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1724 Frankford Road,
Phila. Sept 8th. 1875.

My Dear Mr. Bigelow-

I now enclose you my notes on your collection of Haytian proverbs. Whether some of them are not repetitions of facts & remarks on the same subject, which I sent you a year or so ago, I cannot remember. If they are, my excuse must be that I kept no copy of the former.

I think your book, even if it shall not be popular, will have a certain special value to a rather large class of inquirers, that is, those among us who are looking into the character of our newly made citizens. The analogues which you have brought forward show much research, and your remarks in application of the proverbs, furnish everything in this way that is needed. More Haytian facts & incidents might add value to the book, & these I understand

you intend to supply before its publication.

I have kept you waiting longer than I intended, but since your letter came to hand I have been interrupted by carpenter work about the house, and other necessary business - besides I have not been well.

My head often troubles me, when occupied with work of this kind, & it is particularly rebellious when I am making researches. - But for this probably my notes would have been more extended.

Short as they are, I could not have gotten them together unless I had had Miss Chamberlain to look from volume to volume, & examine my manuscript note books, of which she keeps the run.

My chief occupation (in reply to your question) has been for the last two years, the getting together of notes for a connected account of the early emigration of the poor to America, & especially those called "Redemptioners."

I think the importation of these bought

servants, although the laws regulating their condition, - were terribly, essentially that of slavery - were terribly severe, prevented Pennsylvania, New York & New Jersey from becoming permanently slave states. On the other hand, it prevented the population from reaching that condition of homogeneity, which was such a valuable element of advancement in New England, & especially in New Eng^l Massachusetts. While Massachusetts raised her own laborers, who were at once a part of her society, other states imported them and had to work in a foreign element. It is curious also to see from the advertisements of runaway school-masters, to what an extent the education of the children of the middle states, for a century & a half, was in the hands of a foreign & servile class, while New England raised her own school-masters as well as laborers.

I have now pretty much gotten in my materials, but I doubt if my head will ever permit me to work

them up. If not, & the subject is good
for anything, somebody else will one day
or another take it in hand, for the ma-
terials are in good condition.

If I can help you any farther
in regard to your book, do not hesi-
tate to call on me.

Very sincerely yours,

B. P. Blood

Haitian Proverbs.

Harpers Magazine - June, 1875.

Page 130 - 1st Column.

Molasses is never imported. Syrup, the result of the first process of sugar making, largely supplies the place of sugar, and entirely of molasses. The imports of sugar are not heavy and they are entirely confined to loaf sugar for the better classes.

Page 131 - 1st column.

It has always been a disputed point whether Toussaint really did burn the Cape, on the arrival of Le Clerc's expedition. He persistently denied it, but Madiou & most of the Haitian historians believe that it was burnt by his orders, and that he was justified in giving them. Old Mr. Sassy of Cape Haytien, who had been an employe under Toussaint, and who quoted this proverb to me in 1846, with the addition, of "as Toussaint said when ^{he} burnt the Cape" was evidently of this opinion.

1st & 2nd Columns.

I presume you have the apologue as

written down by Mr. Laforesterie, & therefore it ought to be in good Creole; but I know nothing about "abla za." In the next line "outi-le" should be "outi-li", "Tournin" should be "tourne."

2nd column, below middle.

"L is frequently, &c. "O" is certainly pronounced "zo" in Creole; but generally the z takes the place of the plural article, or rather is a corrupt pronunciation of it; as "z'amie" for "les amie", & "z'œufs" for "les œufs."

Page 132 - 1st column - bottom.

Proverb 1st. "Quete" should be "quette", "Quettez-donc"

"See here?" is a very common expression with the Haytiens when they would point out something to you.

Pravette should be Ravet.

3rd. This proverb presents the idea of a trial in court, & the true translation is, "The cockroach never gains its cause when the fowl is judge." Hens feed on cockroaches in the West Indies, to such an extent as to make the yolks of their eggs pale, thin, & at times, more or less bitter,

just as our hens' eggs are affected in the "locust year" by a similar course of feeding). This is the type slave proverb of the West Indies, because it expresses more strongly than any other, the relation of weakness & dependence on one side, & force & tyranny on the other, which existed between the ^{slaves} & their masters. It is the commonest negro proverb in Martinique. When in 1843, the Chamber of Deputies was discussing the question of slavery in the colonies, & proposed a plan by which a slave could redeem himself by an appeal to the ^{colonial} magistrates, Rouvellat de Cussac, ^{a Martinique lawyer} told the Deputies that in this case, the slaves would repeat to them "leur proverbe le plus habituel, 'Bavet pas teni raison devant poule'." It has always been in use in Trinidad, which was both a Spanish & a French island, before it

"Cockroach eber so drunk, him no walk past fowl yard,"— "When cockroach make dance, him no as fowl",

of the comparative mildness of slavery there, & because their multiplied contact with the whites

of the south, in consequence of the latter being the most numerous, wore away negro peculiarities & prevented the growth & adoption of special proverbs.

4th. I should say, "Ne que couteau qui con-
mait" &c.

9th. - Mr. Hogarth, an intelligent Haytian citizen, who came to Port-au-Prince from Maryland when a boy, once told me that this proverb was to be translated, "The sinner is selfish", or mean, as you have it; - that is, a man who has a position is selfish & won't make room for one who has none.

^{Is in Delaney, vol 2nd. p. 743.}
10th. - The country people about Cape Haytien, the day after the earthquake, on the 7th of May, 1842, which destroyed it, gave a slightly different version of this proverb, when they rushed into the town for plunder, crying "Bon dieu bai nous tous ca". (the good God has given us all this) "hier pour ous, joucti pour nous".

12th. - The Haytian version of this proverb is, "Cus

pas capable manger gumbó avec une doight."
 Your observations are entirely correct so far as they go, but it is worth while to remark perhaps, that this is strictly a practical slave proverb. This preparation of gumbó was distributed to the slaves at their meals in a *coui* (pronounced *que*) or half a calabash, & the part which they could not drink, they were expected to take out with their fingers, & they made a sort of spoon of the first two fingers & thumb. Haytian women in towns to this day, prepare ^{for} themselves a plate of food, & instead of drawing up to a table, they sit down in the doorway & eat the contents of their plate in this manner.

13th. The Haytian version differs from the Trinidad version which you have given. It runs thus, "*Ous pas capable trapper pices avec une doight.*" The "*sa*" in the Trinidad version, I do not understand.

20th. "*Pinga*", in Hayti, would be pronounced "*prin gade*" (*preng-garde*.) The insult to the mother referred to in this proverb, re-

lates, among the Haytiens, strictly to the source of life in a woman. A pert boy one day at Cape Haytien, as he passed a man whom he did not like, looked up at him & said, "Maman à ous" and ran on. The man was bitterly offended & I enquired of the boy's older brother what it all meant. He said more was intended by the phrase than was spoken, & gave me the full sentence, containing the Haytian Creole word for uterus. This led me to suspect that the proverb connects with some tradition of the Phallic worship.

27th. I know nothing of the words épié, or laché in this proverb, it being ⁱⁿ Trinidad Creole. The Haytiens would say, "Badinez bien avec macaque mais prin gade manier queue à li."

28th. The Trinidad version of this proverb is similar to the Martinique & Haytian versions. In Jamaica an addition has been made to it, & it runs thus, "If any one hate you, him gib you basket fe carry water, but if

you eleber, you put plantain leaf in him." (17)

36th - "Giramon" is giramou."

42nd. This was a local saying among the negroes of Cap François in the time of the French; & was a bit of railery on their part. St. Mery says (vol 1 p. 342) "For a long time there has been a cracked bell here, the sepulchral sound of which is quite in harmony with the interments which it announces. The negroes pretend that it accords with, & makes the base of the other church bell, there being a pair of them, & that they say "Bon Blanc" &c. The single bell at the Church of Cape Haytien in 1843-6, was still called "Bon Blanc".

45th. - This proverb is not of African origin, nor is it current in Hayti, the present race knowing nothing of Indians, who had disappeared long before their advent. The people of Martinique, which the French settled before they settled Hayti, had Indian as well as negro slaves, & this proverb originated among the white people there, & applies to the dif-

fering dispositions of the two kinds of slaves.
Du Tertre, (*Histoire des Antilles* - vol. 2, p. 490) gives it
thus, "Regarder un sauvage de travers, c'est le
battre; le battre, c'est le tuer; battre un nègre,
c'est le nourrir".

47th. This slave proverb in Hayti was a simple
protest against being required to do too much,
& such is its present use there. The version,
as I remember it, runs thus, "Chien dit li
gagné quatre pieds, mais li pas capable
couri quatre chemins à la fois." - Schoelcher
gives the Martinique version as, "Chien gagné
quatre pattes, mais le pas capable prend quatre
chemins. Pas ca marche" is not Haytian
Creole.

48th. I should say "misère fait" &c, omitting
the ca, as not Haytian Creole. There is a
tradition that one of the four small quadru-
peds of Hayti was a monkey, but it be-
came extinct long before the arrival of the
negro, & all the monkey negro proverbs origi-
nated elsewhere than in Hayti.

49th. - The same remark applies to the "ca" in this proverb. I should say "comme la pli". I never heard this proverb, of which you have given the Trinidad version, in Hayti.

52nd. In Hayti, it is "quidi", quidi." re.

54th. Schelcher, in his version of this Martinique proverb, spells "fièvre", "fièvre". It is not Haytian Creole, & probably the proverb is not Haytian.

61st. This proverb from Thomas is badly printed. He gives it thus, "Li gandoli te' bon viane li pas se' ca driver". I do not know the meaning of the Trinidad word driver.

62nd. This proverb seems ill-constructed, but I do not know how to correct it, & never before saw it.

65th. "Cail" in Hayti would be "caye".

14th. This proverb included in Schoelcher's Martinique list. I never heard in Hayti, nor did I ever hear of "Lamba" as a musician, sorcerer, priest & improvisitor. Lombi simply means a ghost among the negroes of Hayti. It is an African word, used in the same sense in Antigua, & perhaps some other of the British islands. St. Méry, when he treats of negro superstitions, speaks of "Lombi", but says nothing of Lamba. Redpath gives among his Haytian proverbs, (no. 2, in his second hundred) "Before the drum you know the singer or dancer." This is the nearest approach, so far as I know, to the use of No. 14 in Hayti.

31st. This proverb most likely originated with the buccaneers, who knew the habits of the wild hog, the hunting of which had mostly ceased before the slaves became numerous in Hayti. It is still often used there, in the manner you describe, l'arbre being substituted for bois.

The remainder of the proverbs, with the

exception of the 75th, 82th, 83th & 83rd, ^{which is English} are, I think, new to me, & they do not appear to be in Haytian Creole. The 84th I do not understand.

Perhaps the fact is of little practical importance, as your book will have few readers who have any intimate acquaintance with Hayti, but those who have such acquaintance, will not feel quite satisfied to find proverbs ascribed to Haytians which are not in their dialect of Creole & not in general use there. They would rather see those for instance, in Schelcher's collection, described as most in use in Martinique & Guadeloupe, & those in Thomas' collection, set down as proverbs chiefly current in Trinidad. The plan would at least show the various Creole dialects of the three different once French colonies, & which is of some importance, would be in accordance with the facts of the case.

It has occurred to me since I began to make these notes, that it might not be amiss to notice two or three proverbial sayings which have sprung up in Hayti, since the

days of slavery. For example, the better class of Haytiens nowadays like to call themselves les indigènes, & it is a proverbial saying among them, that "Indigène jamais gene." It means that the Haytiens of the present day dont like to give themselves much trouble, & its currency is an admission on their part, that this is one of their characteristics.

Again, a Haytian laborer when he has agreed to do a piece of work which he afterwards concludes he wout do, says "Moi signé nom à moi, moi pas signé piede à moi." (I have signed my name but not my feet.) The saying originated in this wise. The Code Rural of Boyer was published in 1826. Its regulations were very stringent. The laborers were obliged to present themselves for work at a fixed hour. They could not leave the plantation to which they were assigned but at certain times, & then only with a written pass. They could only dance on Sundays, & the privileges which they had enjoyed under Pétion

were abridged in various ways. They felt that it was in some degree a return to the ancien régime, or at least to the systems of Toussaint & Christophe, which they held in almost equal abhorrence. These conditions were arranged by contract to be signed both by planters & laborers. It was on the occasion of signing, that a laborer uttered the mot, which has since passed into a proverb. Of course the signing was done for the laborer, & the phrase literally was, "You have signed my name but you have not signed my feet". That is, notwithstanding all this writing, it can't hinder me from going where I please; nor did it, for the Code was an utter failure in execution. ^{Such} facts & incidents like this will add to the interest of the book.