

not have coped with him, since it failed before a mere shell containing at most fifty inhabitants, and in vain attacked a wretched fort, garrisoned by only fifty men. It happened thus :¹

1692.

When the fleet of French merchantmen which had come to fish off Newfoundland, was ready to sail home, du Brouillan, the Governor of Placentia, was informed, on the 14th of September, that an English fleet lay at anchor five leagues from that port in a bay near Cape St. Mary's. The intelligence was correct, and the next day the squadron anchored in sight of the roadstead, but out of range. The Governor at once formed a company of sixty men under the Baron de la Hontan, a reduced captain, who had recently been sent to him from Quebec. He is the same person whose Memoirs we have on Canada, a work which is seen at a glance to have been dictated by the spirit of irreligion, and by resentment at having been dismissed from the service.²

Placentia
attacked by
the
English.

This detachment held a post where there was every reason to expect that the enemy would attempt a landing, and from which he might then gain the summit of a mountain, and silence the guns of the fort by his musketry. Still the English made no movement that day, except to sound the harbor. On the 17th all their boats, full of soldiers, approached the bay, where la Hontan was posted; perceiving him before they came within musket shot, they changed their course. They ran in behind a little cape, where they hastily put some men ashore, who set fire to the woods, and re-embarked with the same precipitation. They doubtless hoped, by the favor of this conflagration, to reconnoitre the situation of the fort and other posts occupied by the French, but time was not allowed them. During this interval, de Brouillan, after providing, as far as in him lay, for the safety of the fort, threw up a log redoubt on the mountain alluded to, and on the 18th, plant-

¹ See briefly, N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., pp. 544, 546.

² See ante, vol. iii., p. 286, i., p. 86.