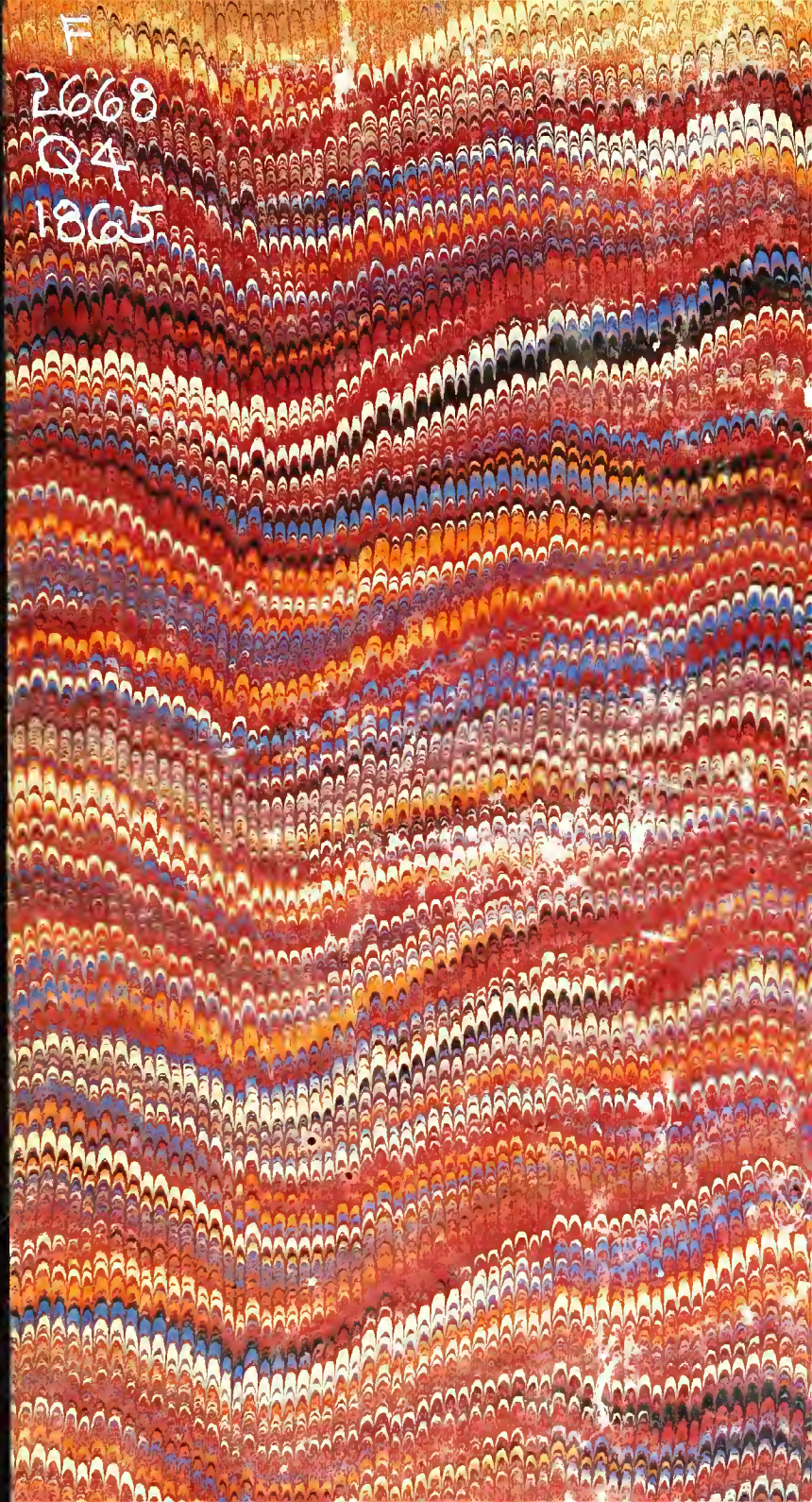


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AN ACCOUNT  
OF  
PARAGUAY

ITS HISTORY, ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS GOVERNMENT.

*From the French*

OF

M. CH. QUENTIN.



LONDON.  
TRÜBNER & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

1865

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.



MANY articles have been published in the Journals and Reviews during the eight months which have elapsed since the attention of Europe was called to the war in the countries of La Plata. The only truth which has been eliminated in these discussions is, that the French are completely ignorant of the history of the American Continent.

With sorrowful surprise, I have observed journals, sincerely democratic, lauding the Institutions of Paraguay, without being conscious for a moment that they were, in fact, eulogising despotism.

It has appeared to me that at the present time a brief account of the States of the Plate would be of some interest. I commence with Paraguay.

The reader will not here find a perfect history, but a few simple notes, collected from the most authentic sources. Solely actuated by a desire to be exact, I have accumulated extracts from the narratives of travellers who have visited and studied those countries. I have endeavoured, above all, to discover the causes which have stifled in a people the very sentiment of liberty, and have felt constrained to ascribe the phenomenon to the fatal influence which the establishment of the Jesuits in Paraguay exercised on this unhappy nation.

PARIS,  
*15th September, 1865.*





# PARAGUAY.

## I.

“PARAGUAY represents an immense trapezium, formed by the Parana and the Paraguay, which define its natural frontiers. A thick belt of forests encloses on the north this mysterious region, that, by its very defences, by its hidden position in the centre of the Southern Continent, appears predestined for isolation.”

It is thus that a historian of Spanish America explains, in a recent publication,\* how Paraguay has existed for centuries, almost separated from the rest of the world. Preoccupied with a veritable phenomenon, he attributes it precisely to a cause which ought to have led to the very opposite effects. The abundance and variety of the products of a country naturally provoke traffic, and relations with other nations are multiplied in proportion to the facility and cheapness of the means of transport. In both these respects Paraguay is a privileged country.

No territory is more fertile. Numerous streams water it on every side, whose coolness second the fecund action of the sun: the soil yields the most marvellous products, and trees of every description, tropical fruits, cereals, cotton, tobacco, vanilla, all grow there without

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\* Santiago Arcos. *La Plata*. Paris, Michel Lévy, 1865.

effort. Embarked on the thousand affluents which traverse the country, these riches may be carried to the Paraguay and Parana, whence they can be transported directly and without much expense to the markets of Buenos Ayres, Monte Video, Rio de Janeiro, and even of Europe, since the depth of the rivers admits of vessels of 400 tons burden ascending to Assumption.

Nevertheless these treasures have long remained as if buried: Paraguay is still isolated from the world. Twenty years ago Europe only knew of this magnificent region by the circulation of strange reports, full of errors and exaggerations. The surprising fortune and the speedy fall of the Jesuit Missions were especially recounted. Incited by these vague rumours, merchants vainly attempted to pass the frontier, and learned men forced an entrance into this unknown land, but they never returned. Only the most inaccurate notions existed respecting the inhabitants, their customs, and their government. A man had arisen like an unapproachable wall around this mysterious and inaccessible country, and rendered useless the riches which nature has so prodigally bestowed upon Paraguay.

One cannot comprehend how a single man could have possessed in himself the power of sequestering a nation, and making it live, so to speak, without the pale of humanity. However energetic the will of a man may be, it could not suffice for the accomplishment of such a task; and one asks with astonishment wherefore the people of Paraguay did not break down the obstacle and remove the impediment.

A light has now been thrown upon this problem; we must not alone seek for the cause of this sequestration, of which history offers no other example, in the

political system adopted by Dr. Francia and perpetuated by President Lopez.

The people of Paraguay do not endure tyranny; they are pleased with and love it. The yoke does not oppress them, and they have no desire to enter into communion with the other nations. They do not even understand that their political and economic situation is abnormal, and demand no other.

What, then, are the causes of this torpidity of a whole people?

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## II.

### THE INDIANS.

The hardy adventurers of the sixteenth century, who explored the land of Columbus, sought exclusively for the precious metals. They did not establish themselves on the borders of the ocean, but penetrated far into the interior. Inflated by the statements of Sebastian Cabot, the companions of Pedro de Mendoza made haste to ascend the Rio de La Plata—the *Silver River*.

They very soon saw themselves compelled, however, to renounce their dearest hope. The Indian tribes inhabiting the banks of the river did not possess precious metals, and the few pieces of silver found amongst them had come from the distant country conquered by the companions of Pizarro. To arrive there it would be necessary to cross deep rivers, to penetrate through dense forests, to support the burden of the day and of the heat, to repel warlike tribes, to surmount almost insuperable obstacles. So great was their love of gold that they were not at the beginning discouraged by these terrible

difficulties. They proceeded with intrepidity, despite every danger, towards the country of wealth.

Nevertheless, the security of the cities built in the interior and the necessity of maintaining communications with Europe, demanded the foundation of an establishment at the very entrance of the river. The Indians had destroyed the fort raised by Mendoza ; it was rebuilt ; and a few houses were erected at the back. Such was the cradle of the city, which from that time bore the name of Buenos Ayres.

Being established quite near to the ocean, the colonists of Buenos Ayres were continually visited by the vessels of the mother country. All ships, even those which were to ascend to Assumption, necessarily stopped at the first port they encountered on the American continent. The passengers were impatient to repose themselves from the fatigues of a long voyage, and sojourned at Buenos Ayres ; the women especially, happy to have escaped the dangers of a voyage of several months, rarely decided to confront new hardships, and permitted the vessels in which they had been brought to leave for the rivers of the interior without them. The men, in eager pursuit of gold, alone reached Assumption. When the experience of the Spaniards dissipated an illusion which had cost the first explorers so dear,—when it was demonstrated that the countries situated on the borders of the great river and its affluents did not contain the precious metals,—the influx of Spanish immigration ceased to ascend the rivers. Buenos Ayres intercepted all the colonists on their passage ; its population, constantly recruited from Spain, remained without mixture ; and the Porteños have, up to this hour, preserved the purity of the Andulasian race.

At Assumption, on the contrary, Spanish women were rare ; and, from the commencement of the conquest, the colonists did not disdain those of the vanquished. In 1536 Juan de Ayolas compelled the Agaces to deliver two young girls to each of his soldiers ; and he himself took seven, in virtue of his position as general. Some years later, Martinez de Irala, Governor of Assumption, on dying, left behind him children by seven Guarani women. The unions of Europeans with Indian females are exceedingly fruitful ; and from these alliances, which recal to our mind the legend concerning Romulus and the Sabine women, a people of half-breeds arose, who were of necessity regarded as Spaniards born in the country, or, in other words, *hijos del pais*. The amalgamation of the two races became perfect, and was very materially aided by the fact that the physical characteristics of the Indian are not so persistent as those of the Negro ; after two or three generations they are lost, without leaving a trace behind. By a phenomenon, which has often repeated itself in history, the conquered race absorbed that of the conqueror : the Indian blood dominated in the population of Paraguay.\*

Amongst the indigenous tribes on the banks of the Paraguay, some, fierce and impatient of control, fought against the invaders ; they constantly retired before the victors ; and, even at the present day, the Indian *bravos* wander in the woods of the Gran Chaco, whose immense forests extend between Paraguay and Brazil, on the banks of the river Apa, or in the southern pampas of the

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\* At the end of the last century, under the domination of Spain, there were only 250 European Spaniards in Paraguay. *Vide* Azara's *Voyage dans l'Amérique Méridionale*, published by Dentu, of Paris, in 1809.

Argentine Confederation, whence they come forth in bands to carry away the cattle of the farms situate on the frontier. Other Indians, of a milder disposition, abandoned all resistance from the very beginning of the Spanish domination. Indolence and docility are the distinctive characteristics of the Guaranís, who so easily lent themselves to the fusion of the two races. Brought up by their Indian mothers, the children acquired the habitude of submission from the cradle. Even now, the Guarani language is almost the only one spoken in Paraguay; and the majority of the Paraguayans do not even understand the Spanish.

These instincts of obedience were also developed in the *encomiendas*. When a tribe submitted, the Indians were given as a recompense to those who had taken part in the expedition, and lived in subjection to their will. They became serfs. Distributed in villages (*encomiendas*) built for them on designated territory, they laboured for the master, or *comendador*; they executed his orders without even seeking to comprehend them; they had no need to be disquieted about the morrow; they were fed, lodged, clothed, cared for in sickness; and the master could not send them away from their habitations in old age. At the end of two generations the village ceased to belong to its masters. The Indians became Spanish subjects, and carried with them into free society all the customs of servitude.

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### III.

#### THE JESUITS.

When the Jesuits arrived at Paraguay, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, they at once

perceived all the advantage to be derived from the indolent and passive character of the Guaranis. After two or three unsuccessful attempts, they ceased catechising the Indian bravos, and the docility of the Guaranis inspired them with the idea of their celebrated Missions. In the first place, they obtained from Spain the concession of a vast territory, chosen by themselves, and admirably chosen.

“Traversed by two grand rivers, and watered by their affluents, the territory of the Missions is fertile, picturesque in the mountainous divisions, and enjoys a perfectly mild and healthy climate. The sugar cane, indigo, and cotton plants flourish; and besides tropical trees, such as the date and the cocoa-nut, the orange, fig, pomegranate, vine, olive, peach, and, in fact, most of the productions of the south of Europe, yield abundant and excellent fruits. The yucca root and the potato, with almost all the other vegetables, also grow remarkably well. The forests of the Sierra present valuable woods for constructive purposes, which, with but little effort, might be transported to the Parana and the Uruguay. In conclusion, the forests contain immense quantities of that precious plant called Paraguayan tea, or *yerba-maté*, the first object of necessity in all the populations of the Plata, and the consumption of which is enormous, the annual export by the river Uruguay alone being, at the present time, not less than two millions of killogrammes for the markets of Buenos Ayres and Monte Video.

“Splendid plains afford pasture for thousands of cattle. . . . With respect to the mineral kingdom, the country is not less favoured. Stone, suitable for building, freestone, clays—everything, with the exception of chalk, is to be found in abundance. Indi-

cations of iron and copper, and, latterly, of mercury and coal, have been discovered. In fine, all that can be useful to man, the needful as well as the superfluous, has been, and still is, found there.”\*

In order to people this vast territory, since all means are good when one works for the glory of God, the Fathers organized *hunting expeditions against the Indians*. The wandering tribes of Guaranis were pursued, trapped, and led to the place designated for the establishment of a centre of population, or *redaccion*. The Fathers afterwards cleverly made use of the first Indians brought into subjection to attract others. Azara thus describes the ingenious system adopted by the Jesuits:—

“Knowing there were savage Guaranis on the Tarnuma, they sent some small presents by two Indians speaking the same language, and who had been chosen in their oldest communities. They repeated these embassies and presents at different times, the messengers always stating that they were sent by a Jesuit who loved them tenderly, who desired to come and live in their midst, and to procure for them other objects of greater value, including herds of cows, in order that they might have food to eat without exposing themselves to fatigue. The Indians accepted these offers, and the Jesuit started with what he had promised, accompanied by a considerable number of Indians selected from amongst those of their early *redacciones*. These Indians remained with the Jesuit, as they were needed to build a

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\* *Vide* Martin de Moussy's *Memoire Historique sur la Décadence et la Ruine des Missions des Jésuits dans le Bassen de la Plata*, first published at Parana in 1857, and reproduced in the *Déscription de la Confédération Argentine*. Paris, Firmin Didot, 1864, vol. iii. p. 663.



house for the curate and to take care of the cows. These were very soon destroyed, for the Indians only thought of eating them. The savages asked for more cows, and they were brought by additional Indians chosen like the first; and the whole of them remained on the spot, under the pretext of building a church and other edifices, and of cultivating maize, the yucca root, etc., for the Jesuit and for all the others. Food, the affability of the priest, the good conduct of the Indians who had brought the cattle, festivals and music, the absence of every appearance of subjection, attracted to this settlement all the savage Indians in the neighbourhood. When the priest saw that his selected Indians greatly exceeded the savages in number, he caused the latter to be surrounded on a determined day by his people, and mildly told them, in a few words, that it was not just their brethren should work for them, that it was therefore necessary they should cultivate the earth and learn trades, and that the women should spin. A few appeared dissatisfied, but as they perceived the superiority of the Indians of the curate, and as the latter was careful to caress some and to punish others with moderation, while exercising a surveillance over all for a time, the Mission of San Joachim was at length entirely and successfully formed.”\*

Then the work began. The Indians knew no other authority save that of the Father. The Father fed and clothed them, and promised the joys of Paradise as the reward of their submission and assiduity in labour. They lived in common, they worked in common, they

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\* Azara, vol. ii. cap. xiii. p. 223.—The means used by the Jesuits in order to seduce and subjugate the Indians, and the manner in which they were governed.

prayed in common, under the direction of the Father, who was the representative of God. The Indian laboured, but nothing belonged to him individually; everything was the property of the whole community. The Father distributed amongst the different families the things necessary for their sustenance, and the remainder was carefully stored and guarded in immense warehouses. The Indian had nothing to do with traffic; the Father it was who sold, in distant markets, the precious woods cut in the forests, the Paraguayan tea, the tobacco, and the hides: he it was who brought back fine garments, the most beautiful of which were given to the most docile and submissive, and returned with implements of agriculture, looms for the weaving of cotton, and splendid stuffs for the adornment of the chapel on holidays, when work was suspended, and the bells sent forth jubilant peals. These days were days of high festival in the *redaccion*. The Fathers of the neighbouring Missions assembled. They invested themselves in copes resplendant with gold; children, clothed in white robes, carried censers, which they waved to and fro; and the whole population, in good order, and to the sound of music, slowly advanced, singing canticles as they went under the shade of the orange trees which fringed their path.

Azara, who visited the Missions only a few years after the expulsion of the Jesuits, and who questioned ocular witnesses, gives some curious details respecting this wise organization\* :—

“ They placed two Jesuits in each community. The one called the curate had been a provincial or rector in

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\* *Vide* Azara, vol. ii. p. 233.

their colleges, or was, at least, a grave Father ; but he exercised no pastoral functions, and was often even ignorant of the language of the Indians. He was solely occupied with the temporal administration of all the property of the community, of which he was the absolute director. The spiritual charge was confided to the other Jesuit, who was called a companion, or vice-curate, and who was subordinate to the first. The Jesuits of all the communities were under the surveillance of another, known as the Superior of the Missions, and who was also empowered by the Pope to confirm.

“For the government of these communities there were neither civil nor criminal laws ; the sole rule was the will of the Jesuits. In fact, though there was in every community an Indian who acted as *corrigidor*, and *alcades*, and *regidores* (municipal officers), who formed a *corps de ville*, as in the Spanish colonies, neither of them exercised any species of jurisdiction, and were only instruments for the execution of the decrees of the curates even in criminal matters, for the accused were never cited before the tribunals of the king, nor before the ordinary judges.

“They compelled the Indians, of every age, and of both sexes, to work for the community at large, and never permitted them to engage in private pursuits. They were all bound to obey the orders of the curate, who caused the produce of the labour to be warehoused, and undertook the responsibility of nourishing and clothing them. It is clear, therefore, that the Jesuits were absolute masters of everything ; that they could dispose of the surplus wealth of the entire community ; and that, the Indians being all equal, without distinction and without power to possess any personal property, no im-

pulse of emulation could urge them to exert either their faculties or their reason, since the cleverest, the most virtuous, and the most active was neither better fed nor better clothed than the rest, and had no other enjoyments. The Jesuits succeeded in persuading the world that this sort of government was the only one suitable, and that it secured the happiness of the Indians, who, like children, were incapable of managing their own affairs. They added that they directed them as a father did his family; and that they gathered and kept the produce of the harvest in their warehouses, not for their private benefit, but in order to make a suitable distribution thereof amongst their adopted children, who were perfectly incapable of foresight, and were unable to care for the maintenance of their families."

The Fathers were, above all, anxious to relieve the Indians of the cares of to-morrow. Labour is not very severe in those fertile countries, and nothing was neglected to make it appear still more light :—

"They amused their neophytes," says Azara, in his second volume, page 249, "by a great number of balls, fêtes, and tournaments; and, in all these ceremonies, they clothed the actors and the members of the municipal bodies in the most magnificent vestments to be had in Europe. Every year they gave the suit of clothes to which I have alluded in a previous chapter to all the Indians, and furnished them with sufficient and even abundant nourishment. They were satisfied with making them work about half the day, and labour had an air of festivity; for when the workers started for the fields, they always marched in procession to music, carrying with them some small image on a sort of litter. They begun by preparing a bower in which to place it;

and the music never ceased until they returned to the Mission, the same order being observed in leaving as in starting.

“The musicians, the sacristans, and the choristers were alone engaged in needlework, because the women were no otherwise employed than in weaving the cotton. The cloth which the Indians made, after deducting what was necessary for the community, was sold in the Spanish cities, where it was sent, as were also the cotton, tobacco, dried pulse, and Paraguayan tea. The transport was effected by means of vessels belonging to them on the navigable rivers, which were, so to speak, at their very door, and they brought in return the ironmongery and whatever else they might require.”

The Jesuits learnt the Guarani in order to speak to the Indians in their own tongue. No Indian understood Spanish, and they carefully avoided teaching them; indeed, to this very day, Guarani is the only language in general use in Paraguay. They instructed only a few who had to keep accounts how to read and write; but all, girls and boys together, had each day to repeat before the church the prayers and the commandments of God. Their education went no further. Their lives were divided between the labours of the field and the exercises of piety; and they were only taught such arts as were indispensable for the rigid wants of a half savage community. Their clothing was simple, and the feet were uncovered. The women wore a chemise without arms, tightened at the waist; the men wore drawers, and a poncho of heavy cloth woven by the women. They could forge sufficiently well to repair their tools, and that was all. To educate is to enfranchise. The priests knew it; and thus, in order to perpetuate their domination, they were careful to perpetuate ignorance.

One of their greatest preoccupations was to isolate the Indians under their subjection, and to keep them from all contact with the outer world. The sequestration was complete; for they had caused the royal taxes and tithes to be replaced by a fixed levy, in order to avoid all relations with the agents of the metropolis. By obtaining the right of administering the sacrament of confirmation, the bishops were interdicted an entrance into the Missions; and, by forbidding individuals to engage in trade, they rendered all intercourse between the Indians and the Spaniards impossible. The incursions of the Portuguese into the Missions powerfully aided the Jesuits in exciting hatred and horror of foreigners in the minds of the simple Indians, who were persuaded that they were a chosen, privileged, and elected people; that other nations lived in sin and misery, under the curse of God; that it was their duty to avoid and repel them; and that those who disobeyed the orders of the Fathers on this point *would fall under the influence of the demon, and be abandoned by God at the hour of their death.*\*

Deep fosses, protected by pallisades, were created around the Redaccions, under the pretext of defending them from the bold *mamelucos* of the province of St.

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\* One of the most striking proofs of the religious fanaticism with which the Jesuits had inspired the Indians of the Missions, is the letter addressed in Guarani by the *cabildo* (municipality) of the Mission of San Luis, on the 12th of February, 1768, to the Governor of Buenos Ayres, supplicating him to allow the Missions to remain under the direction of the Jesuits:—"Otherwise this Mission will be lost like the others; we will be lost for God and for the king; we will fall under the influence of the demon, and where will we then find succour in the hour of our death? Our children, who are at present in the fields and in the villages, will fly into the woods, to do evil there."

Paulo; but the real object was to cut off all relations with the outside world. Even communication between the Indians of the different Missions was rarely permitted.

The necessity of defending themselves against the Paulistos also furnished the Jesuits with a favourable opportunity;—they obtained an authorization to possess powder and arms, and, by degrees, they organized a disciplined and experienced army. The military regulations of the Fathers are curious, and we extract them as follows from M. Martin de Moussy's interesting book:—

“All my predecessors have recommended the use and management of arms of every description. I again recommend, in compliance with the orders of His Majesty, that *sham fights be occasionally organized* and that the Indians receive, on those days, *extra rations* of beef, yerba-maté, salt, &c., with a view to their encouragement. . At least once a month shooting at the target must take place.

“(Signed) Fathers ZEA, HERMAN, MICHONI, BERNARD.”

“By express order of our Generals, the arrangements for sham fights are to be made in presence of the Curate and his Companion.

“(Signed) Father LUIS DE LA ROCA.”

“In each Mission it is necessary to drill some adroit young people in the management of the musket, and to encourage them in its use.

“(Signed) Father HARDOFFER.”

“The children ought also to be drilled, and to undergo review.

(Signed) Father MICHONI.”

“As much powder as is needed will be made in each Mission.

“(Signed) Father ZEA.”

The incursions of the Paulistos ceased towards the end of the twelfth century; but the Fathers did not abandon their military organization. They possessed an army and an enormous quantity of powder. Did they aim, as has been asserted, at rendering the Missions independent of the Metropolis, and creating a State within the State? They have with but ill success defended themselves against this accusation; and the issuing of orders invoking the express order of the Generals of the Company, appears to indicate a vast plan, concocted at Rome, and pursued with admirable perseverance. The Indians attempted to defend their Fathers; and when they were asked why they refused to execute the commands of the king, the chief of the Guaranis replied: “I know only those of the Father Superior and the Curate.”

Whatever may have been the secret projects of the Jesuits, it suffices to state that they had given to their Indians military habits; that all were at once soldiers and cultivators; that all blindly obeyed the orders of the Master; and that it is easy to recognise in the inhabitants of the Missions the manners which characterise the Paraguayans of the present day. Absolute submission, fanaticism, ignorance, hatred of the foreigner—we have here summed up the whole history of Paraguay.

The administration of the Jesuits is, nevertheless, approved by most historians:—

† “It was there,” says M. Martin de Moussy, in reference to the Missions, “that the Jesuits gave to the world the remarkable example of thousands of savages



governed by the simple authority of a few priests, without guards and without soldiers.\* It was there that creatures, naturally lazy and indolent, were led to work marvels in respect of labour. However their system be regarded, it is none the less true that the result was magnificent; that 100,000 souls lived easily where to-day there is only a desert; and that all fell into a condition of chaos so soon as the intelligent hand which governed the province of the Missions was withdrawn."

The rapid decadence of the Missions after the expulsion of the Jesuits was, on the contrary, the inevitable consequence of the education of the Indians. Labours, pleasures, meals, prayers—everything was regulated and organised by the Fathers. The Indian had no care or anxiety; he did not even require to think, for the Father thought for him; his personality disappeared, absorbed in that of the community. Having no desires, passions, or will, he found his happiness in simple and unquestioning obedience. What was to become of him when cast upon himself? He never thought of such a contingency without terror; or rather he never even entertained the idea of freeing himself from a domination he loved, and which, in addition, was both mild and paternal.

Prosperity unquestionably reigned in the Missions. All progressed in discipline as in a barrack or a con-

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\* The author of this learned memoir no doubt means "without foreign soldiers;" for, according to the authentic documents quoted by himself, it is clear that all the Indians were, from their infancy, trained to the use of arms, and that every Redaccion possessed a little army.

vent, and without any individual initiative. The Indian was a mere machine—a wheel, which moved with perfect regularity—labouring, sowing, reaping, and gathering in the produce. This grand workshop accomplished wonders, and great was the material abundance enjoyed. The Indians, fat, healthy, well cared for, were no longer men, but instruments incapable of independent action; and, educated by the Fathers for servitude, they were not a people, but a flock.

This education has borne its legitimate fruits. The Paraguayans have been eager to accept every form of tyranny. Being unable to manage their own affairs, they have readily subjected themselves to the will of every master who had the desire to govern; and, even now, we find the same fanaticism and the same need of submission. The Jesuits made the bed of despotism for after years, and Paraguay has only passed from one condition of servitude to fall into another.

The Jesuits having departed, their work very soon disappeared. The Indians of the *Redacciones* did not know how to work. They wanted direction. Some fled into the forests, and relapsed into the wandering life of savages; others remained in the Missions, obeying the Dominicans as they had obeyed the Jesuits. These new missionaries were less able, their ambition was not so vast, and they only sought how they could most speedily acquire wealth. Efforts to awaken the spirit of independence among the Indians, by giving them a property in lands, were barren of results. They were quite wedded to the system of community, the greater number deserted the *Redacciones*, and the Missions rapidly fell into a state of complete decay. Villages in ruins,

fields untilled, *yerbales*\* destroyed, at once demonstrate the grandeur and the fragility of the work undertaken by the learned ambition of the Jesuits.

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#### IV.

### INDEPENDENCE.

About the end of the eighteenth century grand events transpired in the northern continent of America. The English colonies, casting off the yoke of Great Britain, proclaimed their independence, and proudly declaring war against the mother country, affirmed a new principle—that of the sovereignty of peoples.

“ We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it. . . . We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.”

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\* Woods, planted by the Jesuits, of those trees whose leaves are used in making yerba-maté.

This energetic vindication of popular rights, surmounting every obstacle interposed, had been read in the Spanish dependencies. The colonists of Buenos Ayres had especially followed with an ardent anxiety the phases of the heroic struggle, which terminated in the liberation of a people and the foundation of the great American Republic. The inhabitants of Southern America did not belong to the hardy race of the descendants of Penn, who in times past, left their native land, to become refugees in the desert, bearing with them liberty of conscience as their sole treasure. They were imbued with the spirit of Catholicism; they had no journals to disseminate and propagate principles; the metropolitan authorities were careful to intercept or alter all news from without. Under such disadvantages, the idea of independence made its way but slowly.

Suddenly the voice of the great French Revolution, like the sound of thunder, reverberated throughout the world. The Spanish colonies were startled, and a silent and hidden work was inaugurated. The explosion was not long deferred.

Buonaparte, after having shaken old dynasties in the name of the triumphant revolution, was himself made Emperor. He launched into adventurous wars, with no other object than to satisfy an unbounded ambition, and to place his brothers and his generals upon all the thrones of Europe. The Spanish colonies learnt that Spain, become a sort of French colony, was struggling under the yoke of a Buonaparte. Then the ideas of independence, which had secretly fermented in the colony, were openly manifested. It seemed a favourable opportunity for severing the ties which bound the vice-royalty to Spain. At the beginning the movement

was undigested and ill-defined. The word republic was never mentioned; the form of government mattered little, provided it was composed of indigenous elements. It was, indeed, in the name of the king dethroned by Buonaparte, Ferdinand VII., that the revolution fated to enfranchise Spanish America was commenced.

The Provisional Junta of Buenos Ayres was installed on the 25th of May, 1810. It acted nominally under the authority of the captive king, but in reality it proclaimed the sovereignty of the colonies. The authorities were required to swear allegiance, not to the king, but to the Provisional Government, elected by the popular suffrage of the Argentine nation. The first act of this Junta was to convoke a National Congress at Buenos Ayres to decide the destinies of the country and establish a definitive government. Independence was the sole aim pursued and avowed. "The authority of the Government," said Moreno, the President of the Junta, "has for its basis, in the present crisis, the resumption of the supreme power, which, by the fact of the king's captivity, has returned to those from whom it was derived." It would be difficult to affirm more emphatically the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people.

Enthusiasm spread with inconceivable rapidity on both sides of the Rio de la Plata. The royal functionaries were divested of their authority, and an organised resistance made against the Spanish troops. Thus was begun that long war which gave birth to the Republics of South America.

One province alone was impassive in the midst of this grand revolutionary movement. Buenos Ayres had already achieved her independence and sealed it with

her blood ; but Paraguay still retained the Governor of the Metropolis. The habit of submission, the traditions of obedience established by the Jesuits, formed around Paraguay an impenetrable barrier. Velasco continued to rule the country in the name of Spain, and the indifferent population remained submissive to his authority. This blind resignation of Paraguay compromised the success of the revolution ; the efforts of the other provinces were useless so long as the Spaniards were masters of Assumption. It became necessary, therefore, to wrest Paraguay from the mother country. Belgrano, an ardent patriot, was charged with this enterprise.

Belgrano was one of the leaders of the national movement of Buenos Ayres. A revolutionary enthusiast, he believed in the power of an idea. He was a tribune rather than a general, and started at the head of 800 men, badly armed and ill disciplined, but devoted and prepared for every sacrifice.

He paused on the frontier, and demanded an armistice from the officers of the detachments posted on the right bank of the Parana, at the same time declaring that he waited a reply to letters addressed by him to Governor Velasco and the members of the Cabildo. He was careful to give copies of these letters to the officers ; they read them, but the words of liberty and independence were as unmeaning sounds. They only knew their orders. Belgrano counted upon their patriotism, and expected the officers and soldiers to pronounce themselves in favour of the national cause. He brought them glad tidings ; they replied by firing upon him. The truce was violated, and the patriots were assailed notwithstanding the armistice. The

Cabildo did not even deign to send a despatch to Belgrano.

In the simplicity of his faith, Belgrano could not comprehend the indifference of a whole people; and, imagining the Governor had intercepted his letters, he sent his Secretary to Assumption to obtain an interview with the Municipality and make an appeal to their patriotism. The Secretary was arrested and thrown into prison by their orders.

The young patriot no longer hesitated. Crossing the Parana, he dispersed the troops which opposed his passage, and advanced so far as Paraguay, a place only a few leagues distant from Assumption. Compelled to leave several companies behind to guard the ford, his force was reduced to 600 men, who were surrounded by 7000 Paraguayans. In vain did the little army perform prodigies of valour. Overpowered by numbers, Belgrano retreated to Tacuary, where he signed a capitulation.

Then it was, that, obeying a patriotic inspiration, he essayed a final effort. He sought to gain over to the cause of the revolution the very officers who were charged with his pursuit. He aroused in them the sentiment of independence; he showed them Spain enslaved by a foreign tyrant, humiliated, enfeebled by war, and powerless to retain her colonies; he pronounced the word liberty, and disclosed unknown horizons to their astonished minds—the country governing itself, expelling the grasping foreign functionaries by whom it was devoured, and freeing itself from a ruinous commercial monopoly; he appealed to their heart and also to their ambition, pointing out that the highest offices hitherto reserved for Spaniards sent out from Europe would become accessible to the natives. His ardent conviction endowed

him with an irresistible and seductive eloquence. The commanders of Velasco's army—Cabanas and Yegros—were won over. The conquered had overcome his conquerors!

Belgrano departed full of joy. The defeat of the general was effaced by the triumph of the patriot. This noble soldier of the revolution carried with him the supreme consolation of having sown the germs of principles which were certain to bear fruits at no distant period.

The secretary of Velasco, the Governor, was a creole of Buenos Ayres, named Pedro Sommellera, who had been gained to the cause of the revolution. Yegros and Cabanas, on their return to the capital, saw Sommellera, already apprised by a letter from Belgrano of what had occurred on the banks of the Parana; and a plot was concocted for the subversion of the metropolitan authority in the very palace of the Government. One morning Yegros seized the barracks, and proclaimed the independence of Paraguay. Governor Velasco did not even attempt resistance, but quietly resigned his functions. The leaders of the plot being thus triumphant, followed the example of Buenos Ayres, and nominated a junta of three members, viz., Fulgencio Yegros, Cavallero, and a sort of secretary or lawyer—a clever man, who could formulate decrees. He was called Dr. José Gaspardo de Francia.

Thus the revolution was effected, not, as in Buenos Ayres, by a magnificent popular outburst, and with the active and devoted concurrence of the citizens, but by a handful of soldiers. Begun in the ranks of the army, it was consummated in a barracks. The people were impassive. They took no part in these events; but per-



mitted Velasco to be divested of his authority, and learned without emotion that they would thenceforward be free. They had simply changed masters. Independence, when it has not struck its roots into the very heart of a nation, is but of short duration; and thus Paraguay was only freed from the paternal rule of Spain to pass under the iron yoke of a tyrant.

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V.

FRANCIA.

D. Fulgencio Yegros was merely a soldier. He was fond of riding on horseback and parading, and only saw in power an occasion for fêtes and reviews. He left everything to the Doctor. The latter very soon perceived all the advantage to be derived from this condition of affairs; and, indefatigable in labour, made himself indispensable. His resolution was taken. From the first day he determined to get rid of his colleagues; and to this end he brought to bear a patient address, and proceeded with an astute lenitude, only to accomplish his aim with the greater certainty. From what quarter might an obstacle present itself? From the people? Francia knew that this docile population, reduced to servility, rendered submission to all authorities with indifference. It gave yet another proof of its resignation. Yegros, who imposed severe discipline upon his soldiers while in the barracks or engaged in martial exercises, permitted them to indulge in every excess when at large, or unrestrained by the rigour of military duty. "They believed they had a right to insult the citizens,

and even to strike them when they neglected to take off their hat to a soldier ;” \* and the citizens humbly endured outrages and blows. Such a people would tremblingly submit themselves to the stern command of a master. The other members of the Junta, quite incapable of exertion, unintelligent, and inactive, passed their time at play and in drinking with the officers. These were not very formidable rivals. One thing alone could thwart the ambitious projects of Francia. This was the union of Paraguay with the other countries of the Plate. Francia was well aware that his superiority was based only on the ignorance of his colleagues ; and that Paraguay, once amalgamated with the grand Argentine fatherland, his individuality would very soon be absorbed. In fact, there were men of high intelligence in the Government of Buenos Ayres ; and Francia might have been relegated to the second place, whereas the first was the object of his ambition.

He laboured to develop the antagonism already existing between the two great cities of the Plate, Assumption and Buenos Ayres. He easily persuaded his colleagues and the people that Buenos Ayres desired to oppress Paraguay. He remained deaf to the prayers of the Portenos, asking him to co-operate in the common work, and to send soldiers in aid of the enfranchisement of the common fatherland.

Paraguay remained impassive to all the changing fortunes of that long war. While the patriots of the other countries of the Plate were achieving wonders, at

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\* Rengger and Longchamps' *Essai Historique sur la Révolution du Paraguay et le Gouvernement Dictatorial du Docteur Francia*. Second Edition. Paris : Hector Bossange, 1827.

the price of the most mournful sacrifices, Paraguay shed not one drop of blood for the independence of South America. Under the influence of Francia was continued that policy of isolation which the Jesuits had inaugurated.

The Junta could not perpetuate themselves in their self-conferred power. A Congress was convoked. The alcaldes, or sheriffs, who had been nominated by Francia, and were, consequently, his creatures, appointed the deputies to be sent to Assumption. To choose what form of government? Amongst the rare books in the possession of Francia was a single volume of "Rollin's Roman History." He had just read it, and decided that his country should be a republic. At the same time he determined that he himself should be its dictator.

The tyranny of Dr. Francia so grievously oppressed his country that it is hardly credible that a people could have endured it for so long a period. These facts, however, belong to history. They are reported by witnesses who lived in Paraguay during the Dictatorship of Francia. It is from the narratives of those travellers, and particularly from that of Messrs. Rengger and Longchamps that I have taken the principal events of the Dictator's career.

"The deputies," says Rengger and Longchamps, p. 21, "passed their time in the taverns, and as they had no opinion of their own on the affairs with which they were about to deal, they sought the advice and instruction of others as to what they should say or how they ought to vote. Dr. Francia, on account of his learning, was especially consulted, and he thus created a great *clientèle*. At the end of a few sittings, the Congress, a sort of caricature worthy of the pencil of

Hogarth, abolished the existing Government, and substituted in its place, for one year only, two consuls, Dr. Francia and Don Fulgencio Yegros, who were together invested with all power. (Accustomed to the rule of a Governor whose will served for law, the Paraguayans troubled themselves very little about properly defining the power of the consuls, or limiting their authority. They acted like a horde of Indians choosing their caciques.) The consuls assumed their functions, and Dr. Francia prefigured the fate he reserved for his colleague in the following circumstance. Two chairs of state, that is to say, two arm-chairs, covered with leather, had been prepared for the use of the consuls, and on one of these was inscribed the name of Cæsar, and on the other that of Pompey. Francia took the first, and left the second to Yegros, who was no better treated in the distribution of power."

Republic—two consuls—Cæsar—Pompey! Still the influence of Rollin's book!

Cæsar had only one wish,—to get rid of Pompey. At the end of a year the Congress was again convoked to renew the Government. Francia announced to the Assembly that the country was in danger. By whom was it threatened? By nobody; but the ignorant deputies were terrified, and adopted the only means whereby, according to Francia, the republic could be saved,—the concentration of all authority in the person of one magistrate or dictator.) He hoped to be designated forthwith; but having heard the name Yegros pronounced in the Assembly, he proceeded to address the deputies, occupied them with his remarks, and prevented any decision being arrived at on that day. At the second sitting he pursued the same tactics. (The

deputies were tired of living at their own cost in the capital, and were in haste to bring the business to an end.) At last, however, Francia availed himself of the most efficacious method of effecting his designs: he employed intimidation.

(“Having caused the church in which the deputies deliberated to be surrounded at the decisive moment, by a guard of honour composed of devoted men, he was, by a great majority, elected dictator for three years, with the title of Excellency and a provision of 9,000 piastres. Scarcely was Francia invested with a title and prerogatives, the signification and redoubtable extent of which those by whom they were conferred were themselves far from comprehending, before he established himself in the ancient residence of the governors of Paraguay, which he isolated by enlarging the surrounding streets.) This edifice, built by the Jesuits, is one of the largest in the city, and is approached by a covered gallery, raised some paces above a large square whence both banks of the river and the *llanos* of the Gran Chaco are disclosed to the view.

(“During the temporary magistracy, Francia had the policy as well as the art to exercise self-control, and not to show himself as he afterwards appeared, when delivered from the always disquieting fears of the ballot. He began by reforming his private life, and, renouncing pleasures, affected in his manners a self-righteous and cenobitical austerity; afterwards, convinced that the independence of the State he desired to found and the existence of his own power demanded the establishment of an imposing military force devoted to his person, he directed all his attention to the organization of an army.) In the first place, he dismissed all the officers and com-

manders he considered suspicious, either from the fact of their belonging to honourable families, or because they exerted too great an influence over the troops, and replaced them by men of the basest origin, who, having nothing to expect, would naturally attach themselves to him as to the sole author of their unhopèd-for fortune. He even discharged such of the soldiers as he believed could not be depended on, and filled the vacancies by means of new recruits. In addition to these precautions, he organized corps which he himself manœuvred, with a view to promoting a spirit of emulation profitable for the service and to inspiring devotion to his person. Submitted to severe discipline while under arms, these troops at other times knew no control, and the inhabitants endured from them a thousand vexations without daring to complain to the master, who had too great need of his soldiers not to close his eyes to their misconduct. He also adopted measures for increasing his war material and munitions. Without being in declared hostility, his relations with the neighbouring provinces were of a character to induce fear of an attack at any moment, and he was well aware that in this case his communications of supply would be closed. He therefore only allowed those merchants who brought him powder and arms to take return cargoes. By means of those authorizations (*licencias*), which yielded considerable profits, he was easily enabled to procure what was necessary; but in the midst of all his cares, he never lost sight of the hour when his period of power would expire, and made preparations for his re-election."

( The army was his; and the people being more and more brought under subjection, Francia now approached the object of his ambition. In 1817 he caused himself to

be proclaimed *supreme and perpetual Dictator* by a docile Congress ; and from that time his great aim was to make the people tremble—to give them an awful idea of his power, and to impose respect for his person by the inauguration of a reign of terror.)

(He imprisoned or killed all those who caused him displeasure, and his old colleague in the consulate was one of his first victims.) Was he really guilty? Had he contrived a plot against the person of the Dictator? No one could tell, but he was put in irons with his accomplices. A letter, secretly addressed to Yegros while in prison, fell into the hands of Francia, who pretended that it contained proof of the conspiracy.

“He began,” write Rengger and Longchamps, page 92, “by shooting the bearer of the letter and interrogating the prisoners ; and when he failed in obtaining a confession, he put them to the torture. By this means new accomplices were discovered, who in their turn denounced others. . . . The examination to which the prisoners were subjected, was conducted as follows:—Every day the Dictator gave a series of written questions to his first secretary, who bore the name of Fiel de Fecho. The latter put them to the accused in the presence of an officer and clerk, and the answers were at once reported to the Dictator, who, in case he found them unsatisfactory, caused the prisoner to be transferred to the *Chamber of Truth*, as he named the place where the torture was applied. There he received from a hundred to two hundred lashes on the back with a cowhide, after which he was re-interrogated. This operation was sometimes repeated every two or three days upon the same individual until the Dictator obtained satisfactory responses, which were then signed by the prisoner. Some

of these unfortunate creatures thus received, at different periods, so many as five hundred lashes. Nevertheless, it frequently occurred that no confession could be extracted; and one, a domestic, from whom they desired to draw a denunciation against his master, fell a victim to this cruel treatment without uttering a word. On the conclusion of the examination the prisoners were led out to execution, and shot in batches of from four to eight at a time. Though crushed by the sufferings they had endured, all died with the greatest courage, and some of them with cries of *Viva la Patria!* A young man, named Montiel, who had escaped death, even raised himself in order to invite a fresh discharge. One alone, of all these victims, Don Juan Pedro Caballero, committed suicide with the view of avoiding the torture and his inevitable doom. Upon the walls of his cell these words were found inscribed with charcoal: '*I know that suicide is contrary to the laws both of God and man, but the tyrant of my country shall not feed upon my blood.*' The execution over, the bodies remained stretched upon the spot where they had fallen before the residence of the Dictator; and only at night were the relations permitted to remove them, and to rescue the corpses, already decomposing in consequence of the excessive heat of the climate, from the vultures that had hovered over them all the day.

“For these executions, as in those of a later period, the Dictator himself furnished the necessary ammunition. So great was his mistrust that the army was only served with the cartridges absolutely requisite for the safe custody of the more important posts, such as the prisons and the powder magazines. He also doled out the munitions with so sparing a hand that only three men



were detailed for an execution, and upon more than one occasion the victims had to be finished with thrusts of the bayonet. Yet he was the witness of those scenes of horror, the executions invariably taking place under his windows, and often in his presence. These spectacles recurred almost every two months up to the middle of the year 1822, and thus as many as forty victims perished. It is right to state the Dictator spared the lives of many individuals who had had a knowledge of the plot, without taking any active part; but he left them to languish in the prisons of the State—a doom worse than death itself. In this manner he treated the wife of one of the conspirators, who, after the arrest of her husband, had resolved to resuscitate the plot. Though discovered and placed in irons, she daily continued to exclaim—‘*Had I a thousand lives I would risk them all for the destruction of this monster!*’”

“An authority thus suspicious,\* would naturally effect a change in the character of the unfortunate people subject to its oppression. (If the torture occasionally extracted confessions, it more frequently provoked unjust accusations. Even the members of the same family sometimes denounced each other while undergoing its agonies. Espionage, extensively organised, enveloped the inhabitants, and penetrated even to the bosom of the domestic circle. Thenceforward all confidence was destroyed, friendly intercourse ceased, and every one isolated himself, lest a word innocently uttered, but interpreted by hatred, should arm against him a hand ever ready to strike.)

“As an instance of this, a woman jealous of her lover,

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\* Demersay's *Biographie Michaud*, page 620. Hachette.

accused him of having used expressions offensive to the Dictator, who, without any other proof, condemned him to receive a hundred lashes ; but the accused, indignant at the outrage which awaited him, asked rather to be shot. He was immediately executed.

“ When a man was thrown into one of those horrible prisons (which the space at our command does not permit us to describe), he rarely knew the cause of his arrest, and no one was better informed than himself. As to the duration of the punishment, it was always unlimited. The prisoner either died in his chains, or, after long years of cruel suffering, Francia gave orders for his execution. This was his way of making room for others. During the period of his incarceration the family of the victim was as if under an anathema. Its members moved as in a desert ; for all avoided them lest they should bring upon their heads the suspicion or the anger of the despot. The same profound terror reigned in the country districts, where his agents committed the greatest excesses, and revenged themselves for their own baseness and servility towards the Dictator, by inflicting the most odious vexations upon the populace. To Francia nothing was unknown ; but he tolerated these acts, which were as pledges of their fidelity.”

The conspiracy of Yegros rendered access to him still more difficult. From that time he beheld in those who sought to approach him only traitors and conspirators. Woe to him who was found in his path ! Imprisonment or hard labour was his immediate fate. The Dictator punished everything—the most trifling accident as well as the most unpremeditated fault. Thus, his horse being startled at the sight of an old cask, he caused the occupant of the house before which it was placed to be

arrested. Having been apprised by the information of a spy that conspirators had conceived the design of assassinating him while walking abroad—and the narrow and tortuous streets of the city, together with the orange-trees which lined them, seeming to favour such an attempt—he at once caused them to be removed. The greater number of the trees were cut down, without any regard to the shade they afforded, so useful in the midst of the burning sands of the capital, and the facades, and often entire houses, were demolished to open up new streets and widen the old ones. He also fitted up a residence in a barrack situated outside the city, and occupied it at intervals, in order that no one might know where he passed the night.

“A woman of the people,” write Rengger and Longchamps, “who, not knowing how to gain access to the Dictator, had approached him through the window of his cabinet, was sent to prison for her audacity; and her husband, who had no knowledge even of this pretended offence shared her punishment. (The Dictator was so enraged by ~~this~~<sup>the</sup> want of respect for his person, that he gave the functionary placed before his door the following direction:—‘If any passer-by dares to fixedly regard the front of my house, thou shalt shoot him; if thou needest it, here is provision for a second shot (he had brought him a second musket charged with ball); and if thou missest again, I shall not miss thee.’ This order passed from mouth to mouth like wildfire throughout the city, and from that time people took care not to pass before this redoubtable palace, or if they could not avoid passing it, they at least did so with eyes fixed upon the ground. . . .”

He soon came to live as deeply enveloped in mystery

as the grand priests of Asia. He was as unapproachable as a divinity. Hidden in the recesses of his palace, nobody could penetrate to his presence. He only went out in the evening, and his progress was marked by a solitude. At the moment he quitted his palace the clock of the cathedral sounded, and all the inhabitants, seized with affright, hastily retreated within doors. If one of them, by chance too late, was encountered by the *cortège* of the Dictator, he cast himself upon his knees, with his face to the earth, never daring to contemplate the features of *El Supremo*, and awaiting the chastisement he had incurred in an agony of fear. Sometimes he was carried to prison ; more frequently he was let off with a few blows with the flat of a sabre, heartily applied by the soldiers of the escort.

With a people habituated to servitude even excesses serve the despot and augment his power. They have lost conscience, and are no longer sensible of their abasement. They run in the van of servility. ( Francia possessed, in addition, the art of flattering and exalting the masses ; and, having inherited the secret of the Jesuits, he described foreigners to them as inferior beings, living miserably in deserts, and desirous of throwing themselves upon Paraguay, the most fertile country in the world. The Paraguayans believed in the superiority of their country, and in the covetousness of foreigners, whom they regarded as enemies. The Spaniards were especially hateful. They recalled to mind having seen them, some years before, disposing of the most lucrative places, and raising tithes and imposts. One of the surest means of ruling this ignorant mass was to pander to their prejudices and rancours. Francia did not fail to do so. He cruelly persecuted the Spaniards who remained in

Paraguay, and with great cleverness disseminated the report that Spain had concocted a plan against the independence of Paraguay. One day he published the following decree :—

“ Seeing that it becomes more and more urgent to anticipate the effects of the pernicious influence, foolish opposition, and unjust suggestions of the Spaniards of Europe, and in order to consolidate the good order, tranquillity and general security, I order that the said Spaniards assemble in the Plaza de la Revolucion *within two hours* after the promulgation of this decree. *A delay of six hours will be given to individuals at the distance of a league.* In default, they shall be immediately shot.”

Hardly had these unfortunate people mustered in the square, when they were seized and crowded into narrow prisons, whence they only came forth, at the end of eighteen months afterwards, on the payment of 150,000 piastres.

These orders were executed with a refinement of cruelty almost incompatible with a belief in the sanity of the tyrant. One of the Spanish prisoners, Don José Carissimo, having been placed in irons which penetrated the flesh, and the fact coming to the knowledge of the Dictator, his reply was : “ If he wants other irons, let him get them forged.” The wife of the prisoner had therefore to perform the sad commission of causing manacles to be forged for the person of her husband. Others were subjected to still worse treatment, and some paid with their lives for a word, an allusion, or a criticism. Francia had evicted the brethren of a Franciscan convent, for the purpose of converting the building into a barracks. A Spaniard was so imprudent as to say that the Franciscans had left, but that Francia’s turn

would come very soon. This observation was reported; the Dictator ordered the Spaniard to be brought into his presence, and thus addressed him:—"I do not know when I shall leave, but I know one thing, that you will go before me." In fact, he caused him to be shot on the following day, and confiscated all his goods in such manner that his widow and her children, though creoles, were reduced to mendicity. From that day Dr. Francia identified himself with the State, declaring whoever dared to oppose his will, or *even to blame his acts*, a traitor to his country. )

The foreigner was repulsed. One city alone was assigned to the merchants, and the exchange of products was effected through agents authorised by the government. The Dictator dreaded the dissemination of liberal ideas; and if a foreigner, impelled by a love of inquiry, chanced to pass the frontier, he could not again leave the country. He was retained a prisoner; and such was the fate of the Englishman, Dr. Portet, of the two Swiss physicians, Messrs. Rengger and Longchamps, of a Frenchman named Escoffier, and Humboldt's companion, the naturalist Bompland. The last had not even passed into Paraguay. "He had reached the ancient Missions of the Jesuits, and found himself on the territory claimed by Paraguay against the Argentine Republic. The learned traveller was quite aware of this fact, and he therefore addressed a letter to Dr. Francia, informing him of his presence on that point, and giving him the most satisfactory explanations respecting his intentions there to manufacture maté or South American tea with the aid of Indians he had engaged in his service.

"But the tyrant furious at the idea of competition in a branch of commerce, the monopoly of which he desired

to secure at every price, immediately despatched four hundred men, who crossed the river during the night, and massacred a number of the surprised and unarmed servants of M. Bompland, who himself received a sabre-cut in the head in the midst of this savage attack. This horrible occurrence took place on the 3rd of December, 1821. Two days afterwards he was carried with his feet in irons into this inhospitable country, destined to be his prison for so long a period. Confined in the old Mission of Santa Maria, the friend of Humboldt lived for long years upon his own resources, venerated by the inhabitants, whom he assisted with his counsels both as a physician and agriculturist. At length on the 2nd of February, 1831, he received notice that his Excellency *El Supremo* left him at liberty to depart from Paraguay. Thus ended M. Bompland's motiveless captivity, after having broken his career and cost him his fortune."

These acts of violence against foreigners remained unpunished. Paraguay was so distant that European powers did not much care about taking steps to chastise a despot thus isolated in the centre of the American continent. Nevertheless, in 1824, M. Grandsire, a member of the Institute, courageously offered to go and demand the liberation of Bompland. On arriving at the frontier of Paraguay, he sought an authorization to proceed to Assumption. Francia replied:—"This is not the moment to permit Frenchmen to enter America." M. Grandsire prosecuted his useless attempt no further. Subsequently the English Consul at Buenos Ayres wrote to the Dictator in favour of the captive; but unfortunately the address of his letter did not contain the word *Supremo*, and Francia flatly refused in an insolent com-

munication, bearing the superscription : *A Parish, Consul a Buenos Ayres.*

The Dictator was careful not to leave his subjects in ignorance of these details, and the flattered people consequently imagined that Paraguay was the most powerful of nations, and that Dr. Francia was no less formidable abroad than at home.

( As to the interior *régime*, Francia religiously perpetuated the system practised by the Jesuits. The State continued to be a producer. The land was cultivated on its account, and it undertook the exchange of products as in the days of the Fathers. ) When the Dictator needed labourers for the harvests, he organised a press-gang, and seized upon men, beasts, waggons, everything in fact, that passed along the public thoroughfares. Every citizen was, and is to-day, subjected to compulsory labour ; and the period during which their service shall be enforced is undetermined and unlimited save by the caprice of the reigning master.

Francia soon perceived that an absolute sequestration was impossible, and even deprived him of the most indispensable resources. He then admitted certain foreigners to receive the products of Paraguay in exchange for munitions and arms, and afterwards Itapua was opened to the Brazilians. Merchandise could only enter this little port by special authorisation, and the Paraguayans were not permitted to approach this solitary market without an express permission of the Dictator. The prices of products were arbitrarily fixed at an exorbitant figure by the Dictator, the result of which was that foreign merchants were compelled to increase the price of their goods in like proportion.

The imported merchandise was also resold by him to



his subjects, and he constituted himself the sole purveyor of the commodities of Europe, retailing them in shops guarded by his soldiers. To prevent all competition, and to maintain the prices by limiting the supply, he took care to mete out but little at a time, and each individual was in addition only entitled to a specified quantity of any article. Thus, for instance, he expressly prohibited the sale of more than two reams of paper to one person. By this monopoly, the Dictator stifled all the germs of agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial development; but he had provisions, arms, and munitions for his soldiers. To him this was the only matter of importance.)

Agriculture of necessity languished. Encountering a ruinous competitor in the State, the proprietors confined themselves almost exclusively to growing sufficient for their own wants, so that a single bad year produced disastrous scarcity. The State itself also indicated the mode of cultivation, and the order of the Supreme Dictator had to be obeyed. Ignorance and the spirit of routine were so rooted in the people, that they rendered unhesitating compliance even when the procedure marked out by the Government was certain to prove injurious. Some of the injunctions were wholesome; for example, the habit of gathering two crops yearly is to be attributed to an arbitrary decree of the Dictator; but how frequently have the measures imposed been productive of the most deplorable consequences! "Thus, in 1837, the cattle having in some provinces been attacked by an epidemic which manifested itself by the appearance of tumours, he sent soldiers with instructions to kill all the beasts, and these directions were literally.

executed!"\* Thousands of families were ruined, and the rearing of cattle never fully recovered from the results of the fatal blow.

As for manufacturing industry, it no longer even existed. Only a few stuffs and clumsy implements were with difficulty produced in the country. But, in times of urgent necessity, the Dictator knew how to improvise workmen and teach them those arts of which they were ignorant. The means he employed are worthy of notice. He required belts for his soldiers: no one could make them. "Having prepared a gallows, he threatened to hang thereon a shoemaker who had failed to fashion the belts according to his desire. By this process blacksmiths were converted into locksmiths, armourers, and cutlers, shoemakers into saddlers, goldsmiths into founders, and masons into architects. That their zeal might not be permitted to cool, he condemned a blacksmith to penal servitude who had badly constructed the sight-piece of a cannon."†

Everything was done by rule. The citizens were divested of all power of initiation. If they became proprietors, even their goods were subject to the arbitrary caprices of the Dictator. Under pretext of embellishing the capital, Francia "pulled down several hundred houses without compensating the owners, or troubling himself as to their fate or that of their families. Each was compelled to demolish his own house, and if he lacked the means, convicts were employed to do the work, and afterwards carried away what they thought proper."‡

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\* *Vide* Santiago Arcos' *La Plata*, p. 563.

† *Vide* Azara, vol. ii., p. 70.

‡ Azara, vol. ii., p. 148.

For more than a quarter of a century the people of Paraguay were curbed by the iron hand of Francia, and, with the most incredible resignation, endured this bloody tyranny.\* Francia felt the approach of death. His sanguinary humour became even more violent. Arbitrary arrests and executions followed each other in still quicker succession. "On the 19th of September, 1840, Estigarribia, the only doctor in the country, was summoned to the palace. † He found the Dictator so ill, that he dared, while administering a medicament, to advise him to send for a priest. The Dictator launched into a tirade of abuse against the imprudent apothecary, and God only knows what might have been his fate had not the rapid progress of the disease deprived him of his speech, which suddenly failed him the same evening. On the morning of the 20th the Commandants of the Barracks presented themselves to receive the orders of the master. Estigarribia, who had not quitted him, had to reply that the Dictator was too unwell to speak, and that they might proceed as usual." †

"His life had almost passed away while in the very act of committing a crime. Being suddenly seized with a paroxysm of rage against his doctor, he rose, armed himself with a sabre, and was about to strike the trembling Estigarribia, already resigned to an apparently inevitable fate, when his strength gave way, and he fell in a fainting condition.) The cries of the barber attracted the sergeant of the guard, who refused to

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\* An American traveller, Commander J. Page, assures us, in his work entitled "La Plata, the Argentine Confederation, and Paraguay," p. 303, that a list of fifty persons shot for political causes, was found amongst the papers of Francia.

† Santiago Arcos. La Plata, p. 564.

approach until he had received the order from the mouth of the Dictator. 'But he will never speak again,' said the mulatto. 'It does not matter,' replied the soldier, faithful to the regulations; 'if he recovers he will punish me for having disobeyed him.' At last he was carried dying to his bed, and at nine o'clock on the following morning he expired, in the eighty-third year of his age."\*

It was not until three o'clock that Patinos, the secretary of the Dictator, decided to sound the funeral bell, which announced to the people the death of the perpetual Dictator of Paraguay. Far from bursting into transports of joy, the crowd manifested great consternation, and the last obsequies of the tyrant were celebrated in the midst of general mourning. The people shed tears, and divided the garments of Francia as precious relics. Enfranchised by the death of his master, the slave regretted his chains. In presence of this mournful spectacle conscience is confounded, and hatred of the tyrant is further augmented by the pity felt for this unfortunate people, so abased as to delight in servitude.

( The system of Dr. Francia, it is sad to think, has had its apologists. He is especially commended because, "in the midst of neighbouring revolutions, he taught his people the difficult art of obedience." † Yes, this people knows how to obey! The Jesuits and Francia have taught them this *difficult art* so thoroughly that they will long be unable to pass from the control of a master! )

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\* Demersay's *Histoire Physique, Economique, et Politique du Paraguay*, vol. ii. p. 390.

† A. de Brossard. *Considerations Historiques et Politiques sur les Republiques de la Plata*. Guillaumin, Paris.

## VI.

## LOPEZ I.

The secretary, Patinos, very nearly secured the succession to the Dictator. The very evening of the death of Francia he invited the commanders of the barracks of Assumption, who, at the conclusion of a banquet, improvised a provisional junta, composed of all the guests. Patinos naturally reserved the presidency for himself. The discharge of cannon, agreeably to the custom the Dictator had borrowed from the Jesuits, convoked the people upon the square, who learned without emotion that they had five masters in place of one. Patinos calculated on his business habits to render his will paramount, and at the end of some days spoke to his colleagues of the necessity of re-establishing the dictatorship. The officers, who had carried the manners of the barracks into the palace of the government, and were passing their days in idleness and debauchery at the public cost, found that power had its advantages, and felt themselves menaced by the proposition of the secretary. They began to laugh in his face, and showed him that, being armed and having the soldiers at their disposition, they were the most powerful. Patinos was stricken with mortal fear and allowed himself to be seized. The former executor of the cruelties of Francia, thinking the same tortures he had inflicted upon so many victims would be applied to himself, committed suicide by hanging in his prison. The officers continued their career of gaiety and dissipation, until the scandal became so great as to incite an honest sergeant named Duré to seize them with a handful of

soldiers, and instal a new junta. Possessing little ambition, Duré excluded himself. The population, always docile, welcomed the government of the morning as it had welcomed that of the evening. Some days after, a discharge of cannon again caused the inhabitants of the capital to assemble to hear the announcement that an officer, Don Roque Alonzo, had subverted the second junta and formed a third. Better advised than Duré, Alonzo was careful to reserve a seat in the government, and to secure the position of commandant-at-arms. The illiterate soldiers who composed the junta required a secretary; they engaged Don Carlos Lopez, a lawyer—intelligent, learned, and ambitious—who took charge of everything. (He personally appointed the functionaries, taking the precaution to show them that they depended upon him alone. The administration was very soon filled with his creatures. It was requisite to obtain the support of the clergy, and Dr. Basilio Lopez, curate of Piraya, and brother of the Secretary of the Junta, was called to Assumption. A few intelligent advocates, among them Molas and Zalduando, were displeased with the ambition of Lopez; but these he got rid of by casting them into prison. The Congress was then convened.) There were no elections in the capital. The government designated the deputies: it was simpler. In the country the mode of procedure was as follows:—"Lopez crowded the administration, the magistracy, and military commands of districts with his police. These sent him deputies of his liking, who arrived in the capital, some in bullock-carts, others on horseback, or on bare feet, carrying on their heads the provisions for the session." The assembly met in the Church of San Francisco, which was contiguous to a

barrack full of soldiers. At the slightest signal from Alonzo, the commandant-at-arms, an entire regiment might approach; and, under pretext of doing honours to the *Soberana Corporacion*, a detachment was stationed in the sacristy. Lopez presided over the assembly. He retired for an instant, from modesty, in order that an orator might read a report written by Lopez himself, and which was only an apology for the acts of Lopez. When he again entered the Church he was received with applause; but nevertheless a deputy, Juan Bautista Rivarola, pronounced the word constitution. At this word Lopez, who had resumed his position as president, interrupted the speaker, declaring that the time had not yet come to give a constitution, and that the menaced country had still need of a strong government. Lopez had scarcely finished, when an officer, Lieutenant Bazan, entered the church, sabre in hand, and, indicating Rivarola with his finger, cried to his soldiers in Guarani, "Kill him! kill him! peyuca! peyuca!" The officer was restrained, the Deputy remained mute on his seat; but this opportune demonstration produced the effect desired by Lopez—namely, the unanimous election by the Congress of D. Carlos Lopez as First Consul, and of D. Roque Alonzo as Second Consul.

The comedy so cleverly played by Francia was repeated by Lopez, who utilised the consular period to the profit of his ambition. He removed all obstacles out of his path. He tried his strength against one of the idols of the people,—against Sergeant Duré, whose probity had disdained power. A solemn decree had proclaimed that he had merited well of his country. Under the most futile pretext he was arrested and confined in a fortress of the Gran Chaco; there he pro-

tested against the injustice of which he was the victim and demanded to be tried; he was carried back to Assumption and immediately shot without judgment or investigation. Francia could not have done better. The people, however, were indifferent to the execution of this honest citizen.

How to get rid of Alonzo, who had the command of the army? It was dangerous to declare war against his rival. Lopez, an indefatigable worker, applied himself to the task of concentrating all business in his own hands, and made a great show of perfect disinterestedness, the more effectively to cover his ambition and to flatter the national pride of the people. At a Congress convoked in 1842, he presented the Act of Independence of Paraguay, in which he introduced a solemn declaration that the Republic of Paraguay must never become the patrimony of a family. Was it his design to dissimulate his covetousness? It is more probable that at this period his ambition did not anticipate his becoming the head of a dynasty, and that he simply wished to depose his colleague. In two years Alonzo was completely lost sight of, and Lopez, judging the time propitious, assembled a Congress on the 13th of March, 1844, to vote a Constitution under the name of "*A Law for the Establishment of the Political Administration of Paraguay.*"

This fundamental law had for its result the substitution of a definitive and legal despotism for a temporary and accidental tyranny. It erected "an irresponsible power on unlimited bases, giving the sanction of legality and conditions of stability to an odious *régime*, which one had hoped to see disappear with the despot by whom it was inaugurated. This *régime* ceased, therefore, to be



the work of an individual, the result of exceptional circumstances, to pass into a state of permanent and definitive existence." Further on we will analyse this strange Republican Constitution, in which the word liberty is not once pronounced. Submitted to the Congress on the 13th of March, 1844, it was adopted on the 13th of March, 1844. The Deputies scarcely waited to hear all the articles read. One day alone sufficed to vote the Constitution of Paraguay by acclamation, and without discussion. It is manifest that Paraguay has for long practised that famous theory which regards as lost the time devoted by parliamentary bodies to political discussions.

Lopez was naturally elected, still by acclamation, President for ten years. He retained the supreme power until his death in 1862, and transmitted it to his son—by testament! Could it have been otherwise? Every charter granted is converted to the use and profit of the grantor. This is a proposition which can only be contested by the simple partisans of a system of enlightened despotism. To such especially the history of Paraguay affords instruction.

At the death of Francia, Paraguay, isolated and sequestered, was stifling behind her frontiers. She had no outlets and therefore she had no industry. Lopez perceived that it was time to break down the Chinese wall erected around the country—that it was a question of life or death! He permitted the foreigners retained as prisoners to depart, and at the same time opened the port of El Pilar to commerce. Rosas, then Dictator of the Argentine Confederation, sought to compel Paraguay, formerly a province of the Vice-Royalty of Buenos Ayres,

to enter the union of the Platine States, and determined to close the rivers to foreign commerce for the purpose of preventing all mercantile transactions with Paraguay, which he desired to take by dint of famine. Lopez thus by chance found himself obliged to become a partizan of the free navigation of the rivers. Occupying provinces situated on the upper affluents of La Plata, and possessing no other means of communication save the rivers for the conveyance of the products of those regions, Brazil made common cause with Paraguay. The Brazilian Empire secured a double advantage by such an alliance, for Paraguay was necessitated to join with her in demanding the opening of the great fluvial way which extends from Cuyaba to Buenos Ayres. What especially determined Brazil to this course, and what is to-day the basis of her policy in the Plate, was the wish to have no common frontier with Argentine Confederation. The southern provinces are the only vulnerable points of the empire, and they have long excited the desire of Rosas and the Confederation. Brazil has therefore always endeavoured to diminish the points of contact, and, as a natural consequence, the occasions of conflict with the Argentine Republic. It was to avoid the danger of its immediate vicinity to the Confederation that the Imperial Government recognised the independence of Paraguay in 1844, and insisted in 1828 that Monte Video should become an independent State rather than a province of the Argentine Republic. These two little States are the "fenders" which deaden the shocks between Brazil and the Confederation; and this geographical consideration is the best safeguard of the independence of both Paraguay and Uruguay.

Lopez merely complied with the dictates of necessity in demanding the free navigation of La Plata and its affluents. He was far, however, from repudiating the ideas of Francia with regard to foreigners. An absolute sequestration would have brought the country to ruin and destruction. He, therefore, permitted foreigners to enter for commercial purposes, but clogged this permission with restrictions of every description. The Captain of the Port of Assumption was ordered to read to every foreigner arriving at the capital a series of regulations containing the most vexatious requirements. The following are a few of the prescriptions imposed by these regulations :—

“ Traffic in the streets is at all times forbidden one hour after the sounding of the signal for retreat. Those who are obliged by necessity to leave their houses must be the bearers of lanterns.

“ The crews of foreign ships are bound to go on board at sunset, unless exempted by a special permission furnished on demand of the captain of the vessel by the authorities of the port.

“ *If any person happen to meet the SUPREME GOVERNMENT, he shall stand still, with his hat in his hand, at the same time presenting face until he shall have passed.*

“ It is forbidden to gallop, to go at an amble in the streets, or to mount a horse on the footpath, under pain of twenty days’ imprisonment. In case of recurrence of the offence, the accused will in addition be mulct in a penalty of ten hard piastres.

“ The concession of passports for abroad belongs to the President alone. Their price is two piastres for natives and six piastres for foreigners.”

Certainly some of those measures are no longer enforced, but the greater number are still in vigour; and the Government is careful to publish them from time to time.

Lopez, then, so far as was practicable, continued to abide by the traditions of Francia. (Access to the country, it is true, was no longer withheld from the foreigner; but it was surrounded with such formidable restrictions and vexatious precautions, as really amounted to a prohibition. Francia at least avowed his hate frankly; Lopez hypocritically concealed it under apparent and deceitful concessions. In his heart he detested the foreigner because he detested liberty, and he adopted the most stringent means to preserve his people from the contagion of liberal ideas.) His secret thought was more than once betrayed. He vindicated for Paraguay the right of free navigation against Rosas, but nevertheless refused to take part in the crusade organised for the deposition of the tyrant of Buenos Ayres. In the eyes of Lopez, there was a danger yet more formidable for Paraguay than the closing of the rivers—namely, an alliance with the revolutionists of Monte Video and Buenos Ayres, and the exposure of his Paraguayan soldiers to the peril of hearing the word liberty pronounced. Brazil vainly solicited the co-operation of President Lopez, and Paraguay, which made no sacrifices for the independence of Spanish America, in nothing contributed to the fall of the tyranny of Rosas. It remained perfectly aloof from participation in those two important events.

It was Lopez, however, who especially profited by the victory of Monte Caseros, the first result of which

was the free navigation of La Plata and its tributaries. The Argentine Confederation recognized the independence of Paraguay, and opened the ports of the Parana to its flag. In 1853 Lopez signed treaties of commerce, amity, and navigation at Assumption with the minister plenipotentiaries of France, England, Sardinia, and the United States. The dream of Paraguay will now be realised; the narrow circle which confined it will be broken; Lopez, as the corollary to freedom of navigation, will no doubt proclaim liberty in mercantile transactions, invite the foreigner, and with the foreigner, progress and civilization? Far from doing all this, he maintained the absurd vexations imposed on foreigners in Paraguay, and the free navigation so ardently and constantly demanded, was itself a cause of fear. His sole thought was to weaken, to regulate and contend against its consequences. He constructed a formidable battery of two hundred cannons at Humaita, on the River Paraguay, which it commanded. Every vessel must pass under the crossed fire of this artillery, so that by an order of the President, the navigation can be instantaneously interrupted. Further up, the bank of the river is covered with fortresses, and the most harassing regulations were and are imposed on the navigation of the Paraguay. In a word, Lopez did everything in his power to restrict the commerce of the Brazilian provinces above Paraguay, and to deprive Brazil of the advantages of the free navigation of the affluents of the Plata. He feared the incessant passage of the citizens of a free country as a bad example for the Paraguayans; he accepted treaties and outlets for his merchandise, but his aversion to the foreigner increased; and in order to preserve Paraguay as much as possible from his impure

contact, he barricaded himself and the country behind the cannons of Humaita.\*

“Before, as after the treaty of 1853, Lopez always treated the foreigner as an enemy. In 1845, a scientific commission, headed by M. de Castelnau, arrived at Port Olympo, and solicited authorisation to explore the country. The President responded with a brutal refusal. England had previously attempted to obtain information respecting the resources of Paraguay, and to this end had sent out an agent, Mr. Gordon, accompanied by a naturalist and a secretary. This agent was

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\* The following is a description of this fortress by an eye witness:—“At a little distance from its mouth (about six leagues), and at 27° 4' of latitude, the Rio Paraguay makes an abrupt bend, which has received the name of Vuelta de Humaita. At this point the bed of the river is very narrow, being not more than 200 metres in width. The great depth of the water enables vessels of considerable tonnage to coast along the left bank, on which for the whole extent of the Vuelta (nearly 1,500 metres), a series of batteries have been constructed, some of them casemated and others *à barbette*, and unenclosed at the top, the whole being united by a pallisade covered with gabions and pierced with embrasures for the reception of flying cannon. These defences, to which the Government attaches a perhaps exaggerated importance, in face of the powerful means of destruction and resistance possessed by ironclads, is every day being extended and strengthened by additional armaments. One can count a hundred (M. Martin de Moussy says a hundred and twenty, but in any case the number has been greatly increased since 1856) of the pieces mounted on the batteries, some of them, about eighty, having come from England. On the second line of defences, and in the enclosure circumscribed by the fortifications, a number of buildings are erected for the accommodation of the different services of an entire army, quarter-general, parcs, magazines, hospital, &c. Finally a church has been built, and its consecration to Saint Borromó on the 1st of January, 1861, was the occasion of grand fêtes and reviews in the presence of the President of the Republic.

the victim of a misadventure which clearly exhibited the hatred of Lopez against Europeans :—

“ Informed,” says Demersay, “ of the frightful ravages which the small-pox was making in the country, Mr. Gordon undertook to propagate vaccination by means of the virus in his possession. A family was inoculated under the auspices of a rather ill-reputed individual, who professed to be a physician. He had not time to renew this attempt, for the Consular Government, so soon as it learned what had passed, caused the doctor to be cast into prison loaded with irons, and *sequestered the vaccinated family in a barrack*. Mr. Gordon, justly offended at such extraordinary proceedings, and grieved at the punishments of which he was the cause, complained loudly; but to the letters and to the reproaches he verbally addressed to them, the Consuls replied, *that the moment for propagating vaccination did not appear opportune*, that this preservative had long been in their power without their having judged it politic to use it, that nothing guaranteed the quality of the virus he had brought with him, &c. In short, as an unanswerable argument against his complaints, the British representative received his *congé*, and was given one day to take his departure. On the day fixed, Mr. Gordon had to freight a ship for Buenos Ayres at an exorbitant price, and, as the wind was contrary, he went to pass the night in the Gran Chaco opposite the city.”

The aversion of Lopez to the foreigner was never, however, better demonstrated than in the attempt at colonization in 1855 :—

“ D. Solano Lopez, the son of the President of the Republic, having made a voyage to France, conceived the project of sending to the states of his father a part





to a judge of the peace. A strong garrison were bound to protect the inhabitants against the Indians and, in cases of need, as was very soon discovered, to subdue the colonists themselves. The too credulous emigrants were soon undeceived. The enterprise projected by the son displeased the father, who had no desire for its success. The region where the colonists were located was unproductive, and their labours barren. Three times the fields were sown, but all in vain. They were compelled to purchase the implements of husbandry and also the cattle he had promised them. In order to supply the want of provisions they were forced to sell their goods, and to appeal for succour to the Consulate. Vexation and ill-treatment were the punishment of every complaint and infraction of the rules. Some of the colonists then attempted to escape. *Seventeen were arrested, put in irons*, and their names having been erased from the list of those entitled to concessions, were banished into the interior, under the surveillance of the police. The President believing himself secure, on account of the distance, did not disquiet himself about the contracts he had sanctioned, and wished to treat the colonists as subjects of Paraguay. He claimed to prevent their enrolment at the Consulate, and refused to allow them either to deposit goods there, or to be married before the Consul, M. Lucien de Brayer, who fruitlessly attempted to moderate the proceedings of Lopez. Far from regarding his remonstrances, the President *threatened the colonist with death* who should be taken in the act of attempting to escape, and indeed *two were killed by the soldiers* the moment they took to flight. Experience condemned the enterprise to speedy dissolution, stifled as it was by the oppressive and arbi-

trary use of authority on the one hand and the irritation of the colonists, heightened by misfortune and injustice, on the other. The President visited the settlement at the end of December, 1855, addressed the colonists, and invited those who desired to depart to make declaration to that effect. *They all presented themselves*, and were thereupon informed that they *ceased to have any right to provisions*, that eight days were allowed them to leave the colony, and *fifty to repay the cost of passage, sustenance, &c.* It was impossible to comply with these demands, and the iniquity of expelling the settlers from their lands was especially odious. They were compelled, however, to yield to force, and the colonists, on the expiration of the fifty days, had to present themselves before the Judge of the Peace of the district, who employed them according to their professions. They were forced to work in the brickfields and iron mines, *in the company of convicts and the slaves of the State.* The fourth of their wages was retained for their liberation. In the streets of Assumption, where the President placed them in charge of his inferior agents, their misfortunes were aggravated by sickness and dissension. On hearing of these barbarities, *the French Government issued an official circular, prohibiting the departure of emigrants for Paraguay*, but too late to prevent some inhabitants of Gers, who had already set out in the month of February. A note was at the same time addressed to the French Consul, instructing him to remonstrate against the conduct of the President, which he did on the 12th of May, 1856. A little squadron was even on the point of leaving for the waters of Paraguay, and was only prevented because Lopez, being intimidated, renounced his rigorous measures,

though not without stipulating for the repayment of his advances at the rate of three piastres per head for the labourers, and six piastres for the artizans. A decree on the 13th of June authorised the departure of the colonists, most of whom proceeded to the Argentine provinces of Corrientes, Parana, and Buenos Ayres, where they hoped to meet with a humane reception, and a just reward for their labours. Even those who, having found employment, desired to remain in virtue of the treaty with France, *were ordered to quit the country*, and the colony of New Bordeaux, left nothing save a warning and name of sorrowful remembrance."

To exclude the foreigner! The Dictators of Paraguay have transmitted with their power this invariable rule of conduct, which has not a little aided in the maintenance of their despotism.

Emigrants from Europe carry into distant regions a lively sentiment of liberty, which is gradually confounded with the remembrance of their native country. They love to speak of the land of their birth, to eulogise and exaggerate its advantages, to compare its institutions with those under their immediate notice, and the comparison (often indeed at the expense of truth) is invariably in its favour. They readily criticise, even while complying with them, the manners and customs of their adopted country. Respect of authority is the least fault of an emigrant. If a regulation interferes with his independence, he of necessity obeys, but revenges himself with a *bon mot*, or a sarcasm. (In a free country the railing discourses of the emigrant produce no inconvenience, but they are dangerous to despotism. The people acquire a liking for these criticisms, and by degrees lose that fear of the master which in the eyes of

a tyrant is the most important basis of Government. The tyrant above all dreads the evening recitations of the emigrant, when, in the presence of his fellow-workmen, he speaks of the revolutions he has witnessed, or in which perhaps he has been an actor.) His love of country endows him with an irresistible eloquence. Separated from it by thousands of miles, he recounts with enthusiasm the glorious deeds of the land he has left, never perhaps to return, and communicates to his hearer the same emotions with which he himself is transported. Without doubt the adventurer becomes an apostle.

It was to avoid this peril that Lopez treated the colonists of New Bordeaux as enemies, causing some to be killed by his soldiers and driving the others beyond the frontiers of Paraguay. In the exchange of diplomatic notes to which this lamentable occurrence gave occasion, Lopez heaped abuse upon the unfortunate Frenchmen he had so unworthily deceived.

It was further a confirmed habit of Lopez to manifest irritating hauteur in his relations with foreign agents. In 1853 the Government of Brazil sent a minister plenipotentiary to Assumption, in order to treat with that of Paraguay on a boundary question. Senhor Pereira Leal, in an interview with the President, explained the reasons upon which the Brazilian pretensions were based. Lopez was seated opposite the Ambassador; suddenly interrupting him, he said: *Mente usted* (you lie), and this brutal expression he repeated three times. The Minister of Brazil at once bowed, and pretended not to have heard the outrage; but when Lopez, speaking in his turn, had replied to the first argument presented by Senhor Pereira Leal, the Ambassador rose,

and respectfully bowing to Lopez, said: *Mente V. E.* (your Excellency lies). The negotiations were broken off, a Brazilian fleet presented itself at the mouth of the Rio Paraguay, and Lopez decided to sign the treaty.

The United States had sent a Consul to Assumption, Mr. Hopkins, who wished to establish workshops for the manufacture of cigars and to found a navigation company. Lopez did not desire to openly quarrel with the United States. He appeared to encourage the projects of the American, and even advanced funds; but he very soon provoked difficulties, complained of designs attributed to Hopkins, closed the establishment, and withdrew the Consul's *exequatur*.

“An incident of another character, and of much greater gravity, before long rendered the situation more complicated. At the time he had recognised the existence of the new State, President Fillmore had appointed a scientific commission to explore the rivers of the Southern half of the American Continent. The expedition embarked in the *Water Witch*, and was headed by Mr. J. Page, the lieutenant of the vessel. Well received at the time of its arrival at Assumption, the vessel was effecting the exploration of the Rio Parana, under the orders of Lieutenant Jeffers, when, having arrived in front of Fort Itapiru, situate on the right bank of the river, it was ordered to return by the commandant. The captain, declining to obey this order, the batteries of the fort opened fire. The steersman was killed, and two sailors were grievously wounded. (February 1, 1855). Too weak to repel this unexpected attack with advantage, the *Water Witch* returned to the anchorage of Corrientes, and Mr. Page lost no time in informing his Government of this grave insult.” The mediation

of General Urquiza modified the proceedings of the Government of Washington, and the negotiations were terminated by the signing of a new treaty between the United States and Paraguay.

Fortified behind Humaita, placed in the centre of the American continent, Paraguay is especially strong from her geographical position. Lopez strangely abused this advantage. He calculated that an expedition against Paraguay would cost a European power much time and money; he counted on the batteries of Humaita; and, certain of impunity, he exhibited in his relations with foreign powers the most incredible recklessness.

“In 1859, suspecting some poor wretches, to whom he had conceived an aversion, he caused them to be arrested and cast into prison. In Paraguay there are no means of defence. The judges are only agents of police, and their duties are of the simplest character. They have but to carry out promptly the orders they receive. The inoffensive objects of the tyrant’s rage would have languished for years in their cells, if one of them, named Constadt, having invoked his nationality, had not been claimed by Mr. Handerson, the English Consul. This affair gave rise to difficulties from which he extricated himself after a strange fashion. He did not at first pay any attention to the reclamations of the Consul, and a year elapsed before Constadt was liberated with the others accused; but to show he had been justified in arresting the man that had brought about the English reclamations, he ordered two Paraguayans, the brothers Ducoud, to be shot. These were certainly as innocent as Constadt.”

The presence of an English subject amongst the accused rendered it necessary to submit the matter to

the ordinary tribunals, by which a sentence of condemnation was pronounced. But this was a rare exception, for Lopez preferred the course of summary and arbitrary justice. In most instances he alone sentenced, and he did not even take the trouble to investigate the facts of a case, though the penalty was that of death. (He had been cautious enough, in the constitution he had drawn up, to invest himself with the dread power of disposing of the life and liberty of his subjects.) The following incident will show how he used that power:—

“In the month of August, 1846, in the middle of the day, a young man, named Espindola, was suddenly taken from his home, and conducted to the Custom-house. A priest was called in haste; at the same time a cart arrived, drawn by two oxen, and followed by some armed soldiers. The prisoner underwent a short examination and signed it. He was permitted to speak for a few moments with his confessor, and then conducted to the middle of the Palace-square, where he was shot. The cart received the body of the victim, which no covering concealed from the view of the affrighted population, and proceeded slowly towards the cemetery of Recoletas, passing through the most frequented street of the city, and under the windows of the representative of Brazil. It was then three o'clock in the afternoon. Of what crime was this unfortunate man guilty, and what necessity existed for this inexorable and terrible act of justice? *A witness of this dreadful drama*, I have vainly sought to know. I will therefore be content to report the explanations which have been given of this unqualifiable proceeding. In the eyes of those who are anxious to justify the President, Sergeant Espindola, already suspected of complicity in a mutiny in the

district of Corrientes, *was guilty of having torn and trodden under foot an order bearing the signature of the Supreme Government.* But, according to the most accredited version, he had made a declaration at the Custom-house for the exportation of a certain quantity of rum on a slip of paper insufficiently stamped. The circumstance was mentioned to him, and he had torn his 'demande' as useless, expressing his intention to begin it afresh. This natural action, attended perhaps with a movement of humour and anger, was reported to the Chief of the State, doubtless distorted by unworthy exaggeration. We have seen in how prompt and terrible a manner it was punished. That day the inhabitants of Paraguay felt themselves remitted to the good times of the Dictator's bloody and mysterious domination. Nobody had the hardihood to speak of this execution; the journal remained mute, and the veil which covers its cause has never been lifted.") (DEMERSAY, vol. ii. p. 478.)

What makes these crimes the more odious is the fact that they were perfectly useless. The power of Lopez was neither contested nor attacked; but it is the nature of tyranny always to imagine its authority compromised, and to hesitate at no means to strengthen its position.)

The political régime was in no degree softened after the death of Francia; and the modifications effected in the commercial and economic system were of such a nature as to secure for the State a monopoly in the majority of mercantile transactions. Paraguay was and is a great firm under the management of the President. Lopez authorised the people to work in the *yerbales*, but it was necessary to ask and obtain a licence. The *yerba* thus produced was purchased by the State, which ex-



ported it on its own account. The Government paid for it five piastres per arroba, and resold it for fifteen in the interior, and for so much as forty piastres to export. In consequence of the monopoly in the sale of this important product, an exorbitant price was maintained, which enabled the Brazilians to give a great development to its production in the province of Parana. The *yerba* there grown, though of inferior quality, nevertheless found an immense consumption in the Plate, on account of its more moderate price. The utilization of the forests of Paraguay was also permitted; but the State imposed a duty of 20 per cent.; and as the value was fixed by itself, this pretended liberty of commerce in timber was simply a device to extort money, and ruin the individuals who might engage in it.

With regard to the raising of cattle and the commerce in hides, the State possessed farms and tanneries, and did not allow private persons to offer any serious competition. The State could, in addition, command labourers without payment; for the citizens were still subject, as under the colonial administration, to be pressed into the public service. At every requisition of authority, they were bound to work without receiving either reward or nourishment; and it was by means of these *auxilios* that roads have been made and repaired, churches built, and both the fortress of Humaita and the arsenal of Villa Rica erected. The *Guardias Auxiliares*—to-day soldiers, to-morrow labourers—are employed in the cultivation of the lands of the State. These soldiers carry the posts, gather the maté harvest, and fell timber; but receive no remuneration, being only fed like the rest of the army. These labourers cost so little, that, thanks to them, the State defies all private

competition in the produce of its *yerbales*, forests, and farms.

Such was the system adopted by Lopez. On the whole, it is no longer the communism of the Jesuits, but the enrolment of an entire nation. The State controlled everything ; and it was on its account, and for its profit, that almost all exportations were effected.

Lopez neglected no means of developing the military resources of the State. Everybody was a soldier. After the regular army came the militias, and after them the *Guardias Auxiliares*. A few foreign officers, especially in particular branches of the service, gave military instruction to the others : the foundry of Ibicuy, under the direction of English engineers, manufactured cannon and bullets ; and the vast arsenal of Villa Rica was always abundantly supplied with arms and munitions. Since Lopez purchased the first steamer of Paraguay, the *Tacuary*, in 1854, workshops and arsenals have been established at Assumption. Englishmen directed the operations, the forests furnished the wood, the foundry of Ibicuy the iron, and Lopez was thus enabled to create the only important navy in the countries of the Plate.

A little commercial liberty under rigorous restraint, an immense development of maritime and military force, an organization which placed all the resources of the nation in the hands of the President,—to this was limited the progress of the country under Lopez ! His dictatorship weighed not less heavily on the people of Paraguay than that of Francia.

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VII.  
LOPEZ II.

Lopez, during his long administration, in which he so frequently followed the example of his predecessor, took good care not to imitate the only virtue of Francia—disinterestedness. The cares of government did not cause him to neglect his own interests nor those of his family. Under an apparent indifference he ill concealed an insatiable ambition; and the deputy who, in the Congress of 1854, proposed to proclaim him emperor, and declare the succession to the crown hereditary, only expressed the secret thought of Lopez. He did not, at the beginning, entertain such a project. His first aim was to consolidate his power, and in the constitution framed by himself we find no trace of these ambitious ideas. He soon discovered, however, how easy it was to impose his will on a people so docile and well adapted to servitude; and from that time his sole object was not only to maintain his own power, but to transmit Paraguay as a sort of patrimony to his son and descendants.

By a singular chance the realisation of the plan of Lopez encountered no obstacles other than those he had himself created. To repeal the law he had made would have been to reveal his design and to endanger its success. He therefore devoted the later years of his life to silently altering one after another those articles of his constitution in which, from his want of foresight, he had introduced guarantees against the President for the maintenance of the republican form of government. The first modification appeared insignificant, and was to fix the age when a citizen might be eligible to the office of President at thirty-three instead of forty-five. Worn

by labour, and feeling the approach of old age, Lopez feared he might die before his son had attained the period fixed for acquiring his heritage. The precaution was a wise one, as the event proved.

By the terms of the fundamental law, in case of the death of the first magistrate of the Republic, the Supreme Judge of Appeal acts in his place, and convokes the Congress for the election of a new President.\* Lopez knew by experience that this interval between the death of the President and the election of a successor might be utilized to his profit by some ambitious soldier. The indifferent people ratified everything; lawyer or soldier, they proclaimed whoever seized upon power; and the great point was, that his son should be the first in the field. He convened a Congress which, at his request, gave him the right of designating by testament the Vice-President, who, on his death, should exercise authority until the election of President. By this arrangement, the presidential chair not being vacated, no person could seat himself therein; and from that time Lopez regarded the future without inquietude, for the consummation of his desire was assured.

He steadily pursued his project, and his last years were exclusively devoted to preparing his son for the future he had marked out for him. (To secure the submission of the army, he was made general at twenty-three. The soldiers would not dare to act against their commander. He wished his son to be known to foreign sovereigns, and to this end appointed him ambassador, under which title D. Solano Lopez visited Europe.)

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\* *Ley que Establece la Administracion Politica de la Republica del Paraguay*, chap. iv. art. 5.

Strange republic, where a President can thus improvise a general of twenty years, and confide to his son—an inexperienced young man—the highest functions of the State, without awaking suspicion or provoking the slightest remonstrance!

Don Solano Lopez, therefore, departed from Paraguay with the title of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Paraguay. He was accompanied by aides-de-camp. Though coldly received by the different courts who had recognised Paraguay, the young ambassador, arriving as he did from a country still savage, was astonished at the luxury which surrounded the sovereigns of Europe.) He saw brilliant uniforms, plumes, balls, fêtes, castles, and armies of a hundred thousand soldiers obeying the word of command like one man.

He arrived in Europe in 1853, a time of violent reaction, and witnessed the precautions taken by the sovereigns against the peoples in order to secure their dynasties. He saw the severity exercised towards parties, the universal surveillance of the police, and the silence of the press, and naturally believed that these conditions were indispensable to the existence of all authority. In his mind he compared the modest, sad, and silent residence of his father with the palaces blazing, with gold and light, and went back to his country, dreaming of those mighty armies he had seen defiling in the Champ de Mars and acclaiming the Chief of the State. To his friends he presented uniforms, glittering with gold lace, like those worn by the aides-de-camp of the Emperor of the French, and his own breast was resplendant with the decorations it is the custom to bestow so lavishly upon all ambassadors. He returned, therefore, devoured

by ambition, and prepared to adopt even the most extreme measures for the acquisition of power. The elder Lopez had divined truly; the voyage to Europe had produced the desired effect.

The plan so cleverly conceived succeeded admirably. Don Carlos Antonio Lopez died on the 10th of September, 1862. On the very same day, D. Francisco Solano Lopez assembled the Bishop, the Supreme Judge, and the principal functionaries, and in their presence opened the sealed envelope which contained the testament of his father. In virtue of the law of 1856, D. F. Solano Lopez was designated Vice-President, and in that character he convoked the Extraordinary Congress.

As, under such circumstances, it is well to neglect nothing, young Lopez prudently confided the command of the army to his brother, and one of his uncles was already at the head of the clergy. Thus all the avenues to power were guarded.

The Congress assembled under the presidency of D. Solano Lopez. The result of the vote was certain. Every precaution had been well taken. They were about to proceed to the ballot when a Deputy, named Varela, commenced speaking. He began by eulogising General Lopez, and assuring him of his personal esteem and sympathy; reminded the Congress of the express terms of the Act of Independence: *Paraguay shall never become the patrimony of a family*; and concluded with these words:—"I have the most profound respect for General Lopez, but I have sworn to obey the laws of my country; I hesitate between my affection and my conscience." The moment was a critical one. An unexpected opposition manifested itself and drew its

force from the law, for the first time invoked in the heart of a Congress. Lopez tremblingly witnessed this episode, but retained his coolness and self-possession. He made a sign to Father Roman, the Bishop of Assumption, who of right formed part of the Congress. The prelate approached Varela, who humbly fell on his knees in the midst of the assembly, and the Bishop, placing his hands upon his head, said with a loud voice: —“*Ego te absolvo*; thou art released from thy oath; this is not the case for its observance (*no es este el caso de observarlo*).” Varela rose with delight, and cried, “Then I will be the first to give my vote to his Excellency General Lopez!” It need not be stated that the President obtained unanimity, and that the people welcomed its new master with transport.

The Lopez dynasty was founded. Taught in the school of his father, Don Solano Lopez professes and practises its principles. He believes in the necessity of merciless repression, and of instilling a salutary fear in order to sustain the prestige of authority. His rule was inaugurated by an act of vengeance. The Deputy Varela was punished. He had dared in full Congress to place respect for the law above the respect due to the President, and so dangerous an example called for chastisement. Even now Varela still languishes in prison.

Once it is an admitted principle that it is desirable to stifle every spark of opposition and to prevent resistance at all cost, a government is compelled to go to yet further extremes. Distrust discovers the accomplices of pretended traitors. Friends and relations are suspected, for they may have had a knowledge of the plot and they did not denounce it! Besides, how can

there be belief in a conspiracy if only one man is arrested? A man cannot conspire alone. Among the relations of Varela was Colonel Marin, an old soldier who boasted forty-five years of service. He was cast into prison. The arrest of a colonel gave to the mysterious accusation against Varela the appearance of a military conspiracy, and accounted for the severest measures.

The most impenetrable secrecy reigns over the motives for punishments publicly inflicted upon the highest personages of the country. When Don Carlos Lopez died, the First Magistrate of the Republic, the Civil Judge, was an old man of seventy years of age, named Lescano. His duties required him to be present at the opening of the political testament by which the President conferred the Vice-presidency of the Republic upon his son. Some months after this solemnity, Señor Lescano was arrested, and as there was no room in the interior of the prison, he was attached to a chain and left in the courtyard. He lived thus for a year, without any covering to protect him from the rain or the sun, laying either on the hard ground or standing in the rain. Death at last put an end to his sufferings. The cause of his arrest has never been known. The body of Lescano was carried to the hospital by order of the President, who wished to make it manifest by *post-mortem* examination that poison had not been administered. The wife of Lescano was called by the head of the police, who, without announcing the death of her husband, said to her, "Your husband is free; go and find him at the hospital." The unfortunate woman ran to the hospital, but there only found a corpse.

As for the people, they witness with indifference the rigours which they do not themselves feel. The



blows of power never fall on the ignorant and impoverished masses. They are almost exclusively reserved for those who, by their social position or their fortune, may give cause of offence to the President. When a functionary, a man enjoying a certain notoriety, is stricken, the people willingly believe the punishment is merited, and that the President is only fulfilling the first duty of his office, and acting for the security of the public. The prestige of power is still further increased both by the influence of the imaginary culprit and the severity of his punishment. The policy of the Dictators of Paraguay has always tended to strengthen respect for their power in the people, and to cause them to regard it as at once sacred and infallible. They were not permitted to discuss the actions of the Government, and it was even a crime to make a retrospective review of its past proceedings.

A few days after the death of the first Lopez, Father Mais, a priest, pronounced from the pulpit an eulogium on the deceased, whose friend and confidant he had been; and the better to illustrate the virtues of his hero, instituted a comparison between Lopez and Francia, whom he styled a stupid tyrant. He expiated his *maladresse* in a prison. It is not well for a people to learn to judge their masters. It is dangerous to accustom them to hear the word tyranny.

The case of Colonel Marin, punished solely because he was a relative of the Deputy Varela, is not an exceptional one. It reveals an odious system of moral complicity which renders a whole family responsible for individual opinions or acts of one of its members. The family can only escape the consequences, always terrible, of this strange solidarity by a public protestation. A

young man, named Benigno Fereira, being accused of a conspiracy against the President, judged it prudent to fly and take refuge in Buenos Ayres. In the Argentine newspapers the refugee attacked the policy and person of Lopez, and unveiled certain piquant details connected with his private life. One day the official paper of Assumption—the only paper in Paraguay—to which the President of the Republic himself deigns to contribute, published a letter against the refugee. In itself this would have been unobjectionable ; but the letter, harsh and injurious in the highest degree, was signed by the mother of the proscribed, and concluded with the following phrase :—

“ If my son, Benigno Fereira, persists in his folly ; if he do not publicly renounce his course of conduct, let him be reprobated by all his fellow citizens and by his afflicted mother ; *on him alone* will fall the infamy of a son rebellious to his parents.

“ D. CONCEPCION DE FERREIRA.”

Has it ever entered into the mind of a mother to write such a letter ? A mother suffers in silence, and weeps for an absent son, proscribed, perhaps even guilty, but never does she add bitterness to the trials of the exile. This declaration was torn from the poor woman. Everything proves it ; the tenor of the letter, which does not contain one single expression of affection ; its publication in the journal of Lopez ; and finally those remarkable words, *on him alone*. The unfortunate mother had other children ; and it was to preserve them from persecution and to save them from a prison, that she signed, with trembling hand, this declaration against which her maternal feelings protested. Doubtless, as each word was dictated she inwardly asked pardon of

the poor exile whom she renounced. It was the ransom of her other children.

This letter, inserted in the *Semanario*, shows how great is the terror exercised by Lopez II. The people still bow themselves under the will of their master; the spirit of Francia and of the Jesuits yet reigns in Paraguay; and, what is more lamentable, has penetrated both into the law and the Constitution.

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## VIII.

### THE CONSTITUTION.

When Lopez I. framed the political law of Paraguay, the country emerged from the long and terrible dictatorship of Dr. Francia. It was not the best preparation for a republican form of government. The new law must of necessity have retained some traces of the customs established by tyranny; but at least one might have hoped for an improvement upon the former *régime*. Of what use, indeed, is a constitution unless it consecrates the rights of a people? The law of the 13th of March, 1844, only transformed a temporary dictatorship into a definitive and permanent institution. It was altogether deceitful, and its provisions were but calculated to conceal an absolute dictatorship.

The first chapter ordained the division of power; but the seventh destroyed this guarantee in declaring (‘ that the authority of (the President is *extraordinary* in case of invasion or internal commotion, and *whenever it shall be necessary to preserve order and the public tran-*

*quillity.*" To the President alone was reserved the right of deciding when order was menaced ; so that he could, at any moment, substitute his will or caprice for the constitution. This was a permanent dictatorship}

The first chapter exclusively entitles the Congress to make laws ; but, in reality, the legislative power is absorbed by the President. This Congress assembles only once every five years. The President in the interval decrees all the measures he thinks proper, and the task of the Deputies, when they meet, is limited to their ratification.

In order to rightly comprehend the impotency of this assembly, it is necessary to know how it is constituted.

The mode of election, by the terms of the constitution (chap. ii. art. 1), remains determined in accordance with *previous* laws, that is to say, with those established by Francia. This is sufficient to show how liberal they are ! In point of fact, the President elects the Congress, or causes it to be elected by his agents ; and it is, further, the President of the Republic who chooses the President of the Congress. Most frequently, he unceremoniously installs himself in the Presidential chair.

It is the right of the Congress to fix the budget ; but, as it only assembles every five years, it is satisfied with giving *carte blanche* to the President ! This formality is, however, almost useless ; and in the last Congress, held in the present year, at Assumption, a Deputy declared, amidst universal approbation, that *the fortune of the State was identified with the fortune of the President*. A convenient theory enough, and one which vastly simplifies the discussion of the budget.

This mode of election perfectly ensures the serenity of the Deputies to the President ; nevertheless the

use of precautions can never be injurious. The sittings of the Congress are public according to law ; but the Dictator's battalion of ordnance surrounds the building, and prevents the citizens approaching nearer than four *cuadras*, or six hundred yards, out of respect for the solemnity of the Session.

Each Session lasts but five days. The assembly has to examine and approve the acts of the past five years, to verify the expenditure, to discuss and decree laws,—and all in five days ! Truly the Deputies of Paraguay are expeditious ! Is there here any serious control ? Is it not evident that this sham Congress has been created to give to the dictatorship an appearance of legality ?

If by chance a feeble opposition manifested itself, it was speedily stifled. I have already recounted what happened in 1842 to Bautista Rivarola, and to Varela in 1862. In the Congress of 1856, which conferred on Lopez I. the faculty of designating at his death, by secret testament (*pliego reservado*), the Vice-President of the Republic, this fundamental modification of the Constitution was accepted without debate, and, as was always the case, unanimously. A deputy who had taken part in this comedy, turning towards his neighbour, carelessly asked him what was the necessity of bringing them from such a distance for so simple a matter (to alter the Constitution !). The Dictator heard him, and rising, cried out, “ Who is that audacious fellow ! Go out, animal ! ” The deputy got up and took his departure.

In conclusion, another fact demonstrates what independence can be expected from a Legislative body thus composed. Every proposition presented by the

President of the Republic has always, without a single exception, been adopted unanimously!

The judicial power is not more substantial than that of the Legislature. No doubt there is a magistracy hierarchically organised, but the President is special (*privativo*) Judge of the cases reserved by the statute for the administration of justice. The repression of misdemeanours and political crimes, withdrawn from the ordinary course of justice, is left to the discretion of the executive power. Thanks to this terrible prerogative, the Lopez have been able, like Francia, to remove from their path all those who have excited their displeasure. The honour and existence of the inhabitants are in the hands of the President, who has to render no account of the exercise of his power of life and death! Only one political process has been submitted to the jurisdiction by law established, and the motive for this exception is manifest enough. An Englishman was amongst the accused. The Government of Great Britain would not have suffered one of her subjects to be judged by the summary and secret procedure habitually employed by the Dictator of Paraguay.

“All these arrangements, it is clear, are calculated to give the greatest possible force to the supreme authority of the Republic.” It is in these words that M. de Brossard, *attaché* to the French Legation, summarises the Constitution of Paraguay, and naturally he cannot sufficiently eulogise these marvellous combinations for the protection of a country from the danger of revolutions!

Thus the executive power occupies a most prominent place in the Constitution. It is vested in the person of

a President (Chap. iv., act 2), who must be a citizen *del fuero comun*, a native of the country, not less than thirty-three years of age,\* of recognized capacity, honesty, and patriotism, of *good conduct*, and possessed of a capital of 8,000 piastres.

He is designated by the Congress. The Constitution defines his titles, and styles him *El Supremo* (the Supreme)! It fixes *the marks of respect to be obligatory upon all the citizens!* *Every citizen has in addition to take an oath of fealty to the President when he enters upon his functions.* The President also appoints his ministers, *whose powers he alone defines.* *He is Commander-in-Chief of the army, the effective strength of which he determines.* He appoints and dismisses functionaries and employés of every description, for the military grades are but themselves employments of *pura comision*. He is the judge of reserved cases, and can, when he takes the fancy, become himself the only judicial power; for, to that end, he has only to declare that he uses the extraordinary prerogatives conceded to him by the Constitution.

The citizens, however, are not without guarantees. The Constitution deigns to recognise *the right of presenting petitions* to the supreme Government of the nation; but no citizen has up to the present thought it expedient to use the right. It is also just to add that the President, on his entry into power, *solemnly swears by God, our Lord, and the holy Evangelists*, to do his utmost *for the happiness of the Republic.* What a solid guarantee is such an oath, and how effectually it protects Paraguay! Till this day, however, the Presidents of Paraguay have discovered no better means of promoting the happiness

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\* Formerly it was forty-five years, but we know why, and in whose favour the legal age has been altered.

of the Republic than by retaining their absolute authority up to their death and by transmitting it to their children.

When the President goes out, the bells of the cathedral of Assumption sound in order to inform the people of the fact. Formerly they also sounded when the bishop entered the church ; but Lopez, being jealous of the respect accorded to the prelate by the people, has put an end to a custom incompatible with his supreme authority. On the anniversary of the President's birthday, the people of Assumption dance before the palace—by order !

Paraguay is not a Republic, it is a tribe ! Lopez is not a President, but a cacique !

Is that a republican constitution which consecrates the omnipotence of a President, indefinitely re-eligible for election, and which leaves in his hands all the means of perpetuating his power ? What has come to pass ? Francia ruled till his death (twenty-nine years) ; Lopez I. ruled till his death (twenty-two years), and was even so clever as to establish his son as his successor !

The Constitution of 1844 has, then, only aggravated the political situation of Paraguay. Formerly the country was the slave of Dr. Francia ; to-day it is the slave of a despotic constitution, which the Dictator can modify for his own profit when and how he pleases. Formerly, tyranny was but an accident ; now it has become a permanent and definitive fact.

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## IX.

### CONCLUSION.

The Dictatorship of Paraguay has endured for more than fifty years. Authority has never for an instant



been troubled by internal commotions, for political passions are there unknown. All the resources are in the hands of the master, and the population blindly executes the orders it receives. What a magnificent opportunity had Francia and the two Lopez to initiate this docile people into the path of progress, to raise them out of their habits of indolence, and gradually, without a shock, to teach them the exercise of liberty! No; the Dictatorship is unfruitful. What has it produced for Paraguay? An army!

Broken to discipline by the educational system of the Jesuits, the Paraguayans possess all the qualities requisite to make soldiers,—blind obedience and exaggerated patriotism. The traditions of the Missions are religiously preserved. All the citizens are soldiers, either in the regular army, the national militia, or the auxiliary guards; the officers have an insignificant salary, and the simple soldiers receive only their clothing and food.

In time of war all the men are placed under arms. This is the habit of an Indian tribe, in which the labourers become warriors at the first call of authority. They are braves, sustained by national and religious fanaticism. In the present war with Brazil, the Argentine Confederation, and the Republic of Uruguay, the bodies of the dead have been found to wear, suspended round the neck in a small bag, the written absolution of the priest, with the promise that the soldier killed on the field of battle would be born again in Paraguay!

On the conclusion of war, the soldiers return to the fields—still according to the wont of an Indian tribe—where they are employed by the State in public works.

The Dictators have not even the honour (if honour there be) of having invented the military organization. They have simply inherited it from the reverend Fathers.

I have already recited the regulations which irrefutably prove that the Jesuits had introduced a military organization into their Reductions. Then also passive obedience was practised, as the following will show. —

“ Their humility was such, that a colonel at the head of his regiment, on returning from a siege, where they (the Paraguayans) had mounted to the assault by hanging with their teeth, their feet, and their hands, bowed himself at a sign from the father to receive, as punishment for a fault, a dozen blows with a whip, at the same time saying, as he kissed the hand which struck him, ‘ God bless you, my father, for you have made me see that I have sinned.’ ”

Francia and the two Lopez could not improve upon the traditions of the Fathers.

The army is a model one. Rank is not the property of the officer. The master gives it, the master takes it away, and his will is always blessed !

The army, however, is not everything in a nation. Where is the people ? What step has been made towards progress ?

Liberty of worship is proscribed !

The liberty of the press is proscribed, or, what is the same thing, the Constitution declares that no one can be a printer without the authorization of the Government. The repression of offences of the press is committed to the Executive power, which has not abused this right for the simple and sufficient reason that no person has yet conceived the idea of soliciting permission to publish a journal. Nevertheless there is a newspaper for Paraguay, the *Semanario*, appearing, as its name indicates, once a week, which is frequently edited by the President, and always published under his inspection !

The liberty of instruction is proscribed ! Primary

schools exist ; and an old colonial regulation even obliges the fathers of families to send to them their male children ; but, according to the Constitution, the State (that is to say, the President) fixes the course of study, the mode of tuition, the list of authors to be admitted, &c. This course of study is exceedingly simple ; for, says a traveller, “ the Catechism is the only book which may be used ” in the primary schools. It is in this book that the children learn to read and to think ! As regards the girls, they do not enjoy any public instruction.\*

The liberty of navigation is sanctioned by treaties ; but we know what restrictions are imposed by the regulations of the President, who can always modify them according to his fancy. Besides, what guarantee can there be for freedom of navigation on the River Paraguay while the batteries of Humaita and Fort Olympo can at any moment bar the passage of vessels ?

Liberty of navigation is but an illusion unless it is accompanied by liberty of commerce. The State has reserved the monopoly of the sale of the principal products ; and if Paraguay is no longer hermetically closed as in the time of Francia ; if the Constitution permits free exit from the territories of the Republic, it also declares that, in order to cross the frontier, it is necessary to submit to the police regulations, which are almost tantamount to a prohibition.

Thus, despite the riches and fertility of the territory

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\* “ In Paraguay there is not a single school for girls. In the boys' schools only reading and writing are taught. The women are, in general, both kind and intelligent. I have seen several so desirous to learn to write, that they copied into books (which are rare) typographical characters. Thus, on leaving Paraguay, my first care was to send writing-copies to several families. But it was not long before I learned that all of them had been seized at the Custom-house of Assumption.”—Letter by J. Lelong, published in the *Tribuna* of Buenos Ayres, of the 12th of July, 1865.

of Paraguay, its commerce is insignificant. The table showing the commercial movements of France with foreign nations, published yearly at Paris by the Customs' Administration, puts Brazil, in 1853, in the tenth place in the list of nations; the value of her commercial transactions with France being represented by 166,465,825 francs. The Argentine Confederation occupies the fourteenth place, with 97,923,862 francs; and the Oriental Republic the twentieth, with 57,028,895.\* The publication does not even name Paraguay.

Does this silence arise because the ships of France do not ascend so high as Assumption, or because the products are arrested at Monte Video and Buenos Ayres? In any case the portion of the exports and imports of Paraguay which enter France are quite inappreciable; for, in 1859, the total transactions of Paraguay, not with France alone, but with the whole world, was as follows:—

Imports	...	...	...	8,833,000 francs.
Exports	...	...	...	7,703,000 „
Total				16,536,900 francs.†

It would appear that even this sum is exaggerated. Santiago Acros says that in 1860 “the commerce amounted, according to official documents published in Paraguay, to 12,878,520 francs; viz. :—

Imports	...	...	...	4,429,205 francs.
Exports	...	...	...	8,449,520 „
Total				12,878,725 „

\* *Tableau Général du Commerce de la France avec les Colonies et les Puissances Etrangères pendant l'année 1863.* Paris: Imperial Printing Office, 1865, pp. 53, 54, 55.

† *Moniteur* of the 15th of January, 1863, quoted by the *Annuaire Diplomatique et Statistique* of 1865, page 758, in the chapter on Paraguay.

In this same year, 1860, Brazil saw her commerce rise to a total of 246,619 contos of reis, or about 739,857,000 francs. The Argentine Confederation, whose population is equal to that of Paraguay, attained to 7,393,545 dollars, or 186,687,011 francs; and in the Oriental Republic, with one-third the population of Paraguay, the value of commerce was 17,218,779 hard piastres, or 89,900,000 francs.

These figures are eloquent, and prove that commerce can only develop itself under the influence of liberty.

Immigration is active all around Paraguay, in the Argentine Confederation, in the Oriental Republic, and in the Empire of Brazil. The foreigner goes only where liberty invites, and the foreigner avoids Paraguay. We know what has been the deplorable issue of the attempt at colonization at New Bordeaux. The French colonists who sought happiness and prosperity only found misery and death in that inhospitable country. In Paraguay the foreigner is subjected to exceptional laws, and suspected; and if he desires to marry a native of the country, he must obtain the authorization of the President.\* These absurd regulations prevent foreigners establishing themselves in Paraguay. Consequently, while the other States of the Plate receive a regular current of immigration, possessing not less than two hundred thousand immigrant residents; while in the seaport towns of Brazil, not to speak of the colonies established in the interior, there are at least upwards of one hundred thousand foreigners—Paraguay is almost

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\* A young Spaniard having asked Lopez I. for permission to marry, it was accorded to him in the following terms:—"Though D. F., a *gallego* (a term of contempt applied to European Spaniards in the ancient colonies of Spain), who, being insolvent, has come to this country, *like all foreigners*, to repair his fortune, we accord him authorization, *as a special favour*, to marry the honourable Senora, D. S."

completely deprived of this precious element of prosperity. "Such proceedings," says M. Jules Duval, after having recounted the sad history of the colony of New Bordeaux, and the misadventure of the American consul Hopkins, "explain the presence of only a hundred foreigners. The policy of Francia, hardly tempered by imperious necessity, still reigns on the banks of the beautiful river which empties its waters into the free Parana. Despotism and monopoly offer few attractions to emigrants."\*

This hatred of the foreigner has still another result besides that of depriving the country of the elements of industry and wealth. It prevents the fusion of races, and maintains for Paraguay an exclusively indigenous population—a population hostile to industry, and opposed to all progress.

Such is the actual position of Paraguay. Fifty years of Dictatorship have produced but misery and servility. This is a lesson which the partizans of enlightened despotism would do well to meditate. The proof is before the world. After the Jesuits, Francia; after Francia, Lopez I.; after Lopez I., Lopez II.; and Paraguay has not passed out of barbarism! It is yet a tribe, obeying with servility the will of a hereditary cacique! The experiment is decisive; and the history of Paraguay is an energetic contradiction of that fatal doctrine which pretends that a people may *arrive through a Dictatorship at emancipation.*

THE END.

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\* Histoire de l'Emancipation au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle, page 264. Par Jules Duval.









