

# FRANCIS PARKMAN

FRANCE AND ENGLAND  
IN N AMERICA, PART V:  
COUNT FRONTENAC,  
NEW FRANCE, LOUIS XIV

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**America, Part V: Count**  
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*France and England in N America, Part V: Count Frontenac, New France,  
Louis XIV:*

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# **Francis Parkman France and England in N America, Part V: Count Frontenac, New France, Louis XIV**

## **PREFACE**

The events recounted in this book group themselves in the main about a single figure, that of Count Frontenac, the most remarkable man who ever represented the crown of France in the New World. From strangely unpromising beginnings, he grew with every emergency, and rose equal to every crisis. His whole career was one of conflict, sometimes petty and personal, sometimes of momentous consequence, involving the question of national ascendancy on this continent. Now that this question is put at rest for ever, it is hard to conceive the anxiety which it wakened in our forefathers. But for one rooted error of French policy, the future of the English-speaking races in America would have been more than endangered.

Under the rule of Frontenac occurred the first serious collision

of the rival powers, and the opening of the grand scheme of military occupation by which France strove to envelop and hold in check the industrial populations of the English colonies. It was he who made that scheme possible.

In "The Old Régime in Canada," I tried to show from what inherent causes this wilderness empire of the Great Monarch fell at last before a foe, superior indeed in numbers, but lacking all the forces that belong to a system of civil and military centralization. The present volume will show how valiantly, and for a time how successfully, New France battled against a fate which her own organic fault made inevitable. Her history is a great and significant drama, enacted among untamed forests, with a distant gleam of courtly splendors and the regal pomp of Versailles.

The authorities on which the book rests are drawn chiefly from the manuscript collections of the French government in the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and, above all, the vast repositories of the Archives of the Marine and Colonies. Others are from Canadian and American sources. I have, besides, availed myself of the collection of French, English, and Dutch documents published by the State of New York, under the excellent editorship of Dr. O'Callaghan, and of the manuscript collections made in France by the governments of Canada and of Massachusetts. A considerable number of books, contemporary or nearly so with the events described, also help to throw light upon them; and these have all been examined.

The citations in the margins represent but a small part of the authorities consulted.

This mass of material has been studied with extreme care, and peculiar pains have been taken to secure accuracy of statement. In the preface of "The Old Régime," I wrote: "Some of the results here reached are of a character which I regret, since they cannot be agreeable to persons for whom I have a very cordial regard. The conclusions drawn from the facts may be matter of opinion: but it will be remembered that the facts themselves can be overthrown only by overthrowing the evidence on which they rest, or bringing forward counter-evidence of equal or greater strength; and neither task will be found an easy one."

The invitation implied in these words has not been accepted. "The Old Régime" was met by vehement protest in some quarters; but, so far as I know, none of the statements of fact contained in it have been attacked by evidence, or even challenged. The lines just quoted are equally applicable to this volume. Should there be occasion, a collection of documentary proofs will be published more than sufficient to make good the positions taken. Meanwhile, it will, I think, be clear to an impartial reader that the story is told, not in the interest of any race or nationality, but simply in that of historical truth.

When, at the age of eighteen, I formed the purpose of writing on French-American history, I meant at first to limit myself to the great contest which brought that history to a close. It was by an afterthought that the plan was extended to cover the

whole field, so that the part of the work, or series of works, first conceived, would, following the sequence of events, be the last executed. As soon as the original scheme was formed, I began to prepare for executing it by examining localities, journeying in forests, visiting Indian tribes, and collecting materials. I have continued to collect them ever since, so that the accumulation is now rather formidable; and, if it is to be used at all, it had better be used at once. Therefore, passing over for the present an intervening period of less decisive importance, I propose to take, as the next subject of this series, "Montcalm and the Fall of New France."

Boston, 1 Jan., 1877.

# CHAPTER I

1620-1672

## Count and Countess Frontenac

Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madame de Frontenac • Orleans • The Maréchale de Camp • Count Frontenac • Conjugal Disputes • Early Life of Frontenac • His Courtship and Marriage • Estrangement • Scenes at St. Fargeau • The Lady of Honor dismissed • Frontenac as a Soldier • He is made Governor of New France • Les Divines.

At Versailles there is the portrait of a lady, beautiful and young. She is painted as Minerva, a plumed helmet on her head, and a shield on her arm. In a corner of the canvas is written *Anne de La Grange-Trianon, Comtesse de Frontenac*. This blooming goddess was the wife of the future governor of Canada.

Madame de Frontenac, at the age of about twenty, was a favorite companion of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, the granddaughter of Henry IV. and daughter of the weak and dastardly Gaston, Duke of Orleans. Nothing in French annals has found



more readers than the story of the exploit of this spirited princess at Orleans during the civil war of the Fronde. Her cousin Condé, chief of the revolt, had found favor in her eyes; and she had espoused his cause against her cousin, the king. The royal army threatened Orleans. The duke, her father, dared not leave Paris, but he consented that his daughter should go in his place to hold the city for Condé and the Fronde.

The princess entered her carriage and set out on her errand, attended by a small escort. With her were three young married ladies, the Marquise de Bréauté, the Comtesse de Fiesque, and the Comtesse de Frontenac. In two days they reached Orleans. The civic authorities were afraid to declare against the king, and hesitated to open the gates to the daughter of their duke, who, standing in the moat with her three companions, tried persuasion and threats in vain. The prospect was not encouraging, when a crowd of boatmen came up from the river and offered the princess their services. "I accepted them gladly," she writes, "and said a thousand fine things, such as one must say to that sort of people to make them do what one wishes." She gave them money as well as fair words, and begged them to burst open one of the gates. They fell at once to the work; while the guards and officials looked down from the walls, neither aiding nor resisting them. "To animate the boatmen by my presence," she continues, "I mounted a hillock near by. I did not look to see which way I went, but clambered up like a cat, clutching brambles and thorns, and jumping over hedges without hurting myself. Madame de

Bréauté, who is the most cowardly creature in the world, began to cry out against me and everybody who followed me; in fact, I do not know if she did not swear in her excitement, which amused me very much." At length, a hole was knocked in the gate; and a gentleman of her train, who had directed the attack, beckoned her to come on. "As it was very muddy, a man took me and carried me forward, and thrust me in at this hole, where my head was no sooner through than the drums beat to salute me. I gave my hand to the captain of the guard. The shouts redoubled. Two men took me and put me in a wooden chair. I do not know whether I was seated in it or on their arms, for I was beside myself with joy. Everybody was kissing my hands, and I almost died with laughing to see myself in such an odd position." There was no resisting the enthusiasm of the people and the soldiers. Orleans was won for the Fronde. <sup>1</sup>

The young Countesses of Frontenac and Fiesque had constantly followed her, and climbed after her through the hole in the gate. Her father wrote to compliment them on their prowess, and addressed his letter *à Mesdames les Comtesses, Maréchaux de Camp dans l'armée de ma fille contre le Mazarin*. Officers and soldiers took part in the pleasantries; and, as Madame de Frontenac passed on horseback before the troops, they saluted her with the honors paid to a brigadier.

When the king, or Cardinal Mazarin who controlled him, had triumphed over the revolting princes, Mademoiselle de

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, I. 358-363 (ed. 1859).

Montpensier paid the penalty of her exploit by a temporary banishment from the court. She roamed from place to place, with a little court of her own, of which Madame de Frontenac was a conspicuous member. During the war, Count Frontenac had been dangerously ill of a fever in Paris; and his wife had been absent for a time, attending him. She soon rejoined the princess, who was at her château of St. Fargeau, three days' journey from Paris, when an incident occurred which placed the married life of her fair companion in an unexpected light. "The Duchesse de Sully came to see me, and brought with her M. d'Herbault and M. de Frontenac. Frontenac had stopped here once before, but it was only for a week, when he still had the fever, and took great care of himself like a man who had been at the door of death. This time he was in high health. His arrival had not been expected, and his wife was so much surprised that everybody observed it, especially as the surprise seemed to be not at all a pleasant one. Instead of going to talk with her husband, she went off and hid herself, crying and screaming because he had said that he would like to have her company that evening. I was very much astonished, especially as I had never before perceived her aversion to him. The elder Comtesse de Fiesque remonstrated with her; but she only cried the more. Madame de Fiesque then brought books to show her her duty as a wife; but it did no good, and at last she got into such a state that we sent for the curé with holy water to exorcise her." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, II. 265. The curé's holy water, or his

Count Frontenac came of an ancient and noble race, said to have been of Basque origin. His father held a high post in the household of Louis XIII., who became the child's god-father, and gave him his own name. At the age of fifteen, the young Louis showed an incontrollable passion for the life of a soldier. He was sent to the seat of war in Holland, to serve under the Prince of Orange. At the age of nineteen, he was a volunteer at the siege of Hesdin; in the next year, he was at Arras, where he distinguished himself during a sortie of the garrison; in the next, he took part in the siege of Aire; and, in the next, in those of Callioure and Perpignan. At the age of twenty-three, he was made colonel of the regiment of Normandy, which he commanded in repeated battles and sieges of the Italian campaign. He was several times wounded, and in 1646 he had an arm broken at the siege of Orbitello. In the same year, when twenty-six years old, he was raised to the rank of *maréchal de camp*, equivalent to that of brigadier-general. A year or two later, we find him at Paris, at the house of his father, on the Quai des Célestins.<sup>3</sup>

In the same neighborhood lived La Grange-Trianon, Sieur de Neuville, a widower of fifty, with one child, a daughter of sixteen, whom he had placed in the charge of his relative, Madame de Bouthillier. Frontenac fell in love with her. Madame de Bouthillier opposed the match, and told La Grange that he

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exhortations, were at last successful.

<sup>3</sup> Pinard, *Chronologie Historique-militaire*, VI.; *Table de la Gazette de France*; Jal, *Dictionnaire Critique, Biographique, et d'Histoire*, art. "Frontenac;" Goyer, *Oraison Funèbre du Comte de Frontenac*.

might do better for his daughter than to marry her to a man who, say what he might, had but twenty thousand francs a year. La Grange was weak and vacillating: sometimes he listened to his prudent kinswoman, and sometimes to the eager suitor; treated him as a son-in-law, carried love messages from him to his daughter, and ended by refusing him her hand, and ordering her to renounce him on pain of being immured in a convent. Neither Frontenac nor his mistress was of a pliant temper. In the neighborhood was the little church of St. Pierre aux Bœufs, which had the privilege of uniting couples without the consent of their parents; and here, on a Wednesday in October, 1648, the lovers were married in presence of a number of Frontenac's relatives. La Grange was furious at the discovery; but his anger soon cooled, and complete reconciliation followed.<sup>4</sup>

The happiness of the newly wedded pair was short. Love soon changed to aversion, at least on the part of the bride. She was not of a tender nature; her temper was imperious, and she had a restless craving for excitement. Frontenac, on his part, was the most wayward and headstrong of men. She bore him a son; but maternal cares were not to her liking. The infant, François Louis, was placed in the keeping of a nurse at the village of Clion; and his young mother left her husband, to follow the fortunes of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who for a time pronounced her charming, praised her wit and beauty, and made her one

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<sup>4</sup> *Historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux*, IX. 214 (ed. Monmerqué); Jal, *Dictionnaire Critique*, etc.

of her ladies of honor. Very curious and amusing are some of the incidents recounted by the princess, in which Madame de Frontenac bore part; but what is more to our purpose are the sketches traced here and there by the same sharp pen, in which one may discern the traits of the destined saviour of New France. Thus, in the following, we see him at St. Fargeau in the same attitude in which we shall often see him at Quebec.

The princess and the duke her father had a dispute touching her property. Frontenac had lately been at Blois, where the duke had possessed him with his own views of the questions at issue. Accordingly, on arriving at St. Fargeau, he seemed disposed to assume the character of mediator. "He wanted," says the princess, "to discuss my affairs with me: I listened to his preaching, and he also spoke about these matters to Préfontaine (*her man of business*). I returned to the house after our promenade, and we went to dance in the great hall. While we were dancing, I saw Préfontaine walking at the farther end with Frontenac, who was talking and gesticulating. This continued for a long time. Madame de Sully noticed it also, and seemed disturbed by it, as I was myself. I said, 'Have we not danced enough?' Madame de Sully assented, and we went out. I called Préfontaine, and asked him, 'What was Frontenac saying to you?' He answered: 'He was scolding me. I never saw such an impertinent man in my life.' I went to my room, and Madame de Sully and Madame de Fiesque followed. Madame de Sully said to Préfontaine: 'I was very much disturbed to see you talking with

so much warmth to Monsieur de Frontenac; for he came here in such ill-humor that I was afraid he would quarrel with you. Yesterday, when we were in the carriage, he was ready to eat us.' The Comtesse de Fiesque said, 'This morning he came to see my mother-in-law, and scolded at her.' Préfontaine answered: 'He wanted to throttle me. I never saw a man so crazy and absurd.' We all four began to pity poor Madame de Frontenac for having such a husband, and to think her right in not wanting to go with him." <sup>5</sup>

Frontenac owned the estate of Isle Savary, on the Indre, not far from Blois; and here, soon after the above scene, the princess made him a visit. "It is a pretty enough place," she says, "for a man like him. The house is well furnished, and he gave me excellent entertainment. He showed me all the plans he had for improving it, and making gardens, fountains, and ponds. It would need the riches of a superintendent of finance to execute his schemes, and how anybody else should venture to think of them I cannot comprehend."

"While Frontenac was at St. Fargeau," she continues, "he kept open table, and many of my people went to dine with him; for he affected to hold court, and acted as if everybody owed duty to him. The conversation was always about my affair with his Royal Highness (*her father*), whose conduct towards me was always praised, while mine was blamed. Frontenac spoke ill of Préfontaine, and, in fine, said every thing he could to displease

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<sup>5</sup> *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, II. 267.

me and stir up my own people against me. He praised every thing that belonged to himself, and never came to sup or dine with me without speaking of some *ragoût* or some new sweetmeat which had been served up on his table, ascribing it all to the excellence of the officers of his kitchen. The very meat that he ate, according to him, had a different taste on his board than on any other. As for his silver plate, it was always of good workmanship; and his dress was always of patterns invented by himself. When he had new clothes, he paraded them like a child. One day he brought me some to look at, and left them on my dressing-table. We were then at Chambord. His Royal Highness came into the room, and must have thought it odd to see breeches and doublets in such a place. Préfontaine and I laughed about it a great deal. Frontenac took everybody who came to St. Fargeau to see his stables; and all who wished to gain his good graces were obliged to admire his horses, which were very indifferent. In short, this is his way in every thing." <sup>6</sup>

Though not himself of the highest rank, his position at court was, from the courtier point of view, an enviable one. The princess, after her banishment had ended, more than once mentions incidentally that she had met him in the cabinet of the queen. Her dislike of him became intense, and her fondness for his wife changed at last to aversion. She charges the countess with ingratitude. She discovered, or thought that she discovered, that in her dispute with her father, and in certain dissensions in

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<sup>6</sup> *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, II. 279; III. 10.



her own household, Madame de Frontenac had acted secretly in opposition to her interests and wishes. The imprudent lady of honor received permission to leave her service. It was a woful scene. "She saw me get into my carriage," writes the princess, "and her distress was greater than ever. Her tears flowed abundantly: as for me, my fortitude was perfect, and I looked on with composure while she cried. If any thing could disturb my tranquility, it was the recollection of the time when she laughed while I was crying." Mademoiselle de Montpensier had been deeply offended, and apparently with reason. The countess and her husband received an order never again to appear in her presence; but soon after, when the princess was with the king and queen at a comedy in the garden of the Louvre, Frontenac, who had previously arrived, immediately changed his position, and with his usual audacity took a post so conspicuous that she could not help seeing him. "I confess," she says, "I was so angry that I could find no pleasure in the play; but I said nothing to the king and queen, fearing that they would not take such a view of the matter as I wished." <sup>7</sup>

With the close of her relations with "La Grande Mademoiselle," Madame de Frontenac is lost to sight for a while. In 1669, a Venetian embassy came to France to beg for aid against the Turks, who for more than two years had attacked Candia in overwhelming force. The ambassadors offered to place their own troops under French command, and they asked

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<sup>7</sup> *Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, III. 270.

Turenne to name a general officer equal to the task. Frontenac had the signal honor of being chosen by the first soldier of Europe for this most arduous and difficult position. He went accordingly. The result increased his reputation for ability and courage; but Candia was doomed, and its chief fortress fell into the hands of the infidels, after a protracted struggle, which is said to have cost them a hundred and eighty thousand men.<sup>8</sup>

Three years later, Frontenac received the appointment of Governor and Lieutenant-General for the king in all New France. "He was," says Saint-Simon, "a man of excellent parts, living much in society, and completely ruined. He found it hard to bear the imperious temper of his wife; and he was given the government of Canada to deliver him from her, and afford him some means of living."<sup>9</sup> Certain scandalous songs of the day assign a different motive for his appointment. Louis XIV. was enamoured of Madame de Montespan. She had once smiled upon Frontenac; and it is said that the jealous king gladly embraced the opportunity of removing from his presence, and from hers, a lover who had forestalled him.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Oraison funèbre du Comte de Frontenac, par le Père Olivier Goyer*. A powerful French contingent, under another command, co-operated with the Venetians under Frontenac.

<sup>9</sup> *Memoires du Duc de Saint-Simon*, II. 270; V. 336.

<sup>10</sup> Note of M. Brunet, in *Correspondance de la Duchesse d'Orléans*, I. 200 (ed. 1869). The following lines, among others, were passed about secretly among the courtiers:—"Je suis ravi que le roi, notre sire, Aime la Montespan; Moi, Frontenac, je me crève de rire, Sachant ce qui lui pend; Et je dirai, sans être des plus bestes, Tu

Frontenac's wife had no thought of following him across the sea. A more congenial life awaited her at home. She had long had a friend of humbler station than herself, Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, daughter of an obscure gentleman of Poitou, an amiable and accomplished person, who became through life her constant companion. The extensive building called the Arsenal, formerly the residence of Sully, the minister of Henry IV., contained suites of apartments which were granted to persons who had influence enough to obtain them. The Duc de Lude, grand master of artillery, had them at his disposal, and gave one of them to Madame de Frontenac. Here she made her abode with her friend; and here at last she died, at the age of seventy-five. The annalist Saint-Simon, who knew the court and all belonging to it better than any other man of his time, says of her: "She had been beautiful and gay, and was always in the best society, where she was greatly in request. Like her husband, she had little property and abundant wit. She and Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, whom she took to live with her, gave the tone to the best company of Paris and the court, though they never went thither. They were called *Les Divines*. In fact, they demanded incense like

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n'as que mon reste,Roi,Tu n'as que mon reste."Mademoiselle de Montpensier had mentioned in her memoirs, some years before, that Frontenac, in taking out his handkerchief, dropped from his pocket a love-letter to Mademoiselle de Mortemart, afterwards Madame de Montespan, which was picked up by one of the attendants of the princess. The king, on the other hand, was at one time attracted by the charms of Madame de Frontenac, against whom, however, no aspersion is cast.The Comte de Grignan, son-in-law of Madame de Sévigné, was an unsuccessful competitor with Frontenac for the government of Canada.

goddesses; and it was lavished upon them all their lives."

Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise died long before the countess, who retained in old age the rare social gifts which to the last made her apartments a resort of the highest society of that brilliant epoch. It was in her power to be very useful to her absent husband, who often needed her support, and who seems to have often received it.

She was childless. Her son, François Louis, was killed, some say in battle, and others in a duel, at an early age. Her husband died nine years before her; and the old countess left what little she had to her friend Beringhen, the king's master of the horse.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> On Frontenac and his family, see Appendix A.

# CHAPTER II

1672-1675

## Frontenac at Quebec

Arrival • Bright Prospects • The Three Estates of New France • Speech of the Governor • His Innovations • Royal Displeasure • Signs of Storm • Frontenac and the Priests • His Attempts to civilize the Indians • Opposition • Complaints and Heart-burnings.

Frontenac was fifty-two years old when he landed at Quebec. If time had done little to cure his many faults, it had done nothing to weaken the springs of his unconquerable vitality. In his ripe middle age, he was as keen, fiery, and perversely headstrong as when he quarrelled with Préfontaine in the hall at St. Fargeau.

Had nature disposed him to melancholy, there was much in his position to awaken it. A man of courts and camps, born and bred in the focus of a most gorgeous civilization, he was banished to the ends of the earth, among savage hordes and half-reclaimed forests, to exchange the splendors of St. Germain and the dawning glories of Versailles for a stern gray rock, haunted by

sombre priests, rugged merchants and traders, blanketed Indians, and wild bush-rangers. But Frontenac was a man of action. He wasted no time in vain regrets, and set himself to his work with the elastic vigor of youth. His first impressions had been very favorable. When, as he sailed up the St. Lawrence, the basin of Quebec opened before him, his imagination kindled with the grandeur of the scene. "I never," he wrote, "saw any thing more superb than the position of this town. It could not be better situated as the future capital of a great empire." <sup>12</sup>

That Quebec was to become the capital of a great empire there seemed in truth good reason to believe. The young king and his minister Colbert had labored in earnest to build up a new France in the west. For years past, ship-loads of emigrants had landed every summer on the strand beneath the rock. All was life and action, and the air was full of promise. The royal agent Talon had written to his master: "This part of the French monarchy is destined to a grand future. All that I see around me points to it; and the colonies of foreign nations, so long settled on the seaboard, are trembling with fright in view of what his Majesty has accomplished here within the last seven years. The measures we have taken to confine them within narrow limits, and the prior claim we have established against them by formal acts of possession, do not permit them to extend themselves except at peril of having war declared against them as usurpers; and this,

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<sup>12</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1672.

in fact, is what they seem greatly to fear." <sup>13</sup>

Frontenac shared the spirit of the hour. His first step was to survey his government. He talked with traders, colonists, and officials; visited seigniories, farms, fishing-stations, and all the infant industries that Talon had galvanized into life; examined the new ship on the stocks, admired the structure of the new brewery, went to Three Rivers to see the iron mines, and then, having acquired a tolerably exact idea of his charge, returned to Quebec. He was well pleased with what he saw, but not with the ways and means of Canadian travel; for he thought it strangely unbecoming that a lieutenant-general of the king should be forced to crouch on a sheet of bark, at the bottom of a birch canoe, scarcely daring to move his head to the right or left lest he should disturb the balance of the fragile vessel.

At Quebec he convoked the council, made them a speech, and administered the oath of allegiance. <sup>14</sup> This did not satisfy him. He resolved that all Quebec should take the oath together. It was little but a pretext. Like many of his station, Frontenac was not in full sympathy with the centralizing movement of the time, which tended to level ancient rights, privileges, and prescriptions under the ponderous roller of the monarchical administration. He looked back with regret to the day when the three orders of the state, clergy, nobles, and commons, had a place and a power in the direction of national affairs. The three orders still

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<sup>13</sup> *Talon au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1671.

<sup>14</sup> *Registre du Conseil Souverain*.

subsisted, in form, if not in substance, in some of the provinces of France; and Frontenac conceived the idea of reproducing them in Canada. Not only did he cherish the tradition of faded liberties, but he loved pomp and circumstance, above all, when he was himself the central figure in it; and the thought of a royal governor of Languedoc or Brittany, presiding over the estates of his province, appears to have fired him with emulation.

He had no difficulty in forming his order of the clergy. The Jesuits and the seminary priests supplied material even more abundant than he wished. For the order of the nobles, he found three or four *gentilshommes* at Quebec, and these he reinforced with a number of officers. The third estate consisted of the merchants and citizens; and he formed the members of the council and the magistrates into another distinct body, though, properly speaking, they belonged to the third estate, of which by nature and prescription they were the head. The Jesuits, glad no doubt to lay him under some slight obligation, lent him their church for the ceremony that he meditated, and aided in decorating it for the occasion. Here, on the twenty-third of October, 1672, the three estates of Canada were convoked, with as much pomp and splendor as circumstances would permit. Then Frontenac, with the ease of a man of the world and the loftiness of a *grand seigneur*, delivered himself of the harangue he had prepared. He wrote exceedingly well; he is said also to have excelled as an orator; certainly he was never averse to the tones of his own eloquence. His speech was addressed to a double



audience: the throng that filled the church, and the king and the minister three thousand miles away. He told his hearers that he had called the assembly, not because he doubted their loyalty, but in order to afford them the delight of making public protestation of devotion to a prince, the terror of whose irresistible arms was matched only by the charms of his person and the benignity of his rule. "The Holy Scriptures," he said, "command us to obey our sovereign, and teach us that no pretext or reason can dispense us from this obedience." And, in a glowing eulogy on Louis XIV., he went on to show that obedience to him was not only a duty, but an inestimable privilege. He dwelt with admiration on the recent victories in Holland, and held forth the hope that a speedy and glorious peace would leave his Majesty free to turn his thoughts to the colony which already owed so much to his fostering care. "The true means," pursued Frontenac, "of gaining his favor and his support, is for us to unite with one heart in laboring for the progress of Canada." Then he addressed, in turn, the clergy, the nobles, the magistrates, and the citizens. He exhorted the priests to continue with zeal their labors for the conversion of the Indians, and to make them subjects not only of Christ, but also of the king; in short, to tame and civilize them, a portion of their duties in which he plainly gave them to understand that they had not hitherto acquitted themselves to his satisfaction. Next, he appealed to the nobles, commended their gallantry, and called upon them to be as assiduous in the culture and improvement of the colony as they were valiant in its defence. The magistrates,

the merchants, and the colonists in general were each addressed in an appropriate exhortation. "I can assure you, messieurs," he concluded, "that if you faithfully discharge your several duties, each in his station, his Majesty will extend to us all the help and all the favor that we can desire. It is needless, then, to urge you to act as I have counselled, since it is for your own interest to do so. As for me, it only remains to protest before you that I shall esteem myself happy in consecrating all my efforts, and, if need be, my life itself, to extending the empire of Jesus Christ throughout all this land, and the supremacy of our king over all the nations that dwell in it."

He administered the oath, and the assembly dissolved. He now applied himself to another work: that of giving a municipal government to Quebec, after the model of some of the cities of France. In place of the syndic, an official supposed to represent the interests of the citizens, he ordered the public election of three aldermen, of whom the senior should act as mayor. One of the number was to go out of office every year, his place being filled by a new election; and the governor, as representing the king, reserved the right of confirmation or rejection. He then, in concert with the chief inhabitants, proceeded to frame a body of regulations for the government of a town destined, as he again and again declares, to become the capital of a mighty empire; and he farther ordained that the people should hold a meeting every six months to discuss questions involving the welfare of the colony. The boldness of these measures will scarcely be

appreciated at the present day. The intendant Talon declined, on pretence of a slight illness, to be present at the meeting of the estates. He knew too well the temper of the king, whose constant policy it was to destroy or paralyze every institution or custom that stood in the way of his autocracy. The despatches in which Frontenac announced to his masters what he had done received in due time their answer. The minister Colbert wrote: "Your assembling of the inhabitants to take the oath of fidelity, and your division of them into three estates, may have had a good effect for the moment; but it is well for you to observe that you are always to follow, in the government of Canada, the forms in use here; and since our kings have long regarded it as good for their service not to convoke the states-general of the kingdom, in order, perhaps, to abolish insensibly this ancient usage, you, on your part, should very rarely, or, to speak more correctly, never, give a corporate form to the inhabitants of Canada. You should even, as the colony strengthens, suppress gradually the office of the syndic, who presents petitions in the name of the inhabitants; for it is well that each should speak for himself, and no one for all." <sup>15</sup>

Here, in brief, is the whole spirit of the French colonial rule in Canada; a government, as I have elsewhere shown, of excellent intentions, but of arbitrary methods. Frontenac, filled with the

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<sup>15</sup> *Frontenac au Roi*, 2 Nov., 1672; *Ibid.*, 13 Nov., 1673; *Harangue du Comte de Frontenac en l'Assemblée à Quebec*; *Prestations de Serment*, 23 Oct., 1672; *Réglement de Police fait par Monsieur le Comte de Frontenac*; *Colbert à Frontenac*, 13 Juin, 1673.

traditions of the past, and sincerely desirous of the good of the colony, rashly set himself against the prevailing current. His municipal government, and his meetings of citizens, were, like his three estates, abolished by a word from the court, which, bold and obstinate as he was, he dared not disobey. Had they been allowed to subsist, there can be little doubt that great good would have resulted to Canada.

Frontenac has been called a mere soldier. He was an excellent soldier, and more besides. He was a man of vigorous and cultivated mind, penetrating observation, and ample travel and experience. His zeal for the colony, however, was often counteracted by the violence of his prejudices, and by two other influences. First, he was a ruined man, who meant to mend his fortunes; and his wish that Canada should prosper was joined with a determination to reap a goodly part of her prosperity for himself. Again, he could not endure a rival; opposition maddened him, and, when crossed or thwarted, he forgot every thing but his passion. Signs of storm quickly showed themselves between him and the intendant Talon; but the danger was averted by the departure of that official for France. A cloud then rose in the direction of the clergy.

"Another thing displeases me," writes Frontenac, "and this is the complete dependence of the grand vicar and the seminary priests on the Jesuits, for they never do the least thing without their order: so that they (*the Jesuits*) are masters in spiritual matters, which, as you know, is a powerful lever for moving every

thing else." <sup>16</sup> And he complains that they have spies in town and country, that they abuse the confessional, intermeddle in families, set husbands against wives, and parents against children, and all, as they say, for the greater glory of God. "I call to mind every day, Monseigneur, what you did me the honor to say to me when I took leave of you, and every day I am satisfied more and more of the great importance to the king's service of opposing the slightest of the attempts which are daily made against his authority." He goes on to denounce a certain sermon, preached by a Jesuit, to the great scandal of loyal subjects, wherein the father declared that the king had exceeded his powers in licensing the trade in brandy when the bishop had decided it to be a sin, together with other remarks of a seditious nature. "I was tempted several times," pursues Frontenac, "to leave the church with my guards and interrupt the sermon; but I contented myself with telling the grand vicar and the superior of the Jesuits, after it was over, that I was very much surprised at what I had heard, and demanded justice at their hands. They greatly blamed the preacher, and disavowed him, attributing his language, after their custom, to an excess of zeal, and making many apologies, with which I pretended to be satisfied; though I told them, nevertheless, that their excuses would not pass current with me another time, and, if the thing happened again, I would put the preacher in a place where he would learn how to speak. Since then they have been a little more careful, though not enough to

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<sup>16</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1672.

prevent one from always seeing their intention to persuade the people that, even in secular matters, their authority ought to be respected above any other. As there are many persons here who have no more brains than they need, and who are attached to them by ties of interest or otherwise, it is necessary to have an eye to these matters in this country more than anywhere else." <sup>17</sup>

The churchmen, on their part, were not idle. The bishop, who was then in France, contrived by some means to acquaint himself with the contents of the private despatches sent by Colbert in reply to the letters of Frontenac. He wrote to another ecclesiastic to communicate what he had learned, at the same time enjoining great caution; "since, while it is well to acquire all necessary information, and to act upon it, it is of the greatest importance to keep secret our possession of such knowledge." <sup>18</sup>

The king and the minister, in their instructions to Frontenac, had dwelt with great emphasis on the expediency of civilizing the Indians, teaching them the French language, and amalgamating them with the colonists. Frontenac, ignorant as yet of Indian nature and unacquainted with the difficulties of the case, entered into these views with great heartiness. He exercised from the first an extraordinary influence over all the Indians with whom he

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<sup>17</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 13 Nov., 1673.

<sup>18</sup> *Laval à—*, 1674. The letter is a complete summary of the contents of Colbert's recent despatch to Frontenac. Then follows the injunction to secrecy, "estant de très-grande conséquence que l'on ne sache pas que l'on aye rien appris de tout cela, sur quoi néanmoins il est bon que l'on agisse et que l'on me donne tous les avis qui seront nécessaires."

came in contact; and he persuaded the most savage and refractory of them, the Iroquois, to place eight of their children in his hands. Four of these were girls and four were boys. He took two of the boys into his own household, of which they must have proved most objectionable inmates; and he supported the other two, who were younger, out of his own slender resources, placed them in respectable French families, and required them to go daily to school. The girls were given to the charge of the Ursulines. Frontenac continually urged the Jesuits to co-operate with him in this work of civilization, but the results of his urgency disappointed and exasperated him. He complains that in the village of the Hurons, near Quebec, and under the control of the Jesuits, the French language was scarcely known. In fact, the fathers contented themselves with teaching their converts the doctrines and rites of the Roman Church, while retaining the food, dress, and habits of their original barbarism.

In defence of the missionaries, it should be said that, when brought in contact with the French, the Indians usually caught the vices of civilization without its virtues; but Frontenac made no allowances. "The Jesuits," he writes, "will not civilize the Indians, because they wish to keep them in perpetual wardship. They think more of beaver skins than of souls, and their missions are pure mockeries." At the same time he assures the minister that, when he is obliged to correct them, he does so with the utmost gentleness. In spite of this somewhat doubtful urbanity, it seems clear that a storm was brewing; and it was fortunate for the

peace of the Canadian Church that the attention of the truculent governor was drawn to other quarters.



# CHAPTER III

**1673-1675**

## **Frontenac and Perrot**

La Salle • Fort Frontenac • Perrot • His Speculations • His Tyranny • The Bush-rangers • Perrot revolts • Becomes alarmed • Dilemma of Frontenac • Mediation of Fénelon • Perrot in Prison • Excitement of the Sulpitians • Indignation of Fénelon • Passion of Frontenac • Perrot on Trial • Strange Scenes • Appeal to the King • Answers of Louis XIV. and Colbert • Fénelon rebuked.

Not long before Frontenac's arrival, Courcelle, his predecessor, went to Lake Ontario with an armed force, in order to impose respect on the Iroquois, who had of late become insolent. As a means of keeping them in check, and at the same time controlling the fur trade of the upper country, he had recommended, like Talon before him, the building of a fort near the outlet of the lake. Frontenac at once saw the advantages of such a measure, and his desire to execute it was stimulated by the reflection that the proposed fort might be made not only a

safeguard to the colony, but also a source of profit to himself.

At Quebec, there was a grave, thoughtful, self-contained young man, who soon found his way into Frontenac's confidence. There was between them the sympathetic attraction of two bold and energetic spirits; and though Cavelier de la Salle had neither the irritable vanity of the count, nor his Gallic vivacity of passion, he had in full measure the same unconquerable pride and hardy resolution. There were but two or three men in Canada who knew the western wilderness so well. He was full of schemes of ambition and of gain; and, from this moment, he and Frontenac seem to have formed an alliance, which ended only with the governor's recall.

In telling the story of La Salle, I have described the execution of the new plan: the muster of the Canadians, at the call of Frontenac; the consternation of those of the merchants whom he and La Salle had not taken into their counsels, and who saw in the movement the preparation for a gigantic fur trading monopoly; the intrigues set on foot to bar the enterprise; the advance up the St. Lawrence; the assembly of Iroquois at the destined spot; the ascendancy exercised over them by the governor; the building of Fort Frontenac on the ground where Kingston now stands, and its final transfer into the hands of La Salle, on condition, there can be no doubt, of sharing the expected profits with his patron.<sup>19</sup>

On the way to the lake, Frontenac stopped for some time at Montreal, where he had full opportunity to become acquainted

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<sup>19</sup> Discovery of the Great West, chap. vi.

with a state of things to which his attention had already been directed. This state of things was as follows:—

When the intendant, Talon, came for the second time to Canada, in 1669, an officer named Perrot, who had married his niece, came with him. Perrot, anxious to turn to account the influence of his wife's relative, looked about him for some post of honor and profit, and quickly discovered that the government of Montreal was vacant. The priests of St. Sulpice, feudal owners of the place, had the right of appointing their own governor. Talon advised them to choose Perrot, who thereupon received the desired commission, which, however, was revocable at the will of those who had granted it. The new governor, therefore, begged another commission from the king, and after a little delay he obtained it. Thus he became, in some measure, independent of the priests, who, if they wished to rid themselves of him, must first gain the royal consent.

Perrot, as he had doubtless foreseen, found himself in an excellent position for making money. The tribes of the upper lakes, and all the neighboring regions, brought down their furs every summer to the annual fair at Montreal. Perrot took his measures accordingly. On the island which still bears his name, lying above Montreal and directly in the route of the descending savages, he built a storehouse, and placed it in charge of a retired lieutenant named Brucy, who stopped the Indians on their way, and carried on an active trade with them, to the great profit of himself and his associate, and the great loss of the merchants in

the settlements below. This was not all. Perrot connived at the desertion of his own soldiers, who escaped to the woods, became *coureurs de bois*, or bush-rangers, traded with the Indians in their villages, and shared their gains with their commander. Many others, too, of these forest rovers, outlawed by royal edicts, found in the governor of Montreal a protector, under similar conditions.

The journey from Quebec to Montreal often consumed a fortnight. Perrot thought himself virtually independent; and relying on his commission from the king, the protection of Talon, and his connection with other persons of influence, he felt safe in his position, and began to play the petty tyrant. The judge of Montreal, and several of the chief inhabitants, came to offer a humble remonstrance against disorders committed by some of the ruffians in his interest. Perrot received them with a storm of vituperation, and presently sent the judge to prison. This proceeding was followed by a series of others, closely akin to it, so that the priests of St. Sulpice, who received their full share of official abuse, began to repent bitterly of the governor they had chosen.

Frontenac had received stringent orders from the king to arrest all the bush-rangers, or *coureurs de bois*; but, since he had scarcely a soldier at his disposal, except his own body-guard, the order was difficult to execute. As, however, most of these outlaws were in the service of his rival, Perrot, his zeal to capture them rose high against every obstacle. He had, moreover, a plan of his own in regard to them, and had already petitioned the minister for

a galley, to the benches of which the captive bush-rangers were to be chained as rowers, thus supplying the representative of the king with a means of transportation befitting his dignity, and at the same time giving wholesome warning against the infraction of royal edicts.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, he sent orders to the judge, at Montreal, to seize every *coureur de bois* on whom he could lay hands.

The judge, hearing that two of the most notorious were lodged in the house of a lieutenant named Carion, sent a constable to arrest them; whereupon Carion threatened and maltreated the officer of justice, and helped the men to escape. Perrot took the part of his lieutenant, and told the judge that he would put him in prison, in spite of Frontenac, if he ever dared to attempt such an arrest again.<sup>21</sup>

When Frontenac heard what had happened, his ire was doubly kindled. On the one hand, Perrot had violated the authority lodged by the king in the person of his representative; and, on the other, the mutinous official was a rival in trade, who had made great and illicit profits, while his superior had, thus far, made none. As a governor and as a man, Frontenac was deeply moved; yet, helpless as he was, he could do no more than send three of his guardsmen, under a lieutenant named Bizard, with orders to arrest Carion and bring him to Quebec.

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<sup>20</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1672.

<sup>21</sup> *Mémoire des Motifs qui ont obligé M. le Comte de Frontenac de faire arrêter le Sieur Perrot.*

The commission was delicate. The arrest was to be made in the dominions of Perrot, who had the means to prevent it, and the audacity to use them. Bizard acted accordingly. He went to Carion's house, and took him prisoner; then proceeded to the house of the merchant Le Ber, where he left a letter, in which Frontenac, as was the usage on such occasions, gave notice to the local governor of the arrest he had ordered. It was the object of Bizard to escape with his prisoner before Perrot could receive the letter; but, meanwhile, the wife of Carion ran to him with the news, and the governor suddenly arrived, in a frenzy of rage, followed by a sergeant and three or four soldiers. The sergeant held the point of his halberd against the breast of Bizard, while Perrot, choking with passion, demanded, "How dare you arrest an officer in my government without my leave?" The lieutenant replied that he acted under orders of the governor-general, and gave Frontenac's letter to Perrot, who immediately threw it into his face, exclaiming: "Take it back to your master, and tell him to teach you your business better another time. Meanwhile you are my prisoner." Bizard protested in vain. He was led to jail, whither he was followed a few days after by Le Ber, who had mortally offended Perrot by signing an attestation of the scene he had witnessed. As he was the chief merchant of the place, his arrest produced a great sensation, while his wife presently took to her bed with a nervous fever.

As Perrot's anger cooled, he became somewhat alarmed. He had resisted the royal authority, and insulted its representative.

The consequences might be serious; yet he could not bring himself to retrace his steps. He merely released Bizard, and sullenly permitted him to depart, with a letter to the governor-general, more impertinent than apologetic.<sup>22</sup>

Frontenac, as his enemies declare, was accustomed, when enraged, to foam at the mouth. Perhaps he did so when he learned the behavior of Perrot. If he had had at command a few companies of soldiers, there can be little doubt that he would have gone at once to Montreal, seized the offender, and brought him back in irons; but his body-guard of twenty men was not equal to such an enterprise. Nor would a muster of the militia have served his purpose; for the settlers about Quebec were chiefly peaceful peasants, while the denizens of Montreal were disbanded soldiers, fur traders, and forest adventurers, the best fighters in Canada. They were nearly all in the interest of Perrot, who, if attacked, had the temper as well as the ability to make a passionate resistance. Thus civil war would have ensued, and the anger of the king would have fallen on both parties. On the other hand, if Perrot were left unpunished, the *coureurs de bois*, of whom he was the patron, would set no bounds to their audacity, and Frontenac, who had been ordered to suppress them, would be condemned as negligent or incapable.

Among the priests of St. Sulpice at Montreal was the Abbé Salignac de Fénelon, half-brother of the celebrated author of *Télémaque*. He was a zealous missionary, enthusiastic and

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<sup>22</sup> *Mémoire des Motifs, etc.*

impulsive, still young, and more ardent than discreet. One of his uncles had been the companion of Frontenac during the Candian war, and hence the count's relations with the missionary had been very friendly. Frontenac now wrote to Perrot, directing him to come to Quebec and give account of his conduct; and he coupled this letter with another to Fénelon, urging him to represent to the offending governor the danger of his position, and advise him to seek an interview with his superior, by which the difficulty might be amicably adjusted. Perrot, dreading the displeasure of the king, soothed by the moderate tone of Frontenac's letter, and moved by the assurances of the enthusiastic abbé, who was delighted to play the part of peace-maker, at length resolved to follow his counsel. It was mid-winter. Perrot and Fénelon set out together, walked on snow-shoes a hundred and eighty miles down the frozen St. Lawrence, and made their appearance before the offended count.

Frontenac, there can be little doubt, had never intended that Perrot, once in his power, should return to Montreal as its governor; but that, beyond this, he meant harm to him, there is not the least proof. Perrot, however, was as choleric and stubborn as the count himself; and his natural disposition had not been improved by several years of petty autocracy at Montreal. Their interview was brief, but stormy. When it ended, Perrot was a prisoner in the château, with guards placed over him by day and night. Frontenac made choice of one La Nouguère, a retired officer, whom he knew that he could trust, and sent him to



Montreal to command in place of its captive governor. With him he sent also a judge of his own selection. La Nouguère set himself to his work with vigor. Perrot's agent or partner, Brucy, was seized, tried, and imprisoned; and an active hunt was begun for his *coureurs de bois*. Among others, the two who had been the occasion of the dispute were captured and sent to Quebec, where one of them was solemnly hanged before the window of Perrot's prison; with the view, no doubt, of producing a chastening effect on the mind of the prisoner. The execution was fully authorized, a royal edict having ordained that bush-ranging was an offence punishable with death.<sup>23</sup> As the result of these proceedings, Frontenac reported to the minister that only five *coureurs de bois* remained at large; all the rest having returned to the settlements and made their submission, so that farther hanging was needless.

Thus the central power was vindicated, and Montreal brought down from her attitude of partial independence. Other results also followed, if we may believe the enemies of Frontenac, who declare that, by means of the new commandant and other persons in his interest, the governor-general possessed himself of a great part of the trade from which he had ejected Perrot, and that the *coureurs de bois*, whom he hanged when breaking laws for his rival, found complete impunity when breaking laws for him.

Meanwhile, there was a deep though subdued excitement among the priests of St. Sulpice. The right of naming their own governor, which they claimed as seigniors of Montreal, had been

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<sup>23</sup> *Édits et Ordonnances*, I. 73.

violated by the action of Frontenac in placing La Nouguère in command without consulting them. Perrot was a bad governor; but it was they who had chosen him, and the recollection of his misdeeds did not reconcile them to a successor arbitrarily imposed upon them. Both they and the colonists, their vassals, were intensely jealous of Quebec; and, in their indignation against Frontenac, they more than half forgave Perrot. None among them all was so angry as the Abbé Fénelon. He believed that he had been used to lure Perrot into a trap; and his past attachment to the governor-general was turned into wrath. High words had passed between them; and, when Fénelon returned to Montreal, he vented his feelings in a sermon plainly levelled at Frontenac.<sup>24</sup> So sharp and bitter was it, that his brethren of St. Sulpice hastened to disclaim it; and Dollier de Casson, their Superior, strongly reproved the preacher, who protested in return that his words were not meant to apply to Frontenac in particular, but only to bad rulers in general. His offences, however, did not cease with the sermon; for he espoused the cause of Perrot with more than zeal, and went about among the colonists to collect attestations in his favor. When these things were reported to Frontenac, his ire was kindled, and he summoned Fénelon before the council at Quebec to answer the charge of instigating sedition.

Fénelon had a relative and friend in the person of the Abbé

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<sup>24</sup> *Information faite par nous, Charles le Tardieu, Sieur de Tilly.* Tilly was a commissioner sent by the council to inquire into the affair.

d'Urfé, his copartner in the work of the missions. D'Urfé, anxious to conjure down the rising storm, went to Quebec to seek an interview with Frontenac; but, according to his own account, he was very ill received, and threatened with a prison. On another occasion, the count showed him a letter in which D'Urfé was charged with having used abusive language concerning him. Warm words ensued, till Frontenac, grasping his cane, led the abbé to the door and dismissed him, berating him from the top of the stairs in tones so angry that the sentinel below spread the report that he had turned his visitor out of doors.<sup>25</sup>

Two offenders were now arraigned before the council of Quebec: the first was Perrot, charged with disobeying the royal edicts and resisting the royal authority; the other was the Abbé Fénelon. The councillors were at this time united in the interest of Frontenac, who had the power of appointing and removing them. Perrot, in no way softened by a long captivity, challenged the governor-general, who presided at the council board, as a party to the suit and his personal enemy, and took exception to several of the members as being connections of La Nouguère. Frontenac withdrew, and other councillors or judges were appointed provisionally; but these were challenged in turn by the prisoner, on one pretext or another. The exceptions were overruled, and the trial proceeded, though not without signs of doubt and hesitation on the part of some of the councillors.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Mémoire de M. d'Urfé à Colbert*, extracts in Faillon.

<sup>26</sup> All the proceedings in the affair of Perrot will be found in full in the *Registre des*

Meanwhile, other sessions were held for the trial of Fénelon; and a curious scene ensued. Five councillors and the deputy attorney-general were seated at the board, with Frontenac as presiding judge, his hat on his head and his sword at his side, after the established custom. Fénelon, being led in, approached a vacant chair, and was about to seat himself with the rest, when Frontenac interposed, telling him that it was his duty to remain standing while answering the questions of the council. Fénelon at once placed himself in the chair, and replied that priests had the right to speak seated and with heads covered.

"Yes," returned Frontenac, "when they are summoned as witnesses, but not when they are cited to answer charges of crime."

"My crimes exist nowhere but in your head," replied the abbé. And, putting on his hat, he drew it down over his brows, rose, gathered his cassock about him, and walked in a defiant manner to and fro. Frontenac told him that his conduct was wanting in respect to the council, and to the governor as its head. Fénelon several times took off his hat, and pushed it on again more angrily than ever, saying at the same time that Frontenac was wanting in respect to his character of priest, in citing him before a civil tribunal. As he persisted in his refusal to take the required attitude, he was at length told that he might leave the room. After being kept for a time in the anteroom in charge of

a constable, he was again brought before the council, when he still refused obedience, and was ordered into a sort of honorable imprisonment.<sup>27</sup>

This behavior of the effervescent abbé, which Frontenac justly enough characterizes as unworthy of his birth and his sacred office, was, nevertheless, founded on a claim sustained by many precedents. As an ecclesiastic, Fénelon insisted that the bishop alone, and not the council, had the right to judge him. Like Perrot, too, he challenged his judges as parties to the suit, or otherwise interested against him. On the question of jurisdiction, he had all the priests on his side. Bishop Laval was in France; and Bernières, his grand vicar, was far from filling the place of the strenuous and determined prelate. Yet the ecclesiastical storm rose so high that the councillors, discouraged and daunted, were no longer amenable to the will of Frontenac; and it was resolved at last to refer the whole matter to the king. Perrot was taken from the prison, which he had occupied from January to November, and shipped for France, along with Fénelon. An immense mass of papers was sent with them for the instruction of the king; and Frontenac wrote a long despatch, in which he sets forth the offences of Perrot and Fénelon, the pretensions of the ecclesiastics, the calumnies he had incurred in his efforts to serve his Majesty, and the insults heaped upon him, "which no man but me would have endured so patiently." Indeed, while the suits

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<sup>27</sup> *Conteste entre le Gouverneur et l'Abbé de Fénelon; Jugements et Délibérations du Conseil Supérieur*, 21 Août, 1674.

were pending before the council, he had displayed a calmness and moderation which surprised his opponents. "Knowing as I do," he pursues, "the cabals and intrigues that are rife here, I must expect that every thing will be said against me that the most artful slander can devise. A governor in this country would greatly deserve pity, if he were left without support; and, even should he make mistakes, it would surely be very pardonable, seeing that there is no snare that is not spread for him, and that, after avoiding a hundred of them, he will hardly escape being caught at last." <sup>28</sup>

In his charges of cabal and intrigue, Frontenac had chiefly in view the clergy, whom he profoundly distrusted, excepting always the Récollet friars, whom he befriended because the bishop and the Jesuits opposed them. The priests on their part declare that he persecuted them, compelled them to take passports like laymen when travelling about the colony, and even intercepted their letters. These accusations and many others were carried to the king and the minister by the Abbé d'Urfé, who sailed in the same ship with Fénelon. The moment was singularly auspicious to him. His cousin, the Marquise d'Allègre, was on the point of marrying Seignelay, the son of the minister Colbert, who, therefore, was naturally inclined to listen with favor to him and to Fénelon, his relative. Again, Talon, uncle

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<sup>28</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 14 Nov., 1674. In a preceding letter, sent by way of Boston, and dated 16 February, he says that he could not suffer Perrot to go unpunished without injury to the regal authority, which he is resolved to defend to the last drop of his blood.

of Perrot's wife, held a post at court, which brought him into close personal relations with the king. Nor were these the only influences adverse to Frontenac and propitious to his enemies. Yet his enemies were disappointed. The letters written to him both by Colbert and by the king are admirable for calmness and dignity. The following is from that of the king:—

"Though I do not credit all that has been told me concerning various little annoyances which you cause to the ecclesiastics, I nevertheless think it necessary to inform you of it, in order that, if true, you may correct yourself in this particular, giving to all the clergy entire liberty to go and come throughout all Canada without compelling them to take out passports, and at the same time leaving them perfect freedom as regards their letters. I have seen and carefully examined all that you have sent touching M. Perrot; and, after having also seen all the papers given by him in his defence, I have condemned his action in imprisoning an officer of your guard. To punish him, I have had him placed for a short time in the Bastille, that he may learn to be more circumspect in the discharge of his duty, and that his example may serve as a warning to others. But after having thus vindicated my authority, which has been violated in your person, I will say, in order that you may fully understand my views, that you should not without absolute necessity cause your commands to be executed within the limits of a local government, like that of Montreal, without first informing its governor, and also that the ten months of imprisonment which you have made him undergo

seems to me sufficient for his fault. I therefore sent him to the Bastille merely as a public reparation for having violated my authority. After keeping him there a few days, I shall send him back to his government, ordering him first to see you and make apology to you for all that has passed; after which I desire that you retain no resentment against him, and that you treat him in accordance with the powers that I have given him." <sup>29</sup>

Colbert writes in terms equally measured, and adds: "After having spoken in the name of his Majesty, pray let me add a word in my own. By the marriage which the king has been pleased to make between the heiress of the house of Allègre and my son, the Abbé d'Urfé has become very closely connected with me, since he is cousin german of my daughter-in-law; and this induces me to request you to show him especial consideration, though, in the exercise of his profession, he will rarely have occasion to see you."

As D'Urfé had lately addressed a memorial to Colbert, in which the conduct of Frontenac is painted in the darkest colors, the almost imperceptible rebuke couched in the above lines does no little credit to the tact and moderation of the stern minister.

Colbert next begs Frontenac to treat with kindness the priests of Montreal, observing that Bretonvilliers, their Superior at Paris, is his particular friend. "As to M. Perrot," he continues, "since ten months of imprisonment at Quebec and three weeks in the Bastille may suffice to atone for his fault, and since also

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<sup>29</sup> *Le Roi à Frontenac*, 22 Avril, 1675.



he is related or connected with persons for whom I have a great regard, I pray you to accept kindly the apologies which he will make you, and, as it is not at all likely that he will fall again into any offence approaching that which he has committed, you will give me especial pleasure in granting him the honor of your favor and friendship." <sup>30</sup>

Fénelon, though the recent marriage had allied him also to Colbert, fared worse than either of the other parties to the dispute. He was indeed sustained in his claim to be judged by an ecclesiastical tribunal; but his Superior, Bretonvilliers, forbade him to return to Canada, and the king approved the prohibition. Bretonvilliers wrote to the Sulpitian priests of Montreal: "I exhort you to profit by the example of M. de Fénelon. By having busied himself too much in worldly matters, and meddled with what did not concern him, he has ruined his own prospects and injured the friends whom he wished to serve. In matters of this sort, it is well always to stand neutral." <sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Colbert à Frontenac*, 13 Mai, 1675.

<sup>31</sup> *Lettre de Bretonvilliers*, 7 Mai, 1675; extract in Faillon. Fénelon, though wanting in prudence and dignity, had been an ardent and devoted missionary. In relation to these disputes, I have received much aid from the research of Abbé Faillon, and from the valuable paper of Abbé Verreau, *Les deux Abbés de Fénelon*, printed in the Canadian *Journal de l'Instruction Publique*, Vol. VIII.

# CHAPTER IV

1675-1682

## Frontenac and Duchesneau

Frontenac receives a Colleague • He opposes the Clergy • Disputes in the Council • Royal Intervention • Frontenac rebuked • Fresh Outbreaks • Charges and Countercharges • The Dispute grows hot • Duchesneau condemned and Frontenac warned • The Quarrel continues • The King loses Patience • More Accusations • Factions and Feuds • A Side Quarrel • The King threatens • Frontenac denounces the Priests • The Governor and the Intendant recalled • Qualities of Frontenac.

While writing to Frontenac in terms of studied mildness, the king and Colbert took measures to curb his power. In the absence of the bishop, the appointment and removal of councillors had rested wholly with the governor; and hence the council had been docile under his will. It was now ordained that the councillors should be appointed by the king himself.<sup>32</sup> This was not the only

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<sup>32</sup> *Édits et Ordonnances*, I. 84.

change. Since the departure of the intendant Talon, his office had been vacant; and Frontenac was left to rule alone. This seems to have been an experiment on the part of his masters at Versailles, who, knowing the peculiarities of his temper, were perhaps willing to try the effect of leaving him without a colleague. The experiment had not succeeded. An intendant was now, therefore, sent to Quebec, not only to manage the details of administration, but also to watch the governor, keep him, if possible, within prescribed bounds, and report his proceedings to the minister. The change was far from welcome to Frontenac, whose delight it was to hold all the reins of power in his own hands; nor was he better pleased with the return of Bishop Laval, which presently took place. Three preceding governors had quarrelled with that uncompromising prelate; and there was little hope that Frontenac and he would keep the peace. All the signs of the sky foreboded storm.

The storm soon came. The occasion of it was that old vexed question of the sale of brandy, which has been fully treated in another volume,<sup>33</sup> and on which it is needless to dwell here. Another dispute quickly followed; and here, too, the governor's chief adversaries were the bishop and the ecclesiastics. Duchesneau, the new intendant, took part with them. The bishop and his clergy were, on their side, very glad of a secular ally; for their power had greatly fallen since the days of Mézy, and the rank and imperious character of Frontenac appear to have

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<sup>33</sup> The Old Régime in Canada.

held them in some awe. They avoided as far as they could a direct collision with him, and waged vicarious war in the person of their friend the intendant. Duchesneau was not of a conciliating spirit, and he felt strong in the support of the clergy; while Frontenac, when his temper was roused, would fight with haughty and impracticable obstinacy for any position which he had once assumed, however trivial or however mistaken. There was incessant friction between the two colleagues in the exercise of their respective functions, and occasions of difference were rarely wanting.

The question now at issue was that of honors and precedence at church and in religious ceremonies, matters of substantial importance under the Bourbon rule. Colbert interposed, ordered Duchesneau to treat Frontenac with becoming deference, and warned him not to make himself the partisan of the bishop;<sup>34</sup> while, at the same time, he exhorted Frontenac to live in harmony with the intendant.<sup>35</sup> The dispute continued till the king lost patience.

"Through all my kingdom," he wrote to the governor, "I do not hear of so many difficulties on this matter (*of ecclesiastical honors*) as I see in the church of Quebec."<sup>36</sup> And he directs him to conform to the practice established in the city of Amiens, and to exact no more; "since you ought to be satisfied with being the

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<sup>34</sup> Colbert à Duchesneau, 1 Mai, 1677.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 Mai, 1677.

<sup>36</sup> Le Roy à Frontenac, 25 Avril, 1679.

representative of my person in the country where I have placed you in command."

At the same time, Colbert corrects the intendant. "A memorial," he wrote, "has been placed in my hands, touching various ecclesiastical honors, wherein there continually appears a great pretension on your part, and on that of the bishop of Quebec in your favor, to establish an equality between the governor and you. I think I have already said enough to lead you to know yourself, and to understand the difference between a governor and an intendant; so that it is no longer necessary for me to enter into particulars, which could only serve to show you that you are completely in the wrong." <sup>37</sup>

Scarcely was this quarrel suppressed, when another sprang up. Since the arrival of the intendant and the return of the bishop, the council had ceased to be in the interest of Frontenac. Several of its members were very obnoxious to him; and chief among these was Villeray, a former councillor whom the king had lately reinstated. Frontenac admitted him to his seat with reluctance. "I obey your orders," he wrote mournfully to Colbert; "but Villeray is the principal and most dangerous instrument of the bishop and the Jesuits." <sup>38</sup> He says, farther, that many people think him to be a Jesuit in disguise, and that he is an intriguing busybody, who makes trouble everywhere. He also denounces the attorney-general, Auteuil, as an ally of the Jesuits. Another

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<sup>37</sup> *Colbert à Duchesneau*, 8 Mai, 1679

<sup>38</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 14 Nov., 1674

of the reconstructed council, Tilly, meets his cordial approval; but he soon found reason to change his mind concerning him.

The king had recently ordered that the intendant, though holding only the third rank in the council, should act as its president.<sup>39</sup> The commission of Duchesneau, however, empowered him to preside only in the absence of the governor;<sup>40</sup> while Frontenac is styled "chief and president of the council" in several of the despatches addressed to him. Here was an inconsistency. Both parties claimed the right of presiding, and both could rest their claim on a clear expression of the royal will.

Frontenac rarely began a new quarrel till the autumn vessels had sailed for France; because a full year must then elapse before his adversaries could send their complaints to the king, and six months more before the king could send back his answer. The governor had been heard to say, on one of these occasions, that he should now be master for eighteen months, subject only to answering with his head for what he might do. It was when the last vessel was gone in the autumn of 1678 that he demanded to be styled *chief and president* on the records of the council; and he showed a letter from the king in which he was so entitled.<sup>41</sup> In spite of this, Duchesneau resisted, and appealed to precedent

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<sup>39</sup> *Declaration du Roy*, 23 Sept., 1675.

<sup>40</sup> "Présider au Conseil Souverain *en l'absence du dit Sieur de Frontenac*."—*Commission de Duchesneau*, 5 Juin, 1675.

<sup>41</sup> This letter, still preserved in the *Archives de la Marine*, is dated 12 Mai, 1678. Several other letters of Louis XIV. give Frontenac the same designation.

to sustain his position. A long series of stormy sessions followed. The councillors in the clerical interest supported the intendant. Frontenac, chafed and angry, refused all compromise. Business was stopped for weeks. Duchesneau lost temper, and became abusive. Auteuil tried to interpose in behalf of the intendant. Frontenac struck the table with his fist, and told him fiercely that he would teach him his duty. Every day embittered the strife. The governor made the declaration usual with him on such occasions, that he would not permit the royal authority to suffer in his person. At length he banished from Quebec his three most strenuous opponents, Villeray, Tilly, and Auteuil, and commanded them to remain in their country houses till they received his farther orders. All attempts at compromise proved fruitless; and Auteuil, in behalf of the exiles, appealed piteously to the king.

The answer came in the following summer: "Monsieur le Comte de Frontenac," wrote Louis XIV., "I am surprised to learn all the new troubles and dissensions that have occurred in my country of New France, more especially since I have clearly and strongly given you to understand that your sole care should be to maintain harmony and peace among all my subjects dwelling therein; but what surprises me still more is that in nearly all the disputes which you have caused you have advanced claims which have very little foundation. My edicts, declarations, and ordinances had so plainly made known to you my will, that I have great cause of astonishment that you, whose duty it is to

see them faithfully executed, have yourself set up pretensions entirely opposed to them. You have wished to be styled chief and president on the records of the Supreme Council, which is contrary to my edict concerning that council; and I am the more surprised at this demand, since I am very sure that you are the only man in my kingdom who, being honored with the title of governor and lieutenant-general, would care to be styled chief and president of such a council as that of Quebec."

He then declares that neither Frontenac nor the intendant is to have the title of president, but that the intendant is to perform the functions of presiding officer, as determined by the edict. He continues:—

"Moreover, your abuse of the authority which I have confided to you in exiling two councillors and the attorney-general for so trivial a cause cannot meet my approval; and, were it not for the distinct assurances given me by your friends that you will act with more moderation in future, and never again fall into offences of this nature, I should have resolved on recalling you." <sup>42</sup>

Colbert wrote to him with equal severity: "I have communicated to the king the contents of all the despatches which you have written to me during the past year; and as the matters of which they treat are sufficiently ample, including dissensions almost universal among those whose duty it is to

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<sup>42</sup> *Le Roy à Frontenac*, 29 Avril, 1680. A decree of the council of state soon after determined the question of presidency in accord with this letter. *Édits et Ordonnances*, I. 238.



preserve harmony in the country under your command, his Majesty has been pleased to examine all the papers sent by all the parties interested, and more particularly those appended to your letters. He has thereupon ordered me distinctly to make known to you his intentions." The minister then proceeds to reprove him sharply in the name of the king, and concludes: "It is difficult for me to add any thing to what I have just said. Consider well that, if it is any advantage or any satisfaction to you that his Majesty should be satisfied with your services, it is necessary that you change entirely the conduct which you have hitherto pursued." <sup>43</sup>

This, one would think, might have sufficed to bring the governor to reason, but the violence of his resentments and antipathies overcame the very slender share of prudence with which nature had endowed him. One morning, as he sat at the head of the council board, the bishop on his right hand, and the intendant on his left, a woman made her appearance with a sealed packet of papers. She was the wife of the councillor Amours, whose chair was vacant at the table. Important business was in hand, the registration of a royal edict of amnesty to the *coureurs de bois*. The intendant, who well knew what the packet contained, demanded that it should be opened. Frontenac

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<sup>43</sup> *Colbert à Frontenac*, 4 Dec., 1679. This letter seems to have been sent by a special messenger by way of New England. It was too late in the season to send directly to Canada. On the quarrel about the presidency, *Duchesneau au Ministre*, 10 Nov., 1679; *Auteuil au Ministre*, 10 Aug., 1679; *Contestations entre le Sieur Comte de Frontenac et M. Duchesneau, Chevalier*. This last paper consists of voluminous extracts from the records of the council.

insisted that the business before the council should proceed. The intendant renewed his demand, the council sustained him, and the packet was opened accordingly. It contained a petition from Amours, stating that Frontenac had put him in prison, because, having obtained in due form a passport to send a canoe to his fishing station of Matane, he had afterwards sent a sail-boat thither without applying for another passport. Frontenac had sent for him, and demanded by what right he did so. Amours replied that he believed that he had acted in accordance with the intentions of the king; whereupon, to borrow the words of the petition, "Monsieur the governor fell into a rage, and said to your petitioner, 'I will teach you the intentions of the king, and you shall stay in prison till you learn them;' and your petitioner was shut up in a chamber of the château, wherein he still remains." He proceeds to pray that a trial may be granted him according to law.<sup>44</sup>

Discussions now ensued which lasted for days, and now and then became tempestuous. The governor, who had declared that the council had nothing to do with the matter, and that he could not waste time in talking about it, was not always present at the meetings, and it sometimes became necessary to depute one or more of the members to visit him. Auteuil, the attorney-general, having been employed on this unenviable errand, begged the council to dispense him from such duty in future, "by reason," as he says, "of the abuse, ill treatment, and threats which he received

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<sup>44</sup> *Registre du Conseil Supérieur*, 16 Août, 1681.

from Monsieur the governor, when he last had the honor of being deputed to confer with him, the particulars whereof he begs to be excused from reporting, lest the anger of Monsieur the governor should be kindled against him still more." <sup>45</sup> Frontenac, hearing of this charge, angrily denied it, saying that the attorney-general had slandered and insulted him, and that it was his custom to do so. Auteuil rejoined that the governor had accused him of habitual lying, and told him that he would have his hand cut off. All these charges and countercharges may still be found entered in due form on the old records of the council at Quebec.

It was as usual upon the intendant that the wrath of Frontenac fell most fiercely. He accuses him of creating cabals and intrigues, and causing not only the council, but all the country, to forget the respect due to the representative of his Majesty. Once, when Frontenac was present at the session, a dispute arose about an entry on the record. A draft of it had been made in terms agreeable to the governor, who insisted that the intendant should sign it. Duchesneau replied that he and the clerk would go into the adjoining room, where they could examine it in peace, and put it into a proper form. Frontenac rejoined that he would then have no security that what he had said in the council would be accurately reported. Duchesneau persisted, and was going out with the draft in his hand, when Frontenac planted himself before the door, and told him that he should not leave the council chamber till he had signed the paper. "Then I will get out of the

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<sup>45</sup> *Registre du Conseil Supérieur*, 4 Nov., 1681.

window, or else stay here all day," returned Duchesneau. A lively debate ensued, and the governor at length yielded the point.<sup>46</sup>

The imprisonment of Amours was short, but strife did not cease. The disputes in the council were accompanied throughout with other quarrels which were complicated with them, and which were worse than all the rest, since they involved more important matters and covered a wider field. They related to the fur trade, on which hung the very life of the colony. Merchants, traders, and even *habitants*, were ranged in two contending factions. Of one of these Frontenac was the chief. With him were La Salle and his lieutenant, La Forêt; Du Lhut, the famous leader of *coureurs de bois*; Boisseau, agent of the farmers of the revenue; Barrois, the governor's secretary; Bizard, lieutenant of his guard; and various others of greater or less influence. On the other side were the members of the council, with Aubert de la Chesnaye, Le Moyne and all his sons, Louis Joliet, Jacques Le Ber, Sorel, Boucher, Varennes, and many more, all supported by the intendant Duchesneau, and also by his fast allies, the ecclesiastics. The faction under the lead of the governor had every advantage, for it was sustained by all the power of his office. Duchesneau was beside himself with rage. He wrote to the court letters full of bitterness, accused Frontenac of illicit trade, denounced his followers, and sent huge bundles of *procès-verbaux* and attestations to prove his charges.

But if Duchesneau wrote letters, so too did Frontenac; and

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<sup>46</sup> *Registre de Conseil Supérieur*, 1681.

if the intendant sent proofs, so too did the governor. Upon the unfortunate king and the still more unfortunate minister fell the difficult task of composing the quarrels of their servants, three thousand miles away. They treated Duchesneau without ceremony. Colbert wrote to him: "I have examined all the letters, papers, and memorials that you sent me by the return of the vessels last November, and, though it appears by the letters of M. de Frontenac that his conduct leaves something to be desired, there is assuredly far more to blame in yours than in his. As to what you say concerning his violence, his trade with the Indians, and in general all that you allege against him, the king has written to him his intentions; but since, in the midst of all your complaints, you say many things which are without foundation, or which are no concern of yours, it is difficult to believe that you act in the spirit which the service of the king demands; that is to say, without interest and without passion. If a change does not appear in your conduct before next year, his Majesty will not keep you in your office."<sup>47</sup>

At the same time, the king wrote to Frontenac, alluding to the complaints of Duchesneau, and exhorting the governor to live on good terms with him. The general tone of the letter is moderate, but the following significant warning occurs in it: "Although no gentleman in the position in which I have placed you ought to take part in any trade, directly or indirectly, either by himself or any of his servants, I nevertheless now prohibit you absolutely

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<sup>47</sup> *Colbert à Duchesneau, 15 Mai, 1678.*

from doing so. Not only abstain from trade, but act in such a manner that nobody can even suspect you of it; and this will be easy, since the truth will readily come to light." <sup>48</sup>

Exhortation and warning were vain alike. The first ships which returned that year from Canada brought a series of despatches from the intendant, renewing all his charges more bitterly than before. The minister, out of patience, replied by berating him without mercy. "You may rest assured," he concludes, "that, did it not appear by your later despatches that the letters you have received have begun to make you understand that you have forgotten yourself, it would not have been possible to prevent the king from recalling you." <sup>49</sup>

Duchesneau, in return, protests all manner of deference to the governor, but still insists that he sets the royal edicts at naught; protects a host of *coureurs de bois* who are in league with him; corresponds with Du Lhut, their chief; shares his illegal profits, and causes all the disorders which afflict the colony. "As for me, Monseigneur, I have done every thing within the scope of my office to prevent these evils; but all the pains I have taken have only served to increase the aversion of Monsieur the governor against me, and to bring my ordinances into contempt. This, Monseigneur, is a true account of the disobedience of the *coureurs de bois*, of which I twice had the honor to speak to Monsieur the governor; and I could not help telling him, with

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<sup>48</sup> *Le Roy à Frontenac*, 12 Mai, 1678.

<sup>49</sup> *Colbert à Duchesneau*, 25 Avril, 1679.

all possible deference, that it was shameful to the colony and to us that the king, our master, of whom the whole world stands in awe, who has just given law to all Europe, and whom all his subjects adore, should have the pain of knowing that, in a country which has received so many marks of his paternal tenderness, his orders are violated and scorned; and a governor and an intendant stand by, with folded arms, content with saying that the evil is past remedy. For having made these representations to him, I drew on myself words so full of contempt and insult that I was forced to leave his room to appease his anger. The next morning I went to him again, and did all I could to have my ordinances executed; but, as Monsieur the governor is interested with many of the *coureurs de bois*, it is useless to attempt to do any thing. He has gradually made himself master of the trade of Montreal; and, as soon as the Indians arrive, he sets guards in their camp, which would be very well, if these soldiers did their duty and protected the savages from being annoyed and plundered by the French, instead of being employed to discover how many furs they have brought, with a view to future operations. Monsieur the governor then compels the Indians to pay his guards for protecting them; and he has never allowed them to trade with the inhabitants till they had first given him a certain number of packs of beaver skins, which he calls his presents. His guards trade with them openly at the fair, with their bandoleers on their shoulders."

He says, farther, that Frontenac sends up goods to Montreal, and employs persons to trade in his behalf; and that, what with

the beaver skins exacted by him and his guards under the name of presents, and those which he and his favorites obtain in trade, only the smaller part of what the Indians bring to market ever reaches the people of the colony.<sup>50</sup>

This despatch, and the proofs accompanying it, drew from the king a sharp reproof to Frontenac.

"What has passed in regard to the *coureurs de bois* is entirely contrary to my orders; and I cannot receive in excuse for it your allegation that it is the intendant who countenances them by the trade he carries on, for I perceive clearly that the fault is your own. As I see that you often turn the orders that I give you against the very object for which they are given, beware not to do so on this occasion. I shall hold you answerable for bringing the disorder of the *coureurs de bois* to an end throughout Canada; and this you will easily succeed in doing, if you make a proper use of my authority. Take care not to persuade yourself that what I write to you comes from the ill offices of the intendant. It results from what I fully know from every thing which reaches me from Canada, proving but too well what you are doing there. The bishop, the ecclesiastics, the Jesuit fathers, the Supreme Council, and, in a word, everybody, complain of you; but I am willing to believe that you will change your conduct, and act with the moderation necessary for the good of the colony."<sup>51</sup>

Colbert wrote in a similar strain; and Frontenac saw that his

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<sup>50</sup> *Duchesneau au Ministre*, 10 Nov., 1679.

<sup>51</sup> *Le Roy à Frontenac*, 29 Avril, 1680.



position was becoming critical. He showed, it is true, no sign of that change of conduct which the king had demanded; but he appealed to his allies at court to use fresh efforts to sustain him. Among the rest, he had a strong friend in the Maréchal de Bellefonds, to whom he wrote, in the character of an abused and much-suffering man: "You exhort me to have patience, and I agree with you that those placed in a position of command cannot have too much. For this reason, I have given examples of it here such as perhaps no governor ever gave before; and I have found no great difficulty in doing so, because I felt myself to be the master. Had I been in a private station, I could not have endured such outrageous insults without dishonor. I have always passed over in silence those directed against me personally; and have never given way to anger, except when attacks were made on the authority of which I have the honor to be the guardian. You could not believe all the annoyances which the intendant tries to put upon me every day, and which, as you advise me, I scorn or disregard. It would require a virtue like yours to turn them to all the good use of which they are capable; yet, great as the virtue is which has enabled you to possess your soul in tranquillity amid all the troubles of the court, I doubt if you could preserve such complete equanimity among the miserable tumults of Canada."

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Having given the principal charges of Duchesneau against Frontenac, it is time to give those of Frontenac against

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<sup>52</sup> *Frontenac au Maréchal de Bellefonds*, 14 Nov., 1680.

Duchesneau. The governor says that all the *coureurs de bois* would be brought to submission but for the intendant and his allies, who protect them, and carry on trade by their means; that the seigniorial house of Duchesneau's partner, La Chesnaye, is the constant resort of these outlaws; and that he and his associates have large storehouses at Montreal, Isle St. Paul, and Rivière du Loup, whence they send goods into the Indian country, in contempt of the king's orders.<sup>53</sup> Frontenac also complains of numberless provocations from the intendant. "It is no fault of mine that I am not on good terms with M. Duchesneau; for I have done every thing I could to that end, being too submissive to your Majesty's commands not to suppress my sharpest indignation the moment your will is known to me. But, Sire, it is not so with him; and his desire to excite new disputes, in the hope of making me appear their principal author, has been so great that the last ships were hardly gone, when, forgetting what your Majesty had enjoined upon us both, he began these dissensions afresh, in spite of all my precautions. If I depart from my usual reserve in regard to him, and make bold to ask justice at the hands of your Majesty for the wrongs and insults I have undergone, it is because nothing but your authority can keep them within bounds. I have never suffered more in my life than when I have been made to appear as a man of violence and a disturber of the officers of justice: for I have always confined myself to what your Majesty has prescribed; that is, to exhorting them to do their duty when

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<sup>53</sup> *Mémoire et Preuves du Désordre des Coureurs de Bois.*

I saw that they failed in it. This has drawn upon me, both from them and from M. Duchesneau, such cutting affronts that your Majesty would hardly credit them." <sup>54</sup>

In 1681, Seignelay, the son of Colbert, entered upon the charge of the colonies; and both Frontenac and Duchesneau hastened to congratulate him, protest their devotion, and overwhelm him with mutual accusations. The intendant declares that, out of pure zeal for the king's service, he shall tell him every thing. "Disorder," he says, "reigns everywhere; universal confusion prevails throughout every department of business; the pleasure of the king, the orders of the Supreme Council, and my ordinances remain unexecuted; justice is openly violated, and trade is destroyed; violence, upheld by authority, decides every thing; and nothing consoles the people, who groan without daring to complain, but the hope, Monseigneur, that you will have the goodness to condescend to be moved by their misfortunes. No position could be more distressing than mine, since, if I conceal the truth from you, I fail in the obedience I owe the king, and in the fidelity that I vowed so long since to Monseigneur, your father, and which I swear anew at your hands; and if I obey, as I must, his Majesty's orders and yours, I cannot avoid giving offence, since I cannot render you an account of these disorders without informing you that M. de Frontenac's conduct is the sole cause of them." <sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Frontenac au Roy*, 2 Nov., 1681.

<sup>55</sup> *Duchesneau au Ministre*, 13 Nov., 1681.

Frontenac had written to Seignelay a few days before: "I have no doubt whatever that M. Duchesneau will, as usual, overwhelm me with fabrications and falsehoods, to cover his own ill conduct. I send proofs to justify myself, so strong and convincing that I do not see that they can leave any doubt; but, since I fear that their great number might fatigue you, I have thought it better to send them to my wife, with a full and exact journal of all that has passed here day by day, in order that she may extract and lay before you the principal portions.

"I send you in person merely the proofs of the conduct of M. Duchesneau, in barricading his house and arming all his servants, and in coming three weeks ago to insult me in my room. You will see thereby to what a pitch of temerity and lawlessness he has transported himself, in order to compel me to use violence against him, with the hope of justifying what he has asserted about my pretended outbreaks of anger." <sup>56</sup>

The mutual charges of the two functionaries were much the same; and, so far at least as concerns trade, there can be little doubt that they were well founded on both sides. The strife of the rival factions grew more and more bitter: canes and sticks played an active part in it, and now and then we hear of drawn swords. One is reminded at times of the intestine feuds of some mediæval city, as, for example, in the following incident, which will explain the charge of Frontenac against the intendant of barricading his house and arming his servants:—

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<sup>56</sup> *Frontenac au Ministre*, 2 Nov., 1681.

On the afternoon of the twentieth of March, a son of Duchesneau, sixteen years old, followed by a servant named Vautier, was strolling along the picket fence which bordered the descent from the Upper to the Lower Town of Quebec. The boy was amusing himself by singing a song, when Frontenac's partisan, Boisseau, with one of the guardsmen, approached, and, as young Duchesneau declares, called him foul names, and said that he would give him and his father a thrashing. The boy replied that he would have nothing to say to a fellow like him, and would beat him if he did not keep quiet; while the servant, Vautier, retorted Boisseau's abuse, and taunted him with low birth and disreputable employments. Boisseau made report to Frontenac, and Frontenac complained to Duchesneau, who sent his son, with Vautier, to give the governor his version of the affair. The bishop, an ally of the intendant, thus relates what followed. On arriving with a party of friends at the château, young Duchesneau was shown into a room in which were the governor and his two secretaries, Barrois and Chasseur. He had no sooner entered than Frontenac seized him by the arm, shook him, struck him, called him abusive names, and tore the sleeve of his jacket. The secretaries interposed, and, failing to quiet the governor, opened the door and let the boy escape. Vautier, meanwhile, had remained in the guard-room, where Boisseau struck at him with his cane; and one of the guardsmen went for a halberd to run him through the body. After this warm reception, young Duchesneau and his servant took refuge in the house of his father. Frontenac

demanded their surrender. The intendant, fearing that he would take them by force, for which he is said to have made preparation, barricaded himself and armed his household. The bishop tried to mediate, and after protracted negotiations young Duchesneau was given up, whereupon Frontenac locked him in a chamber of the château, and kept him there a month.<sup>57</sup>

The story of Frontenac's violence to the boy is flatly denied by his friends, who charge Duchesneau and his partisans with circulating libels against him, and who say, like Frontenac himself, that the intendant used every means to exasperate him, in order to make material for accusations.<sup>58</sup>

The disputes of the rival factions spread through all Canada. The most heinous offence in the eyes of the court with which each charged the other was the carrying of furs to the English settlements; thus defrauding the revenue, and, as the king believed, preparing the ruin of the colony. The intendant farther declared that the governor's party spread among the Indians the report of a pestilence at Montreal, in order to deter them from their yearly visit to the fair, and thus by means of *coureurs de bois* obtain all their beaver skins at a low price. The report, according to Duchesneau, had no other foundation than the fate of eighteen or twenty Indians, who had lately drunk themselves to death at

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<sup>57</sup> *Mémoire de l'Evesque de Quebec, Mars, 1681* (printed in *Revue Canadienne*, 1873). The bishop is silent about the barricades of which Frontenac and his friends complain in several letters.

<sup>58</sup> See, among other instances, the *Défense de M. de Frontenac par un de ses Amis*, published by Abbé Verreau in the *Revue Canadienne*, 1873.

Montreal, in the mean time, was the scene of a sort of by-play, in which the chief actor was the local governor, Perrot. He and Frontenac appear to have found it for their common interest to come to a mutual understanding; and this was perhaps easier on the part of the count, since his quarrel with Duchesneau gave sufficient employment to his natural pugnacity. Perrot was now left to make a reasonable profit from the illicit trade which had once kindled the wrath of his superior; and, the danger of Frontenac's anger being removed, he completely forgot the lessons of his imprisonment.

The intendant ordered Migeon, bailiff of Montreal, to arrest some of Perrot's *coureurs de bois*. Perrot at once arrested the bailiff, and sent a sergeant and two soldiers to occupy his house, with orders to annoy the family as much as possible. One of them, accordingly, walked to and fro all night in the bed-chamber of Migeon's wife. On another occasion, the bailiff invited two friends to supper: Le Moyne d'Iberville and one Bouthier, agent of a commercial house at Rochelle. The conversation turned on the trade carried on by Perrot. It was overheard and reported to him, upon which he suddenly appeared at the window, struck Bouthier over the head with his cane, then drew his sword, and chased him while he fled for his life. The seminary was near at hand, and the fugitive clambered over the wall. Dollier de Casson dressed him in the hat and cassock of a priest, and in this disguise

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<sup>59</sup> *Plumitif du Conseil Souverain*, 1681.

he escaped.<sup>60</sup> Perrot's avidity sometimes carried him to singular extremities. "He has been seen," says one of his accusers, "filling barrels of brandy with his own hands, and mixing it with water to sell to the Indians. He bartered with one of them his hat, sword, coat, ribbons, shoes, and stockings, and boasted that he had made thirty pistoles by the bargain, while the Indian walked about town equipped as governor."<sup>61</sup>

Every ship from Canada brought to the king fresh complaints of Duchesneau against Frontenac, and of Frontenac against Duchesneau; and the king replied with rebukes, exhortations, and threats to both. At first he had shown a disposition to extenuate and excuse the faults of Frontenac, but every year his letters grew sharper. In 1681 he wrote: "Again I urge you to banish from your mind the difficulties which you have yourself devised against the execution of my orders; to act with mildness and moderation towards all the colonists, and divest yourself entirely of the personal animosities which have thus far been almost your sole motive of action. In conclusion, I exhort you once more to profit well by the directions which this letter contains; since, unless you succeed better herein than formerly, I cannot help

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<sup>60</sup> *Conduite du Sieur Perrot, Gouverneur de Montréal en la Nouvelle France*, 1681; *Plainte du Sieur Bouthier*, 10 Oct., 1680; *Procès-verbal des huissiers de Montréal*.

<sup>61</sup> *Conduite du Sieur Perrot*. La Barre, Frontenac's successor, declares that the charges against Perrot were false, including the attestations of Migeon and his friends; that Dollier de Casson had been imposed upon, and that various persons had been induced to sign unfounded statements without reading them. *La Barre au Ministre*, 4 Nov., 1683.



recalling you from the command which I have intrusted to you."

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The dispute still went on. The autumn ships from Quebec brought back the usual complaints, and the long-suffering king at length made good his threat. Both Frontenac and Duchesneau received their recall, and they both deserved it.<sup>63</sup>

The last official act of the governor, recorded in the register of the council of Quebec, is the formal declaration that his rank in that body is superior to that of the intendant.<sup>64</sup>

The key to nearly all these disputes lies in the relations between Frontenac and the Church. The fundamental quarrel was generally covered by superficial issues, and it was rarely that the governor fell out with anybody who was not in league with the bishop and the Jesuits. "Nearly all the disorders in New France," he writes, "spring from the ambition of the ecclesiastics, who want to join to their spiritual authority an absolute power over things temporal, and who persecute all who do not submit entirely to them." He says that the intendant and the councillors are completely under their control, and dare not decide any question against them; that they have spies everywhere, even in his house; that the bishop told him that he could excommunicate

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<sup>62</sup> *Le Roy à Frontenac*, 30 Avril, 1681.

<sup>63</sup> La Barre says that Duchesneau was far more to blame than Frontenac. *La Barre au Ministre*, 1683. This testimony has weight, since Frontenac's friends were La Barre's enemies.

<sup>64</sup> *Registre du Conseil-Supérieur*, 16 Fév., 1682.

even a governor, if he chose; that the missionaries in Indian villages say that they are equals of Onontio, and tell their converts that all will go wrong till the priests have the government of Canada; that directly or indirectly they meddle in all civil affairs; that they trade even with the English of New York; that, what with Jesuits, Sulpitians, the bishop, and the seminary of Quebec, they hold two-thirds of the good lands of Canada; that, in view of the poverty of the country, their revenues are enormous; that, in short, their object is mastery, and that they use all means to compass it. <sup>65</sup> The recall of the governor was a triumph to the ecclesiastics, offset but slightly by the recall of their instrument, the intendant, who had done his work, and whom they needed no longer.

Thus far, we have seen Frontenac on his worst side. We shall see him again under an aspect very different. Nor must it be supposed that the years which had passed since his government began, tempestuous as they appear on the record, were wholly given over to quarrelling. They had their periods of uneventful calm, when the wheels of administration ran as smoothly as could be expected in view of the condition of the colony. In one respect at least, Frontenac had shown a remarkable fitness for his office. Few white men have ever equalled or approached him

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<sup>65</sup> Frontenac, *Mémoire adressé à Colbert*, 1677. This remarkable paper will be found in the *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l'Amérique Septentrionale; Mémoires et Documents Originaux*, edited by M. Margry. The paper is very long, and contains references to attestations and other proofs which accompanied it, especially in regard to the trade of the Jesuits.

in the art of dealing with Indians. There seems to have been a sympathetic relation between him and them. He conformed to their ways, borrowed their rhetoric, flattered them on occasion with great address, and yet constantly maintained towards them an attitude of paternal superiority. When they were concerned, his native haughtiness always took a form which commanded respect without exciting anger. He would not address them as *brothers*, but only as *children*; and even the Iroquois, arrogant as they were, accepted the new relation. In their eyes Frontenac was by far the greatest of all the "Onontios," or governors of Canada. They admired the prompt and fiery soldier who played with their children, and gave beads and trinkets to their wives; who read their secret thoughts and never feared them, but smiled on them when their hearts were true, or frowned and threatened them when they did amiss. The other tribes, allies of the French, were of the same mind; and their respect for their Great Father seems not to have been permanently impaired by his occasional practice of bullying them for purposes of extortion.

Frontenac appears to have had a liking not only for Indians, but also for that roving and lawless class of the Canadian population, the *coureurs de bois*, provided always that they were not in the service of his rivals. Indeed, as regards the Canadians generally, he refrained from the strictures with which succeeding governors and intendants freely interlarded their despatches. It was not his instinct to clash with the humbler classes, and he generally reserved his anger for those who could retort it.

He had the air of distinction natural to a man familiar all his life with the society of courts, and he was as gracious and winning on some occasions as he was unbearable on others. When in good humor, his ready wit and a certain sympathetic vivacity made him very agreeable. At times he was all sunshine, and his outrageous temper slumbered peacefully till some new offence wakened it again; nor is there much doubt that many of his worst outbreaks were the work of his enemies, who knew his foible, and studied to exasperate him. He was full of contradictions; and, intolerant and implacable as he often was, there were intervals, even in his bitterest quarrels, in which he displayed a surprising moderation and patience. By fits he could be magnanimous. A woman once brought him a petition in burlesque verse. Frontenac wrote a jocose answer. The woman, to ridicule him, contrived to have both petition and answer slipped among the papers of a suit pending before the council. Frontenac had her fined a few francs, and then caused the money to be given to her children.<sup>66</sup>

When he sailed for France, it was a day of rejoicing to more than half the merchants of Canada, and, excepting the Récollets, to all the priests; but he left behind him an impression, very general among the people, that, if danger threatened the colony, Count Frontenac was the man for the hour.

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<sup>66</sup> Note by Abbé Verreau, in *Journal de l'Instruction Publique* (Canada), VIII. 127.

# CHAPTER V

**1682-1684**

## **LeFebvre de la Barre**

His Arrival at Quebec • The Great Fire • A Coming Storm • Iroquois Policy • The Danger imminent • Indian Allies of France • Frontenac and the Iroquois • Boasts of La Barre • His Past Life • His Speculations • He takes Alarm • His Dealings with the Iroquois • His Illegal Trade • His Colleague denounces him • Fruits of his Schemes • His Anger and his Fears.

When the new governor, La Barre, and the new intendant, Meules, arrived at Quebec, a dismal greeting waited them. All the Lower Town was in ashes, except the house of the merchant Aubert de la Chesnaye, standing alone amid the wreck. On a Tuesday, the fourth of August, at ten o'clock in the evening, the nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu were roused from their early slumbers by shouts, outcries, and the ringing of bells; "and," writes one of them, "what was our terror to find it as light as noonday, the flames burned so fiercely and rose so high." Half an hour before,

Chartier de Lotbinière, judge of the king's court, heard the first alarm, ran down the descent now called Mountain Street, and found every thing in confusion in the town below. The house of Etienne Planchon was in a blaze; the fire was spreading to those of his neighbors, and had just leaped the narrow street to the storehouse of the Jesuits. The season was excessively dry; there were no means of throwing water except kettles and buckets, and the crowd was bewildered with excitement and fright. Men were ordered to tear off roofs and pull down houses; but the flames drove them from their work, and at four o'clock in the morning fifty-five buildings were burnt to the ground. They were all of wood, but many of them were storehouses filled with goods; and the property consumed was more in value than all that remained in Canada.<sup>67</sup>

Under these gloomy auspices, Le Febvre de la Barre began his reign. He was an old officer who had achieved notable exploits against the English in the West Indies, but who was now to be put to a test far more severe. He made his lodging in the château; while his colleague, Meules, could hardly find a shelter. The buildings of the Upper Town were filled with those whom the fire had made roofless, and the intendant was obliged to content himself with a house in the neighboring woods. Here he was ill at ease, for he dreaded an Indian war and the scalping-knives of

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<sup>67</sup> Chartier de Lotbinière, *Procès-verbal sur l'Incendie de la Basse Ville; Meules au Ministre*, 6 Oct., 1682; Juchereau, *Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec*, 256.

the Iroquois. <sup>68</sup>

So far as his own safety was concerned, his alarm was needless; but not so as regarded the colony with whose affairs he was charged. For those who had eyes to see it, a terror and a woe lowered in the future of Canada. In an evil hour for her, the Iroquois had conquered their southern neighbors, the Andastes, who had long held their ground against them, and at one time threatened them with ruin. The hands of the confederates were now free; their arrogance was redoubled by victory, and, having long before destroyed all the adjacent tribes on the north and west, <sup>69</sup> they looked for fresh victims in the wilderness beyond. Their most easterly tribe, the Mohawks, had not forgotten the chastisement they had received from Tracy and Courcelle. They had learned to fear the French, and were cautious in offending them; but it was not so with the remoter Iroquois. Of these, the Senecas at the western end of the "Long House," as they called their fivefold league, were by far the most powerful, for they could muster as many warriors as all the four remaining tribes together; and they now sought to draw the confederacy into a series of wars, which, though not directed against the French, threatened soon to involve them. Their first movement westward was against the tribes of the Illinois. I have already described their bloody inroad in the summer of 1680. <sup>70</sup> They made the

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<sup>68</sup> *Meules au Ministre*, 6 Oct., 1682.

<sup>69</sup> Jesuits in North America.

<sup>70</sup> Discovery of the Great West.

valley of the Illinois a desert, and returned with several hundred prisoners, of whom they burned those that were useless, and incorporated the young and strong into their own tribe.

This movement of the western Iroquois had a double incentive, their love of fighting and their love of gain. It was a war of conquest and of trade. All the five tribes of the league had become dependent on the English and Dutch of Albany for guns, powder, lead, brandy, and many other things that they had learned to regard as necessities. Beaver skins alone could buy them, but to the Iroquois the supply of beaver skins was limited. The regions of the west and north-west, the upper Mississippi with its tributaries, and, above all, the forests of the upper lakes, were occupied by tribes in the interest of the French, whose missionaries and explorers had been the first to visit them, and whose traders controlled their immense annual product of furs. La Salle, by his newly built fort of St. Louis, engrossed the trade of the Illinois and Miami tribes; while the Hurons and Ottawas, gathered about the old mission of Michillimackinac, acted as factors for the Sioux, the Winnebagoes, and many other remote hordes. Every summer they brought down their accumulated beaver skins to the fair at Montreal; while French bush-rangers roving through the wilderness, with or without licenses, collected many more.<sup>71</sup>

It was the purpose of the Iroquois to master all this traffic, conquer the tribes who had possession of it, and divert the

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<sup>71</sup> Duchesneau, *Memoir on Western Indians in N. Y. Colonial Docs.*, IX. 160.



entire supply of furs to themselves, and through themselves to the English and Dutch. That English and Dutch traders urged them on is affirmed by the French, and is very likely. The accomplishment of the scheme would have ruined Canada. Moreover, the Illinois, the Hurons, the Ottawas, and all the other tribes threatened by the Iroquois, were the allies and "children" of the French, who in honor as in interest were bound to protect them. Hence, when the Seneca invasion of the Illinois became known, there was deep anxiety in the colony, except only among those in whom hatred of the monopolist La Salle had overborne every consideration of the public good. La Salle's new establishment of St. Louis was in the path of the invaders; and, if he could be crushed, there was wherewith to console his enemies for all else that might ensue.

Bad as was the posture of affairs, it was made far worse by an incident that took place soon after the invasion of the Illinois. A Seneca chief engaged in it, who had left the main body of his countrymen, was captured by a party of Winnebagoes to serve as a hostage for some of their tribe whom the Senecas had lately seized. They carried him to Michillimackinac, where there chanced to be a number of Illinois, married to Indian women of that neighborhood. A quarrel ensued between them and the Seneca, whom they stabbed to death in a lodge of the Kiskakons, one of the tribes of the Ottawas. Here was a *casus belli* likely to precipitate a war fatal to all the tribes about Michillimackinac, and equally fatal to the trade of Canada. Frontenac set himself

to conjure the rising storm, and sent a messenger to the Iroquois to invite them to a conference.

He found them unusually arrogant. Instead of coming to him, they demanded that he should come to them, and many of the French wished him to comply; but Frontenac refused, on the ground that such a concession would add to their insolence, and he declined to go farther than Montreal, or at the utmost Fort Frontenac, the usual place of meeting with them. Early in August he was at Montreal, expecting the arrival of the Ottawas and Hurons on their yearly descent from the lakes. They soon appeared, and he called them to a solemn council. Terror had seized them all. "Father, take pity on us," said the Ottawa orator, "for we are like dead men." A Huron chief, named the Rat, declared that the world was turned upside down, and implored the protection of Onontio, "who is master of the whole earth." These tribes were far from harmony among themselves. Each was jealous of the other, and the Ottawas charged the Hurons with trying to make favor with the common enemy at their expense. Frontenac told them that they were all his children alike, and advised them to live together as brothers, and make treaties of alliance with all the tribes of the lakes. At the same time, he urged them to make full atonement for the death of the Seneca murdered in their country, and carefully to refrain from any new offence.

Soon after there was another arrival. La Forêt, the officer in command at Fort Frontenac, appeared, bringing with him

a famous Iroquois chief called Decanisora or Tegannisorens, attended by a number of warriors. They came to invite Frontenac to meet the deputies of the five tribes at Oswego, within their own limits. Frontenac's reply was characteristic. "It is for the father to tell the children where to hold council, not for the children to tell the father. Fort Frontenac is the proper place, and you should thank me for going so far every summer to meet you." The Iroquois had expressed pacific intentions towards the Hurons and Ottawas. For this Frontenac commended him, but added: "The Illinois also are children of Onontio, and hence brethren of the Iroquois. Therefore they, too, should be left in peace; for Onontio wishes that all his family should live together in union." He confirmed his words with a huge belt of wampum. Then, addressing the flattered deputy as a great chief, he desired him to use his influence in behalf of peace, and gave him a jacket and a silk cravat, both trimmed with gold, a hat, a scarlet ribbon, and a gun, with beads for his wife, and red cloth for his daughter. The Iroquois went home delighted.<sup>72</sup>

Perhaps on this occasion Frontenac was too confident of his influence over the savage confederates. Such at least was the opinion of Lamberville, Jesuit missionary at Onondaga, the Iroquois capital. From what he daily saw around him, he thought the peril so imminent that concession on the part of the French was absolutely necessary, since not only the Illinois, but some of the tribes of the lakes, were in danger of speedy

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<sup>72</sup> For the papers on this affair, see *N. Y. Colonial Docs.*, IX.

and complete destruction. "Tegannisorens loves the French," he wrote to Frontenac, "but neither he nor any other of the upper Iroquois fear them in the least. They annihilate our allies, whom by adoption of prisoners they convert into Iroquois; and they do not hesitate to avow that after enriching themselves by our plunder, and strengthening themselves by those who might have aided us, they will pounce all at once upon Canada, and overwhelm it in a single campaign." He adds that within the past two years they have reinforced themselves by more than nine hundred warriors, adopted into their tribes.<sup>73</sup>

Such was the crisis when Frontenac left Canada at the moment when he was needed most, and Le Febvre de la Barre came to supplant him. The new governor introduces himself with a burst of rhodomontade. "The Iroquois," he writes to the king, "have twenty-six hundred warriors. I will attack them with twelve hundred men. They know me before seeing me, for they have been told by the English how roughly I handled them in the West Indies." This bold note closes rather tamely; for the governor adds, "I think that if the Iroquois believe that your Majesty would have the goodness to give me some help, they will make peace, and let our allies alone, which would save the trouble and expense of an arduous war."<sup>74</sup> He then begs hard for troops, and in fact there was great need of them, for there were none in Canada; and even Frontenac had been compelled in the last year

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<sup>73</sup> *P. Jean de Lamberville à Frontenac*, 20 Sept., 1682.

<sup>74</sup> *La Barre au Roy*, (4 Oct.?) 1682.

of his government to leave unpunished various acts of violence and plunder committed by the Iroquois. La Barre painted the situation in its blackest colors, declared that war was imminent, and wrote to the minister, "We shall lose half our trade and all our reputation, if we do not oppose these haughty conquerors."<sup>75</sup>

A vein of gasconade appears in most of his letters, not however accompanied with any conclusive evidence of a real wish to fight. His best fighting days were past, for he was sixty years old; nor had he always been a man of the sword. His early life was spent in the law; he had held a judicial post, and had been intendant of several French provinces. Even the military and naval employments, in which he afterwards acquitted himself with credit, were due to the part he took in forming a joint-stock company for colonizing Cayenne.<sup>76</sup> In fact, he was but half a soldier; and it was perhaps for this reason that he insisted on being called, not *Monsieur le Gouverneur*, but *Monsieur le Général*. He was equal to Frontenac neither in vigor nor in rank, but he far surpassed him in avidity. Soon after his arrival, he wrote to the minister that he should not follow the example of his predecessors in making money out of his government by trade; and in consideration of these good intentions he asked for an

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<sup>75</sup> *La Barre à Seignelay*, 1682.

<sup>76</sup> He was made governor of Cayenne, and went thither with Tracy in 1664. Two years later, he gained several victories over the English, and recaptured Cayenne, which they had taken in his absence. He wrote a book concerning this colony, called *Description de la France Équinoctiale*. Another volume, called *Journal du Voyage du Sieur de la Barre en la Terre Ferme et Isle de Cayenne*, was printed at Paris in 1671.

addition to his pay.<sup>77</sup> He then immediately made alliances with certain merchants of Quebec for carrying on an extensive illicit trade, backed by all the power of his office. Now ensued a strange and miserable complication. Questions of war mingled with questions of personal gain. There was a commercial revolution in the colony. The merchants whom Frontenac excluded from his ring now had their turn. It was they who, jointly with the intendant and the ecclesiastics, had procured the removal of the old governor; and it was they who gained the ear of the new one. Aubert de la Chesnaye, Jacques Le Ber, and the rest of their faction, now basked in official favor; and La Salle, La Forêt, and the other friends of Frontenac, were cast out. There was one exception. Greysolon Du Lhut, leader of *coureurs de bois*, was too important to be thus set aside. He was now as usual in the wilderness of the north, the roving chief of a half savage crew, trading, exploring, fighting, and laboring with persistent hardihood to foil the rival English traders of Hudson's Bay. Inducements to gain his adhesion were probably held out to him by La Barre and his allies: be this as it may, it is certain that he acted in harmony with the faction of the new governor. With La Forêt it was widely different. He commanded Fort Frontenac, which belonged to La Salle, when La Barre's associates, La Chesnaye and Le Ber, armed with an order from the governor, came up from Montreal, and seized upon the place with all that it contained. The pretext for this outrage was the false one that

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<sup>77</sup> *La Barre à Seignelay*, 1682.

La Salle had not fulfilled the conditions under which the fort had been granted to him. La Forêt was told that he might retain his command, if he would join the faction of La Barre; but he refused, stood true to his chief, and soon after sailed for France.

La Barre summoned the most able and experienced persons in the colony to discuss the state of affairs. Their conclusion was that the Iroquois would attack and destroy the Illinois, and, this accomplished, turn upon the tribes of the lakes, conquer or destroy them also, and ruin the trade of Canada.<sup>78</sup> Dark as was the prospect, La Barre and his fellow-speculators flattered themselves that the war could be averted for a year at least. The Iroquois owed their triumphs as much to their sagacity and craft as to their extraordinary boldness and ferocity. It had always been their policy to attack their enemies in detail, and while destroying one to cajole the rest. There seemed little doubt that they would leave the tribes of the lakes in peace till they had finished the ruin of the Illinois; so that if these, the allies of the colony, were abandoned to their fate, there would be time for a profitable trade in the direction of Michillimackinac.

But hopes seemed vain and prognostics illusory, when, early in spring, a report came that the Seneca Iroquois were preparing to attack, in force, not only the Illinois, but the Hurons and Ottawas of the lakes. La Barre and his confederates were in dismay. They already had large quantities of goods at Michillimackinac,

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<sup>78</sup> *Conference on the State of Affairs with the Iroquois, Oct., 1682, in N. Y. Colonial Docs., IX. 194.*

the point immediately threatened; and an officer was hastily despatched, with men and munitions, to strengthen the defences of the place. <sup>79</sup> A small vessel was sent to France with letters begging for troops. "I will perish at their head," wrote La Barre to the king, "or destroy your enemies;" <sup>80</sup> and he assures the minister that the Senecas must be attacked or the country abandoned. <sup>81</sup> The intendant, Meules, shared something of his alarm, and informed the king that "the Iroquois are the only people on earth who do not know the grandeur of your Majesty." <sup>82</sup>

While thus appealing to the king, La Barre sent Charles le Moyne as envoy to Onondaga. Through his influence, a deputation of forty-three Iroquois chiefs was sent to meet the governor at Montreal. Here a grand council was held in the newly built church. Presents were given the deputies to the value of more than two thousand crowns. Soothing speeches were made them; and they were urged not to attack the tribes of the lakes, nor to plunder French traders, *without permission*. <sup>83</sup> They

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<sup>79</sup> *La Barre au Ministre*, 4 Nov., 1683.

<sup>80</sup> *La Barre au Roy*, 30 Mai, 1683.

<sup>81</sup> *La Barre au Ministre*, 30 Mai, 1683.

<sup>82</sup> *Meules au Roy*, 2 Juin, 1683.

<sup>83</sup> Soon after La Barre's arrival, La Chesnaye is said to have induced him to urge the Iroquois to plunder all traders who were not provided with passports from the governor. The Iroquois complied so promptly, that they stopped and pillaged, at Niagara, two canoes belonging to La Chesnaye himself, which had gone up the lakes in Frontenac's time, and therefore were without passports. *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé en Canada au Sujet de la Guerre, etc., depuis l'année 1682*. (Published by the Historical Society of Quebec.) This was not the only case in which the weapons of La Barre and his



assented; and La Barre then asked, timidly, why they made war on the Illinois. "Because they deserve to die," haughtily returned the Iroquois orator. La Barre dared not answer. They complained that La Salle had given guns, powder, and lead to the Illinois; or, in other words, that he had helped the allies of the colony to defend themselves. La Barre, who hated La Salle and his monopolies, assured them that he should be punished.<sup>84</sup> It is affirmed, on good authority, that he said more than this, and told them they were welcome to plunder and kill him.<sup>85</sup> The rapacious old man was playing with a two-edged sword.

Thus the Illinois, with the few Frenchmen who had tried to defend them, were left to perish; and, in return, a brief and doubtful respite was gained for the tribes of the lakes. La Barre and his confederates took heart again. Merchandise, in abundance, was sent to Michillimackinac, and thence to the remoter tribes of the north and west. The governor and his partner, La Chesnaye, sent up a fleet of thirty canoes;<sup>86</sup> and, a little later, they are reported to have sent more than a hundred. This forest trade robbed the colonists, by forestalling the annual market of Montreal; while a considerable part of the furs acquired by it were secretly sent to the English and Dutch of

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partisans recoiled against themselves.

<sup>84</sup> Belmont, *Histoire du Canada* (a contemporary chronicle).

<sup>85</sup> See Discovery of the Great West. La Barre denies the assertion, and says that he merely told the Iroquois that La Salle should be sent home.

<sup>86</sup> *Mémoire adressé à MM. les Intéressés en la Société de la Ferme et Commerce du Canada*, 1683.

New York. Thus the heavy duties of the custom-house at Quebec were evaded; and silver coin was received in payment, instead of questionable bills of exchange.<sup>87</sup> Frontenac had not been faithful to his trust; but, compared to his successor, he was a model of official virtue.

La Barre busied himself with ostentatious preparation for war; built vessels at Fort Frontenac, and sent up fleets of canoes, laden or partly laden with munitions. But his accusers say that the king's canoes were used to transport the governor's goods, and that the men sent to garrison Fort Frontenac were destined, not to fight the Iroquois, but to sell them brandy. "Last year," writes the intendant, "Monsieur de la Barre had a vessel built, for which he made his Majesty pay heavily;" and he proceeds to say that it was built for trade, and was used for no other purpose. "If," he continues, "the two (*king's*) vessels now at Fort Frontenac had not been used for trading, they would have saved us half the expense we have been forced to incur in transporting munitions and supplies. The pretended necessity of having vessels at this fort, and the consequent employing of carpenters, and sending up of iron, cordage, sails, and many other things, at his Majesty's charge, was simply in the view of carrying on trade." He says, farther, that in May last, the vessels, canoes, and men being nearly all absent on this errand, the fort was left in so defenceless

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<sup>87</sup> These statements are made in a memorial of the agents of the custom-house, in letters of Meules, and in several other quarters. La Barre is accused of sending furs to Albany under pretext of official communication with the governor of New York.

a state that a party of Senecas, returning from their winter hunt, took from it a quantity of goods, and drank as much brandy as they wanted. "In short," he concludes, "it is plain that Monsieur de la Barre uses this fort only as a depot for the trade of Lake Ontario." <sup>88</sup>

In the spring of 1683, La Barre had taken a step as rash as it was lawless and unjust. He sent the Chevalier de Baugis, lieutenant of his guard, with a considerable number of canoes and men, to seize La Salle's fort of St. Louis on the river Illinois; a measure which, while gratifying the passions and the greed of himself and his allies, would greatly increase the danger of rupture with the Iroquois. Late in the season, he despatched seven canoes and fourteen men, with goods to the value of fifteen or sixteen thousand livres, to trade with the tribes of the Mississippi. As he had sown, so he reaped. The seven canoes passed through the country of the Illinois. A large war party of Senecas and Cayugas invaded it in February. La Barre had told their chiefs that they were welcome to plunder the canoes of La Salle. The Iroquois were not discriminating. They fell upon the governor's canoes, seized all the goods, and captured the men. <sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *Meules à Seignelay*, 8 July, 1684. This accords perfectly with statements made in several memorials of La Salle and his friends.

<sup>89</sup> There appears no doubt that La Barre brought this upon himself. His successor, Denonville, writes that the Iroquois declared that, in plundering the canoes, they thought they were executing the orders they had received to plunder La Salle's people. Denonville, *Mémoire adressé au Ministre sur les Affaires de la Nouvelle France*, 10 Août, 1688. The Iroquois told Dongan, in 1684, "that they had not don any thing to

Then they attacked Baugis at Fort St. Louis. The place, perched on a rock, was strong, and they were beaten off; but the act was one of open war.

When La Barre heard the news, he was furious.<sup>90</sup> He trembled for the vast amount of goods which he and his fellow-speculators had sent to Michillimackinac and the lakes. There was but one resource: to call out the militia, muster the Indian allies, advance to Lake Ontario, and dictate peace to the Senecas, at the head of an imposing force; or, failing in this, to attack and crush them. A small vessel lying at Quebec was despatched to France, with urgent appeals for immediate aid, though there was little hope that it could arrive in time. She bore a long letter, half piteous, half bombastic, from La Barre to the king. He declared that extreme necessity and the despair of the people had forced him into war, and protested that he should always think it a privilege to lay down life for his Majesty. "I cannot refuse to your country of Canada, and your faithful subjects, to throw myself, with unequal forces, against the foe, while at the same time begging your aid for a poor, unhappy people on the point of falling victims to a nation of barbarians." He says that the total number of men in Canada capable of bearing arms is about two thousand; that he received last year a hundred and fifty raw recruits; and that he wants, in addition, seven or eight hundred good soldiers. "Recall

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the French but what Monsr. delaBarr Ordered them, which was that if they mett with any French hunting without his passe to take what they had from them." *Dongan to Denonville, 9 Sept., 1687.*

<sup>90</sup> "Ce qui mit M. de la Barre en fureur." Belmont, *Histoire du Canada*.

me," he concludes, "if you will not help me, for I cannot bear to see the country perish in my hands." At the same time, he declares his intention to attack the Senecas, with or without help, about the middle of August.<sup>91</sup>

Here we leave him, for a while, scared, excited, and blustering.

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<sup>91</sup> *La Barre au Roy*, 5 *Juin*, 1684.

# CHAPTER VI

1684

## La Barre and the Iroquois

Dongan • New York and its Indian Neighbors • The Rival Governors • Dongan and the Iroquois • Mission to Onondaga • An Iroquois Politician • Warnings of Lamberville • Iroquois Boldness • La Barre takes the Field • His Motives • The March • Pestilence • Council at La Famine • The Iroquois defiant • Humiliation of La Barre • The Indian Allies • Their Rage and Disappointment • Recall of La Barre.

The Dutch colony of New Netherland had now become the English colony of New York. Its proprietor, the Duke of York, afterwards James II. of England, had appointed Colonel Thomas Dongan its governor. He was a Catholic Irish gentleman of high rank, nephew of the famous Earl of Tyrconnel, and presumptive heir to the earldom of Limerick. He had served in France, was familiar with its language, and partial to its king and its nobility; but he nevertheless gave himself with vigor to the duties of his

new trust.

The Dutch and English colonists aimed at a share in the western fur trade, hitherto a monopoly of Canada; and it is said that Dutch traders had already ventured among the tribes of the Great Lakes, boldly poaching on the French preserves. Dongan did his utmost to promote their interests, so far at least as was consistent with his instructions from the Duke of York, enjoining him to give the French governor no just cause of offence.<sup>92</sup>

For several years past, the Iroquois had made forays against the borders of Maryland and Virginia, plundering and killing the settlers; and a declared rupture between those colonies and the savage confederates had more than once been imminent. The English believed that these hostilities were instigated by the Jesuits in the Iroquois villages. There is no proof whatever of the accusation; but it is certain that it was the interest of Canada to provoke a war which might, sooner or later, involve New York. In consequence of a renewal of such attacks, Lord Howard of Effingham, governor of Virginia, came to Albany in the summer of 1684, to hold a council with the Iroquois.

The Oneidas, Onondagas, and Cayugas were the offending

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<sup>92</sup> *Sir John Werden to Dongan, 4 Dec., 1684; N. Y. Col. Docs., III. 353.* Werden was the duke's secretary. Dongan has been charged with instigating the Iroquois to attack the French. The Jesuit Lamberville, writing from Onondaga, says, on the contrary, that he hears that the "governor of New England (*New York*), when the Mohawk chiefs asked him to continue the sale of powder to them, replied that it should be continued so long as they would not make war on Christians." *Lamberville à La Barre, 10 Fév., 1684.* The French ambassador at London complained that Dongan excited the Iroquois to war, and Dongan denied the charge. *N. Y. Col. Docs., III. 506, 509.*

tribes. They all promised friendship for the future. A hole was dug in the court-yard of the council house, each of the three threw a hatchet into it, and Lord Howard and the representative of Maryland added two others; then the hole was filled, the song of peace was sung, and the high contracting parties stood pledged to mutual accord.<sup>93</sup> The Mohawks were also at the council, and the Senecas soon after arrived; so that all the confederacy was present by its deputies. Not long before, La Barre, then in the heat of his martial preparations, had sent a messenger to Dongan with a letter, informing him that, as the Senecas and Cayugas had plundered French canoes and assaulted a French fort, he was compelled to attack them, and begging that the Dutch and English colonists should be forbidden to supply them with arms.<sup>94</sup> This letter produced two results, neither of them agreeable to the writer: first, the Iroquois were fully warned of the designs of the French; and, secondly, Dongan gained the opportunity he wanted of asserting the claim of his king to sovereignty over the confederacy, and possession of the whole country south of the Great Lakes. He added that, if the Iroquois had done wrong, he would require them, as British subjects, to make reparation; and he urged La Barre, for the sake of peace between the two colonies, to refrain from his intended invasion of British territory.

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<sup>93</sup> Report of Conferences at Albany, in Colden, *History of the Five Nations*, 50 (ed. 1727, Shea's reprint).

<sup>94</sup> *La Barre à Dongan*, 15 *Juin*, 1684.



Dongan next laid before the assembled sachems the complaints made against them in the letter of La Barre. They replied by accusing the French of carrying arms to their enemies, the Illinois and the Miamis. "Onontio," said their orator, "calls us his children, and then helps our enemies to knock us in the head." They were somewhat disturbed at the prospect of La Barre's threatened attack; and Dongan seized the occasion to draw from them an acknowledgment of subjection to the Duke of York, promising in return that they should be protected from the French. They did not hesitate. "We put ourselves," said the Iroquois speaker, "under the great sachem Charles, who lives over the Great Lake, and under the protection of the great Duke of York, brother of your great sachem." But he added a moment after, "Let your friend (*King Charles*) who lives over the Great Lake know that we are a free people, though united to the English." <sup>96</sup> They consented that the arms of the Duke of York should be planted in their villages, being told that this would prevent the French from destroying them. Dongan now insisted that they should make no treaty with Onontio without his consent; and he promised that, if their country should be invaded, he would send four hundred horsemen and as many foot soldiers to their aid.

As for the acknowledgment of subjection to the king and the

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<sup>95</sup> *Dongan à La Barre, 24 Juin, 1684.*

<sup>96</sup> Speech of the Onondagas and Cayugas, in Colden, *Five Nations*, 63 (1727).

Duke of York, the Iroquois neither understood its full meaning nor meant to abide by it. What they did clearly understand was that, while they recognized Onontio, the governor of Canada, as their father, they recognized Corlaer, the governor of New York, only as their brother.<sup>97</sup> Dongan, it seems, could not, or dared not, change this mark of equality. He did his best, however, to make good his claims, and sent Arnold Viele, a Dutch interpreter, as his envoy to Onondaga. Viele set out for the Iroquois capital, and thither we will follow him.

He mounted his horse, and in the heats of August rode westward along the valley of the Mohawk. On a hill a bow-shot from the river, he saw the first Mohawk town, Kaghnewaga, encircled by a strong palisade. Next he stopped for a time at Gandagaro, on a meadow near the bank; and next, at Canajora, on a plain two miles away. Tionondogué, the last and strongest of these fortified villages, stood like the first on a hill that overlooked the river, and all the rich meadows around were covered with Indian corn. The largest of the four contained but thirty houses, and all together could furnish scarcely more than three hundred warriors.<sup>98</sup>

When the last Mohawk town was passed, a ride of four or

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<sup>97</sup> Except the small tribe of the Oneidas, who addressed Corlaer as *Father*. *Corlaer* was the official Iroquois name of the governor of New York; *Onas* (the Feather, or Pen), that of the governor of Pennsylvania; and *Assarigoa* (the Big Knife, or Sword), that of the governor of Virginia. Corlaer, or Cuyler, was the name of a Dutchman whom the Iroquois held in great respect.

<sup>98</sup> *Journal of Wentworth Greenhalgh*, 1677, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, III. 250.

five days still lay before the envoy. He held his way along the old Indian trail, now traced through the grass of sunny meadows, and now tunnelled through the dense green of shady forests, till it led him to the town of the Oneidas, containing about a hundred bark houses, with twice as many fighting men, the entire force of the tribe. Here, as in the four Mohawk villages, he planted the scutcheon of the Duke of York, and, still advancing, came at length to a vast open space where the rugged fields, patched with growing corn, sloped upwards into a broad, low hill, crowned with the clustered lodges of Onondaga. There were from one to two hundred of these large bark dwellings, most of them holding several families. The capital of the confederacy was not fortified at this time, and its only defence was the valor of some four hundred warriors.<sup>99</sup>

In this focus of trained and organized savagery, where ferocity was cultivated as a virtue, and every emotion of pity stifled as unworthy of a man; where ancient rites, customs, and traditions were held with the tenacity of a people who joined the extreme of wildness with the extreme of conservatism,—here burned the council fire of the five confederate tribes; and here, in time of need, were gathered their bravest and their wisest to debate high questions of policy and war.

The object of Viele was to confirm the Iroquois in their

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<sup>99</sup> *Journal of Greenhalgh*. The site of Onondaga, like that of all the Iroquois towns, was changed from time to time, as the soil of the neighborhood became impoverished, and the supply of wood exhausted. Greenhalgh, in 1677, estimated the warriors at three hundred and fifty; but the number had increased of late by the adoption of prisoners.

very questionable attitude of subjection to the British crown, and persuade them to make no treaty or agreement with the French, except through the intervention of Dongan, or at least with his consent. The envoy found two Frenchmen in the town, whose presence boded ill to his errand. The first was the veteran colonist of Montreal, Charles le Moyne, sent by La Barre to invite the Onondagas to a conference. They had known him, in peace or war, for a quarter of a century; and they greatly respected him. The other was the Jesuit Jean de Lamberville, who had long lived among them, and knew them better than they knew themselves. Here, too, was another personage who cannot pass unnoticed. He was a famous Onondaga orator named Otréouati, and called also Big Mouth, whether by reason of the dimensions of that feature or the greatness of the wisdom that issued from it. His contemporary, Baron La Hontan, thinking perhaps that his French name of La Grande Gueule was wanting in dignity, Latinized it into Grangula; and the Scotchman, Colden, afterwards improved it into Garangula, under which high-sounding appellation Big Mouth has descended to posterity. He was an astute old savage, well trained in the arts of Iroquois rhetoric, and gifted with the power of strong and caustic sarcasm, which has marked more than one of the chief orators of the confederacy. He shared with most of his countrymen the conviction that the earth had nothing so great as the league of the Iroquois; but, if he could be proud and patriotic, so too he could be selfish and mean. He valued gifts, attentions, and

a good meal, and would pay for them abundantly in promises, which he kept or not, as his own interests or those of his people might require. He could use bold and loud words in public, and then secretly make his peace with those he had denounced. He was so given to rough jokes that the intendant, Meules, calls him a buffoon; but his buffoonery seems to have been often a cover to his craft. He had taken a prominent part in the council of the preceding summer at Montreal; and, doubtless, as he stood in full dress before the governor and the officers, his head plumed, his face painted, his figure draped in a colored blanket, and his feet decked with embroidered moccasins, he was a picturesque and striking object. He was less so as he squatted almost naked by his lodge fire, with a piece of board laid across his lap, chopping rank tobacco with a scalping-knife to fill his pipe, and entertaining the grinning circle with grotesque stories and obscene jests. Though not one of the hereditary chiefs, his influence was great. "He has the strongest head and the loudest voice among the Iroquois," wrote Lamberville to La Barre. "He calls himself your best friend.... He is a venal creature, whom you do well to keep in pay. I assured him I would send him the jerkin you promised." <sup>100</sup> Well as the Jesuit knew the Iroquois, he was deceived if he thought that Big Mouth was securely won.

Lamberville's constant effort was to prevent a rupture. He wrote with every opportunity to the governor, painting the

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<sup>100</sup> *Letters of Lamberville in N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. For specimens of Big Mouth's skill in drawing, see *ibid.*, IX. 386.

calamities that war would bring, and warning him that it was vain to hope that the league could be divided, and its three eastern tribes kept neutral, while the Senecas were attacked. He assured him, on the contrary, that they would all unite to fall upon Canada, ravaging, burning, and butchering along the whole range of defenceless settlements. "You cannot believe, Monsieur, with what joy the Senecas learned that you might possibly resolve on war. When they heard of the preparations at Fort Frontenac, they said that the French had a great mind to be stripped, roasted, and eaten; and that they will see if their flesh, which they suppose to have a salt taste, by reason of the salt which we use with our food, be as good as that of their other enemies." <sup>101</sup> Lamberville also informs the governor that the Senecas have made ready for any emergency, buried their last year's corn, prepared a hiding place in the depth of the forest for their old men, women, and children, and stripped their towns of every thing that they value; and that their fifteen hundred warriors will not shut themselves up in forts, but fight under cover, among trees and in the tall grass, with little risk to themselves and extreme danger to the invader. "There is no profit," he says, "in fighting with this sort of banditti, whom you cannot catch, but who will catch many of your people. The Onondagas wish to bring about an agreement. Must the father and the children, they ask, cut each other's throats?"

The Onondagas, moved by the influence of the Jesuit and the gifts of La Barre, did in fact wish to act as mediators between

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<sup>101</sup> Lamberville to La Barre, 11 July, 1684, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. 253.

their Seneca confederates and the French; and to this end they invited the Seneca elders to a council. The meeting took place before the arrival of Viele, and lasted two days. The Senecas were at first refractory, and hot for war, but at length consented that the Onondagas might make peace for them, if they could; a conclusion which was largely due to the eloquence of Big Mouth.

The first act of Viele was a blunder. He told the Onondagas that the English governor was master of their country; and that, as they were subjects of the king of England, they must hold no council with the French without permission. The pride of Big Mouth was touched. "You say," he exclaimed to the envoy, "that we are subjects of the king of England and the Duke of York; but we say that we are brothers. We must take care of ourselves. The coat of arms which you have fastened to that post cannot defend us against Onontio. We tell you that we shall bind a covenant chain to our arm and to his. We shall take the Senecas by one hand and Onontio by the other, and their hatchet and his sword shall be thrown into deep water."<sup>102</sup>

Thus well and manfully did Big Mouth assert the independence of his tribe, and proclaim it the arbiter of peace. He told the warriors, moreover, to close their ears to the words of the Dutchman, who spoke as if he were drunk;<sup>103</sup> and it was resolved at last that he, Big Mouth, with an embassy of chiefs and elders, should go with Le Moyne to meet the French governor.

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<sup>102</sup> Colden, *Five Nations*, 80 (1727).

<sup>103</sup> *Lamberville to La Barre*, 28 Aug., 1684, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. 257.

While these things were passing at Onondaga, La Barre had finished his preparations, and was now in full campaign. Before setting out, he had written to the minister that he was about to advance on the enemy, with seven hundred Canadians, a hundred and thirty regulars, and two hundred mission Indians; that more Indians were to join him on the way; that Du Lhut and La Durantaye were to meet him at Niagara with a body of *coureurs de bois* and Indians from the interior; and that, "when we are all united, we will perish or destroy the enemy." <sup>104</sup> On the same day, he wrote to the king: "My purpose is to exterminate the Senecas; for otherwise your Majesty need take no farther account of this country, since there is no hope of peace with them, except when they are driven to it by force. I pray you do not abandon me; and be assured that I shall do my duty at the head of your faithful colonists." <sup>105</sup>

A few days after writing these curiously incoherent epistles, La Barre received a letter from his colleague, Meules, who had no belief that he meant to fight, and was determined to compel him to do so, if possible. "There is a report," wrote the intendant, "that you mean to make peace. It is doing great harm. Our Indian allies will despise us. I trust the story is untrue, and that you will listen to no overtures. The expense has been enormous. The whole population is roused." <sup>106</sup> Not satisfied with this, Meules

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<sup>104</sup> *La Barre au Ministre*, 9 July, 1684.

<sup>105</sup> *La Barre au Roy*, même date.

<sup>106</sup> *Meules à La Barre*, 15 July, 1684.



sent the general a second letter, meant, like the first, as a tonic and a stimulant. "If we come to terms with the Iroquois, without first making them feel the strength of our arms, we may expect that, in future, they will do every thing they can to humiliate us, because we drew the sword against them, and showed them our teeth. I do not think that any course is now left for us but to carry the war to their very doors, and do our utmost to reduce them to such a point that they shall never again be heard of as a nation, but only as our subjects and slaves. If, after having gone so far, we do not fight them, we shall lose all our trade, and bring this country to the brink of ruin. The Iroquois, and especially the Senecas, pass for great cowards. The Reverend Father Jesuit, who is at Prairie de la Madeleine, told me as much yesterday; and, though he has never been among them, he assured me that he has heard everybody say so. But, even if they were brave, we ought to be very glad of it; since then we could hope that they would wait our attack, and give us a chance to beat them. If we do not destroy them, they will destroy us. I think you see but too well that your honor and the safety of the country are involved in the results of this war." <sup>107</sup>

While Meules thus wrote to the governor, he wrote also to the minister, Seignelay, and expressed his views with great distinctness. "I feel bound in conscience to tell you that nothing was ever heard of so extraordinary as what we see done in this

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<sup>107</sup> *Meules à La Barre*, 14 Août, 1684. This and the preceding letter stand, by a copyist's error, in the name of La Barre. They are certainly written by Meules.

country every day. One would think that there was a divided empire here between the king and the governor; and, if things should go on long in this way, the governor would have a far greater share than his Majesty. The persons whom Monsieur la Barre has sent this year to trade at Fort Frontenac have already shared with him from ten to twelve thousand crowns." He then recounts numerous abuses and malversations on the part of the governor. "In a word, Monseigneur, this war has been decided upon in the cabinet of Monsieur the general, along with six of the chief merchants of the country. If it had not served their plans, he would have found means to settle every thing; but the merchants made him understand that they were in danger of being plundered, and that, having an immense amount of merchandise in the woods in nearly two hundred canoes fitted out last year, it was better to make use of the people of the country to carry on war against the Senecas. This being done, he hopes to make extraordinary profits without any risk, because one of two things will happen: either we shall gain some considerable advantage over the savages, as there is reason to hope, if Monsieur the general will but attack them in their villages; or else we shall make a peace which will keep every thing safe for a time. These are assuredly the sole motives of this war, which has for principle and end nothing but mere interest. He says himself that there is good fishing in troubled waters."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> The famous *voyageur*, Nicolas Perrot, agrees with the intendant. "Ils (*La Barre et ses associés*) s'imaginèrent que sitôt que le François viendrait à paroître, l'Iroquois

The Sulpitian, Abbé Belmont, says that the avarice of the merchants was the cause of the war; that they and La Barre wished to prevent the Iroquois from interrupting trade; and that La Barre aimed at an indemnity for the sixteen hundred livres in merchandise which the Senecas had taken from his canoes early in the year. Belmont adds that he wanted to bring them to terms without fighting.

"With all our preparations for war, and all the expense in which Monsieur the general is involving his Majesty, I will take the liberty to tell you, Monseigneur, though I am no prophet, that I discover no disposition on the part of Monsieur the general to make war against the aforesaid savages. In my belief, he will content himself with going in a canoe as far as Fort Frontenac, and then send for the Senecas to treat of peace with them, and deceive the people, the intendant, and, if I may be allowed with all possible respect to say so, his Majesty himself.

"P. S.—I will finish this letter, Monseigneur, by telling you that he set out yesterday, July 10th, with a detachment of two hundred men. All Quebec was filled with grief to see him embark on an expedition of war *tête-à-tête* with the man named La Chesnaye. Everybody says that the war is a sham, that these two will arrange every thing between them, and, in a word, do whatever will help their trade. The whole country is in despair to

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luy demanderoit miséricorde, qu'il seroit facile d'establir des magasins, construire des barques dans le lac Ontario, et que c'estoit un moyen de trouver des richesses." *Mémoire sur les Mœurs, Coustumes, et Relligion des Sauvages*, chap. xxi.

see how matters are managed." <sup>109</sup>

After a long stay at Montreal, La Barre embarked his little army at La Chine, crossed Lake St. Louis, and began the ascent of the upper St. Lawrence. In one of the three companies of regulars which formed a part of the force was a young subaltern, the Baron la Hontan, who has left a lively account of the expedition. Some of the men were in flat boats, and some were in birch canoes. Of the latter was La Hontan, whose craft was paddled by three Canadians. Several times they shouldered it through the forest to escape the turmoil of the rapids. The flat boats could not be so handled, and were dragged or pushed up in the shallow water close to the bank, by gangs of militia men, toiling and struggling among the rocks and foam. The regulars, unskilled in such matters, were spared these fatigues, though tormented night and day by swarms of gnats and mosquitoes, objects of La Hontan's bitterest invective. At length the last rapid was passed, and they moved serenely on their way, threaded the mazes of the Thousand Islands, entered what is now the harbor of Kingston, and landed under the palisades of Fort Frontenac.

Here the whole force was soon assembled, the regulars in their tents, the Canadian militia and the Indians in huts and under sheds of bark. Of these red allies there were several hundred: Abenakis and Algonquins from Sillery, Hurons from Lorette, and converted Iroquois from the Jesuit mission of Saut St. Louis, near Montreal. The camp of the French was on a low, damp plain

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<sup>109</sup> *Meules au Ministre*, 8-11 Juillet, 1684.

near the fort; and here a malarious fever presently attacked them, killing many and disabling many more. La Hontan says that La Barre himself was brought by it to the brink of the grave. If he had ever entertained any other purpose than that of inducing the Senecas to agree to a temporary peace, he now completely abandoned it. He dared not even insist that the offending tribe should meet him in council, but hastened to ask the mediation of the Onondagas, which the letters of Lamberville had assured him that they were disposed to offer. He sent Le Moyne to persuade them to meet him on their own side of the lake, and, with such of his men as were able to move, crossed to the mouth of Salmon River, then called La Famine.

The name proved prophetic. Provisions fell short from bad management in transportation, and the men grew hungry and discontented. September had begun; the place was unwholesome, and the malarious fever of Fort Frontenac infected the new encampment. The soldiers sickened rapidly. La Barre, racked with suspense, waited impatiently the return of Le Moyne. We have seen already the result of his mission, and how he and Lamberville, in spite of the envoy of the English governor, gained from the Onondaga chiefs the promise to meet Onontio in council. Le Moyne appeared at La Famine on the third of the month, bringing with him Big Mouth and thirteen other deputies. La Barre gave them a feast of bread, wine, and salmon trout, and on the morning of the fourth the council began.

Before the deputies arrived, the governor had sent the sick

men homeward in order to conceal his helpless condition; and he now told the Iroquois that he had left his army at Fort Frontenac, and had come to meet them attended only by an escort. The Onondaga politician was not to be so deceived. He, or one of his party, spoke a little French; and during the night, roaming noiselessly among the tents, he contrived to learn the true state of the case from the soldiers.

The council was held on an open spot near the French encampment. La Barre was seated in an arm-chair. The Jesuit Bruyas stood by him as interpreter, and the officers were ranged on his right and left. The Indians sat on the ground in a row opposite the governor; and two lines of soldiers, forming two sides of a square, closed the intervening space. Among the officers was La Hontan, a spectator of the whole proceeding. He may be called a man in advance of his time; for he had the caustic, sceptical, and mocking spirit which a century later marked the approach of the great revolution, but which was not a characteristic of the reign of Louis XIV. He usually told the truth when he had no motive to do otherwise, and yet was capable at times of prodigious mendacity.<sup>110</sup> There is no reason to believe that he indulged in it on the present occasion, and his account of what he now saw and heard may probably be taken as substantially correct. According to him, La Barre opened the

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<sup>110</sup> La Hontan attempted to impose on his readers a marvellous story of pretended discoveries beyond the Mississippi; and his ill repute in the matter of veracity is due chiefly to this fabrication. On the other hand, his account of what he saw in the colony is commonly in accord with the best contemporary evidence.

council as follows:—

"The king my master, being informed that the Five Nations of the Iroquois have long acted in a manner adverse to peace, has ordered me to come with an escort to this place, and to send Akouessan (*Le Moyne*) to Onondaga to invite the principal chiefs to meet me. It is the wish of this great king that you and I should smoke the calumet of peace together, provided that you promise, in the name of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, to give entire satisfaction and indemnity to his subjects, and do nothing in future which may occasion rupture."

Then he recounted the offences of the Iroquois. First, they had maltreated and robbed French traders in the country of the Illinois; "wherefore," said the governor, "I am ordered to demand reparation, and in case of refusal to declare war against you."

Next, "the warriors of the Five Nations have introduced the English into the lakes which belong to the king my master, and among the tribes who are his children, in order to destroy the trade of his subjects, and seduce these people from the obedience they owe him. I am willing to forget this; but, should it happen again, I am expressly ordered to declare war against you."

Thirdly, "the warriors of the Five Nations have made sundry barbarous inroads into the country of the Illinois and Miamis, seizing, binding, and leading into captivity an infinite number of these savages in time of peace. They are the children of my king, and are not to remain your slaves. They must at once be set free and sent home. If you refuse to do this, I am expressly ordered

to declare war against you."

La Barre concluded by assuring Big Mouth, as representing the Five Nations of the Iroquois, that the French would leave them in peace if they made atonement for the past, and promised good conduct for the future; but that, if they did not heed his words, their villages should be burned, and they themselves destroyed. He added, though he knew the contrary, that the governor of New York would join him in war against them.

During the delivery of this martial harangue, Big Mouth sat silent and attentive, his eyes fixed on the bowl of his pipe. When the interpreter had ceased, he rose, walked gravely two or three times around the lines of the assembly, then stopped before the governor, looked steadily at him, stretched his tawny arm, opened his capacious jaws, and uttered himself as follows:—

"Onontio, I honor you, and all the warriors who are with me honor you. Your interpreter has ended his speech, and now I begin mine. Listen to my words.

"Onontio, when you left Quebec, you must have thought that the heat of the sun had burned the forests that make our country inaccessible to the French, or that the lake had overflowed them so that we could not escape from our villages. You must have thought so, Onontio; and curiosity to see such a fire or such a flood must have brought you to this place. Now your eyes are opened; for I and my warriors have come to tell you that the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas, and Mohawks are all alive. I thank you in their name for bringing back the calumet of



peace which they gave to your predecessors; and I give you joy that you have not dug up the hatchet which has been so often red with the blood of your countrymen.

"Listen, Onontio. I am not asleep. My eyes are open; and by the sun that gives me light I see a great captain at the head of a band of soldiers, who talks like a man in a dream. He says that he has come to smoke the pipe of peace with the Onondagas; but I see that he came to knock them in the head, if so many of his Frenchmen were not too weak to fight. I see Onontio raving in a camp of sick men, whose lives the Great Spirit has saved by smiting them with disease. Our women had snatched war-clubs, and our children and old men seized bows and arrows to attack your camp, if our warriors had not restrained them, when your messenger, Akouessan, appeared in our village."

He next justified the pillage of French traders on the ground, very doubtful in this case, that they were carrying arms to the Illinois, enemies of the confederacy; and he flatly refused to make reparation, telling La Barre that even the old men of his tribe had no fear of the French. He also avowed boldly that the Iroquois had conducted English traders to the lakes. "We are born free," he exclaimed, "we depend neither on Onontio nor on Corlaer. We have the right to go whithersoever we please, to take with us whomever we please, and buy and sell of whomever we please. If your allies are your slaves or your children, treat them like slaves or children, and forbid them to deal with anybody but your Frenchmen.

"We have knocked the Illinois in the head, because they cut down the tree of peace and hunted the beaver on our lands. We have done less than the English and the French, who have seized upon the lands of many tribes, driven them away, and built towns, villages, and forts in their country.

"Listen, Onontio. My voice is the voice of the Five Tribes of the Iroquois. When they buried the hatchet at Cataraqui (*Fort Frontenac*) in presence of your predecessor, they planted the tree of peace in the middle of the fort, that it might be a post of traders and not of soldiers. Take care that all the soldiers you have brought with you, shut up in so small a fort, do not choke this tree of peace. I assure you in the name of the Five Tribes that our warriors will dance the dance of the calumet under its branches; and that they will sit quiet on their mats and never dig up the hatchet, till their brothers, Onontio and Corlaer, separately or together, make ready to attack the country that the Great Spirit has given to our ancestors."

The session presently closed; and La Barre withdrew to his tent, where, according to La Hontan, he vented his feelings in invective, till reminded that good manners were not to be expected from an Iroquois. Big Mouth, on his part, entertained some of the French at a feast which he opened in person by a dance. There was another session in the afternoon, and the terms of peace were settled in the evening. The tree of peace was planted anew; La Barre promised not to attack the Senecas; and Big Mouth, in spite of his former declaration, consented that

they should make amends for the pillage of the traders. On the other hand, he declared that the Iroquois would fight the Illinois to the death; and La Barre dared not utter a word in behalf of his allies. The Onondaga next demanded that the council fire should be removed from Fort Frontenac to La Famine, in the Iroquois country. This point was yielded without resistance; and La Barre promised to decamp and set out for home on the following morning.<sup>111</sup>

Such was the futile and miserable end of the grand expedition. Even the promise to pay for the plundered goods was contemptuously broken.<sup>112</sup> The honor rested with the Iroquois. They had spurned the French, repelled the claims of the English, and by act and word asserted their independence of both.

La Barre embarked and hastened home in advance of his men. His camp was again full of the sick. Their comrades placed them, shivering with ague fits, on board the flat-boats and canoes; and the whole force, scattered and disordered, floated down the current to Montreal. Nothing had been gained but a thin and flimsy truce, with new troubles and dangers plainly visible behind it. The better to understand their nature, let us look for a moment at an episode of the campaign.

When La Barre sent messengers with gifts and wampum belts

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<sup>111</sup> The articles of peace will be found in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. 236. Compare *Memoir of M. de la Barre regarding the War against the Senecas*, *ibid.*, 239. These two documents do not agree as to date, one placing the council on the 4th and the other on the 5th.

<sup>112</sup> This appears from the letters of Denonville, La Barre's successor.

to summon the Indians of the Upper Lakes to join in the war, his appeal found a cold response. La Durantaye and Du Lhut, French commanders in that region, vainly urged the surrounding tribes to lift the hatchet. None but the Hurons would consent, when, fortunately, Nicolas Perrot arrived at Michillimackinac on an errand of trade. This famous *coureur de bois*—a very different person from Perrot, governor of Montreal—was well skilled in dealing with Indians. Through his influence, their scruples were overcome; and some five hundred warriors, Hurons, Ottawas, Ojibwas, Pottawatamies, and Foxes, were persuaded to embark for the rendezvous at Niagara, along with a hundred or more Frenchmen. The fleet of canoes, numerous as a flock of blackbirds in autumn, began the long and weary voyage. The two commanders had a heavy task. Discipline was impossible. The French were scarcely less wild than the savages. Many of them were painted and feathered like their red companions, whose ways they imitated with perfect success. The Indians, on their part, were but half-hearted for the work in hand, for they had already discovered that the English would pay twice as much for a beaver skin as the French; and they asked nothing better than the appearance of English traders on the lakes, and a safe peace with the Iroquois, which should open to them the market of New York. But they were like children with the passions of men, inconsequent, fickle, and wayward. They stopped to hunt on the shore of Michigan, where a Frenchman accidentally shot himself with his own gun. Here was an evil omen. But for

the efforts of Perrot, half the party would have given up the enterprise, and paddled home. In the Strait of Detroit there was another hunt, and another accident. In firing at a deer, an Indian wounded his own brother. On this the tribesmen of the wounded man proposed to kill the French, as being the occasion of the mischance. Once more the skill of Perrot prevailed; but when they reached the Long Point of Lake Erie, the Foxes, about a hundred in number, were on the point of deserting in a body. As persuasion failed, Perrot tried the effect of taunts. "You are cowards," he said to the naked crew, as they crowded about him with their wild eyes and long lank hair. "You do not know what war is: you never killed a man and you never ate one, except those that were given you tied hand and foot." They broke out against him in a storm of abuse. "You shall see whether we are men. We are going to fight the Iroquois; and, unless you do your part, we will knock you in the head." "You will never have to give yourselves the trouble," retorted Perrot, "for at the first war-whoop you will all run off." He gained his point. Their pride was roused, and for the moment they were full of fight.<sup>113</sup>

Immediately after, there was trouble with the Ottawas, who became turbulent and threatening, and refused to proceed. With much ado, they were persuaded to go as far as Niagara, being lured by the rash assurance of La Durantaye that three vessels were there, loaded with a present of guns for them. They carried

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<sup>113</sup> *La Potherie*, II. 159 (ed. 1722). Perrot himself, in his *Mœurs des Sauvages*, briefly mentions the incident.

their canoes by the cataract, launched them again, paddled to the mouth of the river, and looked for the vessels in vain. At length a solitary sail appeared on the lake. She brought no guns, but instead a letter from La Barre, telling them that peace was made, and that they might all go home. Some of them had paddled already a thousand miles, in the hope of seeing the Senecas humbled. They turned back in disgust, filled with wrath and scorn against the governor and all the French. Canada had incurred the contempt, not only of enemies, but of allies. There was danger that these tribes would repudiate the French alliance, welcome the English traders, make peace at any price with the Iroquois, and carry their beaver skins to Albany instead of Montreal.

The treaty made at La Famine was greeted with contumely through all the colony. The governor found, however, a comforter in the Jesuit Lamberville, who stood fast in the position which he had held from the beginning. He wrote to La Barre: "You deserve the title of saviour of the country for making peace at so critical a time. In the condition in which your army was, you could not have advanced into the Seneca country without utter defeat. The Senecas had double palisades, which could not have been forced without great loss. Their plan was to keep three hundred men inside, and to perpetually harass you with twelve hundred others. All the Iroquois were to collect together, and fire only at the legs of your people, so as to master them, and burn them at their leisure, and then, after having thinned their numbers by a

hundred ambuscades in the woods and grass, to pursue you in your retreat even to Montreal, and spread desolation around it."

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La Barre was greatly pleased with this letter, and made use of it to justify himself to the king. His colleague, Meules, on the other hand, declared that Lamberville, anxious to make favor with the governor, had written only what La Barre wished to hear. The intendant also informs the minister that La Barre's excuses are a mere pretence; that everybody is astonished and disgusted with him; that the sickness of the troops was his own fault, because he kept them encamped on wet ground for an unconscionable length of time; that Big Mouth shamefully befooled and bullied him; that, after the council at La Famine, he lost his wits, and went off in a fright; that, since the return of the troops, the officers have openly expressed their contempt for him; and that the people would have risen against him, if he, Meules, had not taken measures to quiet them.<sup>115</sup> These, with many other charges, flew across the sea from the pen of the intendant.

The next ship from France brought the following letter from the king:—

Monsieur de la Barre,—Having been informed that your years do not permit you to support the fatigues inseparable from your office of governor and lieutenant-general in

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<sup>114</sup> *Lamberville to La Barre*, 9 Oct., 1684, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. 260.

<sup>115</sup> *Meules au Ministre*, 10 Oct., 1684.

Canada, I send you this letter to acquaint you that I have selected Monsieur de Denonville to serve in your place; and my intention is that, on his arrival, after resigning to him the command, with all instructions concerning it, you embark for your return to France.

*Louis.*

La Barre sailed for home; and the Marquis de Denonville, a pious colonel of dragoons, assumed the vacant office.



# CHAPTER VII

1685-1687

## Denonville and Dongan

Troubles of the New Governor • His Character • English Rivalry • Intrigues of Dongan • English Claims • A Diplomatic Duel • Overt Acts • Anger of Denonville • James II. checks Dongan • Denonville emboldened • Strife in the North • Hudson's Bay • Attempted Pacification • Artifice of Denonville • He prepares for War.

Denonville embarked at Rochelle in June, with his wife and a part of his family. Saint-Vallier, the destined bishop, was in the same vessel; and the squadron carried five hundred soldiers, of whom a hundred and fifty died of fever and scurvy on the way. Saint-Vallier speaks in glowing terms of the new governor. "He spent nearly all his time in prayer and the reading of good books. The Psalms of David were always in his hands. In all the voyage, I never saw him do any thing wrong; and there was nothing in his words or acts which did not show a solid virtue and a consummate prudence, as well in the duties of the Christian

life as in the wisdom of this world." <sup>116</sup>

When they landed, the nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu were overwhelmed with the sick. "Not only our halls, but our church, our granary, our hen-yard, and every corner of the hospital where we could make room, were filled with them." <sup>117</sup>

Much was expected of Denonville. He was to repair the mischief wrought by his predecessor, and restore the colony to peace, strength, and security. The king had stigmatized La Barre's treaty with the Iroquois as disgraceful, and expressed indignation at his abandonment of the Illinois allies. All this was now to be changed; but it was easier to give the order at Versailles than to execute it in Canada. Denonville's difficulties were great; and his means of overcoming them were small. What he most needed was more troops and more money. The Senecas, insolent and defiant, were still attacking the Illinois; the tribes of the north-west were angry, contemptuous, and disaffected; the English of New York were urging claims to the whole country south of the Great Lakes, and to a controlling share in all the western fur trade; while the English of Hudson's Bay were competing for the traffic of the northern tribes, and the English of New England were seizing upon the fisheries of Acadia, and now and then making piratical descents upon its coast. The great question lay between New York and Canada. Which of these two should gain mastery in the west?

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<sup>116</sup> Saint-Vallier, *État Présent de l'Église*, 4 (Quebec, 1856).

<sup>117</sup> Juchereau, *Hôtel-Dieu*, 283.

Denonville, like Frontenac, was a man of the army and the court. As a soldier, he had the experience of thirty years of service; and he was in high repute, not only for piety, but for probity and honor. He was devoted to the Jesuits, an ardent servant of the king, a lover of authority, filled with the instinct of subordination and order, and, in short, a type of the ideas, religious, political, and social, then dominant in France. He was greatly distressed at the disturbed condition of the colony; while the state of the settlements, scattered in broken lines for two or three hundred miles along the St. Lawrence, seemed to him an invitation to destruction. "If we have a war," he wrote, "nothing can save the country but a miracle of God."

Nothing was more likely than war. Intrigues were on foot between the Senecas and the tribes of the lakes, which threatened to render the appeal to arms a necessity to the French. Some of the Hurons of Michillimackinac were bent on allying themselves with the English. "They like the manners of the French," wrote Denonville; "but they like the cheap goods of the English better." The Senecas, in collusion with several Huron chiefs, had captured a considerable number of that tribe and of the Ottawas. The scheme was that these prisoners should be released, on condition that the lake tribes should join the Senecas and repudiate their alliance with the French.<sup>118</sup> The governor of New York favored this intrigue to the utmost.

Denonville was quick to see that the peril of the colony

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<sup>118</sup> *Denonville au Ministre, 12 Juin, 1686.*

rose, not from the Iroquois alone, but from the English of New York, who prompted them. Dongan understood the situation. He saw that the French aimed at mastering the whole interior of the continent. They had established themselves in the valley of the Illinois, had built a fort on the lower Mississippi, and were striving to entrench themselves at its mouth. They occupied the Great Lakes; and it was already evident that, as soon as their resources should permit, they would seize the avenues of communication throughout the west. In short, the grand scheme of French colonization had begun to declare itself. Dongan entered the lists against them. If his policy should prevail, New France would dwindle to a feeble province on the St. Lawrence: if the French policy should prevail, the English colonies would remain a narrow strip along the sea. Dongan's cause was that of all these colonies; but they all stood aloof, and left him to wage the strife alone. Canada was matched against New York, or rather against the governor of New York. The population of the English colony was larger than that of its rival; but, except the fur traders, few of the settlers cared much for the questions at issue.<sup>119</sup> Dongan's chief difficulty, however, rose from the relations of the French and English kings. Louis XIV. gave Denonville an unhesitating support. James II., on the other hand, was for a time cautious to timidity. The two monarchs were closely united. Both hated constitutional liberty, and both held the same principles

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<sup>119</sup> New York had about 18,000 inhabitants (Brodhead, *Hist. N. Y.*, II. 458). Canada, by the census of 1685, had 12,263.

of supremacy in church and state; but Louis was triumphant and powerful, while James, in conflict with his subjects, was in constant need of his great ally, and dared not offend him.

The royal instructions to Denonville enjoined him to humble the Iroquois, sustain the allies of the colony, oppose the schemes of Dongan, and treat him as an enemy, if he encroached on French territory. At the same time, the French ambassador at the English court was directed to demand from James II. precise orders to the governor of New York for a complete change of conduct in regard to Canada and the Iroquois.<sup>120</sup> But Dongan, like the French governors, was not easily controlled. In the absence of money and troops, he intrigued busily with his Indian neighbors. "The artifices of the English," wrote Denonville, "have reached such a point that it would be better if they attacked us openly and burned our settlements, instead of instigating the Iroquois against us for our destruction. I know beyond a particle of doubt that M. Dongan caused all the five Iroquois nations to be assembled last spring at Orange (*Albany*), in order to excite them against us, by telling them publicly that I meant to declare war against them." He says, further, that Dongan supplies them with arms and ammunition, incites them to attack the colony, and urges them to deliver Lamberville, the priest at Onondaga, into his hands. "He has sent people, at the same time, to our Montreal Indians to entice them over to him, promising them missionaries to instruct them, and assuring them that he would prevent the

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<sup>120</sup> *Seignelay to Barillon, French Ambassador at London*, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX. 269.

introduction of brandy into their villages. All these intrigues have given me not a little trouble throughout the summer. M. Dongan has written to me, and I have answered him as a man may do who wishes to dissimulate and does not feel strong enough to get angry." <sup>121</sup>

Denonville, accordingly, while biding his time, made use of counter intrigues, and, by means of the useful Lamberville, freely distributed secret or "underground" presents among the Iroquois chiefs; while the Jesuit Engelran was busy at Michillimackinac in adroit and vigorous efforts to prevent the alienation of the Hurons, Ottawas, and other lake tribes. The task was difficult; and, filled with anxiety, the father came down to Montreal to see the governor, "and communicate to me," writes Denonville, "the deplorable state of affairs with our allies, whom we can no longer trust, owing to the discredit into which we have fallen among them, and from which we cannot recover, except by gaining some considerable advantage over the Iroquois; who, as I have had the honor to inform you, have labored incessantly since last autumn to rob us of all our allies, by using every means to make treaties with them independently of us. You may be assured, Monseigneur, that the English are the chief cause of the arrogance and insolence of the Iroquois, adroitly using them to extend the limits of their dominion, and uniting with them as one nation, insomuch that the English claims include no less than the Lakes Ontario and Erie, the region of Saginaw (*Michigan*), the

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<sup>121</sup> Denonville à Seignelay, 8 Nov., 1686.

country of the Hurons, and all the country in the direction of the Mississippi." <sup>122</sup>

The most pressing danger was the defection of the lake tribes. "In spite of the king's edicts," pursues Denonville, "the *coureurs de bois* have carried a hundred barrels of brandy to Michillimackinac in a single year; and their libertinism and debauchery have gone to such an extremity that it is a wonder the Indians have not massacred them all to save themselves from their violence and recover their wives and daughters from them. This, Monseigneur, joined to our failure in the last war, has drawn upon us such contempt among all the tribes that there is but one way to regain our credit, which is to humble the Iroquois by our unaided strength, without asking the help of our Indian allies." <sup>123</sup> And he begs hard for a strong reinforcement of troops.

Without doubt, Denonville was right in thinking that the chastising of the Iroquois, or at least the Senecas, the head and front of mischief, was a matter of the last necessity. A crushing blow dealt against them would restore French prestige, paralyze English intrigue, save the Illinois from destruction, and confirm the wavering allies of Canada. Meanwhile, matters grew from bad to worse. In the north and in the west, there was scarcely a tribe in the French interest which was not either attacked by the Senecas or cajoled by them into alliances hostile to the colony. "We may set down Canada as lost," again writes Denonville, "if

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<sup>122</sup> Denonville à Seignelay, 12 Juin, 1686.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

we do not make war next year; and yet, in our present disordered state, war is the most dangerous thing in the world. Nothing can save us but the sending out of troops and the building of forts and blockhouses. Yet I dare not begin to build them; for, if I do, it will bring down all the Iroquois upon us before we are in a condition to fight them."

Nevertheless, he made what preparations he could, begging all the while for more soldiers, and carrying on at the same time a correspondence with his rival, Dongan. At first, it was courteous on both sides; but it soon grew pungent, and at last acrid. Denonville wrote to announce his arrival, and Dongan replied in French: "Sir, I have had the honor of receiving your letter, and greatly rejoice at having so good a neighbor, whose reputation is so widely spread that it has anticipated your arrival. I have a very high respect for the king of France, of whose bread I have eaten so much that I feel under an obligation to prevent whatever can give the least umbrage to our masters. M. de la Barre is a very worthy gentleman, but he has not written to me in a civil and befitting style." <sup>124</sup>

Denonville replied with many compliments: "I know not what reason you may have had to be dissatisfied with M. de la Barre; but I know very well that I should reproach myself all my life if I could fail to render to you all the civility and attention due to a person of so great rank and merit. In regard to the affair in which M. de la Barre interfered, as you write me, I

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<sup>124</sup> Dongan to Denonville, 13 Oct., 1685, in *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, IX, 292.



presume you refer to his quarrel with the Senecas. As to that, Monsieur, I believe you understand the character of that nation well enough to perceive that it is not easy to live in friendship with a people who have neither religion, nor honor, nor subordination. The king, my master, entertains affection and friendship for this country solely through zeal for the establishment of religion here, and the support and protection of the missionaries whose ardor in preaching the faith leads them to expose themselves to the brutalities and persecutions of the most ferocious of tribes. You know better than I what fatigues and torments they have suffered for the sake of Jesus Christ. I know your heart is penetrated with the glory of that name which makes Hell tremble, and at the mention of which all the powers of Heaven fall prostrate. Shall we be so unhappy as to refuse them our master's protection? You are a man of rank and abounding in merit. You love our holy religion. Can we not then come to an understanding to sustain our missionaries by keeping those fierce tribes in respect and fear?" <sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *Denonville to Dongan, 5 Juin, 1686, N. Y. Col. Docs., III. 456.*

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