

CHAPTER III.

RIO JANEIRO.

1838.

THE city of San Salvador, better known as Rio de Janeiro, has been often described. At the time of our visit a great change appeared to have taken place within a few years, as well in its outward appearance as in its government and institutions, thus giving to the whole a different aspect from that it formerly wore. Under its former monarch, Don Pedro the First, it had all the aspect of a court residence; now it is the very reverse. I shall, therefore, give my own impressions, and sketch a picture of its state as we found it in the latter part of the year 1838.

Republican forms, habits, and customs, are gradually creeping in under its new and reformed constitution. It is not to be denied that the people now appear to be much better off than formerly, and more at liberty to carry on their lawful pursuits. Commerce, and intercourse with foreigners are every day making liberal advances. Every one, on his first landing at Rio, will be struck with the indiscriminate mingling of all classes, in every place, all appearing on terms of the utmost equality;—officers, soldiers, and priests, both black and white, mixing and performing their respective duties, without regard to colour or appearance. The only distinction seems to be that of freedom and slavery. There are many wealthy free blacks, highly respectable, who amalgamate with the white families, and are apparently received on a footing of perfect equality. The police, too, consisting of a national guard, has taken away those forms of military parade that formerly existed. An air of independence is creeping in even among the working-classes. Any little service that is required, and for which they are well paid, they appear to consider as a favour done you. The mechanical arts are at least half a century