

BOOK XV.

ON hearing of the enemy's approach, Frontenac set out from Quebec for Montreal; but on arriving there he learned of their defeat and flight, and at once retraced his steps. Shortly after he received letters from the Governor-General of New England, begging him to restore the prisoners taken by the Abénaquis on his territory, and proposing to him neutrality in America, notwithstanding the war still subsisting between the two Crowns in Europe. It was easy to infer that this proposition was not made sincerely, inasmuch as the English general said nothing of sending back the French detained by him at Boston; and that the only motive for the step, was some difficulty in which New England found itself.

The Baron de St. Castin, who had made a considerable establishment among the Abénaquis and even married a young woman of that tribe, soon solved the enigma in a memoir which he transmitted to de Frontenac. He there stated that the English and Dutch in New York, were at war, and that the object of the English Governor was also to seduce from us the Abénaqui Indians by means of the proposed exchange, or at least to induce them to arrest their incursions, but that he would undertake to baffle the execution of that project.¹

On this information Frontenac replied to the English General, that when he restored to him the Chevalier d'Eau and Mr. de Manneval, whom he retained as prisoners,

1691.

The
English
propose
neutrality.

What in-
duced it.

¹ Relation, &c., 1691-2. N. Y. Col. Pontchartrain, Oct. 20, 1691. Ib. p. Doc., ix., p. 525. Frontenac to 505.