

1692.

New rumors of an English expedition.

While the Iroquois alone thus kept the centre of the colony in constant alarm, Placentia and Acadia were in scarcely less difficulty to defend themselves against the English. Intelligence received by Frontenac and communicated to the Court, that Sir (William) Phibs, having become Governor-General of New England, was seriously thinking of once more attempting the conquest of New France, had been confirmed from other quarters so circumstantially, that the King and his minister felt it necessary to take positive measures to check the English in the St. Lawrence. Proper as were the measures adopted they would not have prevented the passage of the enemy, had they appeared.¹

The king sends a French squadron to Newfoundland. It misses its opportunity.

The Chevalier du Palais sailed from France with a squadron, which was first to engage the English fleet, should it attempt to force a passage, and then take his opportunity to fall on the posts occupied by the English on the island of Newfoundland. That officer stopped for some time at Spaniard Bay,² detaching a vessel to the mouth of the river to reconnoitre, with orders to the captain, in case it saw the enemy, to return at once and report. After cruising a long time in the gulf, and the mouth of the river, the officer thus detached, seeing nothing, sailed back towards Spaniard Bay at the time designated, but encountered such a furious and stubborn wind, that after many fruitless efforts to rejoin the squadron, he was compelled to go before the wind and return to France.

This accident entirely disconcerted the projects of the Chevalier du Palais, who, while awaiting this ship, lost all the time he might have employed in the enterprises assigned to him. His mortification was doubtless redoubled when he learned in what peril the Newfoundland colony had been, and what an opportunity he had lost of capturing an English fleet, for apparently that squadron could

¹ Memoir on the projected attack Relation, 1692-3. N. Y. Col. Doc., on Canada, N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 543. ix., p. 561. Dr. O'Callaghan, N. Y.

² De la Potherie, Histoire de Col. Doc., ix., p. 544, makes it Sydney Harbor, Cape Breton.