.

During this last administration of la Bourdonnais, in 1743, occurred the wreck of the *St.-Geran*, which event has been interestingly interwo-

ven with the history of Paul and Virginia, the author of which, Bernardin de St.-Pierre, subsequently visited the island.

War being declared, on the 17th March 1746, Labourdonnais, leaving the Government in the hands of Mr. St.-Martin, took his departure for Pondicherry with a fleet equipped principally from the resources of the island.

The limits of this historical summary will not admit of following this wonderful man in his career; suffice it to say that on his return to the Isle of France, he found his post occupied by Mr. David, who, in consequence of further calumnious reports which had been made to the India Company, had been sent out to make an inquiry into his conduct.

Mr. David, however, so far from considering them as founded, placed under the command of la Bourdonnais the vessels destined for Europe. He arrived at Martinique where he took a passage in a Dutch ship for France; but on his way home, he was taken prisoner by an English vessel, and conducted to England. Instead of being treated as a prisoner, he was shortly afterwards permitted, on parole, to return to his country,—to be thrown into the Bastile as a reward for his services. After remaining in a dungeon for three years he was acquitted, and turned penniless into the world,—to survive his incarceration but three years.

It has remained for His Excellency our present Governor Mr. Higginson to execute a project so long deferred, that of erecting a statue to the memory of the illustrious ruler whose great merits have been briefly descanted above. He has proposed to place his own name at the head of a subscription for the purpose, and it is needless to invite every Colonist to follow him in his laudable example, the memory of Labourdonnais being to this day revered by all.

The administration of Mr. David from 1746 to 1750 presents very little of importance. In 1746, Baron Grant relates the misfortunes of the planters in most plaintive terms: a hurricane had ravaged everything causing several fatal accidents; it was succeeded by a cloud of locusts which laid waste all the rest of the crops, and the island was in want of everything. An ineffectual attempt was made by the English in 1748 to take possession of the Island; but a mere pretence of resistance deluded the Commander of the Squadron, Admiral Boscawen, into the idea of an impossibility of success; and after a few shots, he withdrew his 28 vessels from the intended point of attack, «Petite Rivière,» and continued his cruise.

Mr. David was succeeded by his brother-in-law Mr. Lozier Bouvet in 1750, under whose Government, 18th April 1753, arrived, to establish the

geographical position of the island, the Abbé de la Caille, accompanied by M. d'Après Manneville, the celebrated Hydrographer.

In 1734 the small pox broke out, and the island was again devastated by a violent hurricane.

In 1735, Mr. Magon de St.-Elier, arrived as Governor, and the restrictions against the indiscriminate clearing of the forests were at once removed, the bad effects of which act were soon denounced by the Company.

The following three years were devoted to preparations for war. The last Governor for the Company, Mr. Desforges Boucher, replaced Mr. Magon in 1739. His principal attention was devoted to the cultivation of Réduit, which had been founded by Mr. David, and where a Botanical Garden had already been set on foot under the direction of Mr. Oblette.

Fuse d'Auilet

The hurricane of 1760 is cited as one of the most violent that ever befell the Island.

Up to 1767, the commercial retrospect of the Island gives every proof of violent restrictions on the part of the Company to every effort of the inhabitants to individual advancement. Instead of allowing free commerce, we find the Company monopolizing every agricultural benefit. It is true that grants of land were easily procured, the number of acres ceded amounting to no less than 149,067, but only 6,383 were in cultivation.

In return for agricultural produce, the rate of which was fixed as low as possible, and the purchase monopolised by the Company, payment was made in European merchandize at an advance of one hundred per cent, or Indian merchandize at fifty.

In spite of such measures, adopted by the Company throughout their Eastern possessions, the war had so reduced their finances that they found themselves under the obligation to renounce in favour of the King, their possessions in the East, including the Isles of France and Bourbon, in order to meet the demands of their creditors; and we find the Island revert to the Crown in 1767.

The population at this time, according to abbé Raynal, consisted only of 3,163 whites, 387 free people, and 15,022 slaves; the produce not exceeding in value £103,712, and about twenty bales of cotton; the whole value of produce being in francs as follows: wheat 320,600;—rice 474,000;—maize, 1,370,000; haricot, a kind of bean, 142,700;—oats, 133,300.

CHAPER III.

ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE UNTIL 1790.

No sooner had the King taken over the Isle of France, than a total

change was effected in the mode of the administration of its Government.

On the 14th of July 1767, Mr. Dumas and Mr. Poivre, the latter of whom had already passed some years in the Island, and introduced spice plants into it, at considerable personal risk, arrived, under Royal Commissions, the one as Governor, the other as Commissioner and President of the Superior Councils.

From the origin of the Colony, and in virtue indeed of the Charter of the Company in 1664, the custom of Paris was the fundamental law, by which the civil rights of the Inhabitants of the Colony, were regulated. The principal ordinances of the mother-country were observed, namely, that of 1667, on Civil Procedure; of 1681 relative to the Marine; of 1670, upon Criminal Procedure; that of 1673 on Commerce; and that of 1731 as to Legacies. On the King taking over in 1767 the Sovereignty of the Isle of France, the laws put in force were 1st. the Custom of Paris; 2nd those laws and ordinances made for the home country in general, which were ordered to be registered and published in the Colony; 3rd the Laws and bye-Laws made expressly for the Island, and which are comprised in the Code de Laleu.

An ordinance of the King, promulgated immediately after the arrival of Mr. Dumas, established the future administrative organization of this island and Bourbon. It is inserted in the first of the legal Codes that was published in the Colony. (Code de Laleu No. 3, p. 2.)

The sixteen months of joint administration of Mr. Dumas and Mr. Poivre were passed in hostile discussions between themselves, which resulted in the recall of Mr. Dumas, who was replaced temporarily by Mr. Steinaver on the 27th November 1768. The acting Governor retained the reins of Government till the arrival of Mr. Desroches.

The most remarkable events of the administration of Mr. Desroches were the deepening by Mr. Fromelin of the Harbour, which had become already obstructed in many places; and the further introduction of spice plants, due to the zeal of Mr. Poivre.

In 1771 the Colony was afflicted with the small pox, which misfortune was followed by the hurricane of 1st March 1772, in which the *Vert Galant* was sunk, and the *Ambulante* wrecked in the pass at Morne Brabant, which has since borne that name.

About a month after the last introduction of spice plants, the Chevalier de Ternay and Maillard Dumesle arrived, the former as Governor-General, the latter as Intendant, to replace Mr. Desroches and Mr. Poivre who handed over the Government on the 21st August 1772.

Mr. Dumesle's arrival was followed by the establishment of a weekly journal, which the increasing population and extension of commerce then

rendered necessary. The Island was reduced to 8 Districts in lieu of 11 as fixed by Ordinance dated 6th August 1768. Additional Administrative and Police Regulations were enacted.

In the night of the 9—10th April 1773, a more violent Hurricane than had hitherto happened, declared itself. In a few hours the tempest, which began at about 9 o'clock, so ravaged the country, that, the next day, broken and uprooted trees were scattered on all sides, and every trace of the crop had disappeared. The Town of Port Louis was obstructed on all sides by the ruins of more than 300 houses, and 32 ships lay stranded on the banks of the harbour.

By the precaution at once taken, the disasters were shortly repaired, and a new Church was commenced, the old one having fallen in, crushing several persons in its fall.

In 1774 the Powder Mills exploded, with great loss of life to the military stationed there; and in the same year the ship *Mars* was, from want of precaution, burnt in the Harbour.

Under the joint administration of Mr. Poivre, the King's Garden at Pamplemousses was first established, and in 1774, while under the direction of Mr. Céré, the spice plants introduced by that enterprising man produced fruit, to the great satisfaction of every one. At this day, the joy then felt is unappreciable, as the clove trees which were in consequence propagated in the several districts of the Island, have been almost all destroyed to make room for the Sugar Cane!

Mr. Ternay, who was much more feared than loved, was relieved by the Chevalier de Guirau La Brillane on the 2nd December 1776.

Frustrated by the inhabitants in all his intentions for their good, after two years of inquietude the new Governor died, and was buried accompanied to his grave by almost no one.

The war in which France was engaged when the Vicomte of Souillac, Governor of Bourbon, arrived to replace Mr. de la Brillane, so far from proving a check to the prosperity of the Isle of France, brought there on the contrary a crowd of vessels, both national and foreign, which, in introducing abundance, changed into habits of luxury the hitherto simple manners of the people.

Seconded in the first place by Mr. Fourcault, Intendant since the 17th November 1777, afterwards by Mr. Chevreau, who replaced the former on the 14th July 1781, and lastly by Mr. Motais de Narbonne, Commissary General, who succeeded Mr. Chevreau on the 12th October 1783, the Vicomte de Souillac supplied the wants of the squadron of Mr. Dorves and Suffren and the armies of Mr. Ducherien and Dubussy so effectually that

the eyes of the French were at once opened to the importance of the Colony, which they had hitherto given but little attention to.

The old E.I. Company having been dissolved, the enjoyment of a monopoly of trade between France and the East was accorded to the new Company with a simple exception, that a permission to trade with the East Indies was conceded to the Isle of France and Bourbon.

This measure rendered the colony a vast entrepôt between Europe and Asia, giving rise to a factitious prosperity, to the neglect of agriculture.

The war kindled by the American Revolution extending itself to France, the forces which the latter destined for the East were concentrated at the Isle of France, in order that every opportunity might be availed of by the central position of the island for bursting on the Indian Peninsula.

The Vicomte of Souillac, whose name is perpetuated by a village at Savanne, sailed for India the 4th April 1786, leaving the Government in the hands of Mr. de Fleury.

The island, which had now been 13 years without a Hurricane, was again visited by that scourge in 1786.

The latter part of the Government of Mr. de Souillac and the two years of Mr. d'Entrecasteaux, who arrived the 3th November 1787, were passed in tranquillity. The only cause of inquietude during the administration of the latter was the visit of another hurricane during the night of 31st December 1788, in which a frigate, the *Venus*, perished with fifteen children of the best families of the Island, who had been embarked in it for France, where their parents intended they should finish their education.

Mr. Dupuy, as Intendant General, succeeded Mr. Motais de Narbonne the 17th August 1789, and on the 14th November of the same year, the Comte de Conway, relieved Mr. d'Entrecasteaux, and made the Island the chief seat of Government for the French possessions in these seas.

The distant rumours which at this time reached the Island relative to the troubled state of France, although exciting the attention, do not appear for a time to have affected the passions of the Colonists; and it was not until the arrival of a vessel from Bordeaux on the 31st January 1790, that those signals for revolution were given, to which the colony would have fallen a victim, but for the firm and prudent conduct of the more intelligent of its inhabitants. This vessel brought the exciting news of the great power usurped to itself by the National Assembly at Paris, and as the captain, officers, and crew wore the tri-coloured cockade, a similar emblem was, in spite of the opposition of the Governor-General, soon generally adopted by the colonists, and advertisements posted in the streets, inviting all the citizens to form themselves into primary assemblies, (after the example of those which had taken place in all the com-

munes of France), in order to draw up memorials of complaints and demands. A most tumultuous meeting took place at the Church on the 4th February 1790.

General Conway sent some soldiers to arrest the young men who had caused the placards to be posted up; but the people collected on the Place d'Armes, liberated the prisoners on their road to the gaol, and compelled M. de Conway himself to wear the revolutionary emblem.

CHAPTER IV.

COLONIAL ASSEMBLIES.

The day after this revolt (27th April 1790) the inhabitants of the town of Port Louis united in a primary assembly for the whole Colony, after the example of those in France. It was composed of fifty one members who were freely selected from among the inhabitants according to the new electoral system, and it established the different constituted authorities, to whom it confided the interval Government of the Colony.

Arriving in the island during this state of commotion, Mr. de Macnamara, Commandant of the French Marine in the Indian Ocean, could not conceal his aversion to such revolutionary proceedings. The soldiers of the 107th and 108th regiments, who formed the garrison of the island, following the army in France, had abandoned themselves to the cause of the revolutionists. Mr. de Macnamara, however, deemed it his duty to give an account of the defalcation to the minister. His letters being intercepted, he was accused of betraying hostile feelings to the Colony, and those who condemned the acts of the assembly were included in the blame. Fruitless were the measures taken by the Superior Council to maintain peace and tranquillity, and the arrival on the 17th June of the Stanislas with the Decree of the 8th March, only served momentarily to tranquilize the general feeling.

A post and lanthorn were raised on the 18th June 1790 on the Place d'Armes for all adverse to the new principles. Mr. Macnamara at once took his departure, but was pursued and overtaken by some schooners despatched for him by the assembly. After an unsuccessful attempt to blow out his brains, he was brought ashore and escorted by 3 or 400 national guards to the church, where the Assembly was sitting, Governor Conway accompanying him to the place. X?

On this occasion, by the power of his eloquence, this brave man received the greatest applause from his judges, was at once liberated, and, clothed in the costume of the national guard, conducted back to Government house.

In lieu of at once leaving the island, Macnémara remained on the station, to fall a victim to his imprudence. In the Gazette of the 28th October the name of Macnémara appears, announcing his departure for November. The soldiers excited by the person who had denounced him, threatened him with vengeance; and to execute it, the grenadiers seized upon the boats and canoes, and proceeded to the flag ship to seize the person of the admiral. De Macnémara at once ordered the cannon to be loaded and pointed; but the moment the grenadiers approached, and hailed the seamen in a republican style, the latter refused to defend their commander, and he was conducted by the grenadiers as a prisoner to the assembly then sitting in the Church, who after a few interrogatories, ordered him to be conveyed to prison, leaving him, however, unfortunately to be conducted thither by the soldiery.

The admiral on arriving at the entrance of Royal Street, perceiving the danger he ran in approaching the lanthorn hung up at a short distance from him, escaped from his guards, and rushed into the house of a watchmaker of his acquaintance. Relying on his agility, he hoped to escape by the roof and reach the harbour. On the top of the stair, finding the door shut, and one of his pursuers at his heels, he turned round and aimed his pistol at him. The pistol flashed in the pan, and the infuriated soldier felled him down with his sabre. The rest arriving, quickly despatched the prostrate general, and severing his head from his body, carried it in on a pole through the town. His mutilated body, after being dragged to Pont Bourgeois, was abandoned, and afterwards carried to the burial ground and interred by a marine.

This crime was unpunished, in the troubled state of the time it being thought advisable to countermand the orders given for bringing the perpetrators of it to justice.

The Comte de Conway unable to reconcile his principles with the feelings of the times, placed on the 29th July 1790, the reins of Government into the hands of Mr. de Cossigny.

The Colonial Assembly was annual, and the members enrolled at its second formation, the 11th January 1791, showed far greater forbearance and moderation than that evinced on the whole by the first organized assembly; and although it was opposed by the Government and the Municipalities, with the exception of preposterous demands on the part of the troops, the remainder of the year may be said, comparatively with the troubled state of the times, to have passed off in tranquillity.

The year 1792 brought with it a scourge, the small pox, which carried off, in a space of three months, no less than 4,000 persons, exclusive of its ravages in the garrison.

During the troubles thus occasioned, arrived, on the 17th June, the frigate *Fidèle*, with the new Governor, Mr. de Malartic, on board. He was accompanied by four commissioners, and brought with him the act of the National Assembly of France dated 15th May 1791, which ratified the acts of the Colonial Assemblies, and gave those bodies permanence.

The affairs of the island might have now gone on quietly, but that the news of the power of the Jacobin Clubs in France gave a stimulus to the discontented, and a Jacobin Club, called the *Chaumière*, was established, and soon rivalled the constituted authorities.

Such was the power of this Club that it forced M. Malartic to grant them a vessel to carry 100 men to the contiguous Isle of Bourbon, for the arrest of the Governor, Civil Commissary and commandant of the marine of that island, who were thus conveyed as prisoners to the Isle of France, on the charge of having corresponded with the English. These high functionaries were landed at Port Louis, conveyed under an escort of Clubbists to the *Chaumière*, then sitting, and the President (formerly a police officer), gravely said to them «*the people accuse you, and the people will judge you!*» — they were then fettered and conducted to a dungeon, where they remained six months.

A guillotine was established by order of the *Chaumière*, and but for the Colonial Assembly in ordering that the prisoners of the Jacobins should be judged only by a court martial, named by all the citizens of the colony, united in Primary Assemblies each in his own district, much blood would, undoubtedly, have been shed by these unthinking and infuriated men; the delay, however, gave the Assembly time to concert together, in order to contrive that the choice of members of the Commission should fall upon upright persons. In spite of these precautions, the proceedings of such a club would have rendered the guillotine more than an object of terror, but at this moment an account arrived of the French Republic abolishing slavery in all its colonies and settlements.

In a community of 89,000 persons, where upwards of 49,000 were slaves, such a summary decree, without a word about pecuniary compensation, may well be supposed to have created alarm; the Jacobin Club was annihilated, the guillotine removed from the public square, the prisoners set at liberty without a trial, and the principal Jacobins, to the number of 30, arrested, and instantly sent on board a ship bound for France. The planters, with the news of what was occurring at St. Domingo continually arriving, knew not what steps to take: some proposed to declare the colony independent of the French Republic, and others sought to temporize, and to stay the promulgation of the decree,

Mr. de Malartic profited ably by the influence and authority he still possessed, and taking advantage of the opportunity induced the Assembly to pass a resolution forbidding the execution of any laws emanating from France, unless they had been previously examined and sanctioned.

While deliberating (18th July, 1796) a squadron of four frigates, under Vice Admiral Serecy, with two agents from the French Directory (named Baco and Burnel), arrived at Port Louis ; the colonists protested in vain against the disembarkation of these agents, who, however, dressed in the directorial costume, landed in state, and proceeded to the Colonial Assembly, to take on themselves the government of the colony, in which they were to be aided by 800 men of the revolutionary army, and two troops of artillery, all brought from France. Before three days had elapsed, the menacing tone of the agents was such as to alarm the whole colony ; they threatened to hang the governor, and proceeded to other severe measures without promulgating their intentions respecting the slaves ; « twenty young creoles, » says Baron Grant in his interesting account of the Island, « devoted themselves to the welfare of the colony, and vowed the death of those instruments of republican despotism ; » and, in fact, the agents owed their lives to the Governor and Assembly, who caused them to be conveyed on board a ship (*Le Moineau*) which was ordered to convey them to the Philippine Islands, as the place most distant from France.

As an instance of the moral power that the agents of the French Revolution had over the people, it may be stated that on the day after the *Moineau* sailed on her route towards the Philippines, the agents dressed themselves in their directorial costumes, harangued the ship's company, induced them to mutiny against the orders of the captain, and return to France.

The Colonists now gave themselves up to rejoicing for the dangers they had escaped, and the soldiers who had stood by the Assembly were honoured and caressed in every place, while money and largesses were liberally bestowed on them ; but the troops of the agents were soon found dangerous, as they resolved on freeing the negresses who lived with them. Governor Malartic contrived, however, to ship them off for Batavia, under pretence of assisting the Dutch against the common enemy, the English. There now only remained in the island the skeletons of the two old regiments before mentioned, and the colony remained tranquil until May, 1798, when these troops also formed a plan of proclaiming liberty to the slaves, in order to frustrate which, the Colonial Assembly obtained an order from General Malartic, for the two grenadier companies to embark on board the frigate *la Seine*, then ready to sail on a cruise. Those who desired to stir up insurrection in the colony repre-

sented to the troops that this order for embarkation was either to place them in the power of Tippoo Sultan, with whose cruelty they were well acquainted, or to expose them to the destructive climate of Batavia. The grenadiers, influenced by these suggestions, refused to obey the orders for embarkation, and induced the other companies to mutiny, to take arms and seize the field pieces which were in their quarters, as also to break open the doors of the armoury where the cartouches and cartridges were kept. Fortunately the officers of the regiment were men of the old regime, who restrained the fury of the men, and kept them from coming out of their quarters in arms. In this crisis, the Colonial Assembly were not idle, they summoned every freeman capable of bearing arms, from all parts of the island, and at day-break, on the 23th of April, every man at beat of drum was at the post assigned him; a battery planted upon a hill commanded the Court where the soldiers had been under arms the whole night, and twelve field pieces supported by the young National Guard of the colony, advanced in four columns to attack the troops in their quarters. General Malartic then advanced at the head of the National Guard, and again commanded the grenadiers to embark, which however they refused to do; the matches were lighted, and a bloody contest was on the eve of commencing, when the Committee of Public Safety of the Colonial Assembly suggested that the two regiments should embark for France in the *Seine* frigate and a merchantman, granting them until noon to make up their linen and knapsacks and depart; after some hesitation the soldiers consented, and the same day at noon, the Island was freed from 800 armed stipendiaries of the French Republic.

The colonists now sought for and expected peace: they had freed themselves from the agents and troops of the French Directory, and the Assembly, renewed every year by the nomination of the citizens of the colony, was linked, as it was thought, with the happiness and prosperity of the colonists. But disputes now arose respecting the laws about to be established for the repayment of debts contracted in paper currency, the depreciation of which (as issued by the administrators of the French Republic) was so great as to be but a *thousandth* part of the sum it nominally represented!

As soon as the intelligence reached Mauritius, respecting the laws which the two governing councils of France had decreed, relative to the payment of the debts contracted in the paper currency, the creditors, who were greatly favoured by these laws, demanded the execution of them: the debtors, on the other hand, represented with great force and truth, that the circumstances in general, under which the different contracts had been made in the colony being different from those which had

taken place in France, it would evidently be unjust to apply the same laws when there was an apparent difference both in the manner, situation, and contracts of the colony. The Colonial Assembly, acting on the principles of justice, was on the point of arranging these differences, when the creditors, in order to frustrate the aims of the Assembly, raised a conspiracy on the 4th November, 1799—seized on the guns, and loudly demanded of General Malartic to dissolve the Colonial Assembly. This demand the General was obliged to comply with, in order to save the most distinguished members of the Assembly from being murdered, several of the conspirators having rushed forward, and obliged them to escape by the back doors; but dissolving the Assembly did not satisfy the malcontents, they compelled the General to sign an order for the imprisonment of twelve different members of the Assembly, with a view of preventing, by any possibility, the passing of a law, the purport of which was the reimbursement of the debts contracted during the course of a depreciated paper currency. The *Sans Culottes* now formed themselves into armed associations, and the creditors, who had aided in dissolving the Colonial Assembly, became in turn frightened, when they perceived the march of the country people towards Port Louis to rescue it from the dominion of the *Sans-Culottes*; the latter, finding themselves abandoned by the creditors, and like bad men in a bad cause, weakened by internal dissensions, made no further resistance to the entry of the country national guard into the town: the disturbance was concluded by shipping off the principal criminals for France. The Colonial Assembly having been dissolved, the Governor-General Malartic was aided by the primary Assembly (24 members), less numerous than the former (31 members), whose numbers were found a source of much inquietude; the members were in the proportion of 14 for the country, and seven for the town, who were nominated by the primary Assemblies of each district of the island.

In the middle of all these troubles, education was not entirely neglected. In January 1791, the Assembly founded the Colonial (now Royal) College, which was attended by no less than 400 pupils at one time.

Governor Malartic, after eight years of turbulent administration, died on the 24th July 1800. He learned to merit, in every difficult crisis, the esteem and affection of the colonists; his funeral was celebrated with much pomp, and his remains were deposited in the Champ-de-Mars, the only public walk of the inhabitants of Port Louis. The execution of a monument, in the form of a cenotaph, was begun by the inhabitants, but its completion was not effected until the administration of Sir W. Gomm, when the necessary funds were raised, Lady Gomm, by means of a Fancy Fair, having brought to a completion the work which during almost fifty

years had been allowed to remain as an uncompleted testimony to the virtues of an exemplary ruler.

Mr. de Malartic was immediately succeeded by the Comte Magallon de Morhère. The new Assembly, though it had been reconstructed on a principle which apparently precluded any violent ebullitions of republican fury from within, found itself constantly impeded by the remnant of the republican party. Measures were therefore taken in 1801 for the transportation of 108 of their number to France; but the vessel that conveyed them foundered off the shores of that country, and the majority perished.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL DECAEN.

Meanwhile a strong and energetic Government had been established in France, and under its influence the equivocal independence, for some time maintained by the isles of France and Bourbon, soon began to totter to its fall. After he had effectually stifled the liberties of France, Bonaparte next turned his attention to the destruction of those of the Colonies, by the decree of the 30th Floreal an 10 (20th May 1802) which passed almost unnoticed in France, but subjected the Colonies to a most arbitrary régime.

To execute this law in the isle of France, the Consul General expedited a squadron under the orders of Vice Admiral Linois. The fleet of the Admiral, on board of which was Mr. Decaën, with the title of Captain General of the isles of France and Bourbon and power to execute the new decree, contained a large garrison for the defence of the islands.

Mr. Decaen disembarked on the 28th of September 1803, took possession of the Government, dissolved the Colonial Assembly, which had lasted for twelve years, abolished the whole existing system by a proclamation of twelve lines, and promulgated the new constitution formed for the Colony by the Consuls,—in virtue of which all the executive, legislative, and judicial powers were committed to three high functionaries, styled the Captain General, Colonial Prefect, and Commissary of Justice.

At this time the isles of France and Bourbon were the only relics of French dominion to the East of the Cape. The favorable position of those islands for the equipment and victualling of Ships-of-War and privateers, rendered them of incalculable injury to British commerce with India. Disasters at sea were immediately repaired at Port Louis. The Creoles of the island, moreover, men of an active and adventurous spirit, delighted in the most perilous enterprises, and ably seconded the operations of the French fleets by the equipment of a large number of

privateers, with which they cruised successfully in the surrounding seas that became the theatre of most sanguinary conflicts with English vessels and their own. Among the most remarkable of the corsairs of the times (the captures made by whom can be seen in the archive office) were Surcouf, Tréhouart, Perrot and Thomasin.

In a word the isle of France was the centre for the freebooters of every nation to fit out privateers and commit depredations on English property.

In 1809, when the injuries sustained from the enemy had exceeded all bounds, when the East India Company bitterly complained of the loss of their richest vessels on the one hand, and the reclamations of the merchants could no longer be slighted on the other, when the British Navy, though everywhere triumphant, could not correct the evil, either by a blockade of the island, or by bringing their ships to action, the Indian Government considered the subject as worthy of its attention, and resolved on the conquest of the Colony. Since the departure from India of the Marquis of Wellesley, who had long before insisted on the step, the measure had been procrastinated; which may be partly attributed to the fact of General Decaen, who used every endeavour to conceal the real state of the defences.

The Indian Government being, however, at length able to spare a sufficient body of men for the enterprise, a detachment of the 36th Regiment and a strong body of Sepoys under the command of Lieut.-Col. Keating were embarked at Bombay early in 1809, with orders to take possession of the isle of Rodrigues, in order to afford occasional aid to the squadrons, and harrass the enemy's quarters. Vice Admiral Bertie, stationed at the Cape, was ordered to enforce a vigorous blockade. In September, learning from Commodore Rowley that an advantageous attack might be made on Bourbon, Colonel Keating readily joined in the enterprise, and Captain Corbett of the *Néréide* was from his knowledge of the coasts and defences, employed in bringing the army and navy to their destination.

On the 21st September a successful descent was made near St.-Paul's at Réunion and Government stores were destroyed to the value of a million sterling, besides a considerable booty being carried away.

The landing of Captain Willoughby at Black River and Jacoté was perhaps one of the most brilliant actions of the war, from their cool intrepidity and daring. No attempt had been hitherto made to land on the island. Cruising off Cape Brabant, in the *Otter* Sloop of 18 guns, that officer attempted to cut out, in spite of a smart resistance, a brig and two other small vessels lying under the protection of the batteries at Black River. Two boats were sent to secure the brig, which was carried

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in the face of a heavy fire of musquetry from a party of soldiers drawn up to defend her. The batteries being however alarmed, the English, were compelled to abandon the vessel, but they carried out the lugger in defiance of a heavy fire, with the loss of one man only.

On attempting to cut out a large vessel at the end of April 1810 at anchor at Jacoté, before the boats could reach the ship the alarm was given, so that by the time they approached the shore, the batteries and two field pieces were playing upon the only spot where the troops could land. In spite of every obstacle a landing was effected, the batteries dashed upon and taken possession of in less than ten minutes and about 70 regular troops put to flight, leaving their officer and field pieces in the hands of the assailants. It was next imperative to take the battery on the Souillac side of the River des Gallets, which was almost impassible. The river was crossed, and the party giving three cheers, charged with the bayonet and carried the hill and batteries in a brilliant manner.

After destroying the gun carriages, spiking the guns, removing the field pieces on board the frigate, and again putting to flight the enemy who had rallied, the English carried off the Schooner, and re-embarked with the loss of one man.

In the succeeding months, attacks were made with a disproportionate success at Belombre and the Cap de la Savanne. Bourbon had been abandoned, and the enemy in tranquillity awaited a reinforcement. About 4,000 men (half Sepoys) being dispatched from Madras on the 10th June 1810, Grande Chaloupe and St.-Marie were soon taken, and on the 9th July that island surrendered, and Mr. R. T. Farquhar was left with a great portion of the troops as temporary Governor.

In the following month, the isle de la Passe (off Grand Port) on which there was a circular fort and barracks to command the entrance of the harbour was stormed and taken in the night by Capt. Pym of the *Syrius* frigate, who leaving a strong force on ile de la Passe, and one of his vessels in the port, left for a cruise round the island. Informed of this, General Vandermaesen rallied the inhabitants and with them and the regular troops, rushed with eagerness to the quarter menaced. The tide of success turned on the side of the French whose position now appeared in every way precarious.

A strong squadron, under Capt. Duperré, after cruising in the neighbouring seas with success, arrived with three prizes laden with troops off Grand Port on the 20th August. Allured by the French signals which the English had procured, Duperré deemed it prudent to put in, and bore up for the harbour, the *Victor* corvette (which had been taken from the English in a cruise) leading the way, and the *Bellone* of 44, Capt. Duperré

bringing up the rear. In the interval the crew of the *Néréide*, which had remained at Grand Port, had been posted at their guns, and awaited the order to fire, and a party of the 33rd and 69th regiments under Capt. Dodd were equally ready at the batteries on the islot. When on the point of doubling the *Néréide*, the *Victor* was called upon to strike, which refusing, a broadside immediately compelled obedience. The English flag now fluttered in the wind in lieu of the French. Too late to rally, the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* (prize) which had followed the *Victor* were compelled to pass through the narrows, amidst a raking fire from the *Néréide* and the fort, which was returned by them with spirit until they reached the anchorage at the bottom of the bay. Seeing this, Duperré resolved on forcing the passage with the *Bellone*. Entering the pass under easy sail, he returned the fire of the fort and frigate with a vigorous broadside under the stern of the latter, and tacking about, entered the harbour and gave the signal to the *Windham*, which was behind, to follow his example, but the Capt. preferred remaining out at sea. While the attention of the *Néréide* was distracted by the attack of the *Bellone*, the *Victor*, previously taken, took advantage of the moment and escaped from the English into the bay. By this manœuvre the whole of the French fleet had been enabled to place itself under the protection of the batteries, where it arranged itself in a crescent.

On the 21st, shells having been thrown by Capt. Willoughby, the frigates were compelled to approach nearer shore.

The *Windham*, East Indiaman, which had declined entering the port, was in the meantime taken at Black River and dispatched to Isle Bonaparte by the boats of the *Syrius*,—which had received intelligence of the attack at Grand Port, and given notice to the *Magicienne* and *Iphigenia* frigates which were cruising off the north-west port.

On the 22nd the *Néréide* was joined by the *Syrius*, to which Capt. Willoughby made signal that he was prepared for action; that the enemy was inferior in force to the two British frigates supported by the fort; while the master of the *Néréide* assured Capt. Pym that he could lay him alongside the *Bellone*. In steering for the purpose the *Syrius* grounded and could not be got off till the next day at noon which for that day frustrated the design.

Reinforcements were in the meanwhile pouring into Grand Port, and every possible advantage being taken of the proximity of the land. Troops were distributed among the whole of the French vessels. The English on their side received additional support by the arrival on the 23rd at 4 p. m. of the *Magicienne* and *Iphigenia* frigates, Capts. Lambert and Curtis, who had previously been warned by Capt. Pym. The plan of attack was instantly arranged, and the British squadron again stood in. The English

frigates directed their course, one for the *Minerve*, a second for the *Ceylon*, and the other two for Duperré's frigate and the *Victor*, with intent of attacking them at anchor. A well directed fire from the French ships and batteries began the attack. In steering for the *Bellone* the *Sirius* grounded for a second time, in such a position as to be unable to return the fire of the enemy.

The *Magicienne* also grounded along side the *Minerve*, and was obliged to restrict her fire to three guns and musquetry. The cables of the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* (which now struck her colours) were cut away; but before a boat could take possession of the latter, they both drifted on shore with their broadsides towards the *Bellone*, and their fire became almost useless. The *Bellone*, to escape being fouled by her consorts, cut her cable and ran aground, but preserved an excellent position. So far the English seemed to have the advantage, as they had two frigates left to oppose to the *Bellone* and the batteries.

At this juncture, the *Néréide* Capt. Willoughby seeing what had befallen the *Sirius*, in spite of the raking fire poured on her, steered for the *Bellone*, and between these ill-matched vessels a furious cannonade commenced, in which the *Victor* took a part. The *Néréide*, within a half pistol shot of the two latter was subject to a tremendous fire from both and the cross fire of the batteries. The *Iphigenia*, separated by a shoal, endeavoured in vain to run to her assistance. The effect was soon visible, her spring being shot away, she swung round with her stern to the *Bellone*. The cable of the *Néréide* was cut to bring her starboard guns to bear. Being severely wounded on the head; the quarter-deck mast and fore-castle guns dismantled; the deck guns disabled; and the rest of the squadron on the rocks; running aground astern where she was hulled by the ships and batteries; and five hours having elapsed without the arrival of a boat from the squadron, Capt. Willoughby ordered the fire of the *Néréide* to cease, and the survivors to take refuge in the hold. A boat was despatched to Capt. Pym to apprise him of the defenceless state of the ship, leaving him to say whether it was practicable to tow her out of the reach of the enemy's shot; or whether he should set her on fire. The boat returned with orders to repair on board the *Sirius*, which Capt. Willoughby refused to do.

A boat was next sent to the *Bellone* to inform her that the *Néréide* had struck.

The fire from the other English frigates ceased, except the *Iphigenia*, while the broadsides of the *Bellone* became more vigorous, fed as they were by assistance of all kinds from the *Minerve*, which was sheltered from capture by the *Iphigenia* only by the intervention of a shoal.

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At the very moment when his victory appeared complete (11 h. 10 m. P. M.) Commodore Duperré was wounded on the head by a grape shot. Capt. Bouvet of the *Minerve* at once replaced him. The French continued their fire on the *Néréide* during the night. Although the batteries and the *Bellone* had been hailed times without number to say that the *Néréide* had struck, the fire from the former continued to be poured upon that ill-fated vessel, which had sunk as low as the shoal would permit.

It was not till nearly four o'clock of the 26th that the French, ceasing their fire, boarded the *Néréide*, when they found a most frightful scene of carnage. The decks were covered with the dead and dying. Nearly every Officer and Seaman had been killed or wounded. Not a part of the ship had been sheltered. Capt. Willoughby himself was found reclining on the capstan, his arm dangling out of its socket and one of his eyes hanging on his cheek, singing aloud «Rule Britannia.» He even then struggled, under some impulse of mental aberration, until overpowered. Around were 116 of the crew lying dead, and many of the wounded afterwards breathed their last. It is stated that the continuation of the fire of the French after the *Bellone* had been hailed to say the *Néréide* had struck, was occasioned by the Union Jack being still flying, having been nailed to the mast, which had not a cord remaining by which to ascend; and that the firing ceased only on the mast being cut down. No sooner had the French hoisted their own colours on the *Néréide*, than the battery on the Isle de la Passe directed its fire upon that vessel and forced them to abandon her. From this time till after midnight on the 24th, the French fire was directed upon the *Magicienne*, until 2 o'clock, when after firing a few last random shots, the English, having lost 8 men and having many wounded, set fire to and abandoned her. She blew up at 11 h. 30 m. P. M. The crew reach in safety the islet and the *Iphigenia*, which had scarce taken any part, in the action, and was able by three o'clock to get to larboard of the *Magicienne*, and endeavoured for some hours to get the *Sirius* afloat, but in vain.

On the morning of the 25th, the fire of the French was turned on the *Sirius*, which being ill-able to return it, was at 10 o'clock P. M., abandoned and set fire to. The flames, fanned by the evening breeze, offered to the countless spectators on shore a resplendent and yet a horrible spectacle. At 11 P. M. the powder magazine blew up and destroyed what remained of the gallant vessel.

The *Iphigenia*, on board of which were 1,000 men without water or provisions, alone remaining intact, hastened to make her escape under the guns of Ile de la Passe; the *Bellone* followed her in the rear to crown the victory; when the division of Commodore Hamlin, consisting of the *Venus* 44, *La Manche* 40, *Astrée* 40, and *Entreprenant* corvette

suddenly appeared in the offing on the 27th, and taking their position in the van, left to the English no means of escape.

General Decaen dispatched an officer with a summons to surrender, to which Captain Lambert, after flattering himself in vain with the hope of a rescue, his ammunition being almost expended, at length consented, with the promise that the officers and men should be sent to the Cape within a month, which was not done. The prisoners numbered 100 naval and military officers and 1,600 soldiers, seamen, officers and marines.

The loss of the French in the action was also considerable. The *Bellone* had 37 killed and 142 wounded, and the other frigates suffered severely.

But it must be remembered that the English were still in possession of Réunion Island, and that other English vessels were afloat on these seas.

Commodore Hamelin, whose opportune arrival at Grand Port, was to be attributed to the removal of the English fleet from the blockade of Port Louis where it was previously shut up, succeeded only in reaching that port, when the English under Commodore Rowley shewed themselves, but were unable to approach the land before their countrymen had yielded.

The several engagements which occurred from this time till the taking of the island, the limits of this work, which are already exceeded, will not permit of being enumerated, and the particulars of the last event must therefore conclude this portion of the epitome.

Year after year had the project of reducing this powerful possession of the enemy been contemplated, but postponed. Lord Minto, the Governor General of India, having obtained the perfect subjection of the native Governments, coupled with the events in Europe, dispatched a body of troops sufficient to crush all effectual opposition. To this end Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Bourbon, Ceylon and the Cape respectively furnished their quota of troops. The land army, consisted of 11,500 men (irrespective of the Cape division of 3,500) a small portion of cavalry, and a formidable train of light and heavy artillery. The combined fleet, under Vice Admiral Bertie, consisted of 27 ships of war, besides 50 East India-men and transports.

The fleet arrived in sight of the island on the 20th, and at 10 o'clock on the morning of the 21st the whole fleet anchored at Grand Bay. The enemy immediately retired from that portion of the coast, blowing up the fort in the vicinity. Before the evening 10,000 men were able to land without accident or resistance. The fleet was in the meantime

directed to maintain the blockade of Port Napoleon, to protect the convoy at the anchorage, and a third of it to keep up a communication with the army on shore, as it advanced, to furnish the necessary supplies. Lieut. Col. Smythe being left to cover the landing place, it was necessary for the army to advance for about five miles through a wood, to prevent its occupation by the enemy. On entering the wood it was met and fired upon by the retreating corps from Grand Bay, by which Col. Keating, Lieut. Ashe and a few of the men were wounded.

Having regained the open country without further opposition, and had time to rest, before day break the army resumed its march with the intention of halting no more till it arrived before Port Napoleon, but from the deprivation and exhaustion of the troops General Abercrombie was compelled to halt at Powder Mills, five miles distant. At 2 o'clock General Decaen, some mounted officers, and about 80 hussar guards appeared within 100 yards of the British line, after surprising and cutting in pieces a small picquet in the wood. He was pursued by the light companies of the 12th and 39th, a few of his men were killed, and he himself received a ball through his hat and was slightly grazed on the leg.

Early the next morning Lieut. Col. MacLeod took possession without opposition of the batteries at Baie des Tortues and Tombeau to keep up a communication with the fleet. At 5 o'clock the army advanced, led by a reserve of the 39th, under Major General Warde. On penetrating about 300 paces a wood which had to be passed, a desultory fire was commenced by the light troops of the enemy. Several men were struck down, but the English troops evidently offered a more effectual opposition. In retiring the French began to destroy a bridge, which was however left still passable to the troops, and the artillery traversed the river itself.

In this charge the English lost Lieut. Col. Campbell, and Major O'Keefe of the 12th. A corps now ascended the signal mountain, and placed the English flag upon it, their cheers reverberating from the surrounding hills. In the course of the forenoon, a position in the front of the lines was taken, beyond the reach of cannon shot, and the army began to deploy, which the French perceiving they opened fire from the battery Dumas with heavy ordnance, but with little effect. The army consequently retired a few paces. During the night a party of marines arriving from the squadron, were mistaken for the enemy, and some shot were fired by which a few were unfortunately killed and several wounded.

The enemy's line, under General Vandermaesen, about 3,500 strong, with field pieces and howitzers, was stationed to the East of Pieter Both mountain, almost parallel to the wood, about 200 paces from it and reaching a habitation on the left, thereby being favourably placed for

making an impression on the English as they should emerge from the narrow road to the town. From the signal post at Mountain Long every movement of the British was telegraphed. The skirmishing continued until the battalions under Lieut.-Col. Campbell of the 33rd emerged from the wood and formed themselves. The enemy's line then gave a confused volley, and while the corps which followed were being formed, the column was exposed to a shower of grape, which fortunately was much too elevated. The grenadiers of the 39th now arriving, rushing to the charge, the enemy retreated precipitately leaving their field pieces, ammunition, with the killed and wounded behind them.

A false alarm likewise disturbed the enemy; the national guards became irresolute, the Cape division and a reinforcement of troops landed at Petite Rivière. These circumstances induced General Decaen to propose terms of capitulation, and a flag of truce was sent, while arrangements were still going on for a general attack of the town. The arrangements were only stayed on General Decaen revising the articles of capitulation, which being done, the treaty* was signed by the Commissioners appointed by each party, at one o'clock in the morning of the 3rd December 1810.

The loss on each side is stated at about 70 killed and 200 wounded.

The French squadron was delivered up, and the *Astrée* 44, *Bellone* 44, *La Manche* 44, *La Minerve* 52, the *Victor* corvette of 10, the *Entreprenant* and another of 14 guns each, all fine vessels, besides 31 sails of ships and brigs fell into the hands of the English. The *Iphigenia* and *Néréide* were also recaptured.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRITISH.

Agreeably to the capitulation, the military posts were to be given up in the course of the day of the 3rd December 1810 to His Britannic Majesty. The inhabitants were surprised to find the troops enter the town without disorder as they anticipated. The only ill done by them on their route to Port Louis was inevitable; but the proprietors who suffered and claimed the proffered indemnity, had their losses made good a few days after by the Government.

Although the French garrison was not confined, an example was made of several refugee Irishmen who had served under the French colours, and

* A translation of the act of capitulation is inserted in the Almanack of 1831.

for whom no stipulation was inserted by General Decaen in framing the conditions of capitulation.

The Governor of Bourbon, Mr. R. T. Farquhar, arriving a few days afterwards, at once assumed the chief power of the island, and directed the inhabitants to follow their usual occupations and obey the orders of their superiors, until the arrangements of the new Government should be completed.

A discussion shortly after arose between Major Warde and Mr. Farquhar, from the fact of the commission of the latter not having arrived, and Mr. Farquhar returned to Bourbon, to continue the separate Government of that island. General Warde thus temporarily held the reins of power, and in the Proclamation of 9th April 1811, announcing his appointment, he changed the name of « Ile de France » into that of « Mauritius, » which latter the island has ever since borne.

On the 20th May 1812, expired the ten years for which the Consuls had suspended the constitution. In the year before 11th July 1811, Mr. Farquhar returned to Mauritius, and resumed his office as Governor of it and of Bourbon and the dependencies.

In the month of February 1813, a large boa constrictor, measuring 14 feet long, was killed in the cascade at Réduit, by Messrs. Fleuriot and Cazeleus.

In 1814, the colony was definitively ceded to Great Britain by an article of the Treaty of Paris. Bourbon was under the same treaty restored to France, and in 1813 was taken possession of by the Commissioners of Louis the XVIII. The hopes which had hitherto been nourished of Mauritius being restored to France were thus for ever dispelled. In the year following, diplomatic and commercial relations were entered into between the Mauritian Government and Radama, King of the Ovas, who, from a petty chieftain in the north of Madagascar, had gradually extended his authority over a great part of the island, by means of his superior courage and sagacity. The two sons of Radama were sent to England for their education, passing at Mauritius on their way. The King on his part engaged to discountenance and suppress the slave trade in his dominions on the payment of an annual subsidy. Missionaries had been previously introduced, through whom with the aid of a few English mechanics, some of the arts of civilized life were introduced into Madagascar. To this tended in no small degree the active co-operation of Mr. Hastie. Everything appeared to promise Radama the sway over the united empire, when death prevented its accomplishment.

On the return of Governor Farquhar to England in 1817, he was visited by that officer, a mark of attention with which he was greatly delighted.

de Farquhar

Farquhar
retourne
en 1820

il avait
quitté
l'île en
1817

A similar convention for the suppression of the slave trade was concluded with the Imaum of Muscat.

A few days after the 20th September 1816, the Governor presided at a sumptuous fête held in commemoration of the taking of possession of the island by the French in 1743. The joy manifested on this occasion was quickly to make place for the deepest feelings of sorrow.

On the 23th September, a fire broke out in the house of Mr. Deshayes in Hospital Street, and before it could be extinguished, it extended from the neighbouring houses to the whole of that side of the town, which was almost immediately in a blaze, the streets obstructed with people and goods thrown about in the utmost confusion. Disorder was its highest point, and, but for the energy of the better class of the inhabitants who were the most to suffer, the town of Port Louis would have formed a single heap of ashes. By their labourious exertions the Government house, after repeatedly taking fire, was saved, and the course of the destructive element confined by Royal and Desforges Streets. Those thus burned out lost almost every thing but the clothes they escaped in, the furniture and valuables thrown into the street having been in many cases carried away without a trace being left, or destroyed by the flames; and had it not been for the prompt measures of Government at once after the disaster, a famine must have declared itself.

On the 8th September 1817, a Council of Commune, a kind of Municipal Institution, was established by Governor Farquhar in each district of the island, the objects to be deliberated on by which were to be pointed out by the Governor.

The year 1818 was one of the most disastrous for the Colony, which was then visited by one of the most violent hurricanes ever felt; and a disease of the throat which during some months filled several families with consternation and dismay. In the month of March the port was closed to Foreign vessels, and the hurricane alluded to took place on the night of the 28th, during which the barometer descended successively to 26, 4, 6. Its effects were disastrous in every part of the island.

The steps then taken for the suppression of the slave trade were rigid in the extreme; no one was free from suspicion, and even persons of the most irreproachable character were unwisely subjected to domiciliary and even nocturnal visits under the pretence of being accomplices in the introduction of slaves!

To Major General Hall, acting as Governor from the time of the departure of Mr. Farquhar, 12th November 1817, such extraordinary proceedings are to be attributed, nor did his arbitrary acts end there. He suspended the Chief Judge, the Procureur General, the Curator of Intestate

*Soldat
à
brigade
françoise*

of Establis, several other functionaries, and the suppression of the offices of Commandants of Districts, and the projected militia were an evidence of his object being to overthrow the good actions of Mr. Farquhar. Complaints were consequently sent against him to England, which were favourably listened to by the Minister. Mr. G. Smith was consequently reinstated in his office as Chief Judge, Colonel Draper,* in his previous office of Collector of Customs, and Major Waugh as Registrar in Admiralty.

1818
On the 10th December of the same year General Hall took his departure from the island, leaving Colonel Dalrymple to officiate until the arrival of Major General Darling. The most remarkable acts of the administration of Colonel Dalrymple, during the two months he held the reins of power, were his reinstating Mr. Virieux, the Procureur General, in office, and the re-establishment of the Commandants of the Districts. On the 23th January 1819, another violent hurricane was felt, which injured the Royal College to such an extent that the building was removed several inches from its place, two coasters were sunk in the harbour, and six other vessels stranded.

The impression made by this new disaster was not effaced, when Major General Darling, named as Acting Governor and Commander of the Troops, arrived on the 5th February. 1819

1819
The new Governor brought with him hopes of the re-opening of the port, solicited with eagerness since 1817, and announced his good intentions by a Proclamation. But the praise his good qualities might otherwise have earned for him was silenced by untoward circumstances.

In the month of November 1819, the cholera morbus suddenly broke out in Port Louis, and spread with frightful rapidity into the country districts. The general belief was that it was introduced by the frigate

* A curious fact connected with this decision of the Minister with regard to Colonel Draper, it may be permitted to the writer to insert in this place. That gentleman whose temporary removal from office may be looked upon as one of the most arbitrary and capricious steps of the Acting Governor, was from his youth notoriously addicted to the amusements of the turf, of which he was considered the « Father » in Mauritius. On the day of his receiving intelligence of his re-appointment to office, a racer which he had sent for from the Cape, arrived,—to which he gave the name of *Restoration*. For upwards of 14 years this beast was the pet of the Colonel, and ran with success yearly on the course, on which it expired during a well contested struggle to the regret not only of the Colonel himself but of every lover of the sports of the turf.

Topaze which arrived on the 29th October, and dissatisfaction was at once shown at the acts of the Governor, who was reproached with not having enforced due regard to the Quarantine laws.

According to Baron D'Unienville, the *Topaze* anchored in Port Louis on the 29th October, having several cases of sickness on board, and communication with the land was permitted, without any attention being paid to the order that was given to burn the clothes of the crew which had been deposited at Coopers' Island. The Blacks were the first to suffer, the disease having broke out amongst them a short time afterwards, and on the 19th November it was declared to be the cholera morbus. Demands were already made to send away the frigate, to which the General did not comply, but ordered a meeting of the faculty to ascertain their opinion on the disease, which increased its ravages daily on all classes of the population. The opinion of the board was that the disease was not *contagious* nor *introduced from abroad*. The town became deserted, the people seeking refuge in the most isolated parts of the country. All payments were at once stopped. Communication with Bourbon was prohibited by the Governor of that island.

Death stalked in every district, and the police did not suffice for the interment of the dead. The call for returns of mortality was without effect.

During the month of January, however, the disease happily abated in violence; and in the month of February the Governor called an assembly of the «*Conseils de Communes*» to consult with them as to the means of repairing, as far as possible, the bad result that might otherwise have been anticipated. The Governor unwisely attributed the pestilence which had just befallen the Colony to a visitation of heaven, consequent on the illicit traffic in slaves which had in a few cases been carried on. This accusation was violently replied to by the *Conseils de Communes*, in a letter where more acrimony than logic and propriety was shown.

The result was the immediate dissolution of those bodies, after the Governor's assuring himself of their full adherence to the sentiments they had expressed.

The loss by the Cholera was greatly exaggerated; the most moderate fixed it at from 10 to 15,000 slaves, but the number did not exceed 6,000, which with the losses caused by the Fire of 1816 and the subsequent hurricanes of 1818 and 1819 were more than sufficient to place the Colony in a most deplorable position.

Governor Farquhar whose return had been anxiously awaited by the

X L'antenne passe sur l'incident Hudson Lowe
(28 avril 1828)

XL

public, arrived to resume his office on the 5th July 1820, and announced that the port was re-opened to foreign vessels under certain restrictions.

After having rendered many important services to the Colony, that officer retired from the Government, and was succeeded by Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole on the 12th June 1823. The new Governor was the harbinger of measures of the highest importance to the Colony. A series of devastating hurricanes had laid waste the crops of the planter, destroying the support of its inhabitants, and leaving the island in a state of poverty bordering on insolvency, while the oppressive duty on sugar, its staple product, excluded it from the market, to which it could most naturally and profitably look without opening that of France. An insurrection of the slaves of Port Louis, was attempted on the 22nd February 1822, by a Malagache outcast named Ratsitane, who calling together a few of the slaves his countrymen took refuge on the mountain. Being denounced by one of his followers named Laizaf, as culpable as himself, the whole were captured, six of them suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and their heads were exposed on the place of their meeting. An act was passed on the 27th June 1823 by the Imperial Government, permitting the importation of the products of the Colony into England on the same terms as those of the West Indies. An impulse was thus given to agriculture, and the crops of sugar were soon doubled.

In 1823, effect was given to the Order in Council of the 9th February of the same year by the establishment of a Council of Government, of which the members were official, and met for the first time on the 19th August. Hence the laws were no longer styled Proclamations, emanating from the Governor alone, but « Ordinances of the Governor in Council. »

On the 9th December 1829, Governor Colville promulgated the Order in Council of the 22nd June preceding; which abolished all the unjust distinctions which had till then existed between the whites and citizens of colour. This step, which should have been taken earlier by the Government, met with general satisfaction; and since then, the Colonists of Mauritius live with harmony, without any of those prejudices of origin which are the bane of other countries. In 1830 the Colonists resolved to send an agent to London, to lay at the foot of the throne and demand certain ameliorations in the laws of their constitution, and in the general administration of the Colony. Mr. Adrien D'Epinay was selected for this important mission. On the 10th of October 1830, he embarked for England, and returning twelve months afterwards, gave an account of the result in a general assembly held in Port Louis. Lord Goderich, the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, had received him in a most favorable manner, and promised attention to the principal reclamations of the Colonists. The creation of a Legislative Council, half the

members unofficial, and the important concession of the liberty of the press were the first results. The previous Council was abolished on the 18th January 1832, and the oaths of office were taken by the new members on the 23rd. The first Ordinance passed by the Council established a Penal Code which was disallowed by the Minister, on the plea of several important omissions having been made in it, (see Despatch of Lord Goderich of 18th March-33). The second Ordinance established the liberty of the press, which had previously been subject to the censorship of the Chief Secretary.

On the 25th March 1832, the Order in Council of the 2nd November 1831, regulating the rights and duties of master and servant arrived and was immediately put in force. Previous to this, a project for the emancipation of the slaves, which the Colonists saw was inevitable, having been drawn up, was transmitted by them to England for approval. The same vessel that had brought the Order in Council was also bearer of the intelligence (announced on the 30th) that Mr. Jeremie, formerly Chief Judge at St. Lucia was to be sent out as Procureur and Advocate General. A forcible pamphlet, which he published in London, and in which he expressed a desire to see the emancipation of the slaves immediately achieved, was, at the same time, received. A report was spread abroad that the object of his mission was to carry this into effect at Mauritius, where he was anxious to make a primary experiment. A deputation of the principal inhabitants assembled, in consequence, on the 27th of March, at Government House, and presented an address to the Governor, expressive of the danger by which they conceived the Colony to be menaced, and requesting that he would authorize the Colonists to form themselves into a corps of volunteers for the maintenance of public tranquillity. The authority was granted, the corps formed, and guard kept day and night under the pretext of repressing any movement among the slaves.

On the 4th June, in the same year, arrived Mr. Jeremie in the ship *Ganges*. On the following day, amidst the most violent attempts to oppose it, he took the oath of office and was admitted to his seat in Council. The public uneasiness at once increased; the course of affairs was stopped as though spontaneously; the courts of Justice were deserted; it seemed as if the whole Colony had become paralyzed. The market was without provisions and the harvest was left uncut by the inhabitants. Addresses without number poured in from all parts of the island, praying that Mr. Jeremie might be sent away.

« While this ferment was very general (to give Mr. Jeremie's own version*) Mr. Blackburn announced his readiness to convene a Court to in-

RECENT EVENTS AT MAURITIUS, 1835, page 41.

*un homme de mensonges et de calomnies
reconnues telles par les anglais mêmes,
et qui s'agitait contre son autheur
comme on l'a vu par le jugement*

projet de loi pour

*projet de loi pour le
conseil privé, qui nous
amena notre part
d'indemnités*

stal Mr. Jeremie, and the 22nd of June was agreed upon. On the day appointed the whole town was in commotion; the front of Government House was thronged from an early hour by the population, and the military guards were all doubled. At 10 o'clock Mr. Jeremie left Government house through the garden and by the back door for the Court house, —he thus, accompanied by the Governor's private Secretary, succeeded in reaching the Court-house without being observed, except by rather a numerous party collected opposite the door of the Court-house, by whom they were hooted. No sooner was it known that he had reached the Court, than a large crowd assembled. Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Justice Cooper, who was that day to be sworn in as a Judge, alone appeared in Court. The Court was therefore adjourned, the clerk of it (Mr. Canel) refusing to draw up the minute of proceedings, conceiving that all the bench had done was illegal. Mr. Jeremie immediately endeavoured to return to Government house, which he was prevented by the crowd from doing, having been assaulted on the threshold of the Court-house. A military guard was sent for, and on its arrival he endeavoured to pass through the crowd under the protection of a Captain's guard and of a strong body of police. At a short distance from the Court-house, he was again assaulted. Captain Congreve of the 29th, who commanded, was struck on the head by a stone and Mr. Jeremie collared and struck also. At this time one or two of the turbulent were slightly wounded, and four or five were taken; the remainder then fled, and he returned in safety, under a strong military escort, to Government house. »

To preserve public tranquillity, in consequence of the opposition made throughout, after calling the Council, and assuring himself of the opinion of the mass of the planters and an official member of the Council, Col. Draper, having expressed, to his own signal misfortune, his opinion as to the expediency of Mr. Jeremie's at once leaving the Colony, Sir Charles Colville ordered his departure, which took place on the 29th. The disturbances now entirely ceased, and every one returned to his usual occupations as they had begun to do some days before Mr. Jeremie left the island.

On the 31st January 1833, Sir Charles Colville was succeeded by Sir William Nicolay. On the 4th February the new Governor published an order in Council of the 6th November ordering the dissolution of the volunteers under pain of death; but the corps had already disbanded itself.

To counteract the effects of Mr. Jeremie's arrival in London, the Colonists again deputed Mr. D'Epinau on a mission to England, on the 27th February, to give a version of their own with respect to the late occurrences.

On Mr. Jeremie's arrival in England, and reporting himself to the Minister, he was at once desired to return, with the least possible delay, instructions having been given to ensure his being able to resume his duties without molestation. He consequently embarked for the island on board a vessel of war, and arrived with two regiments for the reinforcement of the garrison on the 29th April 1833. He immediately entered on his functions at the Court of Appeal and took his seat in Council, without encountering new difficulties.

On the 3rd of September 1834, an official notice was issued, announcing Mr. Jeremie's dismissal by order of the King.

In January 1833, Mr. Adrien Caëz D'Epinay returned to Mauritius, after an absence of sixteen months, and his labours were rewarded by a succession of banquets and other acknowledgments in every quarter of the island.

On the 1st February 1835, the act of Parliament passed on the 28th August 1833, came into operation, and slavery ceased from that moment to exist in Mauritius! This great event was unaccompanied by anything in the shape of disorder, and was celebrated by the negro by the most heartfelt feelings of gratitude and joy. An Order in Council of the 6th July of the same year preserved to the Colonists the right of apprenticeship over the *ci-devant* slaves. In October 1836, the magnificent port of Mahébourg, which had up to this time remained closed to trading vessels, was opened by an advice from the Collector of Customs; but only a few vessels have since been freighted there.

Sir William Nicolay was succeeded on the 16th July 1840 by Sir Lionel Smith, G. C. B., who died at the age of 64 on the 2nd January 1842, leaving the post to be temporarily filled by Lieut.-Col. Staveley, the senior officer in command of the Troops, until the arrival of Sir William M. Gomm, K. C. B., which took place on the 21st November 1842. Being called to a superior command in India, Sir W. Gomm took his departure, after ruling for 7 years, on the 5th May 1849, leaving, in virtue of the Royal Instructions, the senior officer in command to act till the arrival of his successor, Sir George Anderson, who assumed the reins of power on the 8th June of the same year. Being in his turn promoted to the Government of Ceylon, Sir George left with his suite for that Colony on the 19th October 1850, and was replaced temporarily by Major General William Sutherland until the arrival of our present Governor, JAMES MACAULAY HIGGINSON, Esq., C. B., who took the oaths of office on the 8th January 1851.

*from which
the house
dine - ?*



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