

CHAPTER VI.

PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND MEANS OF
HELPING THESE PEOPLES.

IN consequence of the losses incurred, a part of the country of the Hurons is seen to be in desolation; fifteen villages have been abandoned, the people of each scattering where they could,—in the woods and forests, on the lakes and rivers, and among the Islands most unknown to the enemy. Others have taken refuge in the neighboring Nations, more capable of sustaining the stress of war. In less than fifteen days, our House of Sainte Marie has seen itself stripped bare on every side, and the only one which remained standing in these places of terror, most exposed to the incursions of the enemy,—those who had left their former [87] dwellings having set fire to these themselves, fearing lest they should serve as retreat and fortresses to the Iroquois.

What increases the public misery is, that famine has been prevalent this year in all these regions, more than it had been seen in fifty years,—most of the people not having wherewith to live, and being constrained either to eat acorns, or else to go and seek in the woods some wild roots. With these they sustain a wretched life,—still too happy not to have fallen into the hands of an enemy a thousand times more cruel than the wild beasts, and than all the famines in the world. Fishing supports some of