

chimera." In the negotiations of the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, the English had succeeded in getting an admission from the French which required all the resources of French diplomacy to qualify. This was an acknowledgment of the English sovereignty over the Iroquois. The French at a later day, when they felt better able to enforce their views, sniffed at the obligation and called the phrase "a simple enunciation" in words of no binding significance,—a summary way of looking at an obligation which could demolish any contract. When they condescended to explain what they sniffed at, they insisted that the Iroquois themselves never acknowledged such a subjection. Sir William Johnson was frank enough to call the connection of the English and Iroquois one of alliance rather than subjection. The French farther pointed out what was true, that the Iroquois did not always consider it necessary to consult the English when making treaties or declaring war. Again, when forced to other explanations, the French maintained that the subjection of the Iroquois in their persons did not carry sovereignty over their lands. If it did, they said, the Iroquois who occupy lands at Caughnawaga, would be equally subject in land and person, and that would involve the absurdity of yielding to the English jurisdiction territory at the very gates of Montreal.

There was another clause in this treaty of Utrecht which the French were hard put to interpret to their advantage. This was the clause by which the French acknowledged the English right to trade with all Indians. The minutes of instruction given to Duquesne, show how this was interpreted. "The English may pretend that we are bound by the Treaty of Utrecht to permit the Indians to trade with them; but it is sure that nothing can oblige us to allow this trade on our own lands." This, in the light of the French claim to the water-sheds of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, would debar the English from trading at Oswego, and on the Ohio.