

A short time after, the enemy's war-parties vanished almost entirely, and towards the month of July two canoes were desiered, from Montreal, advancing with a flag of truce. They were allowed to approach, and men beheld the Iroquois land with as much assurance as the most faithful allies could display. They were deputies from the cantons of Onondaga and Cayuga, and one of them was the most renowned chief of the latter canton, an old host of Father Mesnard, and at all times the most avowed friend of the French. They brought back four Frenchmen, whom they proposed to exchange for eight Cayugas, held as prisoners at Montreal, and they even promised to give up all the other Frenchmen whom they controlled, if we would surrender all the braves of the two cantons whom we had in our hands.¹

1661.
 Iroquois
 deputies at
 Montreal.

They also handed to Mr. de Maisonneuve a letter signed by all the French captives in the same cantons. It stated that they were treated quite well, and that all minds seemed inclined to peace; but that if the authorities refused to listen to the two deputies, all the French in the country would be pitilessly burnt at the stake on their return. The governor replied to the deputies that he would write to Viscount d'Argenson, to whom alone it belonged to accept or reject such propositions, and that while awaiting his orders they might remain in the fort, where they should enjoy complete liberty.²

At first, Viscount d'Argenson seemed little disposed to enter into negotiations; but considering that, in the condition in which the colony was, a patched-up peace, provided they kept on their guard, was better than the prolongation of a war which they were not in a condition to maintain, he changed his mind. A drowning man will grasp at a twig that he knows will break in his hands, if

¹ Their wampum belts are explained at length in Relation de la N. F., 1661, pp. 7, 8

² Relation de la N. F., 1661, p. 8; Juchereau, Histoire de l'Hotel Dieu de Quebec, pp. 131-4.