

INDIAN WARS OF THE WEST.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL VIEW OF THE WEST.

THE country, of whose first settlers we propose to give sketches, is now called in common parlance the West, and the Mississippi valley, indicating its position in regard to the elder and more populous country on the shores of the Atlantic. It is the largest, most singular, and most fertile valley on the globe. A profile, or physical section of the vast plain between the Alleghanies and Rocky mountains, places this fact in an impressive point of view.

A line round the edge of the immense basin, commencing at the northern sources of the head waters of the lakes, round the Alleghanies, the gulf of Florida, the mountains that separate the waters of the Rio del Norte from those of the Mississippi, and the central ridges of the Rocky mountains dividing between the waters of the Missouri, the gulf of California, and the Oregon, and thence around the head sources of the Mississippi, to its commencement north of the lakes, would be at least five thousand miles in extent.

This vast surface is watered by the longest rivers on the globe. The Missouri, Mississippi, Arkansas, Red River, Ohio, Tennessee, Wabash, Platte, Kansas, Yellow Stone, Illinois, Osage, and many other of the western rivers, are as different in character from those of the old world, as this valley is more extensive and magnificent than any other. In comparison to their width they have far longer courses, and furnish a navigation less impeded by falls and rapids. These rivers may be considered im-