

CHAPTER III.

INDIAN CUSTOMS.

MANNER OF APPOINTING A CHIEF—MATTERS SETTLED BY CHIEF—THEFT PUNISHED—WAR PARTIES—NEVER SUBMIT TO COERCION—BONDAGE REPUGNANT TO INDIAN'S NATURE.

THE customs and laws of the North American Indians may differ, in some respects, from other Indian tribes, but, in general, they are nearly the same. The chiefs are generally elected to their office. The son of a deceased chief is considered to have a claim to succeed his father, and at mature age generally takes his seat at the head of the tribe. But though in some degree entitled to this distinction, he does not enter upon such duties without the appointment and approbation of the tribe, which is sometimes attended with considerable display and ceremony.

Councils are convened by order of the chiefs, who preside on all important occasions. On these occasions free discussion is allowed; but the youngest generally remain silent, and listen to those of more experience and age.

All important matters are decided by the chief. He settles all difficulties, and no appeal is made from his decision.

Tribes are sometimes divided into bands; sometimes two or three bands compose one tribe.