

CHAPTER XIV.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF PERU.

1839.

THE history of Peru, during the last twenty years, is involved in even more obscurity than that of Chili. This arises from the frequent change of rulers, and the consequent alterations in policy and government. The history may be said to be merged in biographical memoirs of its several rulers, who have, without an exception, acted for self-aggrandizement alone, without ever looking to the benefit of their country, its peace, or happiness. They have, in their public decrees and acts, been lavish and prodigal of the words honour, liberty, justice, &c., in order to cry themselves up, and their opponents down. Yet, without exception, the moment they have become installed, they have pursued the very course they before reprobated, and the country has continued to suffer.

The victory of Ayacucho, gained by General Sucre in December, 1824, put an end to the war of the revolution, and placed the whole country in the possession of the patriots, with the exception of Callao. On the surrender of that fortress, January 7th, 1826, Spanish authority ceased to exist in South America. General Bolivar was at this time President of Colombia, and Dictator of Peru, invested as the latter with constitutional powers, but exercising unlimited authority. Through his means, and the troops of Colombia, the liberation of Peru had been effected, and after that event, many of these troops were quartered in Lima, much to the annoyance of the Peruvians, who were anxious to get rid of the military, and the expense of maintaining them. Their presence, and the cost of supporting them, became the more odious, because it was believed they were retained to support the arbitrary power of the Dictator.