

1701.

At the same time Teganissorens declared that the French who were in his canton, having all been adopted and most of them having married there, their relatives would not hearken to the idea of releasing them; that the prisoners could not bring themselves to such a separation; that it was not in his power to compel either to do what was desired of them; and that he was in despair to find himself under the stern necessity of breaking his word to his Father. It would have been useless for the ambassadors to reply. They had to put up with this excuse, bad as it was. It was much indeed for an Indian to stoop to frame excuses for what he was unwilling to do, and any one but Teganissorens, who was sincerely attached to the French, but was not master, would perhaps have spoken with less consideration.

De Maricourt and Father Bruyas deemed it best to dissemble their dissatisfaction, so as to avoid an open rupture with a nation which, secure of English support, (their intrigues probably raising all these difficulties,) was still in a condition to do much mischief. Thus these Indians found, in what seems to us a defect in their government, an advantage that the most refined statesmanship does not always attain. That is to say, the independence enjoyed by individuals, not only does not prevent their contributing to the general good, but even makes them attain it by ways all the surer from the natural irresponsibility for their conduct, and finds its excuse in the limited authority it has over the free will of those who compose it.

The
deputies of
the cantons
at Montreal

Joncaire had been more successful among the Cayugas and Senecas; he brought deputies and some prisoners; and this example, used by Maricourt to excite the emulation of the Onondagas, induced those Indians to restore five French people of both sexes.¹ The Oneidas also sent

¹ For the French account of these negotiations see de la Potherie, iv., pp. 187-192; The English in N. Y. Col. Doc., iv., pp. 889-895. This last account represents six women prisoners to have been given up.

The Iroquois were by English admission in fear of the French, and Nanan in his Conference at Albany, July 18, 1701, by words and presents of arms, urged them to renew hostilities at once. N. Y. Col.