

INTRODUCTION.

To one inspecting a map of the Western Hemisphere, the territories of that great division, adapted to a civilized population, appear pretty equally divided among the representatives of three European nations—England, Spain, and Portugal. France and Holland, whose transactions on the same theatre of action form a considerable item in the history of the past, have nearly—the first, from the insufficiency of her marine, and the second, from the feebleness of the parent state—lost the footing which their early enterprise attained, and, for the future, will probably take but little share in the destinies, social or political, of America.

Of the three races which have finally succeeded to the vast inheritance of the New World, that of Portugal, possessing the empire of Brazil—an empire embracing, it is probable, an ampler amount of natural wealth, and more numerous internal resources of greatness than any single country on the globe—must, from the present sparseness of population, and the comparatively general ignorance which prevails, be long in attaining any thing like national eminence.

The colonies of Spain, for some ages the most numerous and valuable that had been held by any nation since the days of Rome, after fruitlessly enriching the mother-country, and suffering great oppression in return, nearly simultaneously cast off the yoke, and adopted constitutions more or less liberal—for the most part, unfortunately, only to evince, by a chronic state of revolution, their entire incapacity for self-government.

In the Anglo-American states, at the present time, two experiments, political and social, the most important in the history of the world, are being tried—the capacity for absolute self-government