

art. They are not, certainly, amongst the exceptions to Madame de Stael's celebrated axiom, that "*hors de Paris, tout le monde parle de son voisin, ou de sa voisine,*" for in this respect Mexico is most thoroughly a "Petite ville." But in return, they have no affectation or hauteur, they are kind and unpretending in the highest degree, and do the honours of their houses with perfect ease and propriety. They possess considerable natural talents; and although in 1824 they undoubtedly were a little fonder of smoking, and a little less attentive to personal appearance at home, than would be thought engaging in London or Paris,—before I left the country in 1827, a wonderful change had taken place. Cigars were banished from all places of public resort, and, even in private, were falling gradually into disuse; while, with regard to dress, European fashions had entirely taken the place of those glaring colours, by which but too many of the prettiest women were disfigured on the first opening of our intercourse with New Spain. Nor can I omit stating, that, from the first, they showed a delicacy of feeling, and tact, with regard to Mrs. Ward, for which she has always felt grateful, by abstaining from smoking whenever she was present, (and that not only in her house, but in their own,) lest it should prove in any way offensive to her English ideas of politeness, or decorum.—In good society the most marked respect is always shown to the female sex, and all the obsequiousness of old Spa-

nish gallantry kept up, although intermingled, at times, with a good deal of that freedom of speech, which, under the name of "franqueza," has so much changed the tone of society in the Peninsula. It must be recollected, however, that this licence, however repugnant to the feelings of Northern nations, prevails more or less throughout the whole of the South of Europe; and that in Italy, as well as in Spain and Portugal, allusions are constantly made to subjects, which would be proscribed amongst ourselves, without any idea of their inspiring that disgust, with which they must always be listened to by a really delicate mind. It is not just, therefore, to blame the Mexicans for doing that of which they had no reason until lately to suspect the impropriety. We ought rather to hope that they may find amongst their new friends better models to follow; in which case, I have little doubt, from the improvements which I have myself witnessed, that in a very few years, a complete reform will be effected.

As to morality, it is a subject upon which it is no business of mine to touch. There is, perhaps, not less vice in Mexico, but there is certainly not more than in many other countries which bear a fair character in the world; and there are many points upon which, as wives and mothers, the ladies of New Spain give an excellent example. I know few countries where, in as far as the means are within their reach, greater pains are taken with the rising



generation. The children of almost every respectable family are learning music, French, and drawing; and although there is a sad want of masters, such good desires cannot fail, in a little time, to be productive of a happy effect.

This anxiety on the part of the parents to secure to their offspring advantages, which have, in many instances, been denied to themselves, is a part of that revolution which the last few years have wrought in the feelings and wishes of the Creole race.

After three centuries of implicit obedience, and uninterrupted mortifications, they have sought, in an entire change of system, that relief, which might have been afforded by a simple modification of the old institutions, had such a concession been compatible with the principles upon which the Colonial policy of Spain was founded during the days of her power.

It is difficult to conceive any country less prepared than Mexico was in 1824 for the transition from despotism to democracy. The principles upon which the present Government is formed, were at first neither duly appreciated, nor generally understood; yet from the mere force of circumstances they have taken root, and have already struck too deeply into the soil to be easily shaken.

Their hold upon the country is founded neither in a general diffusion of knowledge, nor in what might be termed theoretical patriotism; it rests

upon a still surer basis, the passions and interests of the most influential classes of the inhabitants.

To the mass of the people all forms of government are indifferent, and many do not yet know under which they live; but amongst those who alone possess a political character, the resident landholders, the merchants, the military, the lawyers, and the parochial clergy, considerations of local and personal advantage have created a decided feeling in favour of the Federal system.

In each State, a field is opened by it to every citizen, upon which few think themselves too obscure to venture, although they might not have aspired to political honours beyond the limits of their own provinces. In a small circle every thing is a source of distinction; and thus the multiplicity of petty offices created by the State Legislatures, though disadvantageous in one sense, by increasing the expences of the country, is of use in another, by bringing home to all classes the advantages of a change, which places employment, and a sort of rank in the world, within the reach of the humblest individual.

It was natural that, in a country where the natives had been excluded for three centuries from any share in the management of their own affairs, these considerations should have great weight; but I confess that I was not prepared to see *State* interests, and *State* feelings become so universally predominant as they have done during the last two years.

Another advantage with which the subdivision of



authority has been attended, is the neutralization of rival interests. The Revolution left behind a number of turbulent yet influential officers, who, under any central form of government, must have proved dangerous candidates for power, but who have now found in their respective States that employment which the Supreme Government could not have given to all. Many have become, under these circumstances, useful and efficient servants to the public, whose restless spirits, if not provided with a proper vent, would have involved them in enterprises fatal to the tranquillity of their fellow-citizens.

No inference can be drawn as to the feelings of the country in general, with regard to the present institutions, by those displayed in the Capital, or its vicinity; where a party spirit of the most violent kind has been gradually engendered, which, in a very recent instance, has led to disturbances of a most alarming nature.

With regard to the origin of these disturbances, it is difficult for me to enter into any details without overstepping those limits, within which it is my duty to confine myself. As it is, however, upon their tendency to affect the tranquillity of the country that its prospects in every way depend, I may, I hope, venture to lay before my readers a few remarks, without being thought to trespass upon forbidden ground.

The two parties which, under the denomination of Escoceses and Yorkinos, have been recently arrayed

against each other, are both Mexican in their origin, and entirely unconnected with Spain. The first is said to be composed of many of the largest proprietors of the country, (particularly those who possessed titles of nobility before the Revolution,) with a number of officers of distinction, and individuals of different professions, connected together by the bonds of a masonic society, supposed to be of Scotch origin, from whence their name of "Escoceses" is derived.

The reputed members of this association, (which is very ancient,) are mostly men of moderate principles, and sincere advocates of the cause of Independence. Many of them, however, belonged to the Creole army, and consequently opposed the leaders of the first insurrection, while others held situations under the Spanish Government upon the re-establishment of the Constitution in 1820, and were sent as Deputies to the Cortes of Spain before the declaration of Independence by Iturbide in 1821. It is upon these grounds that they are accused by their adversaries, the Yorkinos, of "Bourbonism," that is, of an attachment to the Mother-country sufficiently strong to induce them to wish for a Prince of the Royal blood of Spain as Constitutional king of Mexico. In this project there would have been no impropriety before the adoption of the present Constitution. I do not myself believe, however, that it extended, even then, beyond a very limited number of individuals; and I am convinced that it does not



exist as the object of a party in Mexico at the present day.

The Escoceses may more properly be assimilated to the "Federalists" of the United States, who, on the establishment of the Constitution in 1787, thought the Government founded upon it too weak, and were consequently reproached by their opponents, the "Democrats," with aristocratical notions, and a desire to convert the Republic into a monarchy. Yet General Washington was a Federalist, as was his successor, Mr. Adams, the father of the present President. In like manner, in Mexico, many of the most moderate and best-intentioned men in the country may be found amongst the Escoceses, upon whose interest General Bravo, (whose mild yet unvarying patriotism I have had occasion to dwell upon in the history of the Revolution,) came forward as a candidate for the Presidency in 1824. He was defeated by the superior influence of General Victoria; but next to Victoria's name, none stood so high as that of Bravo, and none had deserved more of his countrymen.

Up to 1825, the Yorkinos did not exist as a party. In the summer of that year, a number of individuals, not connected with the Escoceses, but not violently opposed to them before, were united as a rival sect, denominated "Yorkinos," because they derive their origin from the Masonic Lodge of New York, which transmitted, through Mr. Poinsett, the American Minister, the diplomas and insignia requisite for

the establishment of a branch lodge in the capital of New Spain. Without any disparagement to its members, of whom many are both useful and distinguished men, I may say that the largest proportion of the *Affiliés* of this society consisted of the *novi homines* of the Revolution. They are the ultra Federalists, or democrats of Mexico, and possess the most violent hostility to Spain, and the Spanish residents; whom the Escoceses have uniformly protected, both as conceiving them to have lost the power of injuring the country, and because, from the large amount of the capital still remaining in their hands, they think that their banishment must diminish the resources, and retard the progress of the Republic.

Having pointed out the characteristics of the two parties, it is neither my wish, nor my intention, to animadvert upon the manner in which the contest between them has been carried on. In a country just emerging from a great political crisis, there must ever be a bitterness of feeling on political questions, which older nations can hardly comprehend; although, a century ago, our own annals might have furnished a counterpart to its violence. In Mexico this feeling has been carried very far indeed. The Yorkinos, as new men, struggling to dispossess their adversaries of that power, which is the real object of both, were undoubtedly the assailants; but acrimony has not been wanting on the other side, and the personalities in which, for two years, the newspapers of the two parties have



indulged, prove but too clearly, that, under similar circumstances, nature is always the same; while liberty, in her infancy, only tends to develope more rapidly those passions, which appear, in every part of the world, to be most deeply implanted in the human breast.

The Yorkinos have made up by numbers for what they wanted originally in individual influence. Their plans have been prosecuted with great activity, and as the desperate appeal to the country, to which their opponents have just been driven, appears to have failed entirely, if they use their victory with forbearance, the success of their candidate, (General Guerrero,) at the approaching election for the Presidency, seems to be certain. But, upon forbearance, at the present crisis, every thing depends; for of General Bravo's devotion to the cause of his country but one opinion is entertained throughout New Spain. Should there be any attempt, therefore, to punish too severely a step, which all must deplore, although none can judge of its causes without a knowledge of the circumstances by which the passions, on both sides, have been excited, and the transition from political to personal hostility effected,—blood will be found to lead to blood, and a long series of calamities may still cloud the prospects of the Republic.

I trust, however, that these calamities will be averted. There are in Mexico a number of excellent men unconnected with either of the parties,

whose animosity has threatened the country with a civil war. At the head of these is General Victoria, in whose moderation, and thoroughly honourable intentions, the most implicit confidence may be placed. To him, and to his friends, I look for the preservation of tranquillity. Of its necessity he is thoroughly convinced; and his influence, if properly exerted, will, I think, be found sufficient to ensure it.

Short as the recent struggle has been, it has already done incalculable mischief, and destroyed the fair reputation which Mexico was beginning to acquire in Europe, by the fidelity with which her engagements with foreign capitalists were at first met. Dissensions, bordering upon civil war, in whatever causes they may originate, must tend to diminish the commercial demand, and with it the general resources of the country. The customs may be regarded as the basis of the whole revenue of Mexico; not only as forming in themselves its most important branch, but as facilitating the collection of all the other branches, by giving to the Executive that command of money, without which, in a new country, no system of administration can be organized, and no subordination enforced.

What my expectations with regard to them were six months ago, I have stated in the Fourth Section of the Third Book, in which I estimated their probable produce during the present year at eight millions of dollars. There is now not the least prospect that those calculations will be found correct. I am



informed that one-third of the orders given by our merchants for the present season have been countermanded, in consequence of the unsettled aspect of affairs, and of the embarrassment which the expulsion of the Old Spaniards has occasioned in the commercial world; and although the storm appears to have blown over, it is very questionable whether confidence will be entirely restored until the election for the ensuing Presidency, which takes place in October, be decided.

I shall now take leave of the only unpleasant part of my present subject. I have not traced the preceding pages without many painful feelings, for I am connected personally with most of the individuals of whom I have been compelled to speak. During three whole years, General Victoria honoured me with a most unreserved and confidential intercourse, while both with General Bravo, and with many of the leaders of the rival parties, I was on terms of frequent and friendly communication. I shall not, therefore, attempt to deny that I write under the influence of these recollections, and that feelings of a private, as well as a public nature induce me to hope that what has passed may be buried in oblivion; for the only mode of averting the evils, which must otherwise be brought upon the country, is for the victorious party to show itself worthy, by its moderation, of the ascendancy which it has acquired.

I have already trespassed upon the patience of my readers to a much greater extent than I at first con-

templated when I undertook the task of preparing my notes upon Mexico for publication. I trust, however, that I shall not solicit their indulgence in vain for a few concluding reflections.

The want of distinguished men, or rather, of some one man so distinguished as to exercise, like Bolivar, an universal influence, has been much commented upon in Europe as disadvantageous to New Spain.

In one sense, it may, perhaps, be so, for it undoubtedly retards the progress of those parts of the country, which might be pushed forward in the career of civilization by that impulse, which power, concentrated in the hands of an individual, can alone give; but it secures, in return, the stability of the present institutions, by rendering innovations difficult; and whether those institutions be good or bad, it is not by any sudden or violent change that they can be amended.

It is likewise favourable to the gradual development of the resources of the country, by removing those checks upon the activity of individuals, which the preponderance of any one man is generally found to create. In a territory so vast, and, as yet, so little explored, no central government, whatever its energy, or however beneficent its intentions, could possess sufficient local knowledge to do the good which it might desire to effect. Under the present system the whole internal arrangements of the States are left to their own care; and with some few restrictions with regard to foreign trade, they are



at liberty to adopt, without restraint, any plans of improvement that may suit the peculiarities of their respective territories.

Their ability to support this system I have had frequent occasion to investigate. To a certain extent it has been already demonstrated; and the journal of my visits to the Interior will prove that, wherever a man of activity has been placed at the head of affairs, a good use has been made by the Provinces of the free agency with which they are entrusted. In Guanajuato, San Luis, Durango, Jalisco, La Puebla, and Veracruz, as well as in some others of the Central and Northern States, important changes have taken place, and much has been done towards that gradual introduction of a better order of things, from which alone permanent improvement can be expected.

I am aware, that in giving this opinion, I expose myself to the attacks of two distinct classes of adversaries; first, those who refuse to admit the fact of any progress at all having been made; and secondly, those, who, from too enthusiastic an admiration of the new institutions, are unwilling to await the mild influence of time, and maintain that, by a proper exercise of Republican energy, roads might have been made, canals traced, rivers rendered navigable, the whole jurisprudence of the country reformed, a system of education generalized, and the work of a century compressed into a twelve-month!

To the first, I should object that they have not, perhaps, taken a very deliberate view of the actual situation of New Spain, or that, at all events, in reflecting upon things as they are, they do not sufficiently consider the point from which the Mexicans commenced their new career. To the second, I can only say that I am not one of those who believe in the practicability of hot-bed reforms. It appears to me to be as impossible to force the human mind to advance too rapidly, as it would be to compel the present generation to revert to the superstitious credulity of the thirteenth century. Nor can a change of government be productive of a simultaneous change in the habits and opinions of the people governed. It may,—indeed it must, ultimately affect them. It may exalt or debase the national character, strengthen or enervate it, according as it affords more or less scope for the development of individual talent, and more or less encouragement for its application to the public service: but no constitution, even if it came down from Heaven with the stamp of perfection upon it, could eradicate at once the vices engendered by three centuries of bondage, or give the independent feelings of free men to a people, to whom, until lately, the very name of freedom was unknown.

It will be sufficient for me, if I am thought to have shown in the work, which I have now the honour of submitting to the public, that in three years a great deal has really been effected; that the