

enemy as brave as themselves, less politic, much fiercer, whom we have never been able to subdue or tame, and who, like those insects that seem to have as many lives as parts of their body, spring to life again, so to say, after their defeat, and, reduced almost to a handful of brigands, appear everywhere, have aroused the hatred of all the nations on this continent, and for the last twenty-five years and more, interrupt commerce, and render the roads almost impracticable for more than five hundred leagues around. These are the Outagamis, commonly called the Foxes.

1712.

Character
of the
Foxes.

Till the time now treated of, they had figured little in Canadian affairs; but they had recently confederated with the Iroquois, and had apparently, through them, just formed an alliance with the English. They had promised the latter to burn the fort of Detroit, to massacre all the French, and introduce English troops into the fort. To carry out this design, they had come in great numbers to lodge at Detroit, quite near the fort, and there is no kind of insult that they did not offer to the Sieur du Buisson, the commandant, a good officer and worthy man.¹

They
undertake
to burn
Detroit.

The Kikapoos and Mascoutins had entered their plot; the latter had already repaired in considerable numbers to the neighborhood of Detroit, and awaited only the arrival of the Kikapoos, to execute their treason, when they ascertained that Saguima, an Ottawa chief, and some Pottawatamies, had killed about one hundred and fifty Mascoutins of both sexes. At this news, they were roused to fury, and Joseph, a Christian Outagami, strongly attached to the French, warned du Buisson that he was going to be attacked at once in his fort.²

The commandant had only twenty Frenchmen³ with him, and his whole resource lay in the Hurons, Ottawas and some other Indians, with whom he lived on good terms,

¹ He was sent to take the place of Sieur de la Forest. Pontchartrain to Vandreuil, July 7, 1711. N. Y. Col. Doc., ix. p. 857. See a memoir on Detroit, by de la Forest, (Oct. 1. 1714.) (Ib. p. 866).

² Du Buisson's Report, June 15, 1712. Smith's Wisconsin, iii., p. 316-7.

³ Thirty. Ib. p. 316.