

1698. country at the head of an army to compel them by force. And I, on my side, to-day dispatch my Lieutenant-Governor with regular troops of the King to oppose the hostilities you may undertake; I will even, if need be, put every man in the provinces under my government, in arms, to repulse you and endeavor to make reprisals for the injury you may do our Indians.¹ ”

Frontenac's
reflection
on this
letter.

Such loud talk is often a mark of conscious weakness; men seek to gain by threats what they know they cannot carry by force; and the whole thread of this history shows that the English have always assumed this tone, when unable to support their pretensions by arms. Frontenac was not duped by the manner in which the English general wished to make his avail, and even saw that this battery was opened no less on the Iroquois than on him, and the Chevalier Bellomont took up their defence thus warmly, only to enslave them more securely.

He was not a man to omit suggesting this reflection to them, and he probably deferred his reply to the letter just received for a period, only from his wish to have time to impart it to them and be sure of their opinion of it. It seems certain, at least, that he awaited the arrival of the ships from France, to see whether they brought him any orders touching the point. Be that as it may, his reply to Chevalier Bellomont, dated September 21st, ran thus :

His reply. “I should not have deferred so long sending to receive some intelligence of you by persons of merit and distinction, and to return the civilities you were pleased to express through Messrs. Schuiller and Dellius, had the vessels I expected from France arrived here sooner. Their delay is the sole reason that still induces me to postpone their departure until next spring, fearing, as I do, lest the advanced state of the season should prevent their return before navigation closes *on the lakes and rivers*.

“The dispatches I receive from court inform me, as you have doubtless learned on your side, that the Kings our

¹ Bellomont to Frontenac, N. Y. Col. Doc., ix., p. 693; iv., p. 367-9.