

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE CEREMONIES THEY OBSERVE IN THEIR
BURIALS AND MOURNING.

OUR Savages are not Savages as regards the duties that Nature itself constrains us to render to the dead; they do not yield in this respect to many Nations much more civilized. You might say that all their exertions, their labors, and their trading, concern almost entirely the amassing of something with which [185] to honor the Dead. They have nothing sufficiently precious for this purpose; they lavish robes, axes, and Porcelain in such quantities that, to see them on such occasions, you would judge that they place no value upon them; and yet these are the whole riches of the Country. You will see them often, in the depth of winter, almost entirely naked, while they have handsome and valuable robes in store, that they keep in reserve for the Dead; for this is their point of honor. It is on such occasions they wish above all to appear magnificent. But I am speaking here only of their private funerals. These simple people are not like so many Christians, who cannot endure that any one should speak to them about death, and who in a mortal sickness put a whole house to trouble to find means of breaking the news to the sick man without hastening his death. Here when any one's health is despaired of, not only do they make no difficulty in telling him that his life is near its close, but they even prepare