

PREFACE.

NO era, in the moral world, has excited the public curiosity, or effected the general interest of mankind, more than the discovery of a western continent, in the year 1492. Attracted as the public mind was by that event, yet its resulting importance was not then fully anticipated by the most extravagant hopes, or the most acute prognostics. To convert the natural riches of the new world to the advantage of the old, was the only object which the kings of Europe wished to accomplish, or intended to essay. Neither king nor subject expected that the western world would become the seat of empires, independent of European rulers; much less did they expect, that the future monarchs of the east would meet in the new world, rivals capable of opposing and defeating attempts at continuing in political subjection, the descendants of emigrants, led to the new continent by cupidity, driven to it by persecution, or banished as an expiation of their crimes.

It was not until long after the first settlement of America by Europeans, that it was sagaciously observed, that "the new world seemed destined to give laws to the old." The observation drew forth but the derision or contempt of the writers and readers. A prophecy so improbable, and which could not, it was supposed, be accomplished.

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