

CHAPTER FOURTH.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CANADIAN BARBARIANS.

I DO not speak of all the nations of these countries, nor of all that concerns their government, which is admirable in this, that, being very different from ours, and therefore to many unknown, it is nevertheless quite as effective as our own, and even more so, since there appear, amid conditions of extreme liberty, very few disorders. I speak only of the nations which we know, and particularly of the Hurons.

These peoples have neither King nor absolute Prince, but certain chiefs, like the heads of a Republic, whom we call Captains,—different, however, from those in war. These hold office commonly by succession on the side of the women, sometimes by election. They assume office at the death of a predecessor (who, they say, is resuscitated in them). This is celebrated with certain ceremonies. These Captains have not *vim coactivam*, which even the Fathers do not exercise over their sons in order to correct them, as they use words alone; and, thus brought up, the more the sons increase in age, the more they love and respect their fathers. Therefore both the former and the latter obtain everything *precario* by eloquence, exhortation, and entreaties; and, as *signatum est super nos lumen vultus Domini*, rude though they were before our arrival, they were nevertheless acquainted with both vice and virtue;