

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE HOPES OF CONVERTING THIS PEOPLE.

AMONG various propositions that have been made to me from Old France, some one asks me how it happens that in so many years so few persons have been baptized. It seems to me that the proposition ought to be reversed, and stated, 'How happens it that in so few years so many persons have been baptized?' The holy Scriptures, in speaking of Saul, say that he reigned only two years; and yet [111] it is certain that he bore the Scepter and the Crown a much longer time. In this regard, the holy Spirit estimates his virtue, and not the years of his Scepter and his Crown. I say the same; if you count how many years it has been since men came to New France in search of the spoils of animals, you will find it a long time. But if you ask how many years they have been preaching the holy Gospel, I answer that they have hardly yet begun; for, to speak correctly, we should only reckon from the time that the Gentlemen of the New Company reëntered Kébec. And if you go further back, you will not be astonished that the faith made no progress in these countries, while a heretic had the principal administration of affairs here, and authority over those who might have devoted themselves to that work. Now the time has been so short since then, that we have reason to offer a thousand praises to God for the progress that has been made in Reli-