

diplomacy as well as woodcraft, felt that their existence depended on successfully playing off the English against the French. They were the friends of either as long as their own interests demanded it. Their nearness to the English settlements of New York and Albany brought them more under the influence of the English, who eagerly sought their friendship for purposes of trade, or for an alliance against the French; and the latter just as eagerly wished for their friendship against their English foes. Denonville's lack of knowledge of Indian character, and his treachery, had brought calamity on the French settlements about Montreal, and had threatened to estrange the Hurons and other Indian allies of the French in the West. Frontenac had not come a moment too soon. His first design had been to fall upon the English settlements in New York; but that had been frustrated for want of ships and a sufficient force of men. He now devoted himself to winning back the Iroquois — no easy task since their appetite for French blood had been whetted—and when he had at least secured their neutrality, to strike a blow against the English. His presence soon had a wonderful influence upon the French. His energy and hardihood overcame all obstacles, and inspired confidence among the *coureurs de bois* and friendly Indians. He determined to attack the English to the south; and for that purpose three war parties were fitted out, one to strike Albany (which reached Schenectady instead), the second directed against the border settlements of New Hampshire, and the third against those of Maine. All were successful. The barbarous massacres of men, women and children in these doomed settlements by the French and their Indian allies, will always remain a stain on the character of Frontenac. Cruelty and bloodshed were characteristic of the border warfare of those days; but it is creditable that no retaliation in kind was attempted by the New York and New England settlements for the repeated butcheries of unoffending and defenceless settlers.¹

The triumphant success of his three war parties, and the failure of Sir Wm. Phips to capture Quebec in the autumn of the following year, restored confidence to the French and brought nearer to a reality the dream of a French Empire in North America. The failure of the English settlements to retaliate with effect was due to their desire to remain at peace, to their scattered condition, and to the want of unanimity and of capable leaders among them. The French were united,

¹ Parkman.