

CHAPTER III.

TRIBES.

THE Indians were, perhaps, at first all derived from one stock. This appears extremely probable, from a great similarity of appearance, manners, and customs. In these respects, when you have described any portion of them, you have given a description of them in general. But, no doubt from causes similar to those which have induced the various divisions of other branches of the human race, they have been split off into a great variety of different tribes. I shall not attempt a catalogue of the tribes which have been, and might be enumerated. Many tribes which would have to be included in such a catalogue, are no longer known, at least by such denominations. Many bodies are undoubtedly extinct, but they were either, many of them, the same people under another name, as we see exemplified in the Hurons and Wyandots, which are only two names of one identical body; or a part of a nation broken off, separated from the main body, by a removal to a distance, and passing under another name, assumed from some circumstance; and then, probably, reunited, or swallowed up, in some other body. This is seen in the case of the Seminoles, which broke off from the Wyandot tribe, and went south, by the way of the Wabash, who, as the French traders say, speak the Wyandot language. And undoubtedly the Missisau-gahs, Ottawas, Pahtewahtemahs, &c. are branches of the great body of Ochipwas. The Indian Tribes derive their distinguishing names from rivers, lakes, swamps, mountains, &c., and they frequently change their denomination from a removal to another locality. The term Missisau-gah, (to whom the Credit Indians belong.)