

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

DESCRIPTION.—The United States extend from the Atlantic in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west, a distance of 2760 miles ; and from Canada in the north to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico in the south, a distance of 1600 miles. Its total area, inclusive of Alaska (acquired by purchase from Russia in 1867) is 3,542,858 acres.

The country is traversed by two great mountain chains, the Alleghanies and the Rock Mountains, which divide the country into three natural divisions, the Atlantic and Pacific slopes and the valley of the Mississippi. The highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains attain to a height of 16,000 feet above the level of the sea, while the highest peak of the Alleghany chain attains to a height of 6426 feet.

The principal river is the Mississippi, which has many important tributaries. It rises in the state of Minnesota, and after running for 3200 miles empties into the Gulf. The principal rivers flowing into the Atlantic are the Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Potomac, and James ; and into the Pacific, the Columbia, Sacramento, and Colorado rivers.

The chain of lakes, comprising Superior, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, form a portion of the boundary line between the United States and Canada. The principal lakes belonging exclusively to the States are Michigan, Champlain, Salt Lake, Pyramid, and Indus. The capital of the United States and the seat of Government is Washington, though the principal city in point of population is New York, beautifully situated at the mouth of the Hudson River, where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The population of the United States is about 52,000,000.

GOVERNMENT.—The Government of the United States is a Federal Republic, composed in all of forty-six independent States and Territories, each State exercising independent powers within its own dominions, subject to the constitution and laws of the United States. The Territories are governed in part by officers appointed by the President of the Republic. By the terms of the Constitution, adopted by a Convention in 1787, and ratified by the States, general powers are vested in the Central Government at Washington. This National Government is composed of three departments, the Legislative, the Executive, and Judiciary.

The Legislative power is composed of a Congress of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate is constituted by two members from each State, elected by the State Legislature. A Senator must be thirty years of age ; his term of office is six years. A Representative, or member of the "Lower House," is elected by the people for a term of two years. He must be twenty-five years of age, and a citizen of the United States of seven years' standing. One representative is elected for every 130,000 inhabitants.