

# NORTH AMERICA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### WASHINGTON.

THE site of the present city of Washington was chosen with three special views ; firstly, that being on the Potomac it might have the full advantage of water-carriage and a sea-port ; secondly, that it might be so far removed from the seaboard as to be safe from invasion ; and, thirdly, that it might be central alike to all the States. It was presumed when Washington was founded that these three advantages would be secured by the selected position. As regards the first, the Potomac affords to the city but few of the advantages of a sea-port. Ships can come up, but not ships of large burthen. The river seems to have dwindled since the site was chosen ; and at present it is, I think, evident that Washington can never be great in its shipping. *Statio benefida carinis* can never be its motto. As regards the second point, singularly enough Washington is the only city of the Union that has been in an enemy's possession since the United States became a nation. In the war of 1812 it fell into our hands,