



AMERICA VESPUCCI.

A decided sensation was created at Washington during the Van Buren Administration by the appearance there of a handsome

and well-educated Italian lady, who called herself America Vespucci, and claimed descent from the navigator who gave his name to this continent. Ex-President Adams and Daniel Webster became her especial friends, and she was soon a welcome guest in the best society. In a few weeks after her arrival, she presented a petition to Congress asking, first, to be admitted to the rights of citizenship; and, secondly, to be given "a corner of land" out of the public domain of the country which bore the name of her

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ancestor. An adverse report, which was soon made, is one of the curiosities of Congressional literature. It eulogized the petitioner as "a young, dignified, and graceful lady, with a mind of the highest intellectual culture, and a heart beating with all our own enthusiasm in the cause of America and human liberty." The reasons why the prayer of the petitioner could not be granted were given, but she was commended to the generosity of the American people. "The name of America—our country's name—should be honored, respected, and cherished in the person of the interesting exile from whose ancestor we derive the great and glorious title."

A subscription was immediately opened by Mr. Haight, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate, and Judges, Congressmen, and citizens vied with one another in their contributions. Just then it was whispered that Madame Vespucci had borne an unenviable reputation at Florence and at Paris, and had been induced by a pecuniary consideration to break off an intimacy with the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe's oldest son, and come to Washington. Soon afterward the Duke's younger brother, the Prince de Joinville, came to this country, and refused to recognize her, which virtually excluded her from reputable society. For some years subsequently she resided in luxurious seclusion with a wealthy citizen of New York, in the interior of that State, and after his death she returned to Paris.