

salutary terror awed the many factions, and pursued vigorously its career of improvement in every branch of government. No one felt disposed to give it credit. All its acts were ascribed to one or other of the former parties. Every one spoke of them as being proposed, projected, or introduced by O'Higgins, Freyre, or Pinto, forgetting that their good intentions were never carried out, and that it was the abuses permitted by them that led to civil war. The present administration proved itself fit to rule. It wielded its power energetically but beneficially. Its vigilance never slept; and the parties which occasionally showed symptoms of movement, have at last made up their minds to come into the fold of good citizens.

The actual president at the time of our visit, was General Joaquim Prieto, a man of unblemished private character, full of benevolence, but who, no doubt, had he been left to the direction of his own feelings and judgment, at several periods of his official career, would by his mistaken lenity have brought upon his government the fate of all the preceding ones. Fortunately for the lovers of order, he had for several years to aid him, as minister of war and the interior, Diego Portales, one of those master spirits a country but rarely produces; a man whose early life was engaged in commerce, but who, in the progress of revolutions, evincing more than ordinary ability, became a prominent politician, and eventually one of the leading men of the country. From his resolute and unbending temper, he was permitted to become the head of a party, and soon gained such an ascendancy, that they abandoned themselves to his guidance. He might have obtained the presidency, had ordinary ambition directed him; but, impelled by a more noble one, he chose to attach himself to the administration as one of its ministers, in order, as subsequent events proved, that he might be better able to carry out the plans he meditated. He possessed a resolution in his political career which never swerved from what he conceived his duty, or what he thought the interests of his country required. He had the unyielding temper of a reformer; and never was one more wanted in any country. He recommended the establishment of a militia system, with a view to check every future military interference in the government; and when it was opposed, on the ground that it would only endanger the peace of the country to place arms in the hands of the people, he answered, "No! depend upon it, the only way to secure permanent order, is to create a power in the people which may be enlisted on their side; and if this should declare against the government, it would be evidence enough that it ought no longer to rule, for such a power should consist of the best portion of the population of the country. The first object