

CHAPTER II.

THE ABORIGINES OF NORTH AMERICA.—DIVISIONS INTO NATIONS
AND TRIBES.—PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.—HABITS OF LIFE.
—INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES.—PROBABLE ORIGIN.—INFLU-
ENCE OF CLIMATE ON THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF MAN.—
ABORIGINES OF CANADA.

WHEN European settlements were first commenced in America, the expanse of country between the Atlantic ocean and the Mississippi river, was occupied by tribes belonging to the eight great families or divisions of the Indian race, viz., the Algonquins, Hurons, Sioux, Cherokees, Catawbas, Uchéés, Natchez, and Mobiles. These were considered substantive nations, because each spoke a language not understood by the others ; whereas, individuals of the different tribes belonging to a nation, could understand the language of any other tribe of that nation.

In person the Indians are rather tall and slender, with frames indicating agility rather than strength ; their faces wearing that stern expression natural to such as are dependent on the chase for a subsistence, and exposed to the vicissitudes of war. Their visages