

it to be, by plebeian usurpation of the royal prerogative; but hitherto they have failed.

Causes of dissatisfaction are not wanting to produce discontent. They are indeed numerous, and among them are a total want of justice in the administration of the laws; the neglect of all petitions for political reform and the remedy of abuses; the onerous and injurious regulations imposed by the government; and the haughty conduct and absolute power of those who hold office. Notwithstanding all these discouragements, well-informed residents perceive an improvement within the last few years, on the part of the government and of the people also. The establishment of a public press has had its effect in producing this change, by enlightening the public mind, and will gradually acquire the same control here that it exercises elsewhere; and education is better attended to than it used to be, although as yet it is far in the background.

According to the best information, the present government was established by, and is under the guidance of, a few leading men, a small party in Rio, who manage all the political concerns of the empire. They seem to act without any desire of personal aggrandizement, and apparently without ambition to be distinguished beyond the circle of their party. From what has already been said of the interior and the character of its inhabitants, it will be seen that there is no great difficulty in managing the provinces by means of a few influential men, and thus the whole power seems concentrated within the city of Rio, where it is easy to direct things to the issue that they may desire.

It was this party which overthrew or effected the reform in the constitution under Don Pedro I. in 1823, and established the new Congress, consisting of a senatorial body of fifty, who were chosen for life, and of one hundred deputies, for three years. The reformed constitution provided that the succession should devolve on the eldest son of Pedro I., during whose minority there should be three regents chosen for life.

Things went on badly after the beginning of the new order of government, principally in consequence of the disastrous Banda Oriental war, which caused a great sacrifice of money and resources, deranged the currency, and involved the nation in debt. In 1831, Don Pedro abdicated the throne, and went to Europe; the regency came into power, and this band of leading men formed themselves into an opposition to the government. They succeeded in making some important changes, setting aside the three regents for life, substituting one elected for four years, and introducing a federal system, which