

HEINONLINE

Citation: 1 Spenser St. John Hayti or the Black Republic 182



Content downloaded/printed from
HeinOnline (<http://heinonline.org>)
Thu Apr 17 14:06:31 2014

- Your use of this HeinOnline PDF indicates your acceptance of HeinOnline's Terms and Conditions of the license agreement available at <http://heinonline.org/HOL/License>
- The search text of this PDF is generated from uncorrected OCR text.

CHAPTER V.

VAUDOUX WORSHIP AND CANNIBALISM.

WHEN the news reached Paris of the massacres in Port-au-Prince of the mulattoes by orders of the black President Soulouque in April 1849, it is said that Louis Napoleon took the opportunity of saying at a public reception, in presence of the sable representative of Hayti, "Haïti, Haïti ! pays de barbares." Had he known all the particulars relating to Vaudoux worship and cannibalism, he would have been still more justified in so expressing himself.

There is no subject of which it is more difficult to treat than Vaudoux worship and the cannibalism that too often accompanies its rites. Few living out of the Black Republic are aware of the extent to which it is carried, and if I insist at length upon the subject, it is in order to endeavour to fix attention on this frightful blot, and thus induce enlightened Haytians to take measures for its extirpation, if that be possible.*

It is certain that no people are more sensitive to

* One thing I wish distinctly to state, that I never heard of any mulatto, except Generals Salnave and Therlonge, who was mixed up with the cannibalism of the Vaudoux, nor of any black educated in Europe.

foreign public opinion than the Haytians, and they therefore endeavour to conceal by every means this evidence of the barbarism of their fellow-countrymen. It is, however, but the story of the foolish ostrich over again ; every foreigner in Hayti knows that cannibalism exists, and that the educated classes endeavour to ignore it instead of devising means to eradicate it.

The only Governments that endeavoured to grapple with the evil were those of President Geffrard and President Boisrond - Canal, and probably they in some measure owe their fall to this action on their part.

The first question naturally asked is, "Who is tainted by the Vaudoux worship?" I fear the answer must be, "Who is not?" This does not necessarily imply that they are tainted with cannibalism, as I shall hereafter explain. It is notorious that the Emperor Soulouque was a firm believer, and that the mulatto general Therlonge was one of its high priests, and in his younger days used to appear in a scarlet robe performing antics in the trees. A late Prime Minister, whose bloody deeds will be an everlasting reproach to his memory, was said to be a chief priest of the sect, and many others whom I will not at present indicate.

If persons so high placed can be counted among its votaries, it may be readily believed that the masses are given up to this brutalising worship. During the reign of Soulouque, a priestess was arrested for having performed a sacrifice too openly ; when about to be conducted to prison, a foreign bystander remarked aloud

that probably she would be shot. She laughed and said, "If I were to beat the sacred drum, and march through the city, not one, from the Emperor downwards, but would humbly follow me." She was sent to jail, but no one ever heard that she was punished.

President Salnave (1867), inclined at first to court the support of the educated classes, kept clear of the Vaudoux. But when he found his advances repulsed, for the gross debauchery at the palace prevented any respectable person from ever willingly entering it, and when the fortunes of the civil war that then raged began to turn against him (1869), he, from some motive or other, whether superstition or the desire to conciliate the mass of his ignorant troops, went to consult a well-known priest living near Marquissant, in the neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince, and there went through all the ceremonies that were required. He bathed in the blood of goats, made considerable presents to the priests and priestesses, and then feasted with the assembly, who all gave themselves up to the lowest debauchery, and kept up these festivities so long that even the iron frame of the President gave way, and he was confined to his bed for many days after.

The fortunes of war still continuing adverse, he again consulted the Papaloi or priest, who insisted that he must now go through the highest ceremony; that the "goat without horns" must be slain, and that he must be anointed with its blood. If he agreed to this, then the priest assured him of certain victory over his enemies.

Whether Salnave gave in or not I cannot say positively. His enemies of all classes declared he did; his friends among the lower orders confirmed the story; but the few respectable people who adhered to his cause naturally denied the truth of the accusation. I think the weight of evidence was more against him than for him.

To explain the phrase of "the goat without horns," I must notice that there are two sects which follow the Vaudoux worship—those who only delight in the blood and flesh of white cocks and spotless white goats at their ceremonies; and those who are not only devoted to these, but on great occasions call for the flesh and blood of the "goat without horns," or human victims.

When Hayti was still a French colony Vaudoux worship flourished; but there is no distinct mention of human sacrifices in the accounts transmitted to us. In Moreau de St. Méry's excellent description of the colony, from whose truthful pages it is a pleasure to seek for information, he gives a very graphic account of fetishism as it existed in his day, that is, towards the close of the last century.

After describing certain dances, he remarks that the Calinda and the Chica are not the only ones brought from Africa to the colony. There is another which has been known for a long time, principally in the western part of the island (Hayti), and which has the name of Vaudoux.* But it is not merely as a dance

* On the African coast the word is Vodun. Burton mentions that the serpents worshipped at Whydah were so respected that formerly to

that the Vaudoux merits consideration ; at least it is accompanied by circumstances that give it a rank among those institutions in which superstition and ridiculous practices have a principal part.

According to the Arada negroes, who are the true sectaries of the Vaudoux in the colony, who maintain its principles and its rules, Vaudoux signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being, on whom depend all the events which take place in the world. This being is the non-venomous serpent, and it is under its auspices that all those assemble who profess this doctrine. Acquaintance with the past, knowledge of the present, prescience of the future, all appertain to this serpent, that only consents, however, to communicate his power and prescribe his will through the organ of a grand priest, whom the sectaries select, and still more by that of the negress whom the love of the latter has raised to the rank of high priestess.

These two delegates, who declare themselves inspired by their god, or in whom the gift of inspiration is really manifested in the opinion of their followers,

kill one by accident was punished by death. Now a heavy fine is inflicted. Bosman states that the serpent is the chief god in Dahomey, to whom great presents are made. They are harmless ; white, yellow, and brown in colour, and the largest was about six feet long, and as thick as a man's arm. Fergusson, in his introductory essay on "Tree and Serpent Worship in India," mentions that at a place called Sheik Haredi, in Egypt, serpent-worship still continues, and that the priests sacrifice to them sheep and lambs. On the west coast of Africa, women, when touched by the serpent, are said to become possessed ; they are seized with hysteria, and often bereft of reason ; they are afterwards considered priestesses. The whole essay of Fergusson is exceedingly interesting.

bear the pompous names of King and Queen, or the despotic ones of Master and Mistress, or the touching titles of Papa and Mama. They are during their whole life the chiefs of the great family of the Vaudoux, and they have a right to the unlimited respect of those that compose it. It is they who decide if the serpent agrees to admit a candidate into the society, who prescribe the obligations and the duties he is to fulfil ; it is they who receive the gifts and presents which the god expects as a just homage to him. To disobey them, to resist them, is to disobey God himself, and to expose oneself to the greatest misfortunes.

This system of domination on the one hand, and of blind obedience on the other, being well established, they at fixed dates meet together, and the King and Queen of the Vaudoux preside, following the forms which they probably brought from Africa, and to which Creole customs have added many variations, and some traits which betray European ideas ; as, for instance, the scarf, or rich belt, which the Queen wears at these assemblies, and which she occasionally varies.

The reunion for the true Vaudoux worship, for that which has least lost its primitive purity, never takes place except secretly, in the dead of night, and in a secure place safe from any profane eye. There each initiated puts on a pair of sandals and fastens around his body a number, more or less considerable, of red handkerchiefs, or of handkerchiefs in which that colour predominates. The King of the Vaudoux has

finer handkerchiefs and in greater number, and one that is entirely red, with which he binds his forehead as a diadem. A girdle, generally blue, gives the finishing-stroke to the tokens of his resplendent dignity.

The Queen, dressed with simple luxury, also shows her predilection for the red colour,* which is generally that of her sash or belt.

The King and Queen place themselves at one end of the room, near a kind of altar, on which is a box where the serpent is kept, and where each adept can see it through the bars of its cage.

When they have verified that no curious stranger has penetrated into the place, they commence the ceremony by the adoration of the serpent, by protestations of being faithful to its worship and entirely submissive to its commands. They renew, holding the hands of the King and Queen, the oath of secrecy, which is the foundation of the association, and it is accompanied by everything horrible which delirium could imagine to render it more imposing.

When the followers of the Vaudoux are thus prepared to receive the impressions which the King and Queen desire them to feel, they take the affectionate tone of a tender father or mother; vaunt the happiness which is the appanage of those who are devoted to the Vaudoux; they exhort them to have confidence in him, and to give him the proofs of it by taking his counsel in all the most important circumstances of their lives.

* Red, the royal colour at Mdra.—*Bosman*.

Then the crowd separates, and each one who may desire it, and according to his seniority in the sect, approaches to implore the aid of the Vaudoux. Most of them ask for the talent to be able to direct the conduct of their masters. But this is not enough: one wants more money; another the gift of being able to please an unfeeling one; another desires to reattach an unfaithful lover; this one wishes for a prompt cure or long life; an elderly female comes to conjure the god to end the disdain with which she is treated by the youth whose love she would captivate; a young one solicits eternal love, or she repeats the maledictions that hate dictates to her against a preferred rival. There is not a passion which does not give vent to its vow, and crime itself does not always disguise those which have for object its success. At each of these invocations the King of the Vaudoux appears absorbed in thought. The spirit seizes him; suddenly he takes hold of the box in which the serpent is confined, places it on the ground, and commands the Queen to get on it. As soon as the sacred ark is beneath her feet, the new Pythoness is filled by the spirit of their god; she trembles, all her body is in a state of convulsion, and the oracle speaks by her mouth. Now she flatters and promises happiness, now she bursts into reproaches; and according to her wishes, her interest, or her caprice, she dictates as decrees without appeal everything which she is pleased to prescribe, in the name of the serpent, to this imbecile crowd, that never expresses the slightest doubt of the most monstrous absurdity, and

that only knows how to obey what is despotically dictated to it.

After all these questions have received some kind of an answer from the oracle, many of which are not without ambiguity, they form a circle, and the serpent is again placed on the altar. Then his followers bring as tribute the objects they think most worthy, and that no jealous curiosity shall raise a blush, the offerings are placed in a covered hat. The King and Queen then promise that the offerings shall be accepted by their god. It is from this collection that the expenses of the meetings are paid, that aid is afforded to absent members, or to those present who may be in want, or to others from whom the society may expect something in favour of its glory or renown. They now propose and settle their future plans, they consider what is to be done, and all this is declared by the Queen the will of the god; often enough these plans have not for object either good order or public tranquillity. A fresh oath, as execrable as the first, engages each one to be silent as to what has passed, to aid in what has been settled; and sometimes a vase, in which there is the blood of a goat, still warm, seals on the lips of those present the promise to suffer death rather than reveal anything, and even to inflict it on any one who may forget that he is thus so solemnly bound to secrecy.

After these ceremonies commences the dance of the Vaudoux.

If there should be a new candidate, it is by his admission that the *fête* commences. The King of the

Vaudoux, with some black substance, traces a large circle, and in this the novice is placed; and in his hand he puts a packet of herbs, horsehair, pieces of horn, and other trifling objects. Then lightly touching him on the head with a slight wooden wand, he thunders forth an African song, which is repeated in chorus by those who stand around the circle; then the new member begins to tremble and to dance, which is called to practise Vaudoux. If, unhappily, excess of excitement makes him leave the circle, the song immediately ceases, the King and Queen turn their backs to avert the evil omen. The dancer recollects himself, re-enters the circle, again trembles, drinks, and arrives at length at so convulsive a state, that the King orders him to stop, by striking him lightly on the head with his wand, or, should he think it necessary, with a heavy *kurbash*. He is taken to the altar to swear, and from that moment he belongs to the sect.

This ceremony over, the King places his hand or his foot on the box in which the serpent is confined, and soon becomes agitated. This impression he communicates to the Queen, and from her it gains the whole circle, and every one commences certain movements, in which the upper part of the body, the head and shoulders, appear to be dislocated. The Queen above all is a prey to the most violent agitation. From time to time she approaches the serpent in order to add to her frenzy; she shakes the box, and the hawkbells attached to it sound like a fool's bauble, and the excitement goes on increasing. This is augmented by the use of spirituous

liquors, which the adepts do not spare. With some, fainting fits follow, with others a species of fury; but a nervous trembling seizes them all, which they appear unable to master. They go on spinning round, and in their excitement some tear their clothes, others bite their own flesh; then again many fall to the ground utterly deprived of sense, and are dragged into a neighbouring dark apartment. Here in the obscurity is too often a scene of the most disgusting prostitution.

At length lassitude puts an end to these demoralising scenes, to be renewed again at a date which is carefully settled beforehand.

In reading this account, freely given from Moreau de St. Méry, I have been struck how little change, except for the worse, has taken place during the last century. Though the sect continues to meet in secret, they do not appear to object to the presence of their countrymen who are not yet initiated. In fact, the necessity of so much mystery is not recognised, when there are no longer any French magistrates to send these assassins to the stake.

Notwithstanding their efforts to keep strangers far from their sacrifices, two Frenchmen succeeded in being present on different occasions.

At a dinner at which I was present, I heard the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince give the following account of what had occurred the preceding week (in 1869). A French priest who had charge of the district of Arcahaye, had the curiosity to witness the Vaudoux ceremonies, and he persuaded some of his

parishioners to take him to the forest, where a meeting of the sect was to be held. They were very unwilling, saying that, if discovered, he and they would be killed ; but he promised faithfully that, whatever happened, he would not speak a word. They blacked his hands and face, and disguising him as a peasant, took him with them. In Salnave's time the Vaudoux priests were so seldom interrupted, that few precautions were taken against surprise, and the neighbouring villagers flocked to the ceremony. With these the Catholic priest mixed, and saw all that went on. As in the previous description, the people came to ask that their wishes should be gratified, and the priestess stood on the box containing the serpent. At first she went into a violent paroxysm, then, in a sort of half-trance, she promised all that they could desire. A white cock and then a white goat were killed, and those present were marked with their blood. Up to this point, it appeared as if Monseigneur were repeating some pages from Moreau de St. Méry, but it soon changed. He continued :—Presently an athletic young negro came and knelt before the priestess and said, " O Maman, I have a favour to ask." " What is it, my son ?" " Give us, to complete the sacrifice, the goat without horns." She gave a sign of assent ; the crowd in the shed separated, and there was a child sitting with its feet bound. In an instant a rope already passed through a block was tightened, the child's feet flew up towards the roof, and the priest approached it with a knife. The loud shriek given by

N

the victim aroused the Frenchman to the truth of what was really going on. He shouted, "Oh, spare the child!" and would have darted forward, but he was seized by his friends around him, and literally carried from the spot. There was a short pursuit, but the priest got safely back to the town. He tried to rouse the police to hasten to the spot, but they would do nothing. In the morning they accompanied him to the scene of the sacrifice. They found the remains of the feast, and near the shed the boiled skull of the child.

The authorities at L'Arcahaie were exceedingly incensed with the priest for his interference, and, under pretence that they could not answer for his safety, shipped him off to Port-au-Prince, where he made his report to the Archbishop.

Another Frenchman, who resided in a village in the southern department, witnessed the whole ceremony, and, as he remained silent, was undiscovered; but on its being rumoured that he had been present, his wife's Haytian family insisted on his leaving the district, as his life was in danger.

I have frequently heard similar details from educated Haytians, and a proof will presently be given.

I may notice that the Haytians have corrupted the compounds Papa Roi and Maman Roi into Papaloi and Mamanloi.

The temples of the Vaudoux, called Humfort, are to be found in every district of the country. They are in general small, though one I visited in the interior was

spacious, and was papered with engravings from the *Illustrated London News*, and the walls were hung with the pictures of the Virgin Mary and of various saints. I may notice that in every one I entered I found similar pictures. In the largest one, a Catholic priest had often said mass during his inland tours. Though he could not prove it, he shrewdly suspected that the Vaudoux worship was carried on there during his frequent absences. He showed me some very curious polished stones of various forms, which he had induced some of his disciples to give up. One was a stone axe in shape of a crescent; and the negroes said that they had been brought from Africa, and formed part of the relics they worshipped. I believe my informant obtained these stones from a young negress during the absence of her husband, who was very indignant on discovering their loss. The French priest destroyed them, to prevent their falling again into the hands of his congregation.

Beside various Christian emblems, I found in one of the temples a flag of red silk, on which was worked the following inscription:—"Société des Fleurs za Dahomian," whatever that may refer to. This flag was said to have been the gift of the Empress, the consort of the Emperor Soulouque.

Once whilst strolling with a friend in the mountains at the back of La Coupé, about six miles from Port-au-Prince, I was shown another small temple. As the guardian was a sort of dependant of the Haytian gentleman who was with me, we were allowed to

enter, and were shown a box under a kind of altar, in which we were told the serpent was confined, but we could not induce the man to let us see it, as he feared the anger of the Papaloi.

I have remarked that the temples are generally small. To accommodate the crowd, however, permanent or temporary sheds are erected near, and there is generally the guardian's house besides, in which to take shelter or carry on their debauch.

The Papalois may generally be distinguished by the peculiar knotting of their curly wool, which must be a work of considerable labour, and by their profusion of ornaments. We noticed the former peculiarity at the trial of some sorcerers, whilst the jailers probably had relieved them of the latter. I have frequently remarked these knotted-headed negroes, and the attention they received from their sable countrymen.

In general, when incidents are spoken of in society in Hayti relating to the Vaudoux worship, Haytian gentlemen endeavour to turn the conversation, or they say you have been imposed upon, or the events have been exaggerated. But the incidents I am about to relate formed the subject of a trial before a criminal court, and are to be found detailed in the official journal of the period, and I was present during the two days that the inquiry lasted.

It occurred during the Presidency of General Gelfard, the most enlightened ruler that that unfortunate country possessed since the time of President Boyer ;

it too plainly proved that the fetish worship of the negroes of Africa had not been forgotten by their descendants, nor to be denied by any one, and the attention of the whole country was drawn to the subject of cannibalism. As the case greatly interested me, I made the most careful inquiries and followed it in its most minute particulars. It is worth while relating the whole story in its disgusting details, as it is one of the truth of which there is not a shadow of a doubt.

A couple of miles to the west of Port-au-Prince lies the village of Bizoton, in which there lived a man named Congo Pellé. He had been a labourer, a gentleman's servant, an idler, who was anxious to improve his position without any exertion on his own part. In this dilemma he addressed himself to his sister Jeanne, who had long been connected with the Vaudoux—was, in fact, the daughter of a priestess, and herself a well-known Mamanloi—and it was settled between them that about the new year some sacrifice should be offered to propitiate the serpent. A more modest man would have been satisfied with a white cock or a white goat, but on this solemn occasion it was thought better to offer a more important sacrifice. A consultation was held with two Papalois, Julien Nicolas and Floreal Apollon, and it was decided that a female child should be offered as a sacrifice, and the choice fell on Claircine, the niece of Jeanne and Congo.

This was the account given in court; but it appears also to be an undoubted fact that human sacrifices are

offered at Easter, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and more particularly on Twelfth Night, or *Les Fêtes des Rois*.

On the 27th December 1863, Jeanne invited her sister, the mother of Claircine, to accompany her to Port-au-Prince, and the child, a girl of about twelve years of age, was left at home with Congo. Immediate advantage was taken of the mother's absence, and Claircine was conducted to the house of Julien, and from thence to that of Floréal, where she was bound, and hidden under the altar in a neighbouring temple. In the evening, the mother, returning home, asked for her child, when her brother Congo told her it had strayed away; a pretended search was made by those in the plot, and another Papaloi was consulted. This man told the mother not to be uneasy, as the Maître d'Eau, or the spirit of the water, had taken her daughter, but that in a short time her child would be restored to her. The woman believed, or pretended to believe, this story, and, by the papa's recommendation, burnt candles before the altar of the Virgin Mary for the prompt return of her offspring,—another proof of the strange mingling of Catholicism and Vaudoux worship.

On the evening of the 31st of December a large party assembled at the house of Jeanne to await the arrival of the child, who had remained for four days bound under the altar. When the chief members of the plot came to the temple to bring her out, she, guessing the fate reserved for her, gave two or three

piercing shrieks, which were soon stifled, and, gagged and bound, she was carried to Jeanne's house, where preparations were made for the human sacrifice. She was thrown on the ground, her aunt holding her by the waist, whilst the Papaloi pressed her throat, and the others held her legs and arms; her struggles soon ceased, as Floréal had succeeded in strangling her. Then Jeanne handed him a large knife, with which he cut off Claircine's head, the assistants catching the blood in a jar; then Floréal is said to have inserted an instrument under the child's skin, and detached it from the body. Having succeeded in flaying their victim, the flesh was cut from the bones, and placed in large wooden dishes; the entrails and skin being buried near to the cottage. The whole party then started for Floréal's house, carrying the remains of their victim with them. On their arrival Jeanne rang a little bell, and a procession was formed, the head borne aloft, and a sacred song sung. Then preparations were made for a feast.

Roused by the noise caused by the arrival, a woman and girl sleeping in another chamber looked through some chinks in the wall and saw all that passed,—Jeanne cooking the flesh with Congo beans, small and rather bitter (*pois congo*), whilst Floréal put the head into a pot with yams to make some soup. Whilst the others were engaged in the kitchen, one of the women present, Roséide Sumera, urged by the fearful appetite of a cannibal, cut from the child's palm a piece of flesh and ate it raw (this I heard her avow in open court).

The cooking over, portions of the prepared dish were handed round, of which all present partook; and the soup being ready, it was divided among the assistants, who deliberately drank it. The night was passed in dancing, drinking, and debauchery. In the morning the remains of the flesh were warmed up, and the two witnesses who had watched the proceedings were invited to join in the repast: the young woman confessed that she had accepted the invitation, but the girl did not.

Not satisfied with this taste of human flesh, the priests now put the young girl, who had watched their proceedings from a neighbouring room, in the place of Claircine, and she was bound in the temple, to be sacrificed on Twelfth Night. It came out in evidence that she had been decoyed to the house for that purpose, and that the young woman who was sleeping in the same room was in reality in charge of her.

Fortunately for her, the inquiries which Claircine's mother had made on her first arrival home and the disappearance of the second girl had roused the attention of an officer of police, and a search being made, the freshly-boiled skull of the murdered girl was found among the bushes near Floréal's house, where careless impunity had induced the assassins to throw it. A further search led to the discovery of the girl bound under the altar and the other remains of Claircine.

Fourteen persons were arrested, against eight of whom sufficient evidence could be obtained, and these were sent to prison to answer for their crime before a

criminal court. The trial commenced on the 4th of February 1864, and lasted two days. Incidents were related in the course of the evidence which showed how the lower classes are sunk in ignorance and barbarity, and renewed the proofs, if any fresh proofs were required, that the Vaudoux worship is associated by them with the ceremonies of the Catholic religion, even the Papalois recommending the burning of tapers in the Christian churches, and the having crosses and pictures of the Virgin Mary strangely mingled on their altars with the objects of their superstition.

In the dock we saw the eight prisoners, four men and four women, with faces of the ordinary Haytian type, neither better nor worse. Their names were: men—Julian Nicholas, a Papaloi; Floréal Apollon, another Papaloi; Guerrier François and Congo Pellé: the women—Jeanne Pellé, a Mamanloi, Roséide Sumera, Néréide François, and Beyard Prosper. Some had been servants to foreigners, others had been gardeners and washerwomen. The French procedure is observed in all trials in Hayti, and to an Englishman the procedure, as practised in that republic, is contrary to the first principles of justice. The prisoners were bullied, cajoled, cross-questioned, in order to force avowals, in fact, to make them state in open court what they were said to have confessed in their preliminary examinations. I can never forget the manner in which the youngest female prisoner turned to the public prosecutor and said, "Yes, I did confess what

you assert, but remember how cruelly I was beaten before I said a word;" and it was well known that all the prisoners had at first refused to speak, thinking that the Vaudoux would protect them, and it required the frequent application of the club to drive this belief out of their heads. That prisoners are tortured to make them confess is known to be a common practice in Hayti.

However this may have been in the present case, there, on a table before the judge, was the skull of the murdered girl, and in a jar the remains of the soup and the calcined bones; and the avowals of the prisoners in court and the testimony of the witnesses were too clear and circumstantial to leave a doubt as to their criminality.

As I have remarked, I was in court during the two days' trial, and I never was present at one where the judge conducted himself with greater dignity. His name was Lallemand, and he was one of the few magistrates who had the courage to do justice, even when political passion would have condemned victims unheard.

Among those who gave their evidence was the young girl who witnessed the ceremonies, and for whom was reserved the fate of Claircine. The judge called her up to his side, and gently asked her to tell the court what she had seen; but, with a frightened look, she started and burst into tears, and the judge, looking up sharply, saw the prisoners making the most diabolical grimaces at the poor child. He then turned

round to the jury and said, in view of the intimidation attempted, he would do what was not strictly regular; the child should whisper the story to him, and he would repeat it to the court. He placed her with her back to the prisoners, and putting his arm round her, drew her gently to him, and said in a soft voice, "Tell me, *chère*, what occurred." The girl, in a very low tone, began her testimony, but the silence in court was so profound, that not a word she uttered was lost, and, almost without faltering, she told her story in all its horrible details; but her nerves then gave way so completely, that she had to be taken out of court, and could not be again produced to answer some questions the jury wished to ask.

Then the young woman, her companion of that night, was called, and she confirmed the account, and confessed that in the morning she had joined in the feast; the mother's testimony followed, and that of numerous other witnesses. The guilt of the prisoners was thus fully established, when one of the female prisoners, Roséide, in the hopes perhaps of pardon, entered into every particular of the whole affair, to the evident annoyance of the others, who tried in vain to keep her silent. Her testimony was the most complete, and left not a doubt of the culpability of the whole of the prisoners. I did in consequence suggest that her life should be spared, but President Geffrard reminded me that it was she who had confessed, in open court, that she had eaten the palms of the victim's hands as a favourite morsel.

Jeanne, the old woman, though she showed the utmost coolness during the trial, did at length appeal for mercy, saying she had only been practising what had been taught her by her mother as the religion of her ancestors. "Why should I be put to death for observing our ancient customs?"

They were all found guilty of sorcery, torture, and murder, and condemned to death.

I asked the public prosecutor if he thought that the mother had been really ignorant of the fate reserved for her child. He replied, "We have not thought proper to press the inquiry too closely, for fear that we should discover that she partook of the feast; we required her testimony at the trial." After a pause, he added, "If full justice were done, there would be fifty on those benches instead of eight."

The execution took place on Saturday, February 13, 1864, the authorities wisely selecting a market-day, in order that the example might have the greater effect. The following particulars relating to it I received from the American Commissioner, Mr. Whiddon, who was present at this last scene. The prisoners, men and women, were all clothed in white robes and white headdresses, the garments reserved for parricides, and were drawn in carts to the place of execution, and all but one had a sullen look of resignation, and neither uttered a word nor a complaint, whilst the eighth, the young woman Roséide, kept up a continued conversation with the crowd around her.

Every effort was made by the Government to give

solemnity to the occasion; the troops and National Guard were summoned, for even the word "rescue" had been pronounced; the principal authorities attended; and thousands of spectators gathered round the spot. The prisoners, tied in pairs, were placed in a line, and faced by five soldiers to each pair; they fired with such inaccuracy, that only six fell wounded on the first discharge. It took these untrained men fully half an hour to complete their work, and the incidents were so painful, that the horror at the prisoners' crimes was almost turned into pity at witnessing their unnecessary sufferings. As usual, the prisoners behaved with great courage, even the women standing up unflinchingly before their executioners, and receiving their fire without quailing, and when at last they fell wounded, no cry was heard, but they were seen beckoning the soldiers to approach, and Roséide held the muzzle of a musket to her bosom and called on the man to fire.

The Vaudoux priests gave out, that although the deity would permit the execution, he would only do it to prove to his votaries his power by raising them all again from the dead. To prevent their bodies being carried away during the night (they had been buried near the place of execution), picquets of troops were placed round the spot; but in the morning three of the graves were found empty, and the bodies of the two priests and the priestess had disappeared. Superstitious fear had probably prevented the soldiers from staying where they had been posted, and as most

of the troops belonged to the sect of the Vaudoux, they probably connived at, rather than prevented, the exhumation.

Among those who attended the trial were the Spanish *chargé d'affaires*, Don Mariano Alvarez, and the Admiral, Mendez Nuñez, but they were so horrified by the sight of the child's remains on the judge's table and the disgusting evidence, that they had precipitately to leave the court. For years Congo beans were forbidden at our table.

Mr. Alvarez had a great liking for Haytian society, and lived much with certain families, and was very familiar with what was occurring in the country. I therefore asked him if he had any objection to give me some extracts from his official reports on the subject of the Vaudoux; he freely consented, and authorised me to publish the same in any way I pleased. I propose to insert some extracts in this chapter, as they confirm my own inquiries.

I have elsewhere remarked, but I may repeat it, that all prisoners condemned to death in Hayti, whether their crimes be political or otherwise, are shot, and as but two or three soldiers are told off to each prisoner, the consequence is that almost every execution that takes place resembles, instead of a solemn warning, a frightful and pitiable butchery.

President Geffrard behaved with great courage on this occasion, for though continued appeals were made for pardon, he remained firm. He was warned that such an execution would sap the attachment of the

masses, but he insisted that the condemned should be put to death. The example probably deterred others from openly committing such crimes, or from committing them near civilised centres; but when Geffrard quitted power, the sect again raised its head, and human sacrifices became common. We, however, heard little of these dreadful rites after the fall of Salnave. It can scarcely be said that civilisation is making progress; it is more probable that the authorities, absorbed in their petty intrigues to maintain power, did not care to inquire too closely into the disappearance of children.

I believe that the latter is the true explanation, and that instead of there having been any amelioration, the subject is only ignored, as one likely to give trouble. Instead of the country advancing in civilisation since the fall of Geffrard, it has retrograded. Civil wars and the imbecile Government of Nissage-Saget followed, and then again insurrections and civil war. It cannot be supposed that under the Government of General Domingue (1874 and 1875) the Vaudoux worship was discouraged, when it was openly stated and believed that one of his Ministers was a Papaloi, and head of the sect in the southern province. His brutal character and love of bloodshed would add to the suspicion. Under the next President (1876-78), Boisrond-Canal, a decree was issued forbidding any Vaudoux dances, as, under cover of these, other rites were carried on; but that decree has, I hear, been since repealed. Who is to think of the improvement of

the masses whilst struggling to maintain a precarious tenure of power?

Mr. Alvarez's account of the Claircine incident differs only in a few trifles from mine, but he had not the opportunities I had fully to investigate it. He says:—"I have previously reported on the subject of the fetish sect of Vaudoux, imported into Hayti by the slaves coming from the tribes on the western coast of Africa, and mentioning the crimes of these cannibals. To-day I enclose an extract from the official *Moniteur*, in which they have commenced to publish the process against four men and four women, who were shot near this capital on the 13th instant, convicted on their own confession of having eaten, in Bizoton, near Port-au-Prince, on the night of the 10th of December last, a young child of six years old, called Claircine, whose own aunt delivered her to these anthropophagi, and for having another child that they were feeding up to sacrifice and eat on the first days of January, in commemoration of the feast of the King of Africa. I assisted at the trial, and there appeared to have been no doubt that if the public prosecutor had desired to verify the case minutely, not only the witnesses, but even the mother of the victim, merited the same fate as the cannibals who were proved to have eaten her."

"President Geffrard, who is not afraid of the Vaudoux, although all the mountains and plains of the republic are full of these anthropophagi, with an energy which does him honour has caused the authorities to

throw down the altars, collect the drums, timbrels, and other ridiculous instruments which the Papalois use in their diabolical ceremonies, and in the district of Port-au-Prince has imprisoned many individuals of both sexes, who, on being interrogated, confessed what had been the fate of other children who had disappeared from their homes, and whose whereabouts were unknown."

As an instance of what occurred in the time of the Emperor Soulouque, I may again seek the testimony of Mr. Alvarez. In 1852, in consequence of a denunciation, Vil Lubin, governor of Port-au-Prince, arrested in the neighbourhood of that city about fifty individuals of both sexes. On examining the house in which human sacrifices were offered, packages of salted human flesh were found rolled up in leaves. These were thrown into the sea. During the examination of the prisoners, they declared that among the members of the best families of the city were many associates of the society of the Vaudoux, and that if the authorities desired to be satisfied of this assertion, let them be permitted to beat the little drum. They would present themselves even to the Emperor Soulouque himself, for among the Vaudoux worshippers no one under peril of his life would be wanting to his engagements. This case was allowed to drop.

In part proof of the above statement, Mr. Alvarez tells the following story:—One of the principal ladies of Port-au-Prince, rich, and of good family, was found late at night by General Vil Lubin stretched out at the door of the Catholic cathedral, wearing only the blue dress of the country negresses, without shoes, and

going through certain incantations called *wanga*. The governor accompanied this lady to her house. I knew the person to whom Mr. Alvarez alludes, and certainly she was one of the last women whom I should have suspected to have belonged to the Vaudoux.

I add some further observations of Mr. Alvarez, as they give the view held by a Catholic who represented a Catholic power:—"1862.—The delegate of his Holiness, Monseigneur Testard du Cocquer, has left, much disgusted with this country on account of the corruption of its customs, the dearth of religion among the sectaries of the Vaudoux, and the opposition and want of confidence with which he met in what is called in Hayti civilised society. In order that you may appreciate the accuracy of the incidents which pass here, a simple narration of some of a very recent epoch will be sufficient to show the powerful influence exercised on the inhabitants by the sect or the society of the Vaudoux, so spread throughout the country; this, with other causes inherent in the race, to which it would be tiresome to refer, prove that Hayti is, of all the republics in America, the most backward and the most pernicious in every point of view. From the same motive, I will not stop to speak of the origin of the fetish religion of the Vaudoux, or the worship of the serpent, imported from the tribes of the west coast of Africa by the slaves coming from that country, and I now pass to facts.

"In the month of August past (1862) there died, in the section called Belair, a negro, and his body was

taken to the Catholic church. The defunct belonged to the society of the Vaudoux. The men and women who accompanied the corpse began in the temple to scream like those possessed, and they commenced a scene such as might occur in Mid-Africa. The Abbé Pascal tried to re-establish order; his requests that they should respect the sacred precincts were useless; and the Abbé having refused, on account of this scandalous conduct, to accompany the body to the cemetery, the mourners fell upon him, seized him by the collar, and he had to fly to the sacristy, the interference of a foreigner alone saving him from further ill-treatment; but the tumult was so great that even the cross which is used at funerals was broken to pieces. Two women were taken out fainting, and the rabble marched off to the cemetery to bury the body; some arrests were made, but it is not known what punishment was inflicted, as the tribunals always leave unpunished the misdemeanours of the sectaries of the Vaudoux, as I am going to prove."

Mr. Alvarez then tells a horrible story, to which I shall refer farther on, as it belongs to a different section of this chapter.

"In February 1862 a negro was taken prisoner at Ouanaminthe for having assassinated his father. He was condemned to death by the tribunals; but he defended himself by saying that he had done no more than follow the orders of the serpent. In a few months he was set at liberty.

"It is not long since that in one of the streets of

Port-au-Prince was found at early morn the body of an unknown youth, of about twenty years of age, who had a weapon piercing his heart, and attached to that a thin hollow cane. It was supposed that he was assassinated in order to suck his blood. I might cite many other facts of which I have taken note, but what I have related appear sufficient for the object I have proposed to myself. The disappearance of children is frequent at certain epochs or seasons, and it is supposed that they are eaten by the cannibals of this society."

"In the secret ceremonies of the Vaudoux the drink in use is the blood of animals mixed with white rum, and the Papaloi, either from the immoderate use they make of alcohol mixed with blood, or from the handling of the poisons they use in their devil craft, die in general, although at an advanced age, covered with leprosy and incurable sores." I myself heard this stated whilst in Hayti, but I fear that a few exceptions have in this case made the rule.

"The people endure every possible oppression from the Papaloi, and if you ask them why they permit these vexations and the abuses which are committed against one another, they answer, 'We are indeed obliged, unhappy that we are: if we denounced our neighbours, certainly we should quickly die.' From which it may be inferred that they tolerate this conduct because they fear, and they fear because they know each other." This fear of one another is

noticed by all foreign residents in Hayti: it extends to the higher classes.

"The society of the Vaudoux, although now (1862, time of Geffrard) not so preponderant as in the time of Soulouque, who was one of its most believing followers, is very extended in all the republic, but there are few initiated into the secrets; they have their signs and symbols, and the society meddles in the politics of every Government which has existed in Hayti; they sometimes sustain them, as in certain cases they will act as a secret police, and the Vaudoux is looked on as one of the firmest props of the independence of the country."

I may notice that the Papaloi lead the most depraved lives. They are feared by all, and the fear inspired is so great, that few women among the lower orders would resist their advances. It may probably be looked upon as an honour. Unlimited drink is the next idea of happiness to a negro, and in this the offerings of their followers enable the priests to indulge to their hearts' content.

After studying the history of Hayti, one is not astonished that the fetish worship continues to flourish. The negroes imported from the west coast of Africa naturally brought their religion with them, and the worship of the serpent was one of its most distinguishing features. St. Méry speaks of the slaves arriving with a strange mixture of Mohammedanism and idolatry, to which they soon added a little Catholicism. Of Mohammedanism I have not myself

observed a trace. When they found the large, almost harmless, serpent in Hayti, they welcomed it as their god, and their fetish priests soon collected their followers around them. The French authorities tried to put down all meetings of the Vaudoux, partly because they looked upon them as political, but they did not succeed in their object. Many of the tribes in Africa are to this day cannibals, and their ancestors imported probably this taste into the French colony. It was difficult at that epoch to indulge in it, as all the children of the slaves were carefully registered, and their disappearance would have been immediately remarked; they may, however, have made use of the expedients for producing apparent death, to which I will presently refer.

Many persons appear to think that cannibalism is a later importation, and came with the Africans freed by our cruisers. If it were so, the seed fell on good ground, as the practice has spread to every district of the island. This opinion, however, can scarcely be correct, as Moreau de St. Méry, in naming the different tribes imported into Hayti, says:—"Never had any a disposition more hideous than the last (the Mondongues), whose depravity has reached the most execrable of excesses, that of eating their fellow-creatures. They bring also to Santo Domingo those butchers of human flesh (for in their country there are butcheries where they sell slaves as they would calves), and they are here, as in Africa, the horror of the other negroes."

This is a fitting introduction to the second part of this

chapter, in which I must refer to the great knowledge of herbs as poisons and antidotes shown by the Papaloi—which, though possibly exaggerated by some inquirers, is no doubt very great—and to cannibalism as not connected with religious rites.

In the following passages from Mr. Alvarez's notes, the first impression will be that there must be gross exaggeration. I thought so when I first read them, but the more my inquiries extended, the less I was inclined to doubt them. If not exactly true, it is the firm belief of all classes of society that they are so. During thirteen years, I had the best opportunities of hearing the opinion of Presidents, intelligent Secretaries of State, the principal members of the medical profession, lawyers, merchants, both foreign and native, as well as other residents, who had passed a lifetime in the republic, and the testimony was more or less unanimous as to the profound knowledge of the use of herbs possessed by the Papaloi.

"The human imagination cannot conceive anything more absurd, more barbarous, or more ridiculous than the acts committed by these ferocious sectaries, who are called Papaloi, Papa Boco, or other names as stupid as they are ill-sounding. They produce death—apparent, slow, or instantaneous—madness, paralysis, impotence, idiocy, *riches or poverty*, according to their will.

"It has happened on occasions that persons have retired to bed in the possession of their senses to awaken idiots, and remain in that state in spite of the aid of science, and in a few days to be completely

cured, when the causes which have produced the alienation have ceased. One individual struck another; the latter threatened him with impotency. At the end of fifteen days he was paralytic in all his members.* Following the counsels of a friend, he consulted a Papaloi, who had the coolness to confess that he had himself sold to his enemy the philter that had reduced him to that state, but for the sum of about £20 he would cure him. In fact, in a few days, by means of the remedies of the Papa, he was completely restored to health. And if it be doubted that these individuals, without even common sense, can understand so thoroughly the properties of herbs and their combinations, so as to be able to apply them to the injury of their fellow-creatures, I can only say that tradition is a great book, and that they receive these instructions as a sacred deposit from one generation to another, with the further advantage that in the hills and mountains of this island grow in abundance similar herbs to those which in Africa they employ in their incantations."

One case occurred in 1860, which was really so remarkable, and drew so much attention at the time,

* Burton, in his "Mission to the King of Dahomey," notices that the fetish priests are a kind of secret police for the despotic king, and exercise the same influence as in Hayti. They are supposed to be able to give health, wealth, length of days, and can compass the destruction of the applicant's foes, all for a fee. Bosman, in his account of the slave coast of Guinea, says that a negro who offered opposition to the priests was poisoned by them, and became speechless and paralysed in his limbs; and that if any woman betrays the secrets of the priests, she is burnt to death.

that there was no possibility of doubting it. It was supported by ample testimony. It was first told me by one of the most eminent medical men in Port-au-Prince, and confirmed by another, who had been an eye-witness of some of the details, and pledged his word as to its truth. I one day mentioned the story in the French Legation, as I was still somewhat sceptical, when, to my surprise, I found that it had been made the subject of an official report. Count Mégan, at that time *chargé d'affaires* (1867), offered to give me an extract relating to that crime, with permission to publish it in any book I might write.

The following are the particulars:—"The police having been informed that some shrieks had been heard at night in the cemetery of Port-au-Prince, went there in the morning, and found a grave disturbed, and near it an open coffin, and lying at the side the body of a lady that had been buried on the previous day. A dagger had been thrust into her bosom, and as blood covered her burial clothes, it was evident that she had been buried alive. Many arrests took place, but the affair was hushed up. It was currently reported, however, that the husband had a mistress, whom he neglected after marriage, and that this woman applied to a Mamanloi for aid. She received a sleeping potion which she contrived to give to the lady during her first confinement, and she was hurriedly buried, to be restored to consciousness in the graveyard at dead of night, with her rival armed with a dagger before her. Her shrieks drew the attention of some Jamaica

negroes, who ran towards the spot shouting, but whom superstition prevented from entering the cemetery. Their shouts, however, caused the murderers to fly, and leave the corpse where it was found next morning." This is the story as told me by my medical friends, and it was universally believed to be true, and in fact was true, and was never denied by those in authority with whom I conversed on the subject.

The accounts given by my French and Spanish colleagues were more complete, and probably more exact, as they were both in Port-au-Prince when this tragedy occurred. My previous French colleague (the Marquis de Forbin Janson) wrote, 2d August 1860 :—

"Deux jours après mon arrivé à Port-au-Prince, une femme endormie au moyen d'un narcotique et enterrée le soir au cimetière de la ville, fut exhumée dans la nuit ; elle respirait encore, on la tua, puis on enleva la cervelle, le cœur et la foi de la victime, dont on retrouva de débris près de la tombe : le lendemain matin une enquête fut ordonnée, on fit plusieurs arrestations, entre autres celle d'une prêtresse du Vaudoux (Mamanloi). Cette femme fit des révélations y, offrit même de livrer à la justice les auteurs du meurtre et de la profanation en les attirant à la prison par une puissance irresistible ou ballant de son tambour d'une manière particulière. La justice et la police, déjà effrayées du nombre et de l'importance des personnes compromises, reculèrent devant cette nouvelle épreuve. On ordonna aux journaux de se taire et l'affaire fut étouffée. On croit que la principale mobile du crime

fut un sentiment de vengeance, mais on tient pour certain que les parties mutilées ont été destinées à la célébration de quelque mystère Vaudoux du fétichisme africain encore pratiqué, quoiqu'on dise, par la grande majorité des Haïtiens."

I think this case of so much importance, that, at the risk of repetition, I will give the report made by Mr. Alvarez :—

"In July of 1860 there was committed in Port-au-Prince a horrible, almost an incredible crime. A young woman died suddenly, and was buried on the following day. At night several individuals of both sexes went to the cemetery, dug up the coffin, and opened it. What they actually did is not known, but what is positive is that the unburied began to shriek and shout for help. The guard near the cemetery, composed of Jamaicans, Louisianians, and Creoles, approached, and saw the woman sitting in the coffin, and various persons—a torch in one hand and a dagger in the other—vociferating words they could not understand. The Creole soldiers of the country fled dismayed, but the Louisianians, as soon as they had overcome the first feeling of terror, ran to the succour of the unburied; already it was too late, they found her dead from the stroke of a dagger, and her heart and lungs torn from her bosom. The assassins escaped, but subsequently some prisoners were made. In a few days the prisoners were at liberty; and it is related that the lungs and the heart had been cooked and eaten in one of the country-houses in Bizoton."

My friend, Auguste Elie, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, deplored but could not deny the truth of this story; and having no Vaudoux prejudices himself, having been born and bred in France, conversed freely on the subject, and told us many particulars that had come to his knowledge.

Of the truth of the following story I had the testimony of ocular witnesses. A lady hearing that a child near her house was ill, went down to see it. She found it lying stupefied in the mother's lap. Her suspicions were aroused, and she sharply questioned the mother as to what had been done to the child. Her answers were so unsatisfactory, yet mournful, that the lady determined to keep a watch on the case. She called in the evening, and was told the child was dead. She insisted on seeing the corpse, and found that though the heart was still and the pulse had ceased to beat, yet that the child did not look dead, and made the remark to the bystanders, but they answered, "Yes, it is dead." She told the mother she was not satisfied, and that she would return in the morning with her husband, and that in the meantime the body must not be buried. Next day she and her husband walked down to the house, and asked to see the body. The mother replied that the neighbours having insisted, she had allowed them to bury her child, and pointed out the grave. The French gentleman called to some of his labourers, and had the grave opened. There they found the coffin, but the child's body was absent. Arrests were made, but nothing

came of it. It is supposed that it was by this means that the Papalois were enabled to obtain victims during the French colonial period.

It is useless to multiply instances of these horrors ; but that they are practised all over the island more or less under every government that has existed in Hayti is certain.

You often hear the expression used in Hayti, "*Li gagné chagrin*," which, though referring occasionally to a known cause, often applies to a sort of anæmia of the mind, when a person appears to care for nothing, or for what becomes of him. I have inquired as to what had been done to the man, and the answer, if in company, was, "We don't know ;" if you asked a person privately, he would probably reply that somebody had given him *wanga*, a generic word for poisons, philters, and charms.

The remark I made when I first began to inquire into this subject may naturally be repeated by others. If the majority of Haytians be tainted by the Vaudoux, who is it that denounces these horrible crimes, and how could a remedy be found ? The answer is, that there are in Hayti, as I have before noticed, two sects of Vaudoux worshippers ; one, perhaps the least numerous, that indulges in human sacrifices, the other that holds such practices in horror, and is content with the blood of the white goat and the white cock. At one time the police took no notice of the latter, and permitted them to carry on their ceremonies in Port-au-Prince in a large courtyard adjoining a house in

which a friend of mine lived. To preserve as much secrecy as possible, the courtyard was hung round with cloth hangings, and watchmen placed to keep prying eyes at a distance; but my friend, though not curious, occasionally got a glimpse of the proceedings. They were much as those described by Moreau de St. Méry. In the country districts the Catholic priests say this sect calls themselves, "Les Mystères," and that they mingle Christian and Vaudoux ceremonies in a singular manner. The name probably refers to the rites they practise. I have been assured by many gentlemen connected with the Haytian police, that if the followers of this sect did not secretly denounce to them the crimes committed by the others, it would be almost impossible for them to keep the assassin sect in check. It is probable that, acting with these comparatively harmless savages, the Haytian Government might be able to do much, if ever it seriously desires to put an end to the shedding of human blood.

I have been told that, besides the goat and cock, the Vaudoux occasionally sacrifice a lamb; this idea they have probably taken from the Catholic Church—the paschal lamb; it is carefully washed, combed, and ornamented before being sacrificed.

All that I have hitherto related refers more or less to human sacrifices as connected with religion; but there is another phase—cannibalism as practised for the sake of the food which the slaughtering of human beings affords to a vile section of the community.

In Mr. Consul Hutchinson's paper on the traits of

African tribes, published in the "Transactions of the Ethnological Society," New Series, vol. i. p. 338, he states: "I have during the last year seen it stated in a Sierra Leone newspaper, on the authority of Mr. Priddy, a missionary of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection in that colony, not that *he had heard of*, but *that he had seen* hampers of dried human flesh carried about on men's backs, to be sold for eating purposes, in the progress of a recent civil war between the Soosoo and Tisney tribes." * This is very similar to what was seen by a lady of my acquaintance in Hayti.

A lady, the widow of a missionary, was forced to stay in the interior of Hayti (north-east of Gonaives), after the death of her husband, on account of the civil war in the surrounding districts in the years 1868 and 1869, and she related some horrible incidents which were of her own knowledge. She declared that human sacrifices were constant, that human flesh was openly sold in the market. One would willingly have believed in exaggeration; but similar incidents, which occurred during the reign of Soulouque, related to me by one so intelligent and truthful as Auguste Elie, compelled me to accept as veritable the horrible stories she told in full detail.

*! * Barbot states that the common food of the natives of the kingdom of Ansiko (west coast of Africa) is man's flesh, inasmuch that their markets are provided with it, as ours in Europe with beef and mutton. All prisoners of war, unless they can sell them alive to greater advantage, they fatten for slaughter, and at last sell them to butchers to supply the markets, and roast them on spits, as we do other meat (date 1700).—Churchill's Collection, vol. v. p. 479. Barbot also notices that the people of Jagos, Congo, and Angola were also cannibals.

Monsieur Desjardins, an eminent French merchant in Port-au-Prince, remarked to me that, walking near Cap Haïtien, he met a party of soldiers beating a man with their clubs ; he inquired the reason, and they told their prisoner to open his basket, and there he saw the body of a child cut up into regular joints.

Auguste Elie told me he knew the following incident as a fact, which occurred during the reign of Soulouque. A man with whom he was acquainted was visiting in the plains with his wife, when she complained of feeling unwell, and they mounted their horses to return to town. At sunset, a violent storm coming on, they determined to halt at a cottage they saw near. They entered, and found two men and a woman there ; his wife becoming worse, he determined to seek help, but was a long time before he could find any one to accompany him. On his return to the house, he inquired for his wife, and the people said that, becoming uneasy at his long absence, she had followed him. He rode away without saying a word, and calling at the next police station, induced the men to follow him ; they surrounded the cottage, arrested the three inmates, and on searching the premises, found the body of the woman, already dismembered, in a cask in an outhouse. A thick layer of salt had been thrown over the remains. The only punishment these assassins received was that administered by the clubs of the police whilst conducting them to prison.

The Haytians occasionally publish accounts of these crimes. I read the following in one of their local

papers. At Jacmel, on the southern coast, an old woman, a midwife, was lying on her death-bed surrounded by her neighbours, and they were somewhat surprised at her long struggles and loud groaning. At last she said, "I cannot die in peace; put aside the bed and dig underneath;" and on doing so, great was their astonishment to come on numerous small skeletons, which the old fiend acknowledged were the remains of children she had eaten. After this confession they say she died quietly. One cannot but be reminded of the horrible picture in the Wiertz Gallery in Brussels of the woman cutting up and cooking the infant. It must have been painted under the influence of nightmare.

That the practice of midwives slaying children for the purpose of eating them is an old one in Hayti is proved by the following story, related by Moreau de St. Méry:—

"On a eu à Saint Domingue (Haïti) des preuves que les Mondongues y avait gardé leur odieuse inclination, notamment en 1786, dans une negresse accouchée et hospitalière sur une habitation aux environs de Jérémie. Le propriétaire ayant remarqué que la plupart des negrillons périssait dans les huit premiers jours de leur naissance, fit épier la matrone; on l'a surpris mangeant un de ces enfans récemment inhumé, et elle avoua qu'elle les faisait périr dans ce dessin."

As late as 1878, the last year of which I propose to treat, two women were arrested in a hut near Port-au-Prince. They were caught in the act of eating the flesh of a child raw. On further examination it was found that all the blood had been sucked from the body,

P.

and that part of the flesh had been salted for later use. In 1869 the police arrested, in that beautiful valley to which I have referred in my first chapter, about a dozen cannibals, and brought them bound to La Coupe. They had been denounced by the opposing sectaries of the Vaudoux. From the time they were taken from their houses they were beaten in the most unmerciful manner, and when thrown into prison they were tortured by the thumbscrew and by tightened cords round their foreheads, and under the influence of these they made some fearful avowals, in which, however, little confidence could be placed. A French priest, with whom I was on intimate terms, hearing of their arrest, had the curiosity to go and see them. At first they would not converse with him, but when they found him protesting against the inhumanity with which they had been treated, and threatening the jailer that he would officially report him should such conduct continue, they placed more confidence in him. He visited them nearly every day, and had many conversations with them in private. They confessed to him that their avowals under torture were true; and when the priest, horrified by the details, said to a mother, "How could you eat the flesh of your own children?" she answered coolly, "And who had a better right,—*est-ce que ce n'est pas moi qui les ai fait?*" *

* Barbot, in his account of the Ansiko kingdom, says: "That which is most inhuman is, that the father makes no difficulty to eat the son, nor the son the father, nor one brother the other; and whosoever dies, be the disease ever so contagious, yet they eat the flesh immediately as a choice dish."—Barbot, in Churchill's Collection, vol. v. p. 479.

One of these prisoners died under the torture of the cord tightened round his forehead.

Though the Haytians believe in the mythical "*loup garou*," they have also the fullest faith in his counterpart among their fellow-countrymen. It is the *loup garou* who is employed by the Papaloi to secure a child for sacrifice in case the neighbourhood does not furnish a suitable subject; and they are supposed to hang about lonely houses at night to carry off the children. I have often heard my young Haytian servants rush into my country-house laughingly saying that they had seen a *loup garou*.—their laugh, however, tinged with a sort of dread. They have often said that these human monsters prowl about the house at night, and that nothing but the presence of my dogs kept them in respect. I have occasionally seen the object of their fear in an ill-looking negro hanging about the gate, but the sight of my dogs was enough to induce him to move on. The negroes have fortunately an almost superstitious terror of dogs.

There is no doubt that these *loup garous* do carry off many children, not only for the priests, but for cannibals. They generally look only for native children, and I have only heard of one instance in which they attempted to carry off a white girl. She was snatched from the arms of her nurse, whilst walking on the Champs de Mars, by a huge negro, who ran off with her towards the woods, but being pursued by two mounted gentlemen who accidentally witnessed the occurrence, he dropped the child to save himself.

One of my Haytian friends who had studied botany informed me that the number of poisonous plants to be found on the island is very great, and that it was absolutely certain that the Papalois made use of them in their practices. I believe in some French botanical works lists of these plants have been published, and their medical value would appear to merit further study. It is not more remarkable that the Papalois should know the properties of the plants in Hayti than that the Indians of Peru and Bolivia should have discovered the properties of the cinchona bark and the coca-leaf.

If it be remembered that the republic of Hayti is not a God-forsaken region in Central Africa, but an island surrounded by civilised communities; that it possesses a Government modelled on that of France, with President, Senate, and House of Representatives; with Secretaries of State, prefects, judges, and all the paraphernalia of courts of justice and of police; with a press more or less free; and, let me add, an archbishop, bishops, and clergy, nearly all Frenchmen,—it appears incredible that sorcery, poisonings for a fee by recognised poisoners, and cannibalism, should continue to pervade the island. The truth is, that except during one year of Geffrard's Presidency, no Government has ever cared resolutely to grapple with the evil. If they have not encouraged it, they have ignored it, in order not to lose the favour of the masses.