

## CHAPTER V.

## POLITY AND GOVERNMENT OF THE INDIANS.

THE polity cannot have greater bounds than the commonwealth, for it is simply the ordering and government of the commonwealth. Now, the savages, having no extensive community, either in number of persons, for they are few, nor in possessions, for they are poor, and live only from hand to mouth; neither by alliance and social bonds, for that they are scattered and wanderers, cannot have a polity of much account. Neither, indeed, can they do without any—being men and consorted together. What they have, then, is after this sort: the Sagamo, who is the oldest member of some powerful family, is, in virtue of his age, the chief and leader thereof. All the younger branches of the family belong to his train, and live with him; he therefore provides the dogs for the chase, and canoes for their migrations; and lays up a store of food against bad weather and the season of travelling. The young men pay deference to him; under him they serve their apprenticeship in war and the hunt, being incapable of holding property, until they are married. Then only they become qualified to own dog and pack, that is to say, to acquire and hold private property; while they still continue subject to the authority of the Sagamo, and generally members of his band; as do likewise others who are destitute of relations, or who, having no adherents of their own, and no resources to live singly, at their own free will, place themselves under his guidance and protection. Accordingly, every thing acquired by the young men belongs to the Sagamo, while the married men give him only a part of their acquisitions; and, if the latter separate themselves from him, as must often happen, for the convenience of hunting and living, when they return, they acknowledge his rights, and do him homage by presents of skins and like articles. From these circumstances arise quarrels and jealousies among them, as they do among us, but by no means so violent in their nature: when, for example, one among them begins to act independently and set up for a Sagamo, no longer paying his tribute, should his followers desert him, or be enticed away by others, just as among ourselves, so do they bandy reproaches and scornful words. The new man is only a half Sagamo, as, being newly hatched, like a chicken three days old, his comb is not grown; he is a Sagamozette, that is, a sucking Sagamo—a dwarf. Thus you may perceive that ambition bears sway beneath the thatch of rushes as well as beneath the gilded roof-tree of the palace, and that its lessons are not hard to learn. The country is parceled