

royalist or republican. And so it was with General Tacon. Many of the accusations raised against him could not be substantiated. I have heard many persons execrate the memory of Napoleon, exclaiming—'How can you admire a man who has done so much harm, who shed so much blood?' These ignorant folk forget that he who would reform abuses and serve mankind, by establishing great national works, must cause injury to some individuals. The exile of St. Helena was an instrument in the hands of Providence, and though he now slumbers peacefully under the dome of the Invalides, where is the country of continental Europe where monuments, roads, canals, docks, or other useful works, do not recal him to mind, and render his name imperishable?

"Tacon was a reformer on a small scale. He contrived, however, to rally round his standard the merchants and the middling classes, who had long been disgusted with the licentiousness of the aristocracy and the insolence of the rabble. They rejoiced to find that they needed no more soldiers to guard their clerks whenever they had to send specie from one part of the town to the other—that they could walk the streets at night with as much safety as at mid-day—and that they could dispense with the precaution of barricading their houses. Their vanity was flattered, because the Captain-General courted their society in preference to that of the nobility. If he made this distinction between the two parties, it was, perhaps, because he found that the one was industrious, honest, and useful members of society, ready to support all his coercive measures; that the other was incorrigible gamblers, licentious, haughty, and adverse to his government. Commerce confided in the military dictator, who fearlessly exclaimed when accused of tyranny—

" 'I shall not alter my system to please any one; if the Government is dissatisfied, let them recal me. He who makes himself obeyed is never in the wrong, and my policy, if disobeyed, is—*Load! present!! fire!!!*'

"That General Tacon was severe, and not unfrequently unjust, I admit. He no doubt often allowed his temper to lead him to acts of cruelty which might have been mitigated. He might have pardoned many whom he banished, and freed many whom he imprisoned. But his task was a most delicate and difficult one. His instructions were positive—his duty was to obey. The reader may imagine the dread he inspired, when there was no lawyer bold enough to sue him or oppose his decrees, by citing him before the tribunals.

"In stature Tacon was below the middling size. Though upwards of sixty years of age when sent to the Havana, he was of an active turn of mind, and his organic developments bespoke a man capable of doing great actions. Firmness and determination were his chief characteristics. He was constitutionally weak, yet enjoyed sufficient health to enable him to carry out his plans for ameliorating and beautifying the capital of Cuba. Two years after his arrival the revenue was doubled; this circumstance enabled him to reduce some of the taxes. Finding that the city was ill-supplied with water, he built a splendid aqueduct, which exceeded six miles in length. The Count of Villamiera, Intendent-General of the Financial Department, suggested the propriety of establishing a