

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICAL STATE OF BRAZIL.

1838.

DURING my stay at Rio, I had an opportunity of seeing several intelligent gentlemen, who had long been residents of the country; I am indebted to them for much information relative to the political state of this empire. Brazil, though quiet at the time of our visit, will long be destined to outbreaks and alarms, either from local oppression or some slight political movements. The people for the most part take very little interest in politics, or in the general welfare of the state. As yet, their habits make them averse to mental exertions, and they generally prefer their own ease, which precludes them from engaging in political excitement. They are not yet sufficiently advanced in civilization and education, so far as regards the mass of the population, to rise from the mental degradation which the policy of the mother country entailed upon them.

The Brazilians, from the character I have received of them, are very ceremonious and punctilious, susceptible of flattery, suspicious yet courteous, selfish, cunning; assuming frankness and generosity, timid, unsteady in purpose, and without any large and comprehensive views. What is claimed from them as a right in a bold and confident manner, is readily yielded, while often through their ignorance they become presumptuous.

The people are farther advanced in morals and intelligence than their government, but as yet they are not sufficiently enlightened to know their power. They are slow to act, and appear very patient under oppression. Long endurance of despotism has made them so.

The new constitution was adopted in 1825. This secured the legislative power from further interruption, and achieved a complete victory over the bayonets and tyranny of Don Pedro, by forcing him, through the threats of the people and his fears, to grant a more liberal