

tiation ; declaring that on their side they would commit 1640. no hostility.

He was still speaking, when two Algonquin canoes having appeared in sight of the spot where the council was held, the Iroquois gave them chase. The Algonquins, seeing no prospect of resisting so large a force, jumped overboard and swam away, leaving their canoes, which were plundered before the eyes of the governor-general. This outrage showed how little reliance could be placed on the word of these savages, and negotiations were broken off at once. The Iroquois having now no veil to hide their perfidy, threw off the mask and spoke with great insolence. The Chevalier de Montmagny undertook to bring them to reason, but they escaped at the moment when he thought he had them ; and to complete his chagrin, he learned almost at the same time that a number of Huron canoes, coming down to Quebec, loaded with furs, had fallen into their hands.

The position of the general was undoubtedly a sad one, exposed daily to similar affronts for want of troops enough just to keep in equilibrium the balance between two bands of Indians who, all together, could not have kept in the field against four or five thousand Frenchmen. But the Company of the Hundred Associates would not shake off their lethargy ; and the French colony, instead of increasing day by day, declined in strength and numbers. An enterprise, undertaken about this time, to settle and fortify the island of Montreal, was some consolation to the Chevalier de Montmagny, and for a time flattered him with the hope that the Iroquois would no longer dare to come and brave him, as they had just done under his very cannon.

The first missionaries had from the outset recognized the importance of occupying the island of Montreal, but the Canada Company did not enter into their views. It needed again private individuals to assume the execution of a design so advantageous to New France, which the Iroquois war rendered actually necessary. Some persons of rank, even

Position of
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Projected
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Montreal.