

must be to counteract military influence; for it too frequently happens amongst us, that when we make a colonel, and give him a regiment, his aspirations soon extend to supreme command."

His counsel was listened to: a militia system was organized; the army was reduced; numerous generals and other officers were struck off the list; the number of civil officers in the various departments was diminished, salaries cut down, and the most rigid economy observed in every branch of the government. Setting an example of unwearied industry in the discharge of his duties, he exacted from those under him a strict performance of theirs. He corrected abuses which had the countenance of time for their practice; he aroused his countrymen from their indolence; corruption ceased, persons were selected to fill office from their fitness, and not, as formerly, from family influence. His militia system worked admirably; it produced a feeling of order among a population notoriously irregular in their private habits and domestic economy; it became a national guard, exercising a certain kind of police over the whole land. Indeed, all his energies were called into play, to improve and advance his country; roads were planned to open communications to the coast, from sections abounding in agricultural wealth, but remote from the seaboard. He set about raising the public credit by husbanding the revenue, so as to enable it, after consolidating domestic and foreign debt, to appropriate a certain amount, first towards the periodical payments on account of interest, and then to effect an arrangement with the English-bond-holders. For the latter purpose, an agent was named to proceed to England.

To accomplish such radical changes great perseverance and firmness were requisite, and these qualities eminently characterized Portales. It is surprising how well he adapted his march to the actual state of the country, and its prejudices of education. He supported the clergy, to obtain their instrumentality as a moral power to strengthen the government, knowing that otherwise they would, as they frequently had, become its most formidable opponents. All this created much discontent among many speculative politicians, who fancied they could establish a refined system of government over an uneducated and prejudiced mass of men like the Chilians; a population that had but a few years emerged from a political state little different from that of Europe in the middle ages, whose predilections were deeply rooted, whose habits only change by an increasing intercourse with nations more enlightened than themselves, and who gradually and almost imperceptibly yield to such an influence.

This government came into power after military rule had been in possession of authority almost ever since the nation became indepen-