THE

STORY OF JONCAIRE

HIS LIFE AND TIMES ON THE NIAGARA

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INTRODUCTION

The following chapters are a portion of an extended study, as yet unpublished, of the operations of the French on the Lower Lakes, with especial reference to the history of the Niagara region. The sources from which the narrative is drawn are almost wholly documentary, both printed and in manuscript. The most important printed sources are the "London Documents" and "Paris Documents," which constitute volumes five and nine of the "Documents relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York." In order to avoid cumbering my pages with many foot-notes referring to these documents, this general acknowledgment of authorities is here deemed sufficient. Some examination of the manuscripts themselves has been made in various depositories, especially the Public Records Office and the British Museum in London, the Canadian Archives Office at Ottawa, and in the manuscripts office of the New York State Library at Albany. Some facts have been gleaned from the Provincial Records of Pennsylvania. There is to be found in the printed histories so little regarding Joncaire the elder and the special field of his activities, that one may ignore them all with little loss, if he have access to the documentary sources, and patience to study them. With the exception of the short but precious "Histoire du Canada" of the Abbé de Belmont; the "Histoire de l'Amerique septentrionale" of De Bacqueville de La Potherie (Paris, 1753); the works of Charlevoix and one or two other chroniclers

who were contemporary with the events of which they wrote, the following narrative is based entirely on the documents themselves. The reader should bear in mind, moreover, that these chapters are but an excerpt, as already stated, from a study of the whole period of French occupancy of our region; and that the true relationship and proper values of those events, depend largely on what has preceded, and what is to follow, these forty years which I have designated the Dark Decades on the Niagara. F. H. S.

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I. From the Rhone to the Niagara.

In tracing the history of the Niagara region, one comes to a time when records seem to vanish and exploits to cease. The story of the early cross-bearers and explorers is much more than twice told. The splendid adventuring of La Salle has been made the most familiar chapter in the annals of the Great Lakes. After him, in the closing years of the seventeenth century, a few expeditions, a few futile campaigns and fated undertakings, have been meagerly chronicled. We read of Le Barre's foolish and fruitless plans, of Denonville's pathetic and calamitous establishment at the mouth of the Niagara. But with the passing of La Salle from the pages of our regional history, the light wanes, the shadows deepen. We are come to the Dark Decades on the Niagara.

So one may fairly designate the first forty years of the eighteenth century. Speaking broadly, they are a part of the century-long strife between France and England for American supremacy. There were periods, it is true, in these decades, when the rivals were nominally at peace. The Treaty of Ryswick, after King William's War, proclaimed a peace that was kept from 1697 till 1702; and following Queen Anne's War, the Treaty of Utrecht warded off armed

hostilities from 1713 to 1744. Thus for thirty-five years—seven eighths of the period under notice—there was political peace between France and England; but on the Niagara, and the Great Lakes which it joins, there was never a day in all those forty years when the spirit of commercial warfare was not active.

During these years, the American colonies of the rival powers were developing along widely divergent lines. France established her distant posts, throughout the lake and trans-Alleghany region, her very energy weakening her for future defense. The English colonies, and New York in particular, devoted themselves more to developing the home territory. Both cajoled and bargained with the Indians, both exhausted themselves in fighting each other. It was the time when the slave trade was encouraged; when piracy flourished. But recently were the days when Captain Kidd and Morgan and Blackbeard and their kind "sailed and they sailed"; and the attention of New York's governors was divided between lawless and red-handed exploits on the seas, the quarrels of their legislative councillors, and the interference of the French in their reach for the fur trade.

Throughout these Dark Decades there is a figure in our regional history which, strive as we may, is at best but dimly seen. Now it stands on the banks of the Niagara, a shadowy symbol of the power of France. Now it appears in fraternal alliance with the Iroquois; and anon it vanishes, leaving no more trace than the wiliest warrior of the Senecas, silently disappearing down the dim aisles of his native forest. Yet it is around this illusive figure that the story of the Niagara centers for forty years.

This man is the French interpreter, soldier, and Seneca by adoption, commonly spoken of by our historical writers as Chabert de Joncaire the elder. He never attained high rank in the service; he was a very humble character in comparison with several of his titled superiors who were conspicuous in making the history of our region during the time of his activity hereabouts. But it was primarily through his skilful diplomacy, made efficient by his peculiar relations to

the Indians, that France was able to gain a foothold on the Niagara, for trade and for defense, and to maintain it for more than a quarter of a century.

His baptismal name was Louis Thomas, de Joncaire; his seigneurial title, Sieur de Chabert. The son of Antoine Marie and Gabriel Hardi, he was born, in the year 1670, in the little town of St. Remi, of the diocese of Arles, in Provence. As a child, he may have played amid the mighty ruins of Roman amphitheatres and palaces, and have grown up familiar with monuments of a civilization which antedated by many centuries the Christian era. He came to Canada when still a boy, presumably with the marine troops, largely from Provence, which accompanied the Chevalier de Vaudreuil in 1687. Many years his senior, Vaudreuil often appears as his patron and staunchest friend, defending his character when villified, and commending him for favor and promotion. With the facility of the young in picking up the Indian speech, Joncaire was soon expert as interpreter. At a later period, he enlisted, and held various ranks; in 1700, quartermaster to the Governor's Guard; by 1706, a lieutenant of the marine forces in Canada. The posts of honor and responsibility which he held later in life will be duly noted in our narrative.

At an early period Joncaire and several companions were taken captive by the Iroquois. I find no account of the time or place of Joncaire's capture. In view of his relations to Vaudreuil, it is not unlikely that he accompanied that officer in the expedition against the Senecas in 1687, and that he was taken prisoner. The earliest account of his captivity that I find is given by Bacqueville de La Potherie, who says: "He was taken in a battle; the fierceness with which he fought a war chief who wished to bind him in order to burn his fingers, until the sentence of death could be carried out, induced the others to grant him his life, his comrades having all been burned at a slow fire. They [i. e., the Iroquois] adopted him, and the confidence which they had in him thenceforth, led them to make him their mediator in all

negotiations."[1] He passed much of his subsequent life among the Senecas, and though he won distinction for his service to his king and the cause of Canada, he seems never to have forfeited the confidence of his red brethren. He did not, like many prisoners of the period, wholly sever his connection with his own people. On the contrary, his intimacy with the Senecas proved of the greatest value to Canada in the promotion of her plans for trade.

Whenever Joncaire may have been taken prisoner, he was released in the autumn of 1694, with twelve other prisoners, one of whom was M. de Hertel,[2] a French officer whose services were of some note at a subsequent period. Father Milet, who had been held a prisoner among the Oneidas since 1689, was returned to the French at the same time. Joncaire had then lived among the Senecas for several years, and had been adopted by a Seneca family to fill the place of "a relative of importance," whom they had lost. "He ingratiated himself so much with that nation," says Colden, "that he was advanced to the rank of a sachem, and preserved their esteem to the day of his death; whereby he became, after the general peace, very useful to the French in all negotiations with the Five Nations, and to this day

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1. La Potherie was a contemporary of Joncaire, and his "Histoire de L'Amerique septentrionale," published in Paris in 1753, contains the fullest early account of Joncaire's captivity I have been able to find. La Potherie is apparently Parkman's authority; yet I find no other basis than the passage above quoted for the following, in "Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV.": "The history of Joncaire was a noteworthy one. The Senecas had captured him some time before, tortured his companions to death, and doomed him to the same fate. As a preliminary torment, an old chief tried to burn a finger of the captive in the bowl of his pipe, on which Joncaire knocked him down. If he had begged for mercy, their hearts would have been flint; but the warrior crowd were so pleased with this proof of courage that they adopted him as one of their tribe, and gave him an Iroquois wife." Evidently the historian has read into the meager account of La Potherie certain picturesque—and highly probable—details drawn from his own knowledge of Indian customs and character. As for Joncaire's Indian wife, her existence is also highly probable; but I find no proof of it in contemporary records.

2. "Orchouche, avec les Ouiengiens, ramêne 13 esclaves; entre autres, M. de Hertel et M. de Joncaire."—Belmont, "Histoire du Canada," p. 36. The Abbé de Belmont was Superior of the Seminary at Montreal, 1713 to 1724. His MS. history is in the Royal Library at Paris.

they show regard to his family and children."[3] There is no implication here, nor in any other writer who may be called contemporary with Joncaire, that he married a Seneca woman. On March 1, 1706, at Montreal, he married Madelaine le Guay, by whom, from 1707 to 1723, he had ten children,[4] several of whom died in infancy, and but two of whom came to bear a part in their country's history. The eldest child, Philippe Thomas de Joncaire, born Jan. 9, 1707, is known by his father's title, Chabert, and by many writers the two are more or less confused.[5] The seventh child, Daniel, Sieur de Chabert et Clausonne, commonly called Clausonne, was born in 1716. Both of these sons followed in their father's footsteps, and for many years are conspicuous figures in the history of the Niagara region.

The first public service in which we find the senior Joncaire employed was not until six years after his release by the Iroquois. He was at the conference in Montreal, July 18, 1700, between the Chevalier de Callières and six deputies from the Iroquois, two from the Onondagas and four from the Senecas. Pledges of peace were made in the figurative language employed on such occasions. Callières was solicitous about certain Frenchmen and Indian allies of the French who were still held in the Iroquois country. The deputies declared their willingness to restore them, and asked as a special favor that Joncaire return with them, to fetch out the captives. This request was granted, Father Bruyas and the Sieur de Maricourt being also sent along, the two former to

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3. Colden's "History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada," (London, 1747), p. 179.

4. Tanguay, "Dictionnaire Généologique." The following data are given regarding Joncaire's children: Philippe Thomas, b. Jan. 9, 1707; Madelaine, b. May 8, 1708, d. 1709; Jean Baptiste, b. Aug. 25, 1709, d. 1709; Louis Romain, b. Nov. 18, 1710; Marie Madelaine, b. April, 1712, d. 1712; Louis Marie, b. Oct. 28, 1715; Daniel, b. 1716; Madelaine Thérèse, b. March 23, 1717; Louis Marie, b. Aug. 5, 1719; Francois, b. June 20, 1723. The family home seems always to have been at or near Montreal. Madame de Joncaire, mother of these children, is buried in the church at Repentigny.

5. In Parkman's "Half Century of Conflict," Joncaire and his oldest son are spoken of as the same person, and no distinction is made between them in the index.

the Onondagas, Joncaire to the Senecas. "Our son Joncaire," the chiefs called him; and before the council broke up, they solemnly gave to Callières three strings of wampum. "We give these," they said, "in consequence of the death of Joncaire's father, who managed affairs well, and was in favor of peace. We inform Onontio, by these strings of wampum, that we have selected Tonatakout, the nearest blood relation, to act as his father instead, as he resembles [him] in his disposition of a kind parent." We are to understand that this father who had died was the adoptive father, according to the Seneca custom. The Governor expressed sympathy; approved the appointment of the new father; and gave the Senecas a belt "in token of my sharing your sentiments; and I consent that Sieur Joncaire act as envoy to convey my word to you and to bring me back yours."[6] This so pleased the chiefs that they consented that four of their people should remain at Montreal until their return.

Callières at this period was more concerned in making a firm peace with the savages south of Lake Ontario than with getting any foothold on the Niagara. In fact, for the time, he avoided any movement in that direction. The next spring, when he sent La Motte Cadillac and Alphonse de Tonty to make their establishment at Detroit, he had them follow the old Ottawa route, "by that means," he announced beforehand to Pontchartrain, "avoiding the Niagara passage so as not to give umbrage to the Iroquois, through fear of disturbing the peace, until I can speak to them to prevent any alarm they might feel at such proceedings, and until I adopt some measures to facilitate the communication and conveyance of necessaries from this to that country through Lake Ontario." Callières knew that the minister had very much at heart the success of the project on the Detroit; it was not politic to urge at the moment the advantages to be gained from a hazardous experiment on the Niagara. The band that built Fort Ponchartrain, thereby laying the foundations for the city of Detroit, went thither by the Ottawa route; and although there was an occasional passage

6. N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 711.

by way of the Niagara—a few of which we can trace, more of which, no doubt, we are ignorant of—yet for many years from the time we are now considering, the principal coming and going between the Upper Lakes and the lower St. Lawrence was by the northern route.

Joncaire spent the summer of 1700 among the Senecas in the furtherance of his mission. There were no permanent Seneca villages at this time west of the Genesee, and there is no ground for supposing that he visited the Niagara. We do not know when he first came hither. By September 3d he was back again at Montreal, with Father Bruyas and Maricourt from the Onondagas, nineteen "deputies" of the Iroquois and thirteen prisoners for restoration to the French.

Joncaire had found no little trouble in inducing them to return. Many a French soldier was brought by the fierce Senecas a trembling, fainting captive into their lodges, only to be adopted as one of the nation. An alliance with a young squaw, by no means always uncomely, quickly followed. The rigors and discomforts of the frontier post and wilderness campaign prepared him to accept with philosophy if not with entire satisfaction, the filth and rudeness of savage life. In the matters of cruelty and barbarity, the French soldier of the period was too often the equal of his Indian brother. The freedom of the forest life always appealed to the Gallic blood. There was adventure, there was license, there were often ease and abundance among his savage captors. If at times there were distress and danger, these, too, he had known in the King's service. Small wonder, then, that among such captives as saved their scalps by reason of some exhibition of a dauntless spirit, there were many who preferred to abide with the red men, in their villages pleasantly seated in the beautiful valleys of Central New York, to a return to the duties and privations of service in Canada. Once more among the French, they knew they need never look for mercy again from the Iroquois into whose hands they were ever likely to fall. Their point of view must have been entirely familiar to Joncaire; though on this and subsequent occasions he seems faithfully to have sought to induce them to return.

Whatever may have been his course, he kept a singularly strong hold on the affections of the Senecas. With the party that went up to Montreal in September, the Senecas sent along a young man. "When Joncaire was in our country," said one of their spokesmen to the Governor, "the father of this youth whom we restore, was his master; but now it is Joncaire who is master of this young man. We give him in order that if Joncaire should happen to die, he may be regarded as his nephew and may take his place. Therefore it is that we give him up to Onontio, whom we beg, with the Intendant, to take care of him and to confine him should he become wild." And Callières, as in duty bound, promised to care for the youth, and to "furnish him everything he shall require to qualify him for filling some day said Sieur Joncaire's place."

For some years following Joncaire was much employed on missions of this sort; now sojourning among the Onondagas or the Senecas, to secure the release of prisoners or to spy on the emissaries of the English; now back at Montreal, interpreting at councils. In the negotiations of the time he seems to have been well nigh indispensable.

At the general council at Montreal in the summer of 1701, at which assembled not only representatives of the Iroquois, but of tribes from Mackinaw and the West, Joncaire found himself for the time being in an embarrassing position. The western tribes, after great difficulty, had been induced to send hither the French and Iroquois prisoners, for exchange. Here appeared the Rat, that greatest and most eloquent red man of his day, of whose eloquence, intelligence and nobility of character many writers from La Potherie to Parkman have testified. The Rat handed over to Callières his Iroquois prisoners, and demanded to know why the Five Nations were not delivering up theirs; they were not acting in good faith, he said. The Iroquois replied, through their orator Teganeout, that their young men had charge of the prisoners, and that the latter were unwilling to leave the lodges where they had lived since childhood; were they French or Western Indian, it mattered not; they

had forgotten their own people and were attached to those who had adopted them, significantly adding that Joncaire had not very strongly urged their return.

Joncaire rose in the council, acknowledged his fault, and begged the Senecas, his brethren, to help him accomplish the matter hereafter. High words followed, but later reconciliation was effected.

A few days afterward, the council being still in session, the Rat died. In the obsequies that followed, Joncaire was singularly conspicuous. The body of the great Huron chief lay in state at the Hôtel Dieu, in an officer's uniform, with side arms, for he held the rank and pay of an officer in the French army.[7] After the Governor General and Intendant had sprinkled the corpse with holy water, Joncaire led sixty warriors from Sault St. Louis to the bier, where they wept for the dead, bewailing him in Indian fashion and "covered him," which figurative expression signifies that they gave presents to his tribesmen. After the imposing funeral, at which the ritual of the Roman Catholic church was blended with military usage and Indian rites, Joncaire led another band of Iroquois to condole with and compliment the Hurons, with significant gifts of wampum.

In these acts Joncaire was undoubtedly at work, not only for his Government, but for the Senecas and his own interests, which from now on center more and more on the western boundary of the Five Nations cantons. French interests on the Niagara were not to be jeopardized by a needless rupture with the Hurons.

At a council at Onondaga, in September, 1701, Joncaire encountered Capt. Johannes Bleecker and David Schuyler, sent out from Fort Orange, as their report has it, "to hinder the French debauching of our Indians." The English reports of these transactions are less formal and correct than are those of the French; but their vigorous phraseology, heightened by the ignorant or whimsical spelling of the time, adds a reality and picturesqueness to the chronicle which the Paris documents lack. Joncaire had brought an abundance

7. Charlevoix, Shea's ed., V, 147.

of the goods which the Indian craved, a part at least of the store intended for the families who consented to release their prisoners in exchange. Captain Bleecker and his companion were irritated at the success which Joncaire and his fellows had among "our Indians." "We understand," said Bleecker, "the French are come here to trade. Do you send for us to come with such people, if you send for us for every Frenchman that comes to trade with you, wee shall have work enough and if you will hearken to them they will keep you in alarm Continually we know this is the contrivance of the Priests to plague you Continually upon pretense of Peace and talk [to] you until you are Mad, and as soon as these are gott home, the Jesuits have another project if you will break your Cranes [craniums?] with such things; we advise you brethren when the French comes again, lett them smoak their pipe and give them their bellyfull of Victualls and lett them goe."

The Dutch emissaries of the English on this occasion heard Joncaire take the Indians roundly to task because they promised more than they performed in the matter of returning prisoners. He spoke as one who had nothing to fear, and consequently his words had weight. After some days of it, "Monsieur Jonkeur went his wayes," says the English record, and the Dutchmen went back to Albany, their chief concern being, as from the first, to secure the trade of the Five Nations to themselves. Their plans for that trade, even at this period, involved the control of the Niagara River.

II. Joncaire among the Senecas—A Royal Mission.

From further worry over the friendship of the Iroquois, Callières was spared by death, May 26, 1703; and a new and stronger Onontio took his place at the head of the administration in Canada. This was the Chevalier de Vaudreuil, whose part in the history of our region is to continue important for many years.

Like his predecessor, he had had experience with the Seneca in his native wilds. As we have seen, Vaudreuil had come out from France just in time to join Denonville's expedition of 1687. He shared in that inglorious campaign, coming to the Niagara at its close, and helped to build the fort which was destined to be the scene of one of the most tragic episodes in the history of French occupancy in America. Vaudreuil's personal knowledge of the Niagara pass had no doubt its influence in shaping his policy towards the Iroquois. In a letter to the minister, Pontchartrain, Nov. 14, 1703, his first communication after the death of Callières, he speaks of Joncaire's recent return from a three months' sojourn among the Senecas, and declares the intention of sending him back to winter among them. This he did, but at the first breaking up of the ice in the spring, Joncaire appeared at Fort Frontenac with the news that the English were preparing to hold a general meeting of the Iroquois at Onondaga.

The neutrality of the Five Nations had now become the chief object of solicitude for the French. Joncaire was speedily sent back to the Senecas, and with him the priest Vaillant, that their combined efforts might defeat the seductive overtures of the English. Once more at Onondaga, the great capital of the Iroquois, he met his old adversary, Peter Schuyler. The Indians were as ready to listen to overtures from one party as the other. This attitude alarmed the French. Joncaire posted off to Quebec to inform Vaudreuil, and was sent back with messages to Ramezay, at Montreal.

Under the sanction of the French at this time Indian parties fell upon certain New England settlements with dire results. We must accord to Joncaire a share in the instigation of these attacks. He was also an intermediary in negotiations with the Senecas, regarding an attack upon them by the Ottawas; we find him writing to the Governor, from the Seneca capital, under date of July 7, 1705, that "the partisans of the English in these villages do all in their power to induce the young men to avenge the attack made by Outtaouais on them, and that they are restrained only

by the hope of recovering their prisoners, and by the proceedings they have seen me adopt."

The King and his ministers at Versailles came to have great interest in the peculiar services rendered by Joncaire. "His Majesty," wrote Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, June 9, 1706, "approves your sending Sieur Jonqueres to the Iroquois, because he is esteemed by them and has not the reputation of a Trader. . . . I have no doubt of the truth of the information Sieur Jonquieres has given you respecting the intrigues of the English among the Iroquois. Continue to order him to occupy himself with breaking them up, and on your part, give the subject all the attention it deserves."

There is among the Paris Documents[8] of the year 1706, a paper entitled: "Proposals to be submitted to the Court that it may understand the importance of taking possession of Niagara at the earliest date, and of anticipating the English who design to do so," etc. It is unsigned. It does not appear to have been written either by Vaudreuil or the Intendant, though it was probably by the order of the former that it was sent to Versailles. It shows that now, seventeen years after the abandonment of Denonville's enterprise, the expediency of again attempting a permanent establishment on the Niagara was being considered. It is worth while to note the principal points in favor of the proposition, as they were drafted for the edification of the King.

Niagara was claimed to be the best of all points for trade with the Iroquois. It would serve as an entrepôt to the establishment at Detroit. With a bark on Lake Ontario, goods could be brought from Fort Frontenac to the Niagara in a couple of days, thus effecting a great saving in time, with less risk of loss, than by the existing canoe transportation. "It is to be considered," argues this document, "that by this establishment we should have a fortress among the Iroquois which would keep them in check; a refuge for our Indian allies in case of need, and a barrier that would pre-

8. N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 773-775.

vent them going to trade with the English, as they begin to do this year, it being the place at which they cross."

The foregoing statement fixes, if not exactly the date at which traders in the English interest made themselves a factor on the Niagara, at any rate the date when the French began to think they had, and seriously to fear them. In this crisis, they turned to Joncaire, whom the writer of these "Proposals" cites as "an officer of the marine forces in Canada, who has acquired such credit among the Iroquois, that they have repeatedly proposed and actually do suggest to him, to establish himself among them, granting him liberty to select on their territory the place most acceptable to himself, for the purpose of living there in peace, and even to remove their villages to the neighborhood of his residence, in order to protect him against their common enemies." This was no doubt true, and goes far to show how closely affiliated with the Senecas Joncaire had now become. But the proposition that follows is a singularly guileless and child-like specimen of statecraft.

It was urged that the English would take no alarm if this good friend of the Senecas, this soldier who lived with the Indians in their lodges, should go to the banks of the Niagara "without noise, going there as a private individual intending simply to form an establishment for his family, at first bringing only the men he will require to erect and fortify his dwelling, and afterwards on pretence of conveying supplies and merchandise there, increasing their number insensibly, and when the Iroquois would see that goods would be furnished them at a reasonable rate, far from insulting us, they would protect and respect us, having no better friends than those who supply them at a low rate." The document goes on to show how a monopoly of the beaver trade at Niagara may be secured, and to discuss the necessity of underselling the English, a thing which the French at this period could not do, especially in the price of powder and lead, which the English furnished very cheaply to the Indians.

It is suggested in the "Proposals" that the King "grant ten or twelve thousand weight of gunpowder and twenty or thirty thousand weight of lead, which would be yearly reimbursed to him at the rate his Majesty purchases it from the contractor. This would counterbalance the price of the English article; and then as our powder is better, we would thereby obtain the preference; become masters of the trade and maintain ourselves at peace; for it cannot be doubted that those who will be masters of the trade will be also masters of the Indians, and that these can be gained only in this way."

All of this was to be accomplished by Joncaire's clandestine establishment at Niagara. The King was reminded, somewhat presumptuously, that the Niagara enterprise, on a liberal scale, "would be of much greater advantage and less expense than carrying on a war against Indians excited by the English." Though obviously true, this was hardly the way in which to win favor with the war-racked Louis. The "Proposals" conclude as follows:

"After having exposed the necessity of the establishment of this post; the means of effecting it without affording any umbrage to the Iroquois, and the most certain means to maintain peace and union with the Indians, it remains for me to add, as respects the management of this enterprise, that it would be necessary to prevent all the improper Commerce hitherto carried on, by the transportaion of Brandy into the forest, which has been the cause of all existing disorders and evils. In order to avoid these it would be proper, that the Court, had it no other views, should give the charge of this business to our Governor and Intendant who in order to maintain the King's authority in Canada and to labor in concert for the public peace, would always so coöperate that the whole would be accomplished in a manner profitable to religion, trade and the union with the Indians, which are the three objects of this establishment."

There is in this a suggestion of priestly authorship. The whole document smacks more of the clerical theorist than of the soldier, the trader or the practical administrator of

affairs. Its recommendations were not followed, though it had its effect, along with other causes, in bringing about an investigation into the state of affairs, not only on the Niagara, but at other points of trade on the lakes.

Louis XIV. was by no means satisfied with the information he received through regular channels regarding the condition and prospects of the lake posts. He accordingly devised a plan for a fuller and more trustworthy report. Under date of June 30, 1707, instructions were sent from Versailles to M. de Clerambaut d'Aigremont at Quebec, imposing upon him a task which called for no little perspicacity and tact. This gentleman, who was serving as sub-delegate to the Intendant, the Sieur Raudot, was directed to visit Fort Cataracouy (i. e., Frontenac, now Kingston, Ont.), Niagara, Detroit and Missilimackinac, "to verify their present condition, the trade carried on there and the utility they may be to the Colony of Canada." The letter of instructions was long and explicit on many delicate matters regarding which the King wanted light. The administration of La Motte Cadillac at Detroit was especially to be inquired into, as many complaints and contradictory reports had reached the Court. Of Niagara the letter of instructions said:

"His Majesty is informed that the English are endeavoring to seize the post at Niagara, and that it is of very great importance for the preservation of Canada to prevent them so doing, because were they masters of it, they would bar the passage and obstruct the communication with the Indian allies of the French, whom as well as the Iroquois they would attract to them by their trade, and dispose, whenever they please, to wage war on the French. This would desolate Canada and oblige us to abandon it.

"It is alleged that this post of Niagara could serve as an entrepôt to the establishment at Detroit, and facilitate intercourse with it by means of a bark on Lake Ontario; that in fine, such a post is of infinite importance for the maintenance of the Colony of Canada, and that it can be accomplished by means of Sieur de Joncaire whom M. de Vau-

dreuil keeps among the Iroquois. His Majesty desires Sieur d'Aigremont to examine on the spot whether the project be of as great importance for that colony as is pretended, and, in such case, to inquire with said Sieur de Joncaire, whether it would be possible to obtain the consent of the Iroquois to have a fort and garrison there, and conjointly, make a very detailed report of the means which would be necessary to be used to effect it, and of the expense it would require; finally to ascertain whether it would be desirable that he should have an interview with said Sieur Joncaire, and that they should have a meeting at Niagara."

Word had reached Louis, which he was loth to accept, that Vaudreuil kept Joncaire among the Iroquois for the purpose of carrying on profitable trade with them, and of destroying the establishment at Detroit. Not the least difficult commission with which d'Aigremont was charged was to inform himself as to Joncaire's conduct, and report thereon.

There were further instructions, in a letter from the minister, Pontchartrain, July 13th; but for some reason, probably because the season was far advanced, d'Aigremont did not undertake his mission until the following summer. On June 5, 1708, he set out from Montreal in a large canoe, amply provisioned but carrying no merchandise for trade. It was in fact the King's express; and so well did his sturdy men ply their paddles, up the swift St. Lawrence, through the tortuous channels of the Thousand Isles, coasting the uncertain lakes—fickle seas even in midsummer—making the great carry around the cataract of Niagara, and hastening by lake and river, that they accomplished the journey as far as Missilimackinac, stopping at the designated points long enough to observe and take testimony, and were back again at Montreal, September 12th. D'Aigremont's report, addressed to Pontchartrain, is dated November 14th; so that, allowing an average passage to France, more than a year and a half elapsed from the day when the King made known his will regarding a special investigation into the lake posts, till he received the report of his emissary.

That report is a document of exceptional value for the exact data it affords. At Fort Frontenac, where Capt. de Tonty was in command, d'Aigremont took the depositions of Indian chiefs and other principal men, much of it tending to show that Tonty pursued an arbitrary and selfish policy in his dealings both with Indian hunters and French soldiers; "yet it is to be remarked," writes the King's reporter, "that notwithstanding all these petty larcenies, Mr. de Tonty is deeply in debt; an evident proof that they have not done him much good. What may have driven him to it is, the numerous family he is burdened with, which is in such poor condition as to excite pity." After pointing out the difficulty of keeping the Indians from carrying their peltries to the English, and the advisability of maintaining and strengthening Frontenac, d'Aigremont goes on to tell of his visit at Niagara.

He had left Fort Frontenac on June 20, 1708, and on the 27th rounded the point that marks the mouth of the Niagara; it had taken him a week to follow the north and west shores of the lake from Tonty's disturbed establishment. Joncaire had been appraised of his coming. "I found him," writes d'Aigremont, "at the site of the former fort." "After conversing some time respecting this post, he admitted, My Lord, that the advantages capable of being derived from it, by fortifying it and placing a garrison there, would be, namely—that a number of Iroquois would separate from all their villages, and establish themselves there, by whose means we could always know what would be going on in those Villages and among the English, and that it would be thereby easy to obviate all the expeditions that could be organized against us.

"That the Iroquois would trade off there all the moose, deer and bear skins, they might bring, as these peltries could not be transported to the English except by land, and consequently with considerable trouble.

"That the Mississaguets settled at Lake Ste. Claire, who also convey a great many peltry to the English, will not fail in like manner to trade off their moose, deer and bear-skins there.

"That the Miamis having, like the Mississaguets, demanded by a Belt of the Iroquois a passage through their country to Orange to make their trade, would not fail to sell likewise at Niagara the skins that are difficult of transportation by land, and this more particularly as the English esteem them but little. But, My Lord, these considerations appear to me of little importance in comparison with the evil which would arise from another side. This would be, that all the Beaver brought thither by any nations whatsoever would pass to the English by means of their low-priced druggets, which they would have sold there by the Iroquois without our being ever able to prevent them, unless by selling the French goods at the same rate as the English dispose of theirs, which cannot be.

"It is true that this post could be of some consideration in respect to Detroit to which it could serve as an entrepôt for all the goods required for purposes of trade there, which could be conveyed from Fort Frontenac to Niagara by bark; a vessel of forty tons being capable of carrying as many goods as twenty canoes. Though these goods could, by this means, be afforded at Detroit at a much lower rate than if carried by canoes to Niagara, the prices would be still much higher than those of the English. This, therefore, would not prevent them drawing away from Detroit all the Beaver that would be brought there.

"The post of Niagara cannot be maintained except by establishing that of La Galette [on the St. Lawrence, a little below present Ogdensburg], because the soil of Fort Frontenac being of such a bad quality, is incapable of producing the supplies necessary for the garrison, its last one having perished only from want of assistance, as they almost all died of the scurvy."

D'Aigremont discussed at length the advisibility of creating an establishment at La Galette as a base of supplies for Niagara; but he did not think a post could be established at Niagara at this time with entire success: "At least great precautions would [need be] taken at the present time, and whoever would propose an extensive establishment there

at once would not fail to be opposed by the Iroquois. Such cannot be arranged with them except by means of Mr. de Longueuil or of Sieur Joncaire, one or other of whom could propose to settle among them at that point, as the Iroquois look on these two officers as belonging to their nation. But my Lord," d'Aigremont significantly adds, "the former would be preferable to the latter because there is not a man more adroit than he or more disinterested. I do not say the same of the other, for I believe his greatest study is to think of his private business, and private business is often injurious to public affairs, especially in this colony, as I have had occasion frequently to remark."

D'Aigremont thought there was so little prospect that the post of Niagara could be established, that he did not take the trouble to report an estimate of the expense such a project would incur; but bearing in mind the King's remarks regarding the motives which led Vaudreuil to keep Joncaire among the Iroquois, he replied to this point as follows:

"I do not think the Iroquois will suffer the English even to take possession of that post [Niagara], because if they were masters of it, they could carry on all the trade independent of the former, which does not suit them.

"The Marquis de Vaudreuil sends Sieur de Joncaire every year to the Iroquois. He draws from the King's stores for these Indians powder, lead and other articles to the value of 2,000 livres, or thereabouts, which he divides among the Five Nations as he considers best. Some there are who believe that he does not give them all, and that he sells a portion to them; or at least that he distributes it to them as if it were coming from himself, thereby to oblige these Indians to make him presents. What's certain is, that he brings back from those parts a great many peltries. I am assured that they reach fully 1000 annually; in the last voyage he made, he brought down two canoes full of them. He left one of them at the head of the Island of Montreal [*"bout de l'isle"*], and had the peltries carted in through the night. As for the rest, My Lord, I do not know whether the Marquis de Vaudreuil has any share in this trade."

The Minister acknowledged this report in due time. Writing from Versailles, July 6, 1709, he said: "In regard to the post of Niagara, it is not expedient under any circumstances; and as there is no apprehension that the Iroquois will take possession thereof, it is idle to think of it. Therefore we shall not require either Sieur Longueil, or Sieur Jonquaire [*sic*] for that"; and he added that he would have the latter "watched in what relates to the avidity he feels to enrich himself out of the presents the King makes these Indians, so as to obviate this abuse in future." Even though Joncaire were chargeable with undue thrift, Pontchartrain evidently felt that he was by all odds the best man to manage the Iroquois in the French interest.

We here encounter for the first time insinuations against the character of Joncaire. In the King's service, he was charged with using his opportunities to enrich himself. There are many allusions to this not very surprising matter, from now on. He continued for several years to come, in much the same employment as that which we have noted. He never lost the confidence of Vaudreuil—possibly, as the foregoing correspondence may have suggested to the reader, because they were allied for personal profit in a surreptitious fur-trade. In November, 1708, we find the Governor commending him in a letter to the Minister. "Sieur de Joncaire," he writes, "possesses every quality requisite to ensure success. He is daring, liberal, speaks the [Seneca] language in great perfection, hesitates not even whenever it is necessary to decide. He deserves that your Grace should think of his promotion, and I owe him this justice, that he attaches himself with great zeal and affection to the good of the service."

Joncaire at this period, 1708-9, was much of the time at Onondaga, doing what he could to counterbalance English influence. This was a task which yearly grew more and more difficult. Although Joncaire to the end of his days retained the good will of the Iroquois, and especially of the Senecas, he saw the hold of the French upon them gradually weakened, the temptations of English trade gradually and effectively strengthened.

Meanwhile, there came a critical time. Schuyler and others in English interests, were very active at Onondaga; reports reached Vaudreuil that the Iroquois were declaring against the French, that troops were about setting out from Fort Orange to strike a blow. The French missionaries, Lamberville and Mareuil, were frightened or cajoled into leaving. A party of drunken Indians burned the chapel and priest's house at Onondaga, being set on thereto, the French believed, by Schuyler. Joncaire and his soldiers were at Sodus Bay, some forty-five miles away, when this happened. He sent word of it, June 14, 1709, by canoe to M. de la Fresnière, commanding at Frontenac. His letter[9] shows that he was thoroughly alarmed for the safety of himself and men. Regaining his assurance, he went back to the Senecas.

Just before this, his men had killed one Montour, a Frenchman among the Senecas, as alleged, in the English interest. Joncaire's return to the Senecas at this time won for him more warm praise from Vaudreuil, who wrote to Pontchartrain that Joncaire, "by his return to the Senecas, has given evidence of all the firmness that is to be expected from a worthy officer who has solely in view the good of his

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9. The letter referred to, sent from Sodus Bay ("Bay of the Cayugas") to M. de la Fresnière, commanding at Fort Frontenac, is one of the few documents written by Joncaire known to be in existence. Its phraseology helps us form a just idea of the writer, who expresses himself, not as a rough woods-ranger might, but as one accustomed to letters and good society. This letter, as printed in N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 838, is as follows:

BAY OF THE CAYUGAS, 14 June, 1709.

SIR—Affairs are in such confusion here that I do not consider my soldiers safe. I send them to you to await me at your fort, because should things take a bad turn for us, I can escape if alone more readily than if I have them with me. It is not necessary, however, to alarm Canada yet, as there is no need to despair. I shall be with you in twenty or twenty-five days at farthest, and if I exceed that time, please send my canoe to Montreal. Letters for the General will be found in my portfolio, which my wife will take care to deliver to him. If, however, you think proper to forward them sooner, St. Louis will hand them to you. But I beg of you that my soldiers may not be the bearers of them, calculating with certainty to find them with you when I arrive, unless I exceed twenty-five days.

The Revd. Father de Lamberville has placed us in a terrible state of embarrassment by his flight. Yesterday, I was leaving for Montreal in the best possible spirits. Now, I am not certain if I shall ever see you again.

I am, sir and dear friend, your most humble and most obedient servant,

DE JONCAIRE.

Majesty's service." Later this year Joncaire went to Montreal with Father d'Heu and a French blacksmith who had been for some years in the Seneca villages, and a band of some forty Senecas as escort.

In July, 1710, the French took alarm lest the Iroquois should join the English in a threatened expedition against Canada. Longueuil and Joncaire, with ten other Frenchmen and some Indians, hastened to Onondaga, where the French, through Joncaire, as interpreter, made an exceedingly vigorous harangue, threatening the Indians with dire vengeance if they shared in the hostile movement. "If you do," said Joncaire (as reported in the English documents), "we will not only come ourselves, but sett the farr Nations upon you to destroy you your wifes and Children Root & Branch. . . . Be quiett and sett still." There was a divided sentiment in this council, but finally the French influence appeared to prevail, though a delegation of Indians soon appeared in Albany to inform Governor Robert Hunter of all that Joncaire had said, and to receive English assurances of friendship. On the other hand, a little later, Vaudreuil reported the matter to the Minister.[10] He begged of Monsigneur Ponchartrain that he specially remember the services of Joncaire and Longueuil, "who expose themselves to being burnt alive, for the preservation of the country in keeping peace with the Iroquois, who without them would inevitably make war." Joncaire, he added, has the same influence among the Senecas that Longueuil has with the Onondagas. Notwithstanding that Joncaire, the preceding summer, "was obliged to stay among them, and to send back his soldiers, in fear lest they would be put in the kettle, exposing himself alone to the caprice of these people in order to endeavor to keep the peace," yet he still continued to receive their favor, "as if himself a Seneca." At this time, the French flattered themselves that they could count on the friendship of all of the Five Nations except the Mohawks, who were most under English influence.

We find Joncaire, in September, carrying messages from M. de Ramezay, commandant at Frontenac, to Vaudreuil at

10. Vaudreuil to Ponchartrain, Nov. 30, 1710.

Montreal. It was from Joncaire that the Governor received the first intelligence of the preparations which the English were making at Boston and elsewhere, to attack Canada.

When Ramezay, in 1710, marched against the English, Joncaire commanded the Iroquois from Sault St. Louis and the Mountain, who made up the rear of the army; and he was probably with Vaudreuil, in September of that year in the advance to Chambly in quest of the English. More urgent matters in the East for a time withdrew the attention of Government from the Niagara and its problems. Still, no emergency could arise which could make Vaudreuil forgetful of the Iroquois.

III. Joncaire wins English Enmity.

For the next few years Joncaire continued to go back and forth between Montreal, where he acted as interpreter, and the Seneca villages, where he was supposed to be at work to offset the influences of the English, chiefly as made manifest through Peter Schuyler. We find record that he was among the Senecas in 1710 and again in 1711.

At a great war-banquet in Montreal, in August, 1711, at which 700 or 800 warriors assembled, "Joncaire and la Chauvignerie first raised the hatchet and sang the war-song in Ononthio's name." This was on receipt of the news that the English were preparing to attack Quebec. Many of the Indians answered the cry of the warlike Joncaire with applause, only the Indians from the upper country hesitating, because they had, almost all, been trading with the English; but in the end, twenty Detroit Hurons taking up the hatchet, all who were present declared for the French. The incident shows of what great value Joncaire was to the cause of the French at this critical time, in holding for them the good will of the Iroquois and tribes to the westward.

The next year, 1712, he was for a time in command at Fort Frontenac, in place of the Sieur de la Fresnière, who was incapacitated by fever. At this time the Senecas were much disturbed over matters to the westward. They feared,

in the event of an outbreak against Detroit or by the tribes at the Sault, that they would be beset on the Niagara side. They sent a large delegation to Montreal, but declared to Vaudreuil "that they should not speak unless Sieur de Joncaire were present." That officer arrived from Fort Frontenac in September. We have not the details of the conference that followed; but the Senecas made their usual pledges of confidence in the French. At the same time, other tribes assembled at Onondaga were showing decided preference for the English, and sending word to the Indians at the Sault, requesting them "to remain passive on their mats, and not to take any sides," whatever might happen.

For the next few years I find little trace of Joncaire; but there is no reason to suppose that he did not continue in the same service as for the preceding years.

By his influence among the Iroquois, Joncaire was enabled to render a peculiar service in the summer of 1715. The post of Michilimackinac was distressed through lack of provisions. An appeal was made to Dubisson, commanding at Detroit; but he sent word that the corn supply had run so short that he had been obliged to send the Sieur Dupuy to the Miamis to try to buy of them, but it was doubtful if they could supply enough. In this extremity Ramezay appealed to Joncaire, who went among his Iroquois friends in the villages of Central New York and bought 300 minots of corn—about 900 bushels. This he made the Indians carry to the shore of Lake Ontario, some twenty leagues from the place of purchase. There it was loaded into the canoes for Capt. Deschaillons and dispatched to the distressed post; but all of this occasioned such delays that a hundred Frenchmen and Canadians were allowed to leave Mackinac and go down to Montreal to winter.

In the autumn of 1716, on his return to Montreal from the Iroquois cantons, Lieut. de Longueuil had called the attention of MM. de Ramezay and Bégon to the need of a "little establishment" "on the north [east] side of Niagara, on Lake Ontario, 100 leagues from the fort of Frontenac, a canoe journey of seven or eight days." Such a post, he

claimed, would attract the Missisagas and Amicoues to trade with the Iroquois, when the latter went to hunt in the vicinity of Lake Erie. He also proposed that a barque should be built to serve as a transport between Frontenac and Niagara, claiming that it would be a sure means of conciliating the Iroquois and of gaining a great part of the fur trade which now went to the English. With such a post at Niagara, it would be possible to keep the *coureurs de bois* from trading in Lake Ontario, either by seizing their goods or arresting the traders, who were working mischief for the traffic at Fort Frontenac. De Ramezay, in communicating these views to Vaudreuil, commented that if such a post were approved, the trade there should be kept to the King's account.[11] The Marquis de Vaudreuil would not agree to establish this post at Niagara until the Iroquois should ask for it. The council approved, granting permission to proceed as suggested, if the Senecas wished it. This proposed establishment was never built, but we have in Longueuil's suggestions another form of the project which some four years later was to take shape in the Magazin Royal at Lewiston, and nearly ten years later in the permanent foundation of Fort Niagara. Due recognition must be taken of Longueuil's foresight at this time. Apparently to him, and not to Joncaire, is due the suggestion which later ripened into the Niagara establishment. Though employed for many years in similar service, the one among the Onondagas, the other with the Senecas, and though equally commended, in despatches to the Minister, for their zeal and sagacity, a certain distinction attaches to Longueuil and his part in our history, which is not shared by Joncaire; a distinction due no doubt to family and social standing, rather than to native ability or devotion to the service.

October 24, 1717, at a conference, apparently held at Onondaga, the Senecas made the surprising inquiry, if Joncaire were not among them "only as a Spy." He had spent the winter of 1716-17 in the Senecas' country. In

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11. MM. de Ramezay and Bégon, at Quebec, to the Council of Marine, Paris, Nov. 7, 1716.

spite of his affiliation and long-standing friendship with the Senecas, "a rumor prevailed that he had been sent thither to amuse them whilst preparations were being made to march against them in the Spring."[12] This suspicion of Joncaire was undoubtedly due to the influence of the English, which by this time had become predominant among the eastern Indians of the Federation. Even the Senecas were wavering and doubtful. Joncaire, when charged with being a spy, "did all in his power to disabuse them; but though highly esteemed among and even adopted by them, he could not succeed in removing their suspicion, for at the moment of his departure for Montreal, they sent a chief of high character with him to know from him whether it were true that he designed to attack them."

So reads the somewhat obscure document. The object of the embassy to Montreal was obviously to learn, not from Joncaire but from Vaudreuil, if any steps were to be taken hostile to the Senecas. Later, a delegation of chiefs and forty others arrived and were given audience by Vaudreuil. With elaborate ceremony they bewailed the death of the old King,[13] gave to Vaudreuil a belt which they begged he would send to the young King, whom they asked to take them under his protection; and did not omit the usual request at these conferences, that Joncaire, the de Longueuils, father and son, and De la Chauvignerie, "Should be allowed to go into their villages whenever they would wish to do so, or should be invited by their nations. They added, that they were fully aware that there were some people (meaning the English) whom this would not please, but no notice must be taken of such; that they were the masters of their own country, and wished their children to be likewise its masters, and to go thither freely whenever M. de Vaudreuil should permit them." This declaration of mastery in their own country illustrates anew the unstable

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12. Proceedings in the Council of the Marine, June 25, 1718, signed L. A. de Bourbon and Le Maréchal D'Estrées. The document is marked: "To be taken to my Lord the Duke of Orleans." *See* N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 876-878.

13. Louis XIV. had died Sept. 1, 1715.

and bewildered state of mind in which the Five Nations then were. Some years since, they had formally deeded their country to William III.; and on more than one occasion they had acknowledged the authority of the French.

In June, Alphonse de Tonty left Montreal for Detroit, at which post he had been granted the privilege of trade, on condition that he would confine his operations to the jurisdiction of Detroit, nor send goods for sale to distant tribes. In crossing Lake Ontario, on his way to Niagara, he met nine canoes, all going to Albany to trade. Three were from Mackinac, three from Detroit and three from Saginaw. Tonty endeavored to head off this prospective trade for the English, and succeeded so well, heightening his arguments by substantial presents, that they all agreed not to go to Albany, but to go with him to Detroit.

Two days later, when this imposing flotilla was within six miles of Niagara, they fell in with seventeen canoes, full of Indians and peltries. In reply to his inquiries, these also admitted that they were going to Albany to trade, though they added that they were coming to Detroit afterwards. Tonty was equal to the emergency. Inspired by self-interest as well as loyalty to his government, "he induced them also to abandon their design, by the promise that the price of merchandise at Detroit should be diminished, and he would also give them some brandy."[14] There followed a judicious distribution of this potent commodity.

One is tempted to conjure up the scene. Here were twenty-six laden canoes, not counting Tonty's own boats. They had come long journeys from remote and widely separated points, and their one objective point was the Englishmen's trading-place on the Hudson. But no sooner do they come under the blandishments of the Frenchman, and scent the aroma of his brandy-kegs, then these long-cherished plans so arduously followed, are thrown to the winds. They beach their canoes at or near the point of Niagara. A cask of liquor is broached, and Tonty permits the thirsty savages

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14. Report of L. A. de Bourbon, secretary, Council of Marine, Oct. 12, 1717.

"to buy two or three quarts of brandy each, to take to their villages. But they first agreed that it should be carefully distributed by a trusty person."

In spite of these reassuring precautions, the transaction seems somewhat to have burdened his mind, for he thought it well to explain that "he hoped the council would not disapprove of what he had done, nor of the continuance of the same course, as he had no other intention than merely to hinder the savages from going to the English."

He succeeded fairly well in that purpose. After the distribution of brandy, they all reëmbarked, seven of the canoes promising to go to Montreal. Tonty sent back with them his trusty interpreter, L'Oranger, to keep them from changing their minds as they paddled down the lake. "He was only able to conduct six of them to Montreal; the seventh escaped and went to Orange."

Meanwhile ten canoes joined the commandant's own retinue; all paddled swiftly up the Niagara to the old landing, made the toilsome portage around the falls and pushed on together for Detroit, where they arrived July 3d. It was a typical move in the game that was being played, and France had gained the point.

This expedition was notable for its use of the Niagara route. Only a few years before we find Vaudreuil explaining to the Minister that he dispatched the Sieur de Lignery to Mackinac, and Louvigny to Detroit, by the Ottawa-river route, because the Senecas had warned him that a band of Foxes lay in wait for plunder at the Niagara portage, or on Lake Erie.[15] If this were not duplicity on the part of the Senecas, it shows that war parties from the West foraged as far east as the Niagara; notwithstanding the supposed jealousy with which the Senecas guarded it.

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15. Vaudreuil to the Minister, Oct. 15, 1712. In a subsequent letter, Nov. 6, 1712, Vaudreuil speaks of the band of Otagamis (*i. e.* Outagamis, otherwise Foxes or Sacs), led by one Vonnere, who lay in wait at the Niagara portage, so that an expedition for Detroit led by M. de Vincennes was sent by the Ottawa River route, "not only to avoid these savages, but to prevent the convoy from being pillaged by the Iroquois," etc. The name "Vonnere" is found elsewhere in the more probable form "Le Tonnerre," *i. e.*, "Thunderbolt."

Again we lose sight of Joncaire for a time; but the events of 1720, a date of great importance in the history of the Niagara, indicate that he was long busy with plans for giving the French a foothold on the river, and that even his Seneca friends had increasing cause to regard him with suspicion.

The attention of the Government was turning more seriously than ever before, to the Niagara passage as a means of reaching the upper posts. A "Memoir on the Indians of Canada, as far as the River Mississippi, with remarks on their manners and trade," dated 1718, affords an interesting glimpse of our river at that period:

"The Niagara portage is two leagues and a half to three leagues long, but the road, over which carts roll two or three times a year, is very fine, with very beautiful and open woods through which a person is visible for a distance of 600 paces. The trees are all oaks, and very large. The soil along the entire [length] of that road is not very good. From the landing, which is three leagues up the river, four hills are to be ascended. Above the first hill there is a Seneca village of about ten cabins, where Indian corn, beans, peas, watermelons and pumpkins are raised, all which are very fine. These Senecas are employed by the French, from whom they earn money by carrying the goods of those who are going to the upper country; some for mitasses,[16] others for shirts, some for powder and ball, whilst some others pilfer; and on the return of the French, they carry their packs of furs for some peltry. This portage is made for the purpose of avoiding the Cataract of Niagara, the grandest sheet of water in the world, having a perpendicular fall of two or three hundred feet. This fall is the outlet of Lakes Erié, Huron, Michigan, Superior, and consequently of the numberless rivers discharging into these lakes, with the names of which I am not acquainted. The Niagara portage having been passed, we ascend a river six leagues

16. According to O'Callaghan, this is another instance of the adoption of Indian words by Europeans. *Mitas* is not a French but an Algonquin word for stockings or leggings, in the "Vocabulary" of La Hontan, II, 223.

in length and more than a quarter of a league in width, in order to enter Lake Erié, which is not very wide at its mouth. The route by the Southern, is much finer than that along the Northern shore. The reason that few persons take it is, that it is thirty leagues longer than that along the north. There is no need of fasting on either side of this lake, deer are to be found there in such great abundance; buffaloes are found on the South, but not on the North shore."

This valuable Memoir, long and full of explicit information regarding the lake region, and the country and peoples to the west as far as the Mississippi, is of unknown authorship. It was probably written by some French officer assigned to a western post. As regards the Niagara, it antedates by three years the visit of the Jesuit Charlevoix, and it gives us our first information of Seneca settlement on the banks of the river. Although throughout these earlier years and for some time yet to come the Ottawa route was used more than the Niagara, yet there can be no doubt that, prior to 1720, many an expedition to the West had passed this way. Many a canoe, coming now singly, now in pairs, now in numbers, had no doubt carried the coureur de bois, and the trader with his merchandise, from Lake Ontario up the beautiful stretch of green water till stopped by the rapids in the gorge; had made the steep climb up those "mountains" and followed the well-worn path of the long portage until, in navigable water above the great cataract, a new embarkation could be made with safety. Many a voyageur, too, returning from the West, as messenger from one of the upper posts or with canoes laden with packets of skins, had no doubt braved the dangers and difficulties of the Iroquois route, that he might sooner reach Frontenac and the settlements down the St. Lawrence. Some of these expeditions we have traced; but when one studies the history of Detroit and Mackinac and the various establishments on Lake Michigan, and notes the frequent communication they kept up with Montreal, he can but conclude that, notwithstanding the known use of the Ottawa route, there must have been

many a hardy traveler on the Niagara of whose presence there is no more record in history than there is trace of his keel in the waters he traversed. Joncaire himself, known and welcomed throughout the country of the Senecas, was probably on the river many a time since his meeting with d'Aigremont, on the site of Fort Denonville; but not until 1720 do we find official record to that effect.

IV. The House by the Niagara Rapids.

Early in May, 1720, Joncaire appeared at Fort Frontenac. The previous year, at the beginning of harvest, he had laden his canoe with trinkets, "small merchandizes," powder, lead, not forgetting the useful belts of wampum and the equally useful brandy, and had crossed over to the Long House of the Iroquois. Here, in the heart of our New York State, he had wintered, part of the time at the great Seneca village and part of the time at the little village.[17]

It was by the instructions of Vaudreuil and Begon that he made this sojourn, the design being that he should win for the French such favor that they might carry out undisturbed the orders which the Court had promulgated in 1718, namely, the building of magazines and stockaded houses at Niagara and other Lake Ontario points.

The winter had been well spent. He brought back with him to Frontenac not merely several bundles of peltries, but good tidings which a council was quickly summoned to hear. The Senecas were most favorably disposed towards their father Onontio, and to the uncle Sononchiez, by which name they had come affectionately to designate Joncaire.

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17. In 1720 "the great Seneca village" was apparently at the White Springs, one and one half miles southwest of Geneva. It later removed to a location some two miles northwest of Geneva, where it was long famous as the Ga-nun-da-sá-ga of the Senecas, otherwise Kanadesaga. "The Seneca castle called Onahe," mentioned further on in our narrative, was at this period about three miles southeast from the present village of Canandaigua. These locations are in accordance with conclusions reached by the late George S. Conover of Geneva, than whom probably no one has made a more thorough study of the subject.

Their father and their uncle, their message ran, were masters of their land. "The Indians consented not only to the building of the House of Niagara but also engaged themselves to maintain it. And if the English should undertake to demolish it they must first take up the hatchet against the Cabanes of the two villages of the Sennekas."[18] Such, at any rate, was the message as delivered to the delighted council.

No time was lost. In "10 or 12 days" a canoe was packed with goods: "Some pieces of Blew Cloth three dozen or thereabouts of white Blankets for the use of the Indians half a Barrell of Brandy &c"; and with eight soldiers and young De la Corne—son of Capt. De la Corne, Mayor of Montreal—the expedition set out gaily for our river. The season was propitious, the voyage short and successful. They entered the mouth of the Niagara and pressed on up the river to the head of navigation. Here, at the beginning of the portage on the east side of the gorge, where Lewiston now stands, "the Sieur de Joncaire & le Corne caused to be built in haste a kind of Cabbin of Bark where they displayed the Kings Colors & honored it with the name of the Magazin Royal."

Joncaire did not linger long, but went very soon to confirm his peace with the Senecas, leaving De la Corne in command. From the Senecas' village he hastened back to Frontenac. There he took into his canoe as *compagnon du voyage* John Durant, the chaplain of the fort, from whose memorial are drawn in part the data for this portion of our narrative. They voyaged together to Quebec, arriving September 3d, and Joncaire was granted early audience with Vaudreuil and the Intendant, to whom he told what he had done. Vaudreuil was pleased, and the next day bestowed upon him the title of Commandant at Niagara, and bade him hasten back to that precarious post. There was joined to this new dignity an order for the inspection of the magazine "established in the Lake of Ontario. This Magazine is situate on the west of the Lake for the Trade with the

18. Durant's Memorial, N. Y. Col. Docs., V, 588.

Missasagué otherwise called the Round Heads distant about thirty leagues from that of Niagara. The House at the bottom of the Lake[19] was built by the Sieur de Anville a little after that of Niagara."[20] The Sieur Douville had built another house, for trade with the Ottawas, at the foot of the Bay of Quinté. "They leave to winter in all their new forts," says Chaplain Durant, "but one Store Keeper and two Soldiers." Here indeed, was service for the King, a living immurement in the wilderness; yet the careers of men like Joncaire show how alluring this forest life, in spite of all its hardships and hazard, proved to many a soldier of New France.

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19. I. E., foot, west end. The allusion is probably to the trading-house at Toronto, with which Douville was more or less connected for some years. I find no statement in the documents showing that there was a trading-post at present Burlington Bay.

20. The builder of the trading-post at the head of Lake Ontario, the builder of the trading-post on the Bay of Quinté, and the officer who spent the winter of 1720-21 on the Niagara, are apparently the same man, variously designated in the printed documents as "the Sieur de Anville," "the Sieur D'Agneaux," and "the Sieur D'Ouville." The name is also to be found written "d'Auville" and "d'Agneaux." Some of these variants are doubtless due to illigible manuscript, or inaccurate copying. He appears to have been the same officer who, at a conference with the Iroquois at Quebec, Nov. 2, 1748, signed his name "Dagneaux Douville." He was a lieutenant in the detachment of marine troops serving in Canada. In 1750 he is spoken of as "Sieur Douville," commandant of Sault St. Louis; and in 1756, when he shared in another conference with Indians at Montreal, as "Lieut. Douville."

I find it impossible, from the allusions in the records, to be definite regarding French officers in the Canadian service, who are designated as "Douville." Philippe Dagneau Douville, Sieur de la Saussaye, born 1700, was commandant at Toronto in 1759. His brother, spoken of also as Sieur de la Saussaye, was at Niagara, *en route* for Detroit, in 1739. The latter appears to have been the Alexandre Dagneau Douville who served among the Miamis, 1747-48; who was sent out from Fort Duquesne in 1756, on a foraging expedition, and was killed the next year in an attack on a fort in Virginia. A "Douville" was second ensign under Capt. Duplissy in 1729; was with Villiers at Green Bay in 1730, in which year he married Marie Coulon de Villiers. "Douville" was also interpreter at Fort Frontenac in 1743. If, as seems probable, it was Philippe who was at the conference in Quebec in 1748—Alexandre being among the Miamis in that year—then it was probably Philippe whose connection with the trade on Lake Ontario is noted in the text. The confusion is increased by the record that in 1728 "Rouville la Saussaye" was the lessee of the trading-post at Toronto; but whether there is any relation between Rouville la Saussaye, the trader, and Douville de la Saussaye, the soldier, I leave for future determination, or those who may have more exact information in the matter.

Joncaire set out from Montreal, about the middle of October, 1720, to winter at Niagara. His two canoes were laden deep with goods from the King's storehouse. His escort numbered twelve soldiers, but at Frontenac six were left behind. There were evidently delays, at Frontenac or beyond, for as he skirted the south shore of Ontario his journey was stopped by ice thirty-five leagues from the Niagara. He put in at the Genesee and wintered there.

Into what extremity this failure of expected relief plunged the occupants of the bark cabin at the mouth of the Niagara gorge, we are not told. De la Corne does not appear to have wintered there, for Durant records that "the Sieur D'Ouville had stayed there alone with a soldier, waiting the Sieur de Joncaire." Probably the friendship of the Senecas preserved them, but Joncaire's failure to arrive in the fall with goods to trade kept the storehouse empty till spring, to the no small embarrassment of the French and disappointment of the Indians.

There exist of this episode, as of many others that form our history, two official accounts, one French, the other English. In the abstract of Messrs. de Vaudreuil and Bégon's report on Niagara for 1720, it is set forth that "the English had proposed to an Iroquois chief, settled at Niagara, to send horses thither from Orange, which is 130 leagues distant from it, for the purpose of transmitting goods, and to make a permanent settlement there, and offered to share with him whatever profits might accrue from the speculation. The English would, by such means, have been able to secure the greatest part of the peltries coming down the lakes from the upper countries; give employment not only to the Indians who go up there and return thence, but also to the French." The reader will note the delightful impudence of this last proposition. The report continues: "They [the French] have a store there well supplied with goods for the trade; and have, by means of the Indians, carried on there, up to the present time and since several years ago, a considerable trade in furs in barter

for merchandise and whisky.[21] This establishment would have enabled them to purchase the greater part of the peltries both of the French and Indians belonging to the upper country." It is clear that the English were about to attempt an establishment on the Niagara, had not the French forestalled them.

It is not easy to reconcile the various dates, or lack of dates, in the English and French records of this establishment. It was on Oct. 26, 1719, that Vaudreuil sent Joncaire to carry to the Five Nations a favorable word from the King, and the presents above mentioned. He was charged to tell the Senecas that if the English came to Niagara they —the Senecas—should fall on them and seize their goods. It was agreed with Bégon that De la Corne the younger and an *engagé* should spend the winter of 1719-'20 on the Niagara, and that they were to open trade the following spring, on the Royal account. Their presence, it was argued, would keep the English away, and help the trade at Frontenac.

An Indian reported at Albany, in July, 1719, that the French were building at Niagara. He had been at the Seneca Castle called Onahe, within a day's journey of Niagara, and there met some Ottawas who had asked the French at Niagara, how they came to make a fort there without asking leave of the Five Nations; and the French had replied, "they had Built it of their Own Accord, without asking any Bodys Leave and Design'd to keep Horses and Carts there for Transportation of Goods," etc.[22]

Either the date of the above is too early by a year, or it refers to a structure built some time in 1719, which was succeeded by the larger Magazin Royal, which, according to explicit accounts, both French and English, was built in the latter part of May, 1720. In the report sent by Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minister, under date of Oct. 26, 1720, it is stated that "on the representation made by the Sieur de Joncaire, lieutenant of the troops, as to the importance

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21. *"Eau de vie de grain."*

22. N. Y. Col. MSS. in State Library, Albany, Vol. LXI., fol. 157.

of this post and of the quantity of furs which could be traded for there, they are making there a permanent establishment *("un établissement sédentaire")*. We have charged him to have built there by the savages a picketed house *("une maison de pieux")* to which [construction] he pledged them last spring." The same report recites the visit to the Senecas of Messrs. Schuyler and Livingston, their names appearing —grotesquely distorted, as is usually the case with English or Dutch names in the old French documents—as *"le Sr. Jean Schult, commandant, et le Sr. L. Euiston, maire à Orange"!* The bark house was obviously surrounded by palisades—a strong, high fence of sharpened stakes. If the text of the French report may be accepted, the Indians themselves bore a willing hand in its construction.

Durant's memorial makes no mention of a visit at Magazin Royal in behalf of the English, but there was one. The work on the bark house under the Niagara escarpment was no sooner begun than word of it was carried eastward through the lodges and villages of the Six Nations. In April of 1720, Myndert Schuyler and Robert Livingston, Jr., had set out from Albany for the Seneca Castle, to hold one of the conferences which the Commissioners of Indian Affairs so frequently ordered at this period. Here, May 16th, they took the Indians to task because the French "are now buissey at Onjagerae, which ought not to be Consented to or admitted." The English emissaries went on to remind their Seneca brethren of the promises that had been made "about twenty-two years agoe to secure their Lands and hunting Places westward of them . . . to the Crown of great Brittain to be held for you and Your Posterity." The French, they continued, "are now buissy at onjagera which in a Manner is the only gate you have to go through towards your hunteing places and the only way the farr Indians conveniently came through where Jean Coeurs [Joncaire] with some men are now at work on building a block house and no Doubt of a Garrison by the next Year whereby you will be so Infenced that no Room will be Left for you to hunt in with out Liberty wee know that in warr time they could

never overcome you, but these proceedings in building so near may be their Invented Intrigues to hush you to sleep whilst they take possession of the Heart of Your Country this is Plainly seen by us therefore desire you to Consider it rightly and sent [send] out to spy what they are doing at onjagera and prohibite Jean Coeur building there, for where they make Settlements they Endeavour to hold it so that if he takes no notice thereof, after given in a Civill way, further Complaints may be made to your brother Corlaer, who will Endeavour to make you Easy therein."

This ingenuous appeal having been emphasized, according to custom, by giving a belt of wampum, the sachems retired to think it over. Six days later—May 22d—the sachems of the Senecas, Cayugas and Oneidas assembled, and in behalf of their own peoples and of the Mohawks and Onondagas, spoke to the English delegates at length and with the customary Indian grandiloquence. Regarding the French intrusion at Niagara they said, in part:

"You have told us that you were Informed the French were building a house at Onjagera which As you perceive will prove prejudiciall to us & You. Its true they are Either yett building or it is finished by this time wee do owne that some Years agoe the Five Nations gave Trongsagroende Ierondoquet & onjagera and all other hunting Places westward to y^{e} Crowne to be held for us and our posterity Least other might Incroach on us then we also partition the hunting Places between us and the french Indians but since then they are gone farr within the Limits and the french got more by setling Trongsagroende and we must Joyne our Opinion with yours that if wee suffer the french to settle at onjagera, being the only way to ward hunting, wee will be altogether shut up and Debarred, of means for our lively hood then in deed our Posterity would have Reason to Reflect on us there fore to beginn in time wee will appoint some of our men to go thither to onjagera and Desire you to send one along so that in the name of the five Nations Jean Coeur may be acquainted with the Resolve of this Meeting and for biden to proceed any further building, but ordered to take down what's Erected."

Having thus confirmed the English in their assertions, and pledged their own friendship, the sachems through their spokesman gave the belt of wampum and passed on to other matters. At the end of the conference three chiefs were appointed to go to Niagara to expostulate with the French; and Messrs. Schuyler and Livingston deputed to go with them their Dutch interpreter, Lawrence Claessen.

This man, whose name in the old records is variously spelled Claessen, Clawsen, Clausen, Claese, Clase or Clace, acquires some importance in our record from the fact that he is the first representative of English interests known to have visited the Niagara in other than a clandestine way. With the exception of Roosboom and McGregorie and perhaps one or two others of their class, he is the first white man, not of France or in the French interest, known to have reached the region. Moreover he is a typical example of a class of men who at this period were indispensable alike to the English and French. He was an Indian interpreter, a go-between, the medium of communication between the English and the Indians. Though not a soldier, he was for his people in other ways the counterpart of Joncaire among the French; and although his experiences appear to have been less hazardous and romantic than were that adventurer's, yet his life, for a score of years before we find him at Niagara, had been successfully devoted to a calling which demanded exceptional knowledge and tact, and which brought no lack of arduous experiences.

As early as 1700 he was serving the English as interpreter in their councils and treaties with the Five Nations. He was apparently even then no novice at the trade, for the next year the Mohawks gave him about three acres on small islands in the Mohawk, in proof of their gratitude because of his fairness as an interpreter. He was a witness, July 19, 1701, to the deed by which the Five Nations conveyed their beaver-hunting grounds to King William. It is a strange document, containing among the attached signatures the pictographic devices of sachems of each of the five nations; and quit-claiming to the English Crown all the country of

the Iroquois south of Lakes Ontario and Huron, on both sides of Lake Erie and as far west as Lake Michigan, "including likewise," specifies the deed, "the great falls oakinagaro" [Niagara]. This vast area, 400 miles wide by 800 miles long, an empire in itself and now the seat of millions of people, the home of commerce and of culture, but then the wilderness which the Iroquois claimed as his hunting-ground, and because of its resources of fur the bone of contention between Europe's greatest powers, was absolutely given, with every rivet and clamp of legal verbiage which the language of the law, redundantly profuse then as now, could command—"freely and voluntarily surrendered delivered up and forever quit-claimed . . . unto our great Lord and Master the King of England called by us Corachkoo and by the Christians William the third and to his heires and successors Kings and Queens of England for ever." And the sole compensation for this transfer was to be liberty on the part of the Five Nations to hunt as they pleased in this domain, and to be protected by the English in the exercise of that right.

From this date on for many years Claessen continued to act in a confidential capacity and as interpreter. The colonial records afford many glimpses of him. In 1710 he was sent to the Senecas' country, "to y^{e} five Nations to watch y^{e} motions of y^{e} French & to perswade those Indians to give a free passage to y^{e} farr Indians through their Countrey to come here to Albany to trade."

On this mission, at Onondaga, July 17th, he encountered Longueuil and Joncaire. He was among the Indians at Onondaga again in the spring of 1711. Two years later we find him, with Heinrich Hanson and Capt. Johannes Bleecker, holding an important conference at the same great rendezvous.

Whenever the Indians went to Albany to confer—and that was often, at this period—Claessen was summoned to interpret. On such occasions, the communications from red men to Governor, or vice versa, were made through successive interpretations. Thus it was customary, on these

occasions, for the sachem to make his speech, paragraphed, so to say, by the gift of wampum belts. This speech Claessen, who, perhaps alone of all the white men present, understood the Five Nations dialects, repeated, more or less accurately, in Dutch. Usually it was Robert Livingston, secretary for the Indian Commissioners, who knew both Dutch and English, but not Indian, who translated what Claessen had said, for the benefit of Gov. Burnet, who understood only English.

Sometimes there was still further interposition of lingual media. Such was the case at a conference at Albany in 1722 between Gov. Spotswood of Virginia and the Indians. On this occasion there was speech-making by the Delawares. Here Claessen's knowledge failed him, so another interpreter, James Latort, was called in, to convert Delaware into Mohawk or Dutch.

More tedious yet was the work of the interpreters at a conference held at Albany in 1723 between the commissioners of Indian affairs and representatives of western tribes—the "farr Indians" of the quaint old records. Claessen could not understand them, but a Seneca who had been a prisoner among them could, and interpreted to Claessen, who in turn interpreted to the commissioners; thus after three transformations the message reached a record in English. The wonder is not that there were so many misunderstandings, but—if one may judge from the dispatch of business—that there were so few.

There were other interpreters employed by the English at this period; among them Capt. Johannes Bleecker and Jan Baptist van Eps, a man who was sent on important missions among the Senecas, and may not unlikely have found his way to the Niagara; his name, in some of the reports of Indian speeches, appears rather startlingly as John the Baptist. There was even a Dutch woman, Hilletje van Olinda, employed as "interpretress" at Albany in 1702. But none other in his time seems to have borne so important a part as Lawrence Claessen. In 1726 he was one of the witnesses to a trust deed by which the Onondagas, Cayugas and

Senecas confirmed to Governor Burnet, as representative of King George, the quit-claim deed which the Five Nations had executed in 1701. The terms of the latter instrument are not so sweeping as in the former case. The country deeded is from the Salmon River, in Oswego County, New York, to Cleveland, Ohio, a strip sixty miles wide back into the country from the water front, and carefully specifying that it includes "all along the said lake [Erie] and all along the narrow passage from the said lake to the Falls of Oniagara Called Cahaquaraghe and all along the River of Oniagara and all along the Lake Cadarackquis," etc.[23] Small wonder, in view of these sessions in good faith, that the English vigorously contested all French establishment on the Niagara.

Two years after the signing of this deed, Claessen was invited to Oswego, to mark out a land grant for the King. "We know none so proper," said the sachems to Governor Montgomery, "as Lawrense Clausen the Interpreter, who is one of us And understands our Language." "I consent," replied His Excellency, "that Lawrence Clausen the Interpreter go up with you as you desire to mark out the Land you are to give his Majesty at Oswego, And as he [the King] is your kind father I expect you will give him a Large tract." This was on Oct. 1, 1728. As late as Nov. 23, 1730, we find him just returning to Albany from Onondaga and reporting to the Indian Commissioners the latest news regarding Joncaire, which will be noted presently as we trace the career of that worthy.

In all the thirty years during which we have sight of Lawrence Claessen, no service on which he was employed is recorded with greater detail than that which brought him to the Frenchmen's "Magazin Royal" on the banks of the Niagara in the spring of 1720. In his journal of that visit he has left a pretty vivid account of the way in which his mission sped.

After a week of travel from the Seneca town Claessen and the three Seneca chiefs, on the last day of May, arrived at

23. From the original roll in the office of the Secretary of State, Albany.

the "Magazin Royal." They found it a good-sized house, "Forty Foot long and thirty wide," but it was not ample enough to afford them a hospitable reception. It was occupied, according to the English account, by a French merchant and two other Frenchmen—one of them Douville. Joncaire does not appear to have been there when Claessen arrived. The French account says that the Englishman (Claessen) told La Corne, "whom M. Bégon appointed to trade at that place, to withdraw, and that they were going to pull down that house. La Corne answered them that he should not permit them to do so without an order from Sieur de Joncaire, who on being advised thereof by an Indian, went to the Senecas to prevent them consenting to that demolition."

The argument between Claessen and La Corne was a heated one. Claessen told the latter that he had been sent, in company with the sachems, "to tell you that the Five Nations have heard that you are building a house at Octjagara [Niagara], and the said sachims having considered how prejudicial that a French Settlement on their Land must consequently prove to them and their Posterity (if not timely prevented) wherefore they have sent me and them to acquaint you with their resolution that it is much against their inclination that any buildings should be made here and that they desire you to desist further building and to leave and demolish what you have made."

The French merchant was at no loss for defense. "We had leave," he replied, "from the young fighting men of the Senecas to build a house at Niagara. My master is the Governor of Canada. He has posted me here to trade. This house will not be torn down until he orders it."

The three sachems with Claessen scouted the idea that the young fighting men of their nation had given or could give permission for the French to establish themselves on the bank of the Niagara. "We have never heard," they said, "that any of our young men had given such leave for making any building at Octjagara."

Claessen did not tarry long. Returning by way of Irondequoit, he there encountered new evidence of French enterprise in a blacksmith whom the Governor of Canada had sent among the Senecas to work for them "gratis, he having compassion on them as a father," and in three French canoes loaded with goods, bound up for Niagara. By June 7th he was back at Seneca Castle, where he called together the chiefs and young warriors for a council. When they met, Joncaire appeared with them. Claessen told the assembly what had been said at Niagara; whereupon the Indians, old sachems and young warriors alike, joined in a disclaimer. The French, they said, had built the house at Niagara without so much as asking their leave, and they desired "that their brother Corlaer may do his endeavour to have y^e^ said House demolisht that they may preserve their Lands and Hunting." They suggested that the English at Albany write to the Governor of Canada and insist that the house be destroyed.

Here Joncaire broke in. He had listened to the Senecas' disclaimer, but now he assumed a taunting tone. Interrupting Claessen he exclaimed: "You seek to have the house at Niagara torn down only because you are afraid that you—you traders at Albany—will not get any trade from this Seneca nation and from the Indians of the far West. When we keep our house and people at Niagara we can stop the Senecas and the Western Indians too from trading with you. That is the trouble with you. You are not afraid that we keep the land from the Senecas."

"The French," disputed Claessen, "have made this settlement at Niagara to encroach on the Five Nations, to hinder them in their hunting, and to debar them of the advantage they should reap by permitting a free passage of the Western Indians through the Seneca castles. What is more, you impose on these people in your trade. You sell them goods at exorbitant rates. For a blanket of strouds you demand eight beavers, for a white blanket six, and other goods in proportion; whereas they may have them at Albany for half those prices." And the assembled Indians gravely affirmed that it was so.

Lawrence Claessen went back to Albany, leaving Joncaire for the time victorious. He prevailed on the vaccilating Senecas not only to spare but to protect the house by the Niagara rapids, arguing that they themselves would profit from it, and emphasizing the argument, we may be sure, by a discreet bestowal of gifts.

For the Senecas, this occurrence was but another step towards an inevitable end. For the French, it was a great achievement. The adroit Joncaire had crowned the efforts of more than forty years; for ever since La Salle had built his first house on the river the French had longed for its permanent possession. The achievement won for Joncaire new expressions of regard. In the report of the Governor and Intendant for 1720 one may read: "No one is better qualified than he [Joncaire] to begin this establishment [Niagara,] which will render the trade of Fort Frontenac much more considerable and valuable than it has ever been. He is a very excellent officer; the interpreter of the Five Iroquois Nations, and has served thirty-five years in the country. As all the Governors-General have successfully employed him, they have led him to hope that the Council would be pleased to regard the services he will have it in his power to render at this conjuncture."

Local tradition fixes the site of Magazin Royal on the present Bridge Street at Lewiston, a few rods east of the tracks of the International Railway Company, and within a stone's throw of the bank of the Niagara. Here, at the south side of the road, just at the edge of the steep slope that stretches to the upper heights, one may yet trace the outlines of what appears to have been a well, and of the foundation of a building; scarcely however of Joncaire's cabin, but very plausibly of a house which later occupied the site, regarding which the Rev. Joshua Cooke, for many years a resident of Lewiston, writes to the present chronicler: "I have a particular interest in the spot, for in 1802, eighty-one years after Joncaire built, my grandfather built his pioneer home on the spot—the first white man's home on the Niagara, after Joncaire." The old ferry road followed the general direction of the present Bridge Street, but ran a little to the north of it, in a ravine of which a portion still remains, at its junction with the river. Within recent years the building of the electric road along the river bank, the reconstruction of the suspension bridge at this point, and the cutting and grading incident to this work, have greatly changed things hereabouts. The present owner of the site is Mr. J. Boardman Scovell of Lewiston, who, in connection with the Niagara Frontier Landmarks Association, proposes to place on the site a monument which shall commemorate Joncaire's famous Magazin Royal.

V. The British Covet the Niagara Trade.

The British plans for getting a foothold on Lake Erie and the Niagara at this time are revealed in various documents. A "Representation of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations to the King upon the State of His Majesties Colonies and Plantations on the Continent of North America," dated Sept. 8, 1721, sets forth at length that it would be of great advantage to build a fort in the country of the Seneca Indians, near the Lake Ontario, "which, perhaps, might be done with their consent by the means of presents, and it should the rather be attempted without loss of time, to prevent the french from succeeding in the same design, which they are now actually endeavouring at." We have already alluded to other forms in which this design was shown. It reappears in various ways, in numerous documents and publications of the time.

There ensued between the Marquis de Vaudreuil in behalf of Canada, and Governor Burnet, an exceedingly spirited correspondence; one of those epistolary dialogues, or rather duels, which by their exhibitions of human nature do so enliven the record of the long strife for supremacy in America. Joncaire had left Montreal in September, 1720, for the house by the Niagara rapids. He undoubtedly carried with him a generous stock of articles of trade, powder, lead and brandy. He was to stay on the Niagara and among the Senecas until the following June. Governor Burnet, down in New York, was quickly apprised of it, and made known his mind to Vaudreuil. He began with compliments worthy of a French courtier. He had come to his post in September last, he wrote, with an inclination to salute his neighbor to the North by a cordial notification of his arrival. "I heard such a high eulogium of your family and of your own excellent qualities that I flattered myself with a most agreeable neighborhood, and was impatient to open a correspondence in which all the profit would be on my side. But I had not passed two weeks in the province when our own Indians of the Five Nations came to advise me, that the

French were building a post in their country at Niagara; that Sieur de Joncaire was strongly urging them to abandon the English interest altogether and to join him, promising them that the Governor of Canada would furnish better land near Chambly, to those who would remove thither; and would uphold the rest against the new Governor of New York, who was coming to exterminate them; . . . that an effort was making to persuade them to close the passage through their country, to the English, in case the latter should disturb the post at Niagara, and that M. de Longueuil had gone thither for that purpose, and to complete the seduction of the Indians from their ancient dependence on Great Britain." He explains why he has not waited for instructions from the Court before writing in the matter, and continues: "You will perceive, by the Treaty of Utrecht, that all the Indians are to be at liberty to go to trade with one party and the other; and if advantage be taken of the post at Niagara to shut up the road to Albany to the Far Indians, it is a violation of the Treaty which ought justly to alarm us, especially as that post is on territory belonging to our Indians, where we were better entitled to build than the French, should we deem it worth the trouble." He charges Vaudreuil with unseemly haste in seizing "disputed posts"; renews his expressions of regret, and adroitly adds that he believes that "most of these disorders are due to this Joncaire, who has long since deserved hanging for the infamous murder of Hontour [Montour] which he committed. I leave you to judge whether a man of such a character deserves to be employed in affairs so delicate."

Canada's Governor replied, *seriatim*, to all the counts which Burnet undertook to score against him. Burnet, he said, was "the first English Governor-General who has questioned the right of the French, from time immemorial, to the post of Niagara, to which the English have, up to the present time, laid no claim." He declared that the French right there had continued since La Salle's first occupancy; that Fort Denonville was given up in 1688 because of sickness, "without this post, however, having been abandoned

by the French"; a claim which, to say the least, shows that Vaudreuil possessed qualifications that would have made him an adept in certain occupations of the law. He denied that there had been any dispute between the French and Indians as to the erection of Joncaire's trading-house, denied that there was any infraction of the treaty of peace, or that French occupancy of the Niagara interfered in the least with the Western Indians who could still carry their trade to the English if they saw fit. As to Joncaire, Governor Burnet was assured that he had been misinformed as to that useful man's character and qualities, "as he possesses none but what are very good and very meritorious, and has always since he has been in this country most faithfully served the King. It was by my orders that he killed the Frenchman named Montour, who would have been hanged had it been possible to take him alive and to bring him to this colony." The letter concludes with formal expressions of esteem, and the rather superfluous hope that the explanations would be satisfactory.

He himself had the satisfaction, the next year, of having his conduct approved by the King. "His Majesty has approved of the measures M. de Vaudreuil adopted to prevent the execution of the plan formed by the English of Orange to destroy the establishment at Niagara; and of the steps he took to dissuade the Iroquois from favoring them in that enterprise, and thereby to hinder the English undertaking anything against that post or against those of the Upper Country. His Majesty recommends him to endeavor to live on good terms with the English, observing, nevertheless, to maintain always His Majesty's interests."

VI. Visitors at Magazin Royal—The Huguenot Spy of the Niagara.

A spectator, on May 19, 1721, looking lakeward from the high bank where now old Fort Niagara keeps impotent guard, would have seen, swiftly skirting the shore from the eastward, a flotilla of King's boats and bark canoes, some

crowded with soldiers, others laden deep with merchandise. Not in many a year had so imposing a company come to the Niagara. The lower reaches of the river are quickly accomplished, and as the voyagers make landing below Magazin Royal, they receive hearty welcome from Chabert Joncaire, surrounded by delighted and greedy men, women and children from the Seneca and Mississauga lodges on the river bank. The first greeting, a deferential one, is for Charles le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, lieutenant governor of Montreal. With him are the Marquis de Cavagnal, son of the Governor-General of Canada, Captain de Senneville, M. de Laubinois, commissary of ordnance, Ensign de la Chauvignerie the interpreter, De Noyan, commandant at Frontenac, and John Durant, state chaplain at that post. Each of the three King's boats brought six soldiers, and there were valets and cooks, so that Longueuil's party numbered twenty-eight or more. Besides these, two bark canoes had each borne eight men and a load of merchandise, one destined for the magazine at Niagara, the other for trade among the Miamis at the upper end of Lake Erie. Still another canoe brought, with De Noyan and the chaplain, four soldiers and an Indian.

For Longueuil, it was an official visit. He and La Chauvignerie were under orders from the Court to join Joncaire at Niagara and go with him among the Senecas to distribute presents and thank them for the good will they had shown the French in permitting the construction of Magazin Royal. For the Marquis de la Cavagnal and Capt. de Senneville, it was largely a pleasure trip: they "had undertaken that voyage only out of curiosity of seeing the fall of the water at Niagara," says Chaplain Durant, thus indicating probably the first sight-seeing tourists, as distinguished from all other travelers on the Niagara.

It was not in the nature of things, however, that young men of the spirit and enterprise of Cavagnal and Longueuil should rest content with sentimental gazing. They had, in fact, the serious purpose, in compliance with an order laid upon them by the Governor himself, "to survey Niagara and

take the exact height of the cataract." This apparently had never been done before. It is plain, from their wild guesses and exaggerations, that neither Hennepin nor La Hontan attempted it, nor do they report an attempt by any one connected with the expeditions of La Salle or Denonville.

It is matter of regret that no official report of this first measurement of the falls is known. We learn of it from a verbal interview which took place in Albany five months later. On October 10th of this year the Hon. Paul Dudley of that town gleaned some facts from one Borassaw—so the English report spells his name. This man (a French Canadian, probably a boatman or possibly a trader), said he had been at Niagara seven times, and was there the last May, when the height of the falls was taken by Longue Isle, St. Ville and Laubineau—in which perverse spelling of the Hon. Paul Dudley we may recognize Longueuil, Capt. de Senneville and Laubinois. They used, the Frenchman said, a large cod-line and a stone of half a hundred weight, and they found the perpendicular height "no more than twenty-six Fathom; his Words were *vingt et six Bras.*" This height, 156 feet, indicates that the measurement was made at the eastern edge of the American Fall, which spot, known in our day as Prospect Point, was undoubtedly the natural and most frequented place of observation, from days immemorial. The height which de Cavagnal and his companions reported in 1721, is still the height at that point.

Mons. "Borassaw" told still further of Niagara wonders. He thought that if the total descent of the river, including the lower rapids, were taken into account, the earlier reports of the height of the fall might not be far out of the way. He mentioned the terrible whirlpools, and the noise, which Mr. Dudley decided was not so terrible as Father Hennepin had reported, since one could converse easily close by; and dwelt especially upon *"la brume,"* the mist or shower which the falls make: "So extraordinary, as to be seen at five Leagues distance, and rises as high as the common Clouds. In this Brume or Cloud, when the Sun shines, you have always a glorious Rainbow." The Canadian's graphic

account of Niagara phenomena served a good purpose in toning down the earlier exaggerations; but, reported Mr. Dudley, "He confirms Father Hennepin's and Mr. Kellug's Account of the large Trouts of those Lakes, and solemnly affirmed there was one taken lately, that weighed eighty-six pounds."[24]

Two or three days[25] after the arrival of Longueuil and his party, there came two other canoes; one laden with merchandise bound for Detroit; in the other were four traders and the famous Jesuit, Father Charlevoix.

It was "two o'clock in the afternoon" of May 22d that Charlevoix reached the mouth of the Niagara. He had passed the neglected waste, the site of Denonville's and La Salle's earlier establishments, not stopping until he reached Joncaire's cabin—"to which," he wrote a few days later, "they have beforehand given the name of fort: for it is pretended that in time this will be changed into a great fortress." There were here now, all told, some fifty Frenchmen, a most distinguished company to be found, this May evening of the year 1721, harbored together in a rough house under the Niagara escarpment at the edge of the rapids, Here these comrades in arms and adventure feasted together on fresh fish which Seneca and Mississauga boys brought them from the river, with roast venison or other provision from the forest, well prepared by Longueuil's own cooks; not forgetting the comfort of French liquors or other luxuries which the voyager of quality was sure to carry with him into the wilderness. They gave the priest a welcome at the board, and he, being no ascetic, was glad to join them. It is a pleasure to conjure up the jovial gathering—a rare

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24. *See* "An Account of the Falls of the River Niagara, taken at Albany, Oct. 10, 1721, from Monsieur Borassaw, a French native of Canada. By the Hon. Paul Dudley, Esq., F. R. S.," in *Philosophical Transactions,* Royal Soc., London, 1722. Dudley's record of Borassaw is also given in Vol. III, "The Gallery of Nature and Art" (6 vols.), 2d ed., London, 1818. *See also* Vol. XIII of La Roche's "Memoires litér. de la Grande Bretagne," La Haye, 1721-26.

25. Durant says May 21st; Charlevoix says he arrived at Niagara on the afternoon of May 22d.—"Journal Historique," Letter XIV.

occasion in a history which usually presents to the student a dismal and distressed aspect, often deepening into tragedy.

The French officers were extremely well satisfied with what they found on the Niagara. A council was held at which the Senecas made their usual facile promises and Joncaire spoke "with all the good sense of a Frenchman, whereof he enjoys a large share, and with the sublimest eloquence of an Iroquoise."

The officers were to set off on their mission the next day. That evening a Mississauga Indian invited them to a "festival," as Charlevoix calls it; and although by this time he was not without some acquaintance with Indian ways, the priest found it "singular enough." As this is the first "festival" on the banks of the Niagara which has been reported for us, the reader may find pleasure in joining the party, with the Jesuit historian for mentor:

"It was quite dark when it began, and on entering the cabin of this Indian, we found a fire lighted, near which sat a man beating on a kind of drum; another was constantly shaking his *chichicoué*, and singing at the same time. This lasted two hours and tired us very much as they were always repeating the same thing over again, or rather uttering half articulated sounds, and that without the least variation. We entreated our host not to carry this prelude any further, who with a good deal of difficulty showed us this mark of complaisance.

"Next, five or six women made their appearance, drawing up in a line, in very close order, their arms hanging down, and dancing and singing at the same time, that is to say, they moved some paces forwards, and then as many backwards, without breaking the rank. When they had continued this exercise about a quarter of an hour, the fire, which was all that gave light in the cabin, was put out, and then nothing was to be perceived but an Indian dancing with a lighted coal in his mouth. The concert of the drum and *chichicoué* still continued, the women repeating their dances and singing from time to time; the Indian danced all the while, but as he could only be distinguished by the

light of the coal in his mouth he appeared like a goblin, and was horrible to see. This medley of dancing, and singing, and instruments, and that fire which never went out, had a very wild and whimsical appearance, and diverted us for half an hour; after which we went out of the cabin, though the entertainment lasted till morning." The discreet father naively adds to his fair correspondent: "This, madam, is all I saw of the fire-dance, and I have not been able to learn what passed the remainder of the night." He speculates at length on how the chief performer could have held a live coal in his mouth; the Indians, he is told, know a plant which renders the part that has been rubbed with it insensible to fire, "but whereof they would never communicate the discovery to the Europeans." With the known properties of cocaine and some other drugs in mind, this explanation would seem in a degree plausible; against the theory is the fact that the pharmacopaea has pretty thoroughly tested all the plants which the Indian of these latitudes could have known. There was probably a good deal of charlatanry about the exhibition which so puzzled the good priest.

To Charlevoix, the environs of Magazin Royal were far from pleasing. Most of the modern visitors who resort to the vicinity in thousands every summer, find the prospect uncommonly attractive. Here the wild gorge of the Niagara ends, and between alluvial banks the beautiful river, as if wearied with its struggles above, continues at a slower pace toward the blue Ontario. At landings, on the Lewiston or Queenston sides, are steamers with flags a-flutter waiting for the throngs of tourists. Trolley-cars shuttle back and forth, their road-beds scarring and changing the old slopes. On the Canadian side, cedars and other wild growth still soften the outlines of the heights, crowned with a noble Corinthian shaft in memory of the heroic Brock. A bridge, the second that has swung across the river at the mouth of the gorge, and, on the American side, a steam railroad, have still further contributed to the obliteration of natural outlines. But nothing short of a cataclysm can destroy the beauty of the place. The heights are green and pleasant,

easily reached by winding roads, crowned with grain-fields and orchards. Below are the quiet, picturesque villages of Lewiston and Queenston, and all the low country is a garden.

Not so did it appear to Charlevoix, who protested that "nothing but zeal for the public good could possibly induce an officer to remain in such a country as this, than which a wilder and more frightful is not to be seen. On the one side you see just under your feet, and as it were at the bottom of an abyss, a great river, but which in this place is like a torrent by its rapidity, by the whirlpools formed by a thousand rocks, through which it with difficulty finds a passage, and by the foam with which it is always covered. On the other, the view is confined by three mountains placed one over the other, and whereof the last hides itself in the clouds. This would have been a very proper scene for the poets to make the Titans attempt to scale the heavens. In a word, on whatever side you turn your eyes, you discover nothing which does not inspire a secret horror." This shows a favorite form of the exaggeration to which the priest was addicted; he has elsewhere described mere oak trees as reaching "to the clouds."

After the departure of the officers, he made the long portage and continued his journey. Once up the heights, he acknowledged a change of sentiment. "Beyond those uncultivated and uninhabitable mountains, you enjoy the sight of a rich country, magnificent forests, beautiful and fruitful hills; you breathe the purest air, under the mildest and most temperate climate imaginable." His passage up the Niagara, it will be remembered, was at the end of May. He visited the falls, of which he wrote on the spot a long description, sending it back to Montreal by some voyageurs whom he met at the entrance to Lake Erie; whence, on May 27th, he continued his long canoe voyage to the westward. The goods for trade and for the post at Detroit were laboriously packed over the portage. Voyageurs and Indians, sweating and straining, bore inverted on their shoulders the long bark canoes, up the steep heights and along the forest path to quiet water above the cataract.

Setting out in the other direction, our tourist officers, with De Noyan, Laubinois and Durant, departed on the 22d, and on reaching the lake turned their prow westward, to make their way to Fort Frontenac along the north shore of the lake.

Nearly a month later Chaplain Durant, making his way to Albany with a delegation of Indians, met Joncaire at the mouth of the Oswego River. "I asked him," the chaplain writes, "what he had done with these savages upon the subject of the voyage he had undertaken to them. He answered me, 'I have beat the Bush and Mr. de Longueuil will take the birds. Our voyage will do him honor at the Court of France,' and explained himself no further." A little advanced on his way, above the Oswego falls, Durant met Longueuil and La Chauvignerie. "Have you succeeded," he asked, "in engaging the Five Nations to defend the Post of Niagara?" They answered that the chiefs of the Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas and Onondagas had given them "good words," promised to tell him further at Montreal, and hurried on towards Lake Ontario.

The French officers were little inclined to make a confidant of the priest, and with good reason, for he was then, as he had been at Niagara, virtually a spy in the English interest. John Durant was a Recollect, a Frenchman who claimed to be of Huguenot family, which, perhaps, accounts for his resolve to change both his country and his religion. Apparently his Niagara visit suggested the way to him. He had been stationed at Fort Frontenac, and returned thither from Niagara; but on June 13th he deserted that post and his charge, and with an Indian escort set out for Albany, where he stated his case to Governor Burnet, and gave him a journal of what he had seen and heard at Niagara. It is from that journal that a portion of the foregoing narrative is drawn.[26] Burnet made Durant the bearer of his own report to the Lords of Trade in London, together with a letter commending the author for favor and suggesting reward for his services. In due time

26. *See* Durant's Memorial, etc., N. Y. Col. Docs., V, 588-591.

the thanks of the Lords of Trade were sent back to Governor Burnet, with the assurance that "we have done what we could for his [Durant's] service, tho' not with so much success as we cou'd wish"[27]; and we hear no more o[c] Chaplain Durant, the Huguenot Spy of the Niagara.

VII. Governor Burnet gets Interested.

William Burnet was appointed Governor of the Colonies of New York and New Jersey, April 19, 1720. He was no sooner established in his new office than he began a zealous campaign against the advances of the French. In his first communication to the Lords of Trade, Sept. 24, 1720, just one week after his arrival in New York, he stated that "there may be effectual measures taken for fortifying & securing the Frontier against the French, who are more industrious than ever in seducing our Indians to their Interests & have built trading Houses in their country." In November, reporting the result of the Legislative Assembly of 1720, he declared it his intention to build a new fort at Niagara and a small one at Onondaga. He complained that the French "tryed to seduce the Sinnekees" by sending priests among them, grotesquely declaring this to be a breach of the treaty which required the French "not to molest the Five Nations"! "This," he added, "besides their continuing to fortify at Niagara shews how much they take advantage of the unsettled state of the limits between the Crowns."[28]

"When I get the King's presents to the Indians, which I hope will be dispatched," he suggestively wrote, "I propose to go into the Indian country through the five nations and give them these presents at their own homes when I come among the Sinnekees I will propose to them my design to build a Fort at Niagara & leave a whole company of souldiers to guard it and be a defence to the Indians against the French and to make this succeed the better I

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27. Lords of Trade to Burnet, Whitehall, June 6, 1722.

28. Burnet to the Lords of Trade, June 18, 1721.

intend to give land to the officers and souldiers & to the Palatines and all others that will go there by this means in a year or two the country which is very fruitful will maintain itself and be the finest Settlement in the Province because it is seated in the Pass where all the Indians in our dependance go over to hunt and trade with the Farr Indians it will likewise make it practicable to have another settlement above the Fall of Niagara where vessells may be built to trade into all the Great Lakes of North America with all the Indians bordering on them, with whom we may have an immense Trade never yet attempted by us and now carried on by the French with goods brought from this Province."

The project does credit to the Governor's zeal and enthusiasm, but it came to naught, so far as Niagara was concerned. In a representation to the King the following year, the advantage is urged of building a fort "in the country of the Seneca Indians, near the Lake Ontario, which, perhaps, might be done with their consent by the means of presents, and it should the rather be attempted without the loss of time, to prevent the French from succeeding in the same design, which they are now actually endeavoring at"[29]; and the King's attention was especially directed to Burnet's Niagara scheme, but no royal encouragement was given. The Governor himself, in his report to the Lords of Trade for 1721, reviews at length the protest he had made to the Canadian Governor because of the French establishment at Niagara, but says nothing more of his own proposition for that river. He had sent instead a small company to carry on trade at Irondequoit Bay. The Palatines, whom he had considered as available Niagara colonists, had objected to such an exile in a distant and probably hostile wilderness, and had been given their now historic lands on the Mohawk.

One phase of the establishment at Irondequoit must be noted in tracing the history of the Niagara. The company of seven young Dutchmen who spent the winter of 1721-'22 at Irondequoit, were under the command of Capt. Peter

29. "State of the British Plantations in America," 1721.

Schuyler, Jr. To him Governor Burnet gave explicit instructions for the regulation of trade and the control of his party. In a postscript to his letter of instructions he wrote:

"Whereas it is thought of great use to the British Interest to have a Settlem[t] upon the nearest part of the lake Erée near the falls of Iagara you are to Endeavour to purchase in his Majesty's name of the Sinnekes or other native propriators all such Lands above the falls of Iagara fifty miles to the southward of the said falls which they can dispose of."

If young Schuyler made any efforts to make this purchase, the record of it is not known. When he returned with his band to Albany in September, 1722, Joncaire still continued commandant at Magazin Royal, and trade-master of the Niagara region.

In June, 1722, the Lords of Trade, replying to Burnet's proposition of a year and a half before, hoped that the fort which he would build on the Niagara would effectually check the efforts of the French at that point, but advised him to "take the consent of the Indian Proprietors" before he built. A year later—June 25, 1723—Burnet wrote that if he could get the Two-per-cent. Act confirmed, he should be "very ernest to build a Fort in the Indian Country among the Sinnekees," but subsequent events showed that he no longer thought Niagara the place for his establishment. The statement of the contemporary English historian, that a number of young men were at this time sent into Western New York "as far as the Pass between the Great Lakes at the Falls of Iagara to learn the language of these Indians & to renew the Trade,"[30]—that is to build up a direct traffic with the Western Indians which had been neglected for the easier barter of English goods to the French—apparently refers to the short-lived establishment at Irondequoit, already referred to. Evidence is lacking to show that the English or Dutch gained any foothold on the Niagara at this period.

In 1724, with due consent of the "Indian Proprietors," Burnet made his famous establishment at the mouth of the

30. Colden's "Account of the Trade of New York," 1723.

Oswego River, which was the foundation of the present city of Oswego. At the time, however, probably no one was dreaming of future cities. It was but a new move in the century-long game for the fur trade. One might say, with some accuracy, that it was Joncaire's trading-house on the Niagara that provoked the English to make a like establishment, though much better built, at Oswego; and it was the English at Oswego that spurred the French to hasten the construction of the stone Fort Niagara. A broader statement of the situation, however, would show that these establishments by no means represented all the efforts which the rivals were putting forth at this period to secure the Indian trade.

The English in particular were successful in other ways. One of the first legislative acts passed under Burnet had aimed to put a stop to the direct trade between the English and the French. It had long been the custom for Albany traders to carry English-made goods to Montreal, selling them to the French who in turn traded them to the Indians. The English could supply certain articles which were more to the savage taste than those sent over from France; and they could afford to sell them at a lower price. Having stopped the peddling to the French, Governor Burnet made strong efforts to draw the far Western Indians to Albany for trade direct with them. In these efforts he was fairly successful. Bands of strange savages from Mackinac and beyond, accompanied by their squaws and papooses, presented themselves at Albany, where their kind had never been seen before. They had come down Lake Huron, past the French at Detroit, and through Lake Erie; and paddling down the swift reaches of the navigable Niagara had made the portage, reëmbarking below the heights and at the very doorway of the French trading-house; with some interchange, no doubt, of jeers and imprecations, but none of furs for French goods; and following the historic highway for canoes, they skirted the Ontario shore to the Oswego, than passed up that river, through Oneida Lake and down the Mohawk, until they could lay their bundles of beaver skins before the English, on the strand at Albany.

This was, indeed, a triumph of trade. They spoke a language which the traders there had never heard, but they brought many packs of furs; and with, perhaps, a double interpretation, the business sped to the entire satisfaction of the English. These people came in various bands; about twenty hunters, in the spring of 1722; and in the spring of 1723 over eighty, besides their numerous train of women and children; with sundry other parties following. They traveled over 1,200 miles to get to Albany.

Burnet was delighted with this proof that even with their Magazin Royal at the foot of the Niagara portage, the French did not by any means have a monopoly of the business. The English emissaries in the country of the Five Nations were as active as ever was Joncaire, and at this period appear to have been even more successful. Burnet attributed the increased trade to the stoppage of the English-French barter above mentioned and to "the Company whom I have kept in the Sinnekees Country whose business it has been to persuade all the Indians that pass by to come rather to trade at Albany than at Montreal, and as the Indians that come from the remote Lakes to go to Canada are commonly in want of Provisions when they come below the falls of Niagara, they are obliged to supply themselves in the Sinnekees Country where our people are and then they may take their choice where they will go, which considering the experience they have now had of the cheapness of Goods in this Province, we need not fear will be universally in our favor."[31]

So well disposed were these Western Indian traders towards the English, that they entered into a "League of Friendship" at Albany, which both Governor Burnet and Surveyor-General Colden construed as a desire to join the Six Nations, "that they may be esteemed the seventh Nation under the English Protection"—a matter for which the English were presumably far more eager than was the ancient League of the Iroquois, now, alas, past the splendid meridian of its strength. Its remaining energies were to be dissipated in the strife of the usurping strangers.

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31. Burnet to Lords of Trade, June 25, 1723.

Burnet's dealings with the Five Nations were conspicuous for fairness and sagacity. In order to thwart the French, and bring the Western fur trade to the New York Colony, he could afford to be generous, especially to the Senecas, whose aid was indispensable. In his first meeting with them, at Albany, in September, 1721, he so won their good will that they declared they would not let the French fortify Niagara. The French, they protested, had deceived them there some thirty years ago, pretending to get permission to build a storehouse, and then fortifying it without permission; but, said the Indians, we pulled it down. They did not exactly promise to do so again, but said: "We are resolved as soon as any French come to the Five Nations to tell them to pull down that trading House at Onjarara, and not to come either to settle or Trade among us any more."

The protestations of friendship at this council, on the part of the Five Nations—still referred to as the Five Nations, though since the inclusion of the Tuscaroras in 1715, really become six—were somewhat warmer than usual. The conference was shared in by the Governor "and diverse gentlemen from New York that attended his Excellency," by Captain Robert Walters, Cadwallader Colden and James Alexander of the Royal Council, by the twelve Commissioners of Indian Affairs, headed by Colonel Peter Schuyler, by the Mayor and Aldermen of Albany, and, no doubt, by such unofficial spectators as could gain admission. The Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas were all represented by painted, be-feathered and greedy sachems. Their chief spokesman was not content, before so august an assemblage, with the more ordinary pledges of friendship.

"We call you Brother," he said, holding out the belt of wampum, "and so we ought to do, and to love one another as well as those that have sucked on [one] breast, for we are Brethren indeed, and hope to live and dye so," and he promised on behalf of the Five Nations "to keep the Covenant Chain inviolable as long as Sun & Moon endure." It is not impossible that the Indians had wind of the great present they were to receive—"as noble a Present," Burnet wrote

afterwards, "as ever was given them from His Majesty King George." At the close of the formal proceedings the Indians told the Governor that they heard he had lately been married.[32] "We are glad of it," they said, "and wish you much Joy And as a token of our Rejoycing We present a few Beavers to your Lady for Pin Money," adding with amusing frankness, "It is Customary for a Brother upon his Marryage to invite his Brethren to be Merry and Dance."

The Governor did not disappoint them. The gifts which he now spread before them would have filled a warehouse. The list, which has been preserved,[33] is not uninstructive. There were given to the Indians on this occasion five pieces of strouds [worth at that time £10 per piece in New York and upwards of $13 at Montreal], five of duffels, five of blankets, four of "half thicks," fifty fine shirts, 213 Ozibrigg[34] shirts, fifty red coats, fifty pairs of stockings, six dozen scissors, fourteen dozen knives, four dozen jack-knives, five dozen square looking-glasses and thirty dozen of round hand-mirrors, twenty-eight parcels of gartering and twelve of binding, twenty pounds of beads, twenty brass kettles, fifty guns, 1,000 pounds of powder in bags, 200 pounds of bar lead, ten cases of ball, 1,500 gun-flints, twelve dozen jews-harps, six and one-half barrels of tobacco, and last, but very far from least, a hogshead of rum. There were besides private presents to the sachems, including guns, powder, shirts, laced coats and laced hats, and special portions of liquor. Even this was not enough. Governor Burnet "in the name of his Majesty, Ordered them some Barrls of Beer to be merry withall and dance, which they did according to their Custom and were extreamly well Satisfyed."

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32. He had married a daughter of Abraham Van Horne, a prominent New York merchant.

33. Minutes of Conference at Albany, Sept. 7, 1721, kept by Robt. Livingston, Sec'y for Indian Affairs.

34. A coarse linen much used in the Indian trade. The name is often written "Oznabrigg," but the correct form is Oznaburg, after the city so named in Germany, whence these linens were originally imported. The name came to be applied to coarse linens made elsewhere. "Duffels" were coarse woolen cloths, the name probably derived from Duffel in the Netherlands.

And back to their several villages the loaded retinue went; up the Mohawk, to Onondaga; the diminishing party continuing, now by lake and stream, now filing along the old trails, to the Seneca towns in the valley of the Genesee and to the westward. Red coats, hand-mirrors and new guns were hard arguments to be overcome by the pinched French at Magazin Royal.

It was on the strength of the good will of the Senecas, won at this conference, that Burnet ventured to send his young men, under Captain Schuyler—son of Peter Schuyler, President of the Council—to attempt a settlement at Irondequoit on Lake Ontario. Burnet hoped that others would join him there; but caused it to be clearly understood that the place was indisputably in the Indians' possession. It was merely to serve as a depôt of English goods, where Western traders, who would pass by the French establishment on the Niagara, were to be supplied on terms far more liberal than the French could afford. With the one possible exception of powder, the English could furnish everything used in the Indian trade more cheaply than the French, supplying, of course, rum instead of brandy, a substitution to which the red man made no demur, so long as the quantity was ample.

VIII. The Building of Fort Niagara.

We are now come to the point in our story where the testimony of the ancient manuscripts is quickened, vivified, by an existing landmark. The stone house popularly known as the "castle," the most venerable of the group of structures in the Government reserve of Fort Niagara, dates, in its oldest parts, from 1726. Vaudreuil conceived the project of it; Longueuil the younger and Joncaire gained the uncertain consent of the Five Nations for its erection; and Gaspard Chaussegros de Lery, the King's chief engineer in Canada, determined its exact location and superintended its construction.

When the Marquis de Vaudreuil learned, Dec. 8, 1724, of the operations of the English at Oswegō, he realized at

once that another move in the game must be made by the French if they would retain even a share of that portion of the fur trade which made the Great Lakes its highway to market. Joncaire's feeble establishment was in danger of eclipse, of being cut out, by the rum and other superior inducements which the English were so lavishly offering. It is evident that the Governor studied the situation thoroughly that winter. By spring he had made up his mind. He wrote to the Minister, May 25th, that, should the English undertake to make a permanent establishment at Oswego, nothing remained but to fortify Niagara. He could say "fortify" to the Minister, though to the Iroquois declarations must continue to be made, that their devoted father—Onontio—sought only to build a trading-house—a storehouse—anything, so long as it was not called fort. He proposed first to build two barques on Lake Ontario, which should not only carry materials for the proposed construction at Niagara, but could cruise the lake and intercept Indian parties on their way to trade with the English. The building at Niagara, the Minister was informed, "will not have the appearance of a fort, so that no offense will be given to the Iroquois, who have been unwilling to allow any there, but it will answer the purpose of a fort just as well."

The Intendant, M. Bégon, approved the project. Under date of June 10, 1725, he wrote to the Minister, that in view of the great importance of doing everything possible to prevent the English from driving the French from Niagara, "we have determined to build at Fort Frontenac two barques to serve in case of need against the English, to drive them from that establishment [Niagara] and also to serve for carrying materials with which to build a stone fort at Niagara, which we hold to be necessary to put that post in a state of defense against the English" as well as against the Iroquois. He added that these boats would be very useful in time of peace, sailing between La Galette, Frontenac and Niagara, and carrying provisions, munitions of war, merchandise for trade, and peltries, reducing the

expense below that of canoe service. "They will serve also as far as Niagara for the transport of provisions, merchandise and peltries for all those belonging to the posts in the upper country, or who go up with trade permits. The freight which they will be able to carry will compensate the King for the cost of construction.

"I sent, for this purpose, in February last, two carpenters and four sawyers, who arrived at Fort Frontenac, traveling on the ice, the 26th of the same month. I am informed that during the winter they cut the wood needed and have barked and sawed a part of it. I have also sent nine other carpenters and two blacksmiths, who set out from Montreal on the 15th of last month, to hurry on the work, that these boats may be ready to sail the coming autumn."[35]

A postscript to this letter adds: "Since writing, M. de Joncaire has come down and tells me that the Iroquois will not interfere with building the boats, and will not oppose the Niagara establishment, asking only that there should not be built there a stone fort."

As the years passed, it was Joncaire who more and more represented the power of France on the Niagara. He it was to whom the Governor of Canada entrusted the delicate business of maintaining amicable relations with the Senecas; and on his reports and advice depended in considerable measure the attitude of the French towards their ever-active rivals. In November, 1724, Vaudreuil had written to the Minister that in order to retain the Five Nations in their "favorable dispositions," he thought he "could not do better than to send Sieur de Joncaire to winter at Niagara and among the Senecas. According to the news to be received from Sieur de Joncaire," added the Governor, "I shall determine whether to send Sieur de Longueuil to the Onontagués, among whom he has considerable influence."

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35. These barques were commanded by sailing-masters Gagnon and Goueville. Each had four sailors, with six soldiers to help. A memorandum states that the operations of the vessels in 1727 cost 5775 livres, 3 sols (sous), 11 deniers. A sailor received for a season's work 530 livres, the masters 803 livres each.

That Joncaire's news was favorable, is evident from the sequel; for Longueuil was sent to the Onondagas, from whom he gained a dubious consent that the French might build a fort at the mouth of the Niagara. In June, 1725, Joncaire went down from the Seneca Castle—near present Geneva—to Quebec, where he assured the Intendant, Bégon, that the Iroquois were pledged not to interfere with the construction of the two barques then building at Fort Frontenac, "nor oppose the establishment at Niagara, only requiring that no stone fort should be erected there." According to the French reports, this last stipulation was soon set aside, for in the dispatches of Vaudreuil and Bégon to the Minister, dated May 7, 1726, telling of Longueuil's mission to the Five Nations, one reads as follows:

"He repaired next to Onontagué, an Iroquois village, and found the Deputies from the other four villages there waiting for him; he got them to consent to the construction of two barques, and to the erection of a stone house at Niagara, the plan of which he designed."

This mission of Longueuil proved an eventful one. He was charged to cross Lake Ontario to order the English to withdraw from Oswego. A curious meeting ensued. At the mouth of the river he found 100 Englishmen with sixty canoes. They stopped him, called for his pass, and showed him their instructions from the Governor of New York, not to let any Frenchman go by without a passport. Then the doughty Canadian, not relishing the idea of being under English surveillance, turned to the Iroquois chiefs who were present, and taunted them with being no longer masters of their own territory. His harangue had the desired effect. The Indians, galled by his words, broke out against the English with violent reproaches and threats. "You have been permitted to come here to trade," they said, "but we will not suffer anything more." They promised Longueuil that in the event of a French war with the English, they would remain neutral; and the delighted emissary turned his back on the discomfited Englishmen, who dared not interfere, and accompanied by a large volunteer retinue of Indians, continued his journey to Onondaga.

Here the deputies of the Five Nations gathered to meet them. He showed them the plan he had designed for a house at Niagara. The report as subsequently laid before the Minister and Louis XV., says "a stone house." It is by no means certain that Longueuil gave the Indians this idea. According to the version they gave, when taken to task the next year by Gov. Burnet, the French officer told the Onondagas "that he had built a Bark House at Niagara, which was old and began to decay, that he could no longer keep his goods dry in it, and was now come to desire leave to build a bigger house, wherein his goods might be safe from rain, and said that if they consented that he might build a house there and have vessels in Cadaracqui lake [Ontario], he promised it should be for their good, peace and quietness, and for their children's children, that the French would protect them for three hundred years." The Senecas were reported to have protested; they sent a wampum belt to the Onondagas, with the warning that "in case the French should desire to make any Building or Settlement at Niagara or at Ochsweeke [Lake Erie] or elsewhere on their land, they should not give their consent to it." But the Onondagas, "being prevailed upon by Fair speeches and promises, rejected the Sinnekes belt, and gave the French leave for building at Niagara." It was Joncaire, as we have seen, who overcame the objection of the Senecas. Returning from their country, he brought word that they would not hinder the construction, though he had previously cautioned Vaudreuil not to attempt a stone building. But the elder Longueuil, writing to the Minister under date of Oct. 31, 1725, explicitly says of his son's achievement: "The Sieur de Longueuil, having repaired to the Onondaga village, found there the deputies of the other four Iroquois villages. He met them there, he got them to consent to the construction of the two barques and to the building of a stone house at Niagara." It was to be no fort, but "a house of solid masonry, where all things needed for trade with the Indians could be safely kept, and for this purpose he would go to Niagara to mark out the spot on which this house might be erected, to which they consented."

The sequence of events in this affair affords a striking illustration of the way in which things were taken for granted, or work undertaken before official sanction was obtained or funds made available. The two barques, without which the construction of Fort Niagara would have been impossible, were being built before the Indians had given their consent to it. The consent of the Indians to the erection of the fort was not gained until after its erection had been fully determined upon by the French; and all of this important work was well in hand long before the Department in France had provided funds for it. The plan of the Niagara house, which is spoken of as designed by Longueuil, was sent to the Minister in France, with an estimate of the cost, amounting to 29,295 livres.[36] Various estimates are mentioned in the dispatches of the time. De Maurepas, perplexed by a multiplicity of demands, endorsed upon these dispatches: "It seems necessary to forego, this year, the grant of 29,295 li., and 13,090 li. for the house at Niagara and the construction of the two barques." At Versailles, April 29, 1727, Louis expressed his satisfaction at the construction of Fort Niagara, and promised to "cause to be appropriated in next year's Estimate for the Western Domain, the sum of 20,430 li., the amount of the expense, according to the divers estimates they have sent, and as the principal house at the mouth of the river must have been finished this spring, his Majesty's intention is, that Sieurs de Beauharnois and Duypuy [Dupuy] adopt measures to rebuild the old house next Autumn. This they will find the more easy, as the two barques built at Fort Frontenac will aid considerably in transporting materials. His Majesty agrees with them in opinion that the Iroquois will not take any umbrage at this, for besides being considered only as the reconstruction of the house already there, it will be used, at least during the Peace, only for Trade. They will, meanwhile, adopt with those Indians such precautions as they shall consider necessary, to neutralize any new impressions of distrust the English would not fail to insinuate among them on this occasion. This must prompt them to have the

36. The livre of the time corresponds to the modern franc.

work pushed on with the greatest possible diligence." The King afterwards disapproved of any further outlay for "the old house," and Joncaire's establishment at the head of the lower navigation on the Niagara was never rebuilt.

It was true then, as now, that building expenses do not always work out according to specifications. In October, 1727, we find Dupuy trying to explain his heavy expenses: "The house at Niagara cost infinitely more than the 29,295 li. granted for last year. The expeditions which we have had to send there in 1726 and this year have greatly increased the cost of freight and transportation of provisions needed there."

Vaudreuil had hoped to have the vessels on Lake Ontario ready by the autumn of 1725; but no record is found stating that they sailed to the Niagara that year. The testimony of the correspondence, so far as known, shows that the vessels did not carry building material or workmen to the Niagara until navigation opened in the spring of 1726.[37] The Baron de Longueuil wrote, Oct. 31, 1725: "The two barques have been finished this autumn, they will be ready to sail next Spring, and to carry the stone and other material needed for building the stone house at Niagara," etc. They were to take out on their first voyage, ten masons and four carpenters and joiners, besides the 100 soldiers with six officers detailed for the enterprise.

Vaudreuil, as we have seen, had written that Longueuil had designed a plan for the proposed establishment on the Niagara, and it may have been in accordance with the suggestions of this soldier that the work was begun; but for such a construction as was desired, expert engineering ability was required. There was but one man in Canada qualified to undertake the task, and to him the Baron de

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37. The local histories and narratives relating to Fort Niagara usually give the date of its commencement as 1725. There is some discrepancy of dates in the documents, or copies of original documents, which I have examined; but it is plain that work on the "castle" was not begun until June, 1726. That the reader may know on what I base my conclusions, I have given in my narrative ample extracts from the documents themselves.

Longueuil—then governor *ad interim,* wrote under date of March 28, 1726:

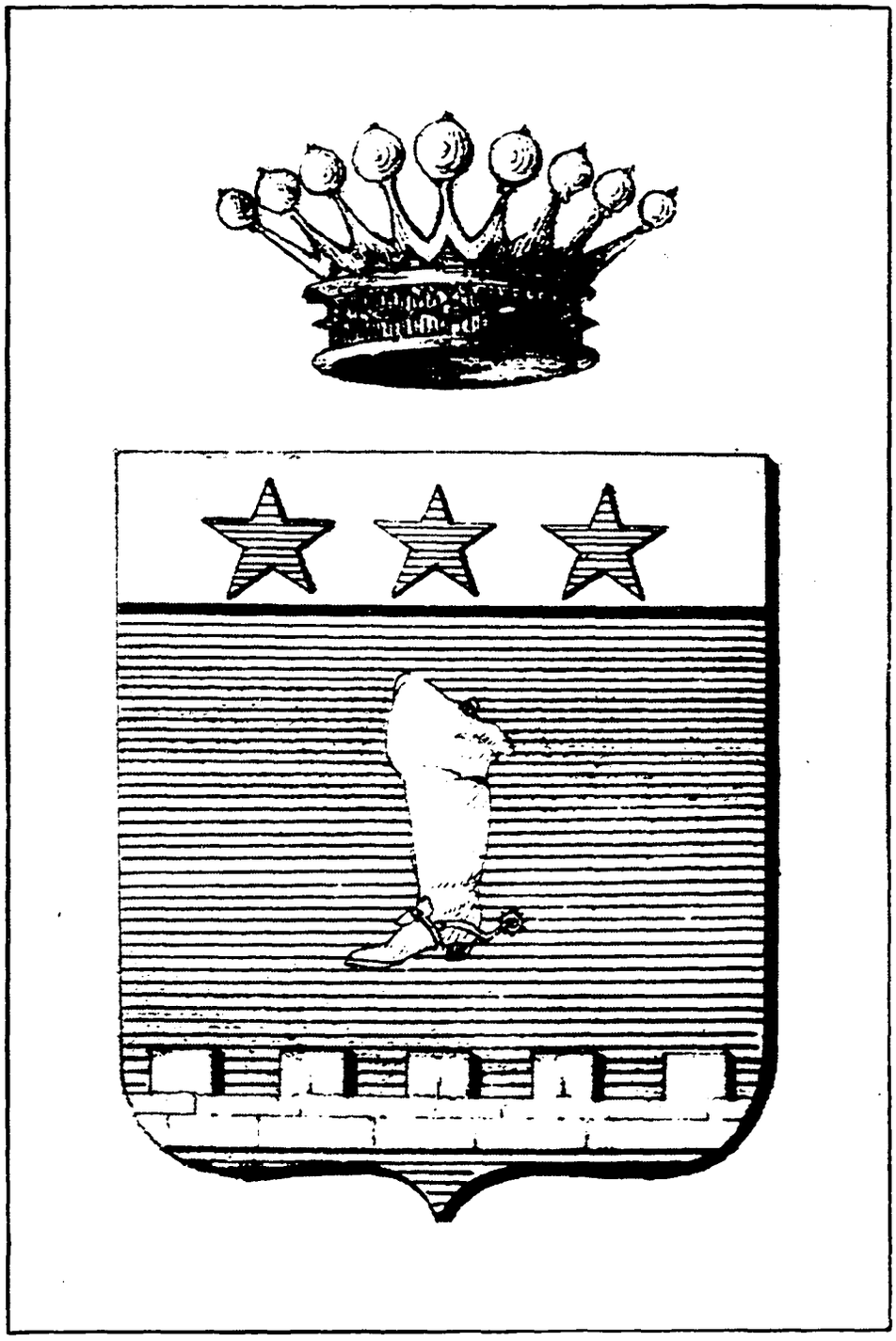
"I beg Monsieur Chaussegros de Lery, engineer, to work without let-up in building the Niagara house, which he will place wherever he shall judge it most advisable. It is a work of absolute necessity, the old house being of wood and offering no means of preservation, unless it is fortified. It is moreover the greatest consequence to profit by the favorable disposition of the Iroquois in regard to us. I undertake to have this expense approved by the Court."

Gaspard Chaussegros de Lery, who now becomes an important figure in the story of the Niagara, was the son of an engineer of Toulon, where he was born, Oct. 13, 1682. Trained to his father's profession, we find him, in 1706, serving in the army of Italy, and gaining glory and a wound at the siege of Turin. A later service in the squadron of the Marquis de Forbin, took him to the coast of Scotland and won him a captain's rank in the infantry regiment of Sault. When the navy board (for so we may render *"le conseil du marine"*) decided in 1716 to undertake a more extensive system of fortifications in Canada, it chose De Lery to carry out the royal plans. These included an elaborate refortification of Quebec, the building of a wall around Montreal and subsequently of other works at Chambly, Three Rivers and other points, as well as the construction of prisons and public buildings. De Lery came at once to the scene of his labors, perfected the plan of what he proposed to do at Quebec, and returning to Paris, submitted it to the King. His plans and estimates were approved and he returned to Canada to press forward the work. The correspondence of the time shows that he was much embarrassed by lack of sufficient appropriations; a fact which gives special point to the closing statement in M. de Longueuil's letter, assigning him to Niagara. Not having received any order from the Court to undertake this work, De Lery was apprehensive that the King would not approve. However, relying on the assurance of Longueuil, he devoted himself to it in the summer of

1726. Under date of July 26th of that year the Baron de Longueuil wrote to the minister:

"It is for me to inform you of the measures which I took this last spring for the establishment of the post of Niagara . . . and of my plan for sending to Niagara as soon as navigation was open, in order to forestall the English, and to begin early to work on the house of which we have had the honor to send you the plan, in order that it may be completed this year. M. Bégon assured me that he would send the workmen I had asked for, as soon as the ice went out, and that M. de Lery would come to Montreal at the same time. He arrived here in March; and in April I sent the workmen with a detachment of a hundred soldiers, commanded by my son and four other officers. As soon as they arrived at Niagara, I learn by these officers, M. de Lery had laid out the house in another place than that which I had proposed to him, and which had seemed to me most suitable in order to make us masters of the portage, and of the communication between the two lakes. He will no doubt give you his reasons.

"The work has been very well carried on and the fortifications are well advanced. The barques which were built last year at Frontenac have been of wonderful aid. They sent me word the tenth of this month that the walls were already breast high everywhere. There has been no opposition on the part of the Iroquois, who on the contrary appear well satisfied to have us near them; but the English, restless and jealous of this establishment, have seduced and engaged several Seneca chiefs to come and thwart us with speeches of which I send herewith a copy, and which have had no other effect than to reassure us of the good will of the Iroquois." He expresses the hope that the house at Niagara will be finished this year, refers to the Dutch and English at Oswego, and adds: "The uneasiness I have felt, because of the English and Dutch, who had threatened to establish themselves at Niagara, and my fears lest the Iroquois would retract the word they gave last year, have not permitted me to await your orders for the construction of



THE DE LERY ARMS.

this house. I beg you to approve what I have done through zeal for the good of this colony."

One of the "four other officers" referred to in the foregoing letter, as having shared in the building of Fort Niagara, was the Sieur de Ramezay, "Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis," etc., as later memoirs recount his titles. He was only an ensign in the colonial troops in 1720, when he entered upon his Canadian service; and he remained in the garrison at Montreal until the spring of 1726, when he was appointed lieutenant and sent to Niagara. Another who shared in this undertaking was a son of Lieut. Le Verrier. The youth "showed good qualities in his service at Niagara," but becoming sick was sent back to Quebec. Still another unfortunate was the Sieur de la Loge, who received so severe an injury in one of his eyes, at Niagara in this summer, that it was feared he would lose the sight of both; he was sent to Quebec and thence to Paris, that he might have the attention of the famous oculist, St. Yves.

Under date of Sept. 5, 1726, the Chevalier de Longueuil, son of the Baron whose letter has been quoted, wrote from Niagara that the new house was very much advanced, and would have been finished had it not been for the sickness that broke out among the workmen, thirty of whom had been ill; but that the place was then enclosed and secured.

De Longueuil, who knew the region well, had proposed that the stone house should stand further up the river, and on going to the Niagara, after his successful conference at Onondaga, had decided to place it "on a most advantageous elevation, about 170 feet from the old house, and some 130 feet from the edge of the river; the barques could there be moored to shore, under the protection of the house, of which they could make later on, a fort with crenelated enclosure or wooden stockade"; but De Lery decided otherwise, holding that the angle of the lake and river not only commanded the portage and all communication between the lakes, but enabled the French to keep watch over Lake Ontario, so as to prevent the English from going

to trade on the north shore of that lake. The English could not cross the lake in their bark canoes; to reach the north side, the natural route was by skirting the shore, from Oswego to Niagara and westward. Hence, even though De Lery had placed the fort at the portage, the English might easily have seized the mouth of the river, and by controlling Lake Ontario, have blockaded the French in their fort and starved them into a surrender. They could have made it impossible for assistance to reach it from the base of supplies, Frontenac, or the river towns; and they could have made it equally impossible for the garrison of Fort Niagara to withdraw. The two barques which the French counted so greatly upon, for communication with the new establishment, would often find it a tedious if not impossible matter to beat up to the portage against seven miles of steady current; whereas the post, if placed at the mouth of the river, would always be accessible, these vessels making the passage from Fort Frontenac and return, in fair weather, in about fourteen days. All of these reasons are so cogent that one can but wonder that an officer of Longueuil's experience should have considered any other spot than that fixed upon by De Lery. The latter's capabilities as a military engineer were sometimes called in question. Montcalm, more than a quarter century later, spoke of him not only as "a great ignoramus in his profession," adding, "it needs only to look at his works," but declared that he "robbed the King like the rest" of the men who served as Engineers in Chief in Canada.[38] Be that as it may, De Lery's judgment in locating Fort Niagara was justified by the circumstances.

When the foundations of the stone house were laid and the walls were rising, De Lery traced a fort around them. He made a map of the lake, showing the mouth of the river, and prepared plans and elevations of the house. The drawings were forwarded to the King, and are described in the abstract of dispatches. The portion of the works which it

38. Montcalm to M. de Normand, Montreal, April 12, 1759. Paris Docs., X, 963.

was found impossible to complete, before the winter of 1726-'27 set in, he colored yellow. He probably procured part of his stone from the Heights ("Le Platon"), his timber from the marsh west of the river. With the map there was also sent a memoir "to make plain my reasons for placing the house [*"maison à machicoulis"*] at the [entrance of the] strait, where it now stands, and where the late Marquis de Denonville, governor-general of this country, had formerly built a fort, with a garrison." He sent also a plan and estimate for a small house at the Niagara portage, adding: "This house will be useful in time of peace, but in case of war with the Indians, it could scarcely be maintained, on account of the difficulty of relieving the garrison." The memoir continues:

"I arrived, June 6th, with a detachment of troops, at the entrance to the river Niagara. The same day I examined it, with the masters of the barques. We found it not navigable for the barques." The examination must have been most superficial, for once past the bar at the mouth, they would have found a deep natural channel for seven miles.

"I remarked, in beginning this house, that if I built it, like those in Canada, liable to fire, should war come and the savages invest it, as was the case formerly with Mons. Denonville's fort, if it caught fire the garrison and all the munitions would be wholly lost, and the [control of the] country as well. It was this which determined me to make a house proof against these accidents. Instead of wooden partitions [*"cloisons"*] I have had built bearing-walls [*"des murs de refend"*], and paved all the floors with flat stones. . . . I have traced around a fort of four bastions; and in order that they may defend themselves in this house, I have made all the garret windows machicolated; the loft [*"grenier"*] being paved with flat stones on a floor full of good oak joists, upon which cannon may be placed above this structure. Though large it would have been entirely finished in September, had not some French voyageurs coming from the Miamis and Illinois, in passing this post, spread the fever here, so that nearly all the soldiers and

workmen have had it. This has interfered with the construction so that it has not been completed in the time that I had expected. There remains about a fourth of it to do next year. This will not prevent the garrison or traders from lodging there this winter." That his own services should not be overlooked he added: "I have the honor to inform you, Monsigneur, that my journeys to Niagara have occupied nearly five months."

De Lery's apprehensions regarding official approval of his choice of site for Fort Niagara were set at rest the next spring by the following letter from the new Minister of Marine:

"The Marquis de Beauharnois and M. Dupuy have forwarded to me the maps and plans which you sent to them, with data explaining your reasons for building the Niagara house where the late Marquis de Denonville had reared a wooden fort, which time has destroyed, instead of placing it at the portage where the old house stood. His Majesty is pleased to approve it. He is gratified with your zeal and the diligence with which you have conducted the work. . . . The Marquis has asked for you the Cross of St. Louis."[39]

IX. The Men who Achieved the Work.

While the King's engineer was busy with the plan and actual construction of the fort, Joncaire and his long-time friend and associate, the younger Longueuil, were fully occupied in keeping the savages in good humor. There is no known basis for the story that the French, resorting to stratagem, planned a hunt which should draw the Indians away from the spot until the building had progressed far enough to serve as a defense in case of attack.[40] Such a

39. Maurepas to Chaussegros de Lery, Brest, May 13, 1727. In later letters it is stated that M. de Lery was to receive the coveted decoration on Sept. 25, 1727.

40. "It is a traditionary story that the mess house, which is a very strong building and the largest in the fort, was erected by stratagem. A consider-

story does not accord with Joncaire's known relations with the Senecas.

It was a singular council that was held on the Niagara—probably at the old house at Lewiston—on July 14, 1726, between the younger de Longueuil and representatives of the Five Nations. Addressing himself to the officer, one of the chiefs referred to the conference of the preceding spring, and holding out a wampum belt, said: "I perceive my death approaching. It is you and the English who come to destroy us. I beg you, cease your work until I may hear your voice another time. Put the time at next September, when I will show you what is in my heart, as I hope you will open yours to me."

The shrewd commandant of Niagara was not to be diverted from his purpose. "Here is your belt, my son," he said, taking up the wampum. "I fold it and put it back in your bag." The return of the wampum always signified a rejection of proposals. "I put it back, not purposing to discontinue the works which they have sent me to do here. I hold fast to your former word, which consented that there should be built here a new and large house, to take the place of the old one, which can be no longer preserved.

"I do not consider these words you now speak as coming from you Iroquois, but as an English speech which shall not stop me. See, here on the table are wine and tobacco, which go better than this affair, which must be forgotten and which I reject."

As this "talk" was not confirmed by a belt, a second council was held at the unusual hour of midnight (*"tenu à minuit"*), at which a much finer belt of wampum was offered and accepted, with longer speeches, in which the Senecas

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able, though not powerful, body of French troops had arrived at the point. Their force was inferior to the surrounding Indians, of whom they were under some apprehensions. They obtained consent of the Indians to build a wigwam, and induced them, with some of their officers, to engage in an extensive hunt. The materials had been made ready and while the Indians were absent the French built. When the parties returned at night they had advanced so far with the work as to cover their faces and to defend themselves against the savages in case of an attack."—*"The Falls of Niagara," by Samuel DeVeaux, Buffalo, 1839.*

promised to stand by the pledges which the Onondagas had made. "It is not only for the present that I speak," said a chief, "but for always. We join hands for good business, we five Iroquois nations, and may we always keep faith, and you do the same on your side."

At the very outset of this new undertaking, the success of which he had so much at heart, Philippe de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, died at Quebec, Oct. 10, 1725, and was buried in the church of the Récollets at Château St. Louis. It would be superfluous here to enter upon a review of his long and on the whole successful administration; but it is pertinent to our especial study to recall his relations to the Niagara region. In France, as early as 1676, he had served in the Royal Musketeers. In the year of his arrival in Canada, 1687, we find him commanding a detachment of the troops of the Marine, engaging in the Iroquois campaign with Denonville, and sharing in the establishment of the ill-fated Fort Denonville at the mouth of the Niagara. The knowledge of the region gained then, undoubtedly affected his direction, throughout many years, of the endeavors of Joncaire and the younger de Longueuil. Soon after his first coming to Niagara, he was promoted to the rank of captain, for gallantry in the defense of Quebec against Phipps. He was decorated with the cross of St. Louis for a successful Indian campaign; and in 1698, when Callières succeeded Frontenac as Governor of Canada, the Chevalier de Vaudreuil succeeded Callières as Governor of Montreal. It was in 1703 that he again followed Callières, in the highest office of the colony. Though not a Canadian by birth, his connections by marriage were Canadian, and more than any other governor up to that time, he identified himself with colonial interests. The French in military or civil office in Canada were by no means always devoted to the welfare of the country; but Vaudreuil seems for the most part to have served it like a patriot. Throughout the twenty-two years of his administration, he had ever in view the promotion of the fur trade, the extension of French influence on the Lakes. His master-stroke in these efforts

was to be the establishment of Fort Niagara, regarding which Louis XV. had written to him with his own hand: "The post of Niagara is of the greatest importance, to preserve the trade with the upper countries." The King no doubt had derived his impressions from Vaudreuil's representations, but none the less, royal sanction was useful. Now, on the eve of achievement, his hand is withdrawn and another is to take up the work.

Louis XV. selected as the successor of Vaudreuil, Charles, Marquis de Beauharnois, a natural son of Louis XIV. He had been an office-holder in Canada a score of years prior to this date, having in 1702 succeeded M. de Champigny as Intendant. In 1705 he was appointed "Director of the Marine Classes" in France, but he was captain of a man-of-war when, Jan. 11, 1726, Louis XV. commissioned him to be Governor of Canada, an office which he was to administer until 1747, thus becoming a factor of no little consequence in the particular history that we are tracing. In the interim between Vaudreuil's death and the arrival of Beauharnois, that is, until Sept. 2, 1726, the first Baron de Longueuil was the chief executor for Canada. He solicited the governorship, but was without influence; the Court, it is said, was advised not to appoint a native Canadian. But the post which was denied him was, later on, to be filled by his son.

Chabert de Joncaire of the trading-house at the portage is spoken of at this period as the commander at Niagara[41]; it is not plain, however, that he was in command of troops at the new fort. In July, 1726, the son of the lieutenant governor of Montreal was sent with a small body of men to garrison the fort and complete the works. This man, with whom begins a succession of commandants of Fort Niagara which continues to the present day, was Charles Le Moyne the second—Le Moyne, it will be borne in mind, being the family name of the Baron de Longueuil. The first of that title was now a veteran of seventy years. The new commandant, too, had seen many years of service for the

41. N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 979.

King in America, and had been on the Niagara before this time. As early as 1716 he had made a campaign beyond Detroit, into the Illinois country, and had been reported as killed. We have noted his great influence with the Indians; but the few glimpses afforded of him in the official documents give little idea of his personality, save in one respect: he was, at a somewhat later period than we are now considering, very corpulent, so that, in the language of the chronicle, he was "illy adapted for travel." He was forty years old when he came to command the new fort on the Niagara. Three years later he was to succeed, on the death of his father, to the title and estate of baron.

It should not be overlooked that this new establishment, which marked a new advance of France and was a new expression of that power, short-lived though it was to be, in the Lake region and Mississippi Valley, identifies with the story of the Niagara a scion of the greatest Canadian family of its period, and, in certain aspects, one of the most important and influential families concerned in making the history of America. Charles Le Moyne the immigrant, son of a tavernkeeper of Dieppe, played his part in the New World as pioneer, interpreter, and trader, marvelously prosperous for his day and opportunities. But the family fame begins with his many sons, several of whom appear on the pages of seventeenth and eighteenth century history by the surnames drawn from their seigneurial rights and estates. One of these sons, Charles, was that first Baron de Longueuil whom we have seen as a major in La Barre's expedition; campaigning with Denonville against the Senecas; helping in the establishment of the ill-fated fort on the Niagara which was built in 1687, and subsequently serving his King in many capacities, not least important of which was that as negotiator with the Iroquois, thus paving the way for the erection of the new Fort Niagara. These were incidents in his later years while serving as lieutenant governor of Montreal. In his more youthful days, and while his numerous younger brothers were still children, he had served in France; as one appreciative student has admirably summed

it up—"had, with his Indian attendant, figured at Court as related by the Duchess of Orleans in one of her letters to her sister, the Countess Palatine Louise; had married the daughter of a nobleman, a lady in waiting to her Royal Highness of Orleans; and had built that great fortress-château of Longueuil, the marvel of stateliness and elegance of the day for all Canada; and had obtained his patent of nobility and title of Baron."[42] Of his brothers, six—Iberville, Saint Hélène, Maricourt, Sérigny, Bienville, Châteauguay—have written their names on the continent from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, none more largely or lastingly than Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, who as Bienville is known as the Father of Louisiana. And of his sons, Charles Le Moyne the second, born in 1687, was the captain, the chevalier and (on the death of his father) the second Baron de Longueuil; the adopted son of the Onondagas, the comrade and friend of Joncaire, and the first commandant of the new Fort Niagara.

A glimpse of the fort, during this interesting period of construction, is afforded by a letter written by the younger Longueuil to his father the baron. It is dated "Niagara, 5th September, 1726," and runs in part as follows:

There are no more English at Oswego or at the little fall. The last canoe which has gone to winter had to go on to Albany to find brandy, and they assure me that there is not one in the whole length of the lake or the river. This is the third canoe that has told me the same thing. If I meet any in the lake or going down, I will have them pillaged.

It will be October before I can leave here, and I do not know when we shall have finished. Sickness has constantly increased. We have now more than thirty men attacked by fever, and I find that our soldiers resist better than our workmen. If they could work, we should not have enough of them to put the house in state of security this month. It would certainly have been finished this year, but for the sickness. I mean the stonework, for M. de Lery having sent away the sawyers, we have not enough planks to half cover it. The master-carpenter is sick and has done nothing for fifteen days. We shall cover what we can, and then close the gable

42. Grace King's "New Orleans," p. 15.

with the joist of the scaffolding. *(" . . . bouchera le pignon avec les madriers d'echafaudage.")* If they (the gables) are not entirely enclosed, they will at any rate be protected by the walls all around.

He adds that as soon as possible, he shall send back the married men, who are good-for-nothing weepers *(les pleureux qui ne valent rien")*, no doubt a true-enough characterization of the home-loving *habitant,* who in the savage-infested wilderness of the Niagara found himself homesick even to tearfulness.

Among the French officers at Niagara in the summer of 1726 was Pierre Jacques Payen, Captain de Noyan; who wrote, probably in the fall of that year,[43] to the Marquis de Beauharnois, as follows:

"As I believe, monsieur, that you have not recently been informed regarding the establishment at Niagara, I crave the honor of telling you as to the condition of the house when I left there, and such news as I learned on my way.

"I set out from Niagara the 8th of this month. The works would have been finished by this time, had not frequent rains and the violent fevers which attacked nearly all our workmen, long delayed their completion.

"There remained yet twelve or fifteen days' work of masonry to do, and there is reason to fear that the timber framework is not yet ready to put up. Whatever diligence M. de Longueuil may have been able to use, he could not procure planks enough to cover it."

The letter continues with a graphic account of negotiations between the English and the Iroquois, as it was reported to Capt. de Noyan at Fort Frontenac. It is but another version of the unsuccessful negotiations of Peter Schuyler—this time disguised in the old French as "Joan

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43. The copy of M. de Noyan's letter which I have followed in the Archives office at Ottawa, bears date Feb. 22, 1726. The original obviously was written some months later than that, probably in September. The old form of indicating September—"7bre"—may very likely have been misread by a copyist. September 22d also accords with the date of a report by de Noyan, given in an abstract of despatches relating to Niagara, N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 978.

Sckuila." "You know," Schuyler is reported to have harangued to the tribes, "you know that the French are building a fort at Niagara in order to reduce you to slavery—and you are resting with your arms crossed. What are you thinking of? We are all dead, brothers, you and I, if we do not prevent our loss by the destruction of this building. Look at these barques, which will carry you off captive. It is for you to say whether they have been built by your consent." And after listening to more in like strain, the Indians returned Schuyler's wampum belt, and replied with cool sarcasm that he always said the same thing to them. "Yes," they added, "it is we who have desired these boats, we consented to what our son [M. de Longueuil] asked of us, we repent of nothing. . . . It is a thing done. We have given our word."

It was at this council that Schuyler asked the consent of the Five Nations for the English to build a trading-house opposite the French post [*"bâtir aussi à Niagara une maison vis-à-vis celle de votre Père"*]; but to this proposition they returned the wampum, saying they would have nothing to do with it, and Schuyler could arrange as best he might with "Onontio." There is a triumphant tone in Capt. de Noyan's letter, reporting this defeat of the English at so critical a time. English enmity now centered on Joncaire, who was regarded as the chief instrument of their discomfiture. It was reported that certain Seneca chiefs were bribed to make way with him. One of the few letters written by Joncaire which are preserved, was written at the end of 1726, at Fort Niagara, apparently to his friend the younger Longueuil, then commanding at Fort Frontenac. It runs in part as follows:

NIAGARA, 26 December, 1726.

I am obliged to you for the notice which you gave me by your letter of December 28th, concerning the council which was held between the Iroquois nations and the governors of Boston and New York.

Tagariuoghen, chief of the Sault Ste. Louis, and one named Alexis, chief of the Lake of the Two Mountains, have just acknowledged to us the design of the English, and the promises which

the Iroquois made to them, concerning the house at Niagara, and me. I learned the same thing toward the end of November at the Seneca village where I had gone, after giving the necessary orders for the Niagara garrison, to reply to a belt which the Iroquois had send to the Governor at Montreal.

I found in this village only coldness towards us and any good words which I could say to them were scarcely listened to. The next night, toward midnight, they wakened me for a council; and being come there, they begged me to treat peaceably with them, that there was no need of heat on the part of any of us.

First, they said, the house at Niagara did not please them; that they strongly suspected that it was only the Onondagas who consented to its construction, and that the four other nations had no part in it.

Second, that M. de Longueuil had promised to make a present of three barrels of powder and a proportion of balls to each nation, but they had seen nothing of all that.

They held out to me a belt for these things, but I would not touch it, and contented myself with telling them that their belt was a rattlesnake which would bite me if I took it in my hand, and that moreover their father Onontio had sent me to Niagara to listen to good words and not to bad.

As to the house in question, it was the strongest pillar of the five Iroquois nations, since M. de Longueuil had intended in making it to deliver them from the slavery in which they had for a long time been. But [I said], as I saw that I was speaking to deaf men, I told them that they might make their speeches to people who knew how to answer. The Iroquois replied:

"We hear you. You say that we should address Onontio. That was indeed our first thought, for our resolution is made for next spring."

The next day I noised it about that I saw clearly that their minds were divided, but that I hoped that they would find for us, as much as for the English ,and that it was useless for them to talk to me of abandoning the building *("de vider le plancher")*, they could be assured that I should not quit Niagara until they had cut my body to pieces to give pleasure to the English—and that even then they would have to deal with people who would come to look after my bones. I have still a trick *("un plat de mon métier")* to show them in the spring—I put it aside till then, since my emissaries are not at the village, and whether it succeeds or not I shall promptly send my two oldest sons to Montreal to inform my superiors of the state of affairs in this country.

One must restrain the Iroquois [? Senecas] in every way in this present affair, but it is necessary to interpose the Onondagas, and say to the Iroquois nations: Since when do you make no longer one body with the Onondagas? You have told us every year that what one Iroquois nation does or says, all the others agree to. Since when is all that changed? How comes it that when the English ask you which nation it was that gave permission to the French to build at Niagara, that in the presence of you all the Onondaga replied fiercely, "It was I." How happens it that you did not dispute this before the English?

After all, I hope that the Holy Spirit which commonly gives to those who govern the State more light than to others, will furnish enough means to our superiors to confound the Iroquois and so reëstablish peace.

As for me, trust to my looking out for myself against the assassination which the English have at all times wished to accomplish. Whoever undertakes it will have half the risk. I will serve him as they do in Valenciennes.

I beg you to communicate what I send you to Messieurs de Beauharnois, Intendant, and to our Governor at Montreal, and above all to so inform M. de Longueuil that he will be assured of the care which I take in the present affair.

A little later Joncaire wrote again to the younger de Longueuil at Fort Frontenac:

" . . . Inform our superiors of what has happened to me in this country. It is for them to direct what I should say and do. The Iroquois will go down to Montreal next spring to demand that we pull down the house at Niagara. If they destroy it," adds Joncaire with a fine touch of the Gascon, "it will only be when I, at the head of my garrison, shall have crossed in Charon's barque—I shall show them the road to victory or to the tomb." Nevertheless, he adds the fervent hope: "May God change the hearts of those who are against us."

It was not until the end of another season—Oct. 17, 1727—that Chaussegros de Lery reported to the Minister that the house at Niagara was entirely finished, surrounded with palisades and furnished with a guard-house to prevent surprise by the savages. Referring to the English at Oswego, he could not refrain from calling attention to the fact that events had justified his choice of site for Fort

Niagara: "The English are established at the mouth of Oswego river, they have built a little fortified work [*"petite redoubt à machicoulis"*] and keep a garrison there. The French have always been masters of this post and of the south side of Lake Ontario. If they had built the stone house as proposed at the portage, it is certain that the English would have made another on Lake Ontario. This house at the portage appears to me useless. The old one, with some small repairs, will serve yet some years." He adds that if he "had been the master" the last year it would have been easy for him to establish the French at Oswego as well as at Niagara; evidently forgetting for the moment that he had not established the French anywhere, however satisfactory from an engineering point of view his services on the Niagara had proved. Our study of the documents makes clear that Fort Niagara was made possible, under the encouraging policy of Vaudreuil, only by the devotion and personal influence of the younger de Longueuil and Chabert de Joncaire.

X. Political Aspect of the Strife on the Niagara.

What may be termed the political situation in the country of the Six Nations, and especially among the Senecas who kept the Western Door of the Long House, in the years from the building of Joncaire's house at Lewiston to the construction and garrisoning of Fort Niagara, 1720-26, admirably illustrates the difficulty of treating with the Indian. Even the noble Iroquois was fickle, given to double-dealing; yet it was a duplicity inherent in a lower degree of social development than that from which his Caucasian tempters approached him. The wisest of their sachems were statesmen in some matters, children in others. The Senecas adopted Joncaire according to their ancient custom, and through him gave the French their foothold on the Niagara. At the same time, tempted by the trade inducements of the English, they helped the Western tribes to go to Albany, to the confusion of the French, and allowed the English to get and to keep a footing in their own territory.

So matters continued until Longueuil, by his *coup de maître* of 1725, gained permission in a council at Onondaga to build what soon proved to be a fort, in Seneca territory. We have already traced the steps of that construction, as recorded in the reports of the French. When Burnet heard of it, as he speedily did, down in New York, he may well have wondered what all his fair speeches to the Indians had accomplished, what all the tiresome councils had amounted to, of what avail the many lavish gifts.

At the September council at Albany in 1726 he took the tribes to task. How is it, he demanded, have you given your consent to the French, to build this house at Niagara? The answer was characteristic, but far from satisfactory. One Ajewachtha, an Onondaga sachem, was the mouthpiece for the occasion. When Longueuil was among the Onondagas last year, said the sachem, the Senecas heard what his errand was, and "sent a Belt of Wampum, . . . that in case the French should desire to make any Building or Settlement at Niagara or at Ochsweeke[44] or elsewhere on land, they should not give their consent to it. . . . The Onondagas being prevail'd upon by Fair speeches and promises, rejected the Sinnekes belt, and gave the French leave for building at Niagara." De Longueuil, the sachem added, had promised that the French would protect them for three hundred years.

Did the land at Niagara, asked Governor Burnet, belong to the Onondagas, or to the Senecas, or to all the Six Nations?

The Seneca sachem, Kanaharighton, replied that it belonged to the Senecas particularly.

Do the sachems of the other Five Nations acknowledge that?

They all said it did; not only the land at Niagara belonged to the Senecas, but the land opposite it, on the other side of Lake Ontario.

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44. "Called by the French *Lac Erié*."—Marginal note in New York Council Minutes, XV, 87.

What business then, asked Burnet, had the Onondagas to grant the French permission to build there, when the land belonged only to the Senecas?

"The Onondagas say it is true they have done wrong, they might better have left it alone and have left it to the Sinnekes whose Land it is, they repent of it and say that People often do what they afterwards repent of."

The Onondaga further explained that the consent which had been given by his people, without leave of the other nations, was in accordance with their old customs; one nation often spoke in the name of all the rest in the League. If the others afterwards approved of it, it was well; if any of them disapproved, the pledge was void. The Six Nations had sent Seneca and Onondaga sachems with a belt of wampum to the French at Fort Niagara, to protest against the proceedings and ordering the work to stop. But the French had not the red man's regard for the talking belts. We can not stop work, they said, with what show of gravity and regret may be imagined; "being sent and order'd by the Governour of Canada to build it," they "durst not desist from working." But they readily promised that Joncaire, who was soon going to Montreal, should inform the Governor that the Six Nations wished the work stopped; "he would bring back an Answer at Onondaga by the latter end of September (when the Indian corn was ripe), and then they threw their Belt back and rejected it by which they had spoke, and said they thought they were sent by the Govr of New York, on which they [the sachems] replyed that they were not sent by him, but by the Sachims of the Six Nations, and did not know who had given the French that liberty, that they did not know it, and desired that they would name the Sachims who had given their leave, on which they [the French] did not reply, but said that when the House was finished 30 souldiers would be posted there with Officers and a Priest."

This and much more the Indians told Governor Burnet. In the same breath, the Onondagas took all the blame to

themselves, and charged the French with perfidy. The Governor adroitly explained to them that France and England were at peace, and gave them to understand that it was not the English, but the Six Nations, whose interests were threatened by the new fort at the mouth of the Niagara. He read to them that portion of the Treaty of Utrecht which bore on the matter. The chief question, he gravely pointed out, was, whether the fort was prejudicial to them in their hunting, or to the Western Indians who might wish to come for trade. If they said it was not, His Excellency had nothing to say, and the French had done well; but if the Six Nations found it prejudicial to their interests, and complained of it to him, he would lay the matter before the English King. The Indians replied:

"Brother Corlaer, . . . you ask if we approve of the building at Niagara; we do not only complain against the proceedings of the French in fortifying Niagara on our Land contrary to our inclination and without our consent, to pen us up from our chief hunting-place, but we also humbly beg and desire that Your Excell: will be pleased to write to His Majesty King George that he may have compassion on us, and write to the King of France to order his Governour of Canada to remove the building at Niagara, for we think it very prejudicial to us all." And this the Governor agreed to do.

Nothing could be finer than the temper and adroitness with which Burnet conducted this matter. At the opening of the conference his attitude was that of accuser, of one deeply wronged; the attitude of the Indians that of culprits and deceivers. This aspect of their relations was quickly annulled by the calm, judicial air which the Governor gave to his inquiries. With rare insight into Indian character, he so presented the case that they became the wronged parties, the French the sole offenders, and himself merely the gracious friend who sought to do all he could in their behalf.

This conference was held on September 7th. Two days later, the Governor made a long, impressive speech to the

sachems. He reviewed the relations of the Five Nations to the French from the earliest days, not failing to show that the latter had been constant aggressors and treacherous enemies, and he pictured the building of the fort at Niagara as a new affront, which endangered the very existence of the Confederacy. His words had their intended effect. The sachems renewed their protestations, in terms of singular earnestness. "We speak now," said Kanackarighton, the Seneca, "in the name of all the Six Nations and come to you howling. This is the reason for what we howl, that the Governor of Canada incroaches on our land and builds thereon, therefore do we come to Your Excellency, our Brother Corlaer, and desire you will be pleased to write to the great King, Your Master, and if Our King will then be pleased to write to the King of France, that the Six Nations desire that the Fort at Niagara may be demolished. This Belt we give to you, Our Brother [Corlaer], as a token that you be not negligent to write to the King, the sooner the better, and desire that the letter may be writ very pressing."

Not the least gratifying point to the Governor in this harangue was the expression *"our* King." The treaty commissioners at Utrecht, thirteen years before, had agreed that the New York Indians were subjects of Great Britain; but the Indians themselves were sometimes provokingly oblivious of the relationship.

Governor Burnet took advantage of the complaisant and suppliant mood of the sachems to suggest that, since they were asking the King of Great Britain to protect them in their own lands, it would be most proper "to submit and give up all their hunting Country to the King, and to sign a deed for it," as it had been proposed to do twenty-five years before. He intimated that had it been done then, they would have had a fuller measure of protection from the English. After consultations, the proposition was accepted, and the deed of trust, which had been executed July 19, 1701, was confirmed and signed by Seneca, Cayuga and Onondaga sachems. Thus at Albany, Sept. 14, 1726, in

the thirteenth year of George I, was deeded to the English, a sixty-mile strip along the south shore of Lake Ontario, reaching to and including the entire Niagara frontier.

The mighty League of the Iroquois had atoned for their blunder of letting the French build Fort Niagara in their domain, by giving it to King George. From this time on the "stone house" was on British soil; but it was yet to take the new owner a generation to dispossess the obnoxious tenant.

The fifteenth Article of the Treaty of Utrecht is as follows:

"The subjects of France inhabiting Canada, and others, shall in future give no hindrance or molestation to the Five Nations or Cantons of Indians, subject to the Dominion of Great Britain, nor to the other natives of America who are in friendly alliance with them. In like manner, the subjects of Great Britain shall behave themselves peaceably towards the Americans who are subjects or friends of France, and they shall enjoy, on both sides, full liberty of resort for purposes of Trade. Also the natives of these countries shall, with equal freedom, resort, as they please, to the British and French Colonies, for promoting trade on one side and the other, without any molestation or hindrance on the part either of British or French subjects; but who are, and who ought to be, accounted subjects and friends of Britain or of France is a matter to be accurately and distinctly settled by Commissioners."

This was assented to by the representatives of England and of France, who signed the treaty of which it is a part, at Utrecht, April 11, 1713. In due time it was promulgated in the Colonies. England in the valley of the Mohawk, and France on the Great Lakes, were at work, with such seductive influences as they could exert, for the friendship of the savages and a greater profit from the fur trade. It was not, however, until Joncaire's cabin stood at the foot of the Niagara rapids, that the English took genuine alarm at what they regarded as the impudent encroachment of the French, and fell back upon the terms of the treaty for a definition of rights.

We have seen (pp. 129) that in 1721 Governor Burnet made a spirited protest against the establishment of Joncaire's trading house, of which Vaudreuil had made an equally spirited, but not equally logical, defense. Protests of this sort being so obviously of no avail, correspondence on the subject between the Governors seems to have ceased. But when word reached Burnet of the new fort at the mouth of the river his ire was kindled afresh. On July 5, 1726, he wrote to M. de Longueuil, then acting Governor, pending the arrival of Beauharnois, a vigorous, but by no means offensive letter on the subject. He had learned, he wrote, that about a hundred Frenchmen were at Niagara, commencing the erection of a fort, "with the design of shutting in the Five Nations, and preventing the free passage of the other Indians at that point to trade with us as they have been in the habit of doing." He expressed his surprise that the French should undertake a project so obviously an infraction of the Treaty of Utrecht; denied that La Salle's brief occupancy of the region gave the French any rights, and reminded the Governor that the lands at Niagara belonged to the Five Nations. "Should the fortifying Niagara be continued," he added in conclusion, "I shall be under the necessity of representing the matter to my Superiors, in order that the Court of France, being well informed of the fact, may give its opinion thereupon; as I have heard that it has already expressed its disapprobation of the part Mr. de Vaudreuil took in the War of the Abenaquis against New England."

Burnet sent his friend Philip Livingston, of the Colonial Council, to Montreal with this letter, and begged of M. de Longueuil considerate treatment of the messenger. The messenger was well enough received, but the reply which the Canadian soldier sent back, under date of August 16th, was far from apologetic. "Permit me, Sir, to inform you," it ran, "that it is not my intention to shut in the Five Iroquois Nations, as you pretend, and that I do not think I contravene the Utrecht Treaty of Peace in executing my orders from the Court of France, respecting the reëstablish-

ment of the Niagara post, whereof we have been the masters from all time. The Five Nations, who are neither your subjects nor ours, ought to be much obliged to you to take upon you an uneasiness they never felt, inasmuch as, so far from considering that the establishment at Niagara may prove a source of trouble to them, they were parties to it by a unanimous consent, and have again confirmed it in the last Council holden at Niagara, on the 14th of July last."

De Longueuil, it will be observed, squarely contradicted the clause in the treaty which declared the Five Nations to be "subject to the dominion of Great Britain." His audacity was symbolical of the entire policy of France on the wilderness frontiers at this period. This feature of Baron de Longueuil's reply may well have surprised the English Governor. It would, no doubt, have surprised him still more had Longueuil meekly yielded to his demands, and promised to leave the Niagara. It was to be expected that he would base the French claim on the flimsy pretext of continuous right from La Salle's day; but that, in addition to this claim, he should have the effrontery to deny and defy the plain declaration of the treaty, was matter for amazement.

As we have seen, at the Albany conferences with the Indians, in September, Burnet had promised to lay the case —their case, as he made it appear to them—before the King. With his unfruitful correspondence with Longueuil fresh in mind he was more than willing to do so. Before the close of the year—presumably by the first ship that served, which happened to be the Old Beaver, Mathew Smith, master,—he despatched long letters on the subject, both to the Lords of Trade and to the Duke of Newcastle, King George's Secretary of State. For the edification of the former, he rehearsed at length all that had taken place; told of the action taken at the conferences with the Indians; exulted a little, as was natural, in announcing that they had signed a deed surrendering the land they lived in to the British Crown; and enclosed a copy of the deed with this explanation of the fact that it was signed by only three of

the nations: "The Maquese [Mohawks] and Oneydes live nearest to us, and do not reach to the French lake, and therefore there was no occasion to mention the matter to them, and if I had proposed it publickly to them, it might soon have been known by the French, and have produced some new enterprize of theirs, so that I thought it best to do it with a few of the cheif and most trusty of the three nations who border upon the lakes."

He sent to the Lords copies of his correspondence with Longueuil, and called especial attention to that officer's denial of the Treaty. "The Treaty says," wrote Burnet, "'*The five Nations or Cantons of Indians, subject to the Dominion of Great Britain.*' Mr. De Longueuil denys it expressly and says, '*Les cinq Nations qui ne sont ny vos Sujets ny les Nôtres.*' The Five Nations who are neither your Subjects nor ours." He pointed out the other aggravating and inconsistent features of Longueuil's letter.

To His Grace the Duke the Governor made a more concise but equally strenuous report, adding his "most earnest application" that Newcastle would "obtain His Majesty's directions, that strong instances may be made at the Court of France for this purpose, which I hope will be successful at a time when there is so firm an alliance between the two Crowns. . . . This is a matter of such consequence to His Majesty's Dominions in North America that I humbly rely on Your Grace's obtaining such a redress, as the Treaty entitles this Province and the Six Nations to, from the French, which can be [no] less than a demolition of this fort at Niagara."[45]

The Duke of Newcastle put the whole matter into the hands of Horatio Walpole, with instructions from King George that he should present it "in its full light" to the Ministers of the Court of France, "and to use all the necessary arguments to prevail on them to dispatch orders to the officer commanding in Canada to demolish that fort, and His Majesty doubts not but they will comply as soon as they

45. Burnet to the Duke of Newcastle, N. Y., Dec. 4, 1726.

shall be informed precisely of the state of this affair."[46] Walpole prepared a memoir on Fort Niagara which he submitted, May 9, 1727, to the aged Cardinal de Fleury, Prime Minister of France.[47] In it he rehearsed at length the grievances which Burnet had communicated. Beyond the employment of a more polished style, Walpole's memoir on Niagara added nothing to the facts or the arguments as we have already reviewed them. At the end of his recital of facts, Walpole added the following:

"It is to be remarked, that the Nations in question are formally acknowledged, by the Treaty of Utrecht, to be subject to and under Great Britain, and in virtue of the same Treaty they and all the Indians are to enjoy full liberty of coming and going for the purpose of trade, without molestation or hindrance. Now, the pass at Niagara is that by which the Far Indians are able to repair to the country of the Five Nations, and also the only one by which the Five Nations themselves can go into their own territory to hunt; and in spite of the benevolent and innocent views Sieur de Longueuil pretends to entertain in building such a fort, the Indians cannot be reputed to enjoy free trade and passage so long as they are bridled by a fort built on their own territory, against their will, and which absolutely subjects them to the pleasure of the French, wherefore they have recourse to their Sovereign and King, the King of Great Britain, who cannot refuse to interest himself strongly, as well on account of these subjects as for the maintenance of Treaties."

In this smooth, featureless form, the innocuous phrases of a somewhat perfunctory diplomacy, Louis XV. received the English protest against the building of Fort Niagara—that protest for which the Iroquois' sachems had gone to Albany "howling," and which they had begged should be "writ very pressing." Kanackarighton, the daubed and

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46. Duke of Newcastle to the Hon. Horatio Walpole, Whitehall, April 11, 1727.

47. DeFleury, formerly preceptor to the King, in 1726 succeeded the Duke de Bourbon Condé as Prime Minister of France, being then seventy-three years old. He lived until January, 1743.

greasy Seneca, and Horatio Walpole, the courtier, were vastly farther apart than even the Court of France and the Niagara wilderness—of which it is plain Walpole's ideas were of the vaguest. Many a forest ranger would have laughed at his claim that the fort at the mouth of the Niagara kept the Senecas from their hunting grounds. The germ of this specious plea lay in Burnet's benevolent suggestion to the Senecas, but it helped make a case against the French, and there were few either at Whitehall or the Court of Louis competent to criticise or likely to question it. Indeed, had the red Indians themselves made their "howl" before the French King and his ministers, the result, beyond the infinite diversion which they would have made, would scarcely have been different. Even while the English protest was taking its official course, Louis and his ministers were affirming that "the post at Niagara is of the utmost importance for the preservation to the French of the trade to the upper country," and were considering the amounts to be spent on "the reconstruction of the old house at Niagara [Joncaire's Magazin Royal], the expense whereof, amounting to 20,430 li., may be placed on the estimate of the expenses payable in 1728 by the Domain of the West."[48]

King George I. died June 11, 1727; and, in Canada, in 1726, the Marquis de Beauharnois had succeeded the Baron de Longueuil; but the Niagara contention continued. Burnet in the spring of 1727 having built and fortified a stone house at Oswego, the new Governor of Canada at once assumed the aggressive; sent a formal summons to Burnet to withdraw his garrison thence within a fortnight, and "to cast down the block house and all pieces of work you raised up contrary to righteousness," "or else His Lordship the Marquis of Beauharnois will take measures against you and against your unjust usurpation as he will think fit." With a fine solicitude for a rigid adherence to the Treaty of 1713, the humor of which must even then have shown itself to Burnet, if not to Beauharnois, the French Governor accused

48. Abstract of Despatches relating to Oswego and Niagara, N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 979. The remark quoted above, on Niagara's importance, is a note by the King himself.

the English Governor of "a plain contravention to the Treaty of Utrecht, which mentions that the subjects of the two Crowns shall not intrench upon one another's land, till the decision of the limits by the judges delegated to that end"—a decision which was never made, for the commissioners contemplated by the 15th article of the Treaty were never appointed. The English contention, as afterwards formulated by Walpole in his memoir on Fort Oswego, was that their fortification at that point was no violation of the Treaty, "since the Commissioners to be named would have nothing to determine relative to the countries of the Five Nations, who are already declared by the Treaty of Utrecht to be subjects to the Crown of England." This was a perfectly just deduction from the obvious intent of the treaty.

Burnet replied to the arrogant demand of Beauharnois with his usual spirit and good sense; reminding him that when he (Burnet) had protested against the operations of the French at Niagara, he had been content with writing to Court, for the English Ambassador to make dignified and decorous presentation at the Court of France: "I did not send any summons to Niagara, I did not make any warlike preparations to interrupt the work, and I did not stir up the Five Nations to make use of force to demolish it, which I might have done easily enough." In a long letter, he defended his right, under the treaty, to build at Oswego, and denied again the right of the French to occupy Niagara: "It is true, sir, that I have ordered a stone house to be built there [at the mouth of the Oswego], with some contrivances to hinder its being surprised, and that I have posted some souldiers in it, but that which gave me the first thought of it, was the fortified and much larger house which the French have built at Niagara, upon the lands of the Five Nations."

In due time report of this correspondence reached the Lord Commissioners of Trade. Under date of Dec. 21, 1727, they referred it all once more to Newcastle; and His Grace in turn placed it in the hands of Horatio Walpole. Recalling the memoir on the subject of Fort Niagara which Walpole had made the year before, Newcastle wrote to him:

"Both that Memoir and his Eminence's answer to you, promising to give orders to examine this matter, and to decide according to justice, led us to expect that there would not be any more cause for complaint, but as, instead of seeing it remedied, His Majesty has been advised that the French think of encroaching still further on the countries under his obedience in said quarter, he has deemed it expedient that you again apply to the Court of France to induce it to transmit the most precise orders to the Governor of Canada to abstain from attempting anything contrary to the Treaties, so that all these differences between the subjects of the two Crowns may be terminated in such a manner that the Indians may visit each other without molestation, and the Five Nations receive such encouragement and protection from His Majesty as they must naturally expect from their Sovereign."[49]

The result of these instructions was Walpole's memoir on Oswego, laid before the French Prime Minister, March 9, 1728.

The 15th article of the Utrecht Treaty continued a fruitful source of disagreement for many years to come. In 1748 we find Gov. Clinton of New York carrying on an epistolary dispute with La Galissonière, who had succeeded de Beauharnois, over this same debatable article. The French Governor had his own interpretation of it, alleging that it "does not name the Iroquois, and though it did so, it would be null in their regard, since they never acquiesced therein: we have always regarded them as Allies in common of the English and French, and they do not look on themselves in any other light." "You are misinformed," replied Clinton, "for they have done it [i. e. submitted themselves to Great Britain] in a solemn manner, and their subjection has been likewise acknowledged by the Crown of France in the Treaty of Utrecht."[50] This disparity of view between the two countries continued as long as France held Canada.

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49. Newcastle to Walpole. The letter as printed in N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 959, is dated "Whitehall, 16th May (O. S.), 1726," but the year should be 1728.

50. Clinton to La Galissonière, Fort George in New York, Oct. 10, 1748.

XI. Fort Niagara and the Fur Trade.

For a decade and more following the building of the new fort, Joncaire the elder continued active in matters relating to the history of the Niagara. He was not military commandant, except apparently for a short period; nor was he in charge of barter with the Indians at that post. Coming and going, now at the Seneca villages, now at Niagara, or again at his home in Montreal, he continued in the military service, but always charged with the special duty, which accorded well with his frequent service of interpreter, of cultivating cordial relations with the Senecas, and of reporting on the movements of the English—duties in which later on his eldest son is to succeed him, when the father is assigned to a new field of activity.

From the day when Chaussegros de Lery broke ground for the great stone building at the angle of lake and river, life on the Niagara became more and more complex. The building operations drew thither hordes of curious and jealous Indians. The trading-post at present Lewiston was still maintained, and in its neighborhood, at the foot of the portage, as well as at the head of the long carry, were settlements of the Senecas, many of whom found profitable employment in helping traders and travelers up and down the steep hills. Although the Mississaugas had not yet made their village across the Niagara from the new fort, they made temporary camp there and haunted the region in numbers during this busy summer. However deserted and desolate these lake and river shores may have been when winter shut down, and the wolf's long howl at the edge of the forest answered the west wind in its sweep over the bleak lake, there was varied life and activity when the ice broke up. Then came endless flotillas of bark canoes, loaded with peltries. The fur trade was old, long before the stone house at Niagara was built. Into the general history and conditions of that trade, it is unnecessary to go in these chapters. But certain features of that trade, and of the attendant life, heretofore unrecorded save in the long-neglected documents, may profitably be set down here in illustration of the conditions of the time on the Niagara and the lower lakes.

The great purpose of the French in building the new fort on the Niagara was to regain the fur trade which was fast slipping from them into the hands of the English. The strategic advantage of the military occupation of the strait was not overlooked; but it was far less by way of preparation for a future contest at arms with England, than to secure purely commercial advantage, that the work was undertaken. And, from the French point of view, it was high time that something decisive be done. More and more the western tribes, who ravaged the great beaver-bearing grounds of the upper lake region, were being drawn to Oswego and Albany by the superior allurements of the English. Longueuil, reporting to his father the baron concerning his Onondaga mission of 1725, wrote that he had seen more than a hundred canoes on Lake Ontario, making their way to Oswego. How to stop this trade was a matter of grave consequence to Canada. Returning from Onondaga, he had encountered many canoes, propelled by Nipissings and Sauteurs from the Huron regions, making their way into Lake Ontario by the Toronto River, and all headed for the mouth of the Oswego. The new barques, he reflected, should stop this. The Baron de Longueuil, in reporting his son's discoveries, added the further information that sixteen Englishmen had gone to trade at the Niagara portage, "where they appear to have wintered, having taken there a large quantity of merchandise. They even came within a day and a half of Frontenac, and have drawn to them by their brandy nearly all the savages, which has done so great an injury to the trade of these two posts that they will not produce this year a half of their usual amount." The French at this time heard some things that were not so. There are many reports that the English intended to establish themselves at Niagara; such rumors had been current at Montreal and Quebec ever since 1720, when the English had proposed to put horses on the Niagara portage; the profits of that enterprise were to be shared with a Seneca chief who was to represent the English. But that project came to naught, nor is there convincing proof that the Eng-

lish, either in 1720, 1725, or at any other time, were on the Niagara in trade, during the French occupancy.

More credible, however, was the further news, gathered by the younger Longueuil in this momentous summer of 1725, that English and Dutch traders at Albany had bought 200 bark canoes from the Ottawas and Mississaugas, tribes which at this period carried most of their peltries to the British. Longueuil saw more than sixty of these canoes, making the Oswego portage. It looked to him as though the English were bent on pushing into the upper country and utterly destroying the French trade, "or to come in superior number to Niagara to make an establishment there, and to prevent that which we plan to do." Longueuil took his hundred soldiers to Niagara in the summer of 1726, not more to employ them as laborers on the stone house, than to patrol the lake and to stop the English canoes which were fully expected to swarm down upon them. The English did not come, but the hundred soldiers were maintained there, apparently, a year or more. Their return to Quebec is noted under date of Sept. 25, 1727.

The French did what they could to check the growing English trade. Voyageurs passing through Lake Ontario were commanded to follow the north shore, from Frontenac to Niagara. If found near Oswego, they were liable to seizure and confiscation. In 1729, this order was renewed, emanating from the King himself, and the commandant at Fort Frontenac was cautioned to enforce it. It was proposed that two canoes, carrying trustworthy men, should cruise on the lake and intercept any traders headed for Oswego. In the spring of 1736, Beauvais, commandant at Fort Frontenac, learned that two traders, Duplessis and Deniau, were making for Oswego. Alphonse de Tonty was sent after them. He overtook them four leagues from the mouth of the Oswego River, confiscated the 300 pounds of beaver in their canoe, and carried them back to Frontenac, whence they were sent to Montreal and imprisoned. After a trial and fine of 500 livres each, which they were too poor to pay, they were further imprisoned for three months. The

hope was expressed in the dispatches that this example would "always restrain those who might be inclined to drive a fraudulent trade."

At Niagara, Capt. de Rigauville, whose command of that garrison extended over several troubled years, exerted himself constantly to keep traders from passing along the south shore of the lake. His faithful services at Niagara won for him special recognition in the despatches. In 1733 promotion was asked for him; but we find him, some years later, still in the same rank and at the same post.

France and England being nominally at peace, the Canadian officials were wary when it came to actual conflict with their adversaries in trade; they showed a wholesome respect for the English ability and willingness to come to blows; but armed strife would have availed them nothing in the circumstances. The main thing was to draw the Indians. To this end, the Government was urged, time after time, in the annual and special reports of the Governor and Intendant, to provide ample store of goods for Fort Niagara. In 1728, the Minister is specially begged to send goods in great abundance to the new house at Niagara, that the Indians may be kept from going to the English. Year after year this request is repeated in the dispatches. Occasionally the Indians found fault with the quality of the *êcarlatines*[51] supplied by the French, or with the price in barter; but the one thing that killed the fur trade at Fort Niagara was the restriction put on the sale of brandy. A report of 1735 says, of the trade at Niagara and Frontenac, that it becomes yearly less and less, in proportion to the expenses incurred for it by the Crown. "These two posts, which some years before had produced 52,000 li. of peltries, for the past four years yielded only 25,000 to 35,000 li." All this loss was charged to the cessation of the brandy supply. The priests were reported to have refused to confess any one engaged in trading brandy to the Indians, and the storekeepers at Niagara and Frontenac were so disturbed by the decree of the bishop, forbidding the traffic, that they preferred to

51. *Ecarlatines,* i. e., scarlatines, as some of the old records have it; probably coarse woolen stuff. *Cf. écarlates,* an old word for hose or legging.

relinquish their posts rather than fall under the ban of the church as a *cas reservé.*[52] Beauharnois, mournfully reviewing the situation, admitted that it was difficult to let the savages have brandy and keep them from getting drunk, "but it is equally certain that nothing so keeps them from trading with the French as the refusal to let them have liquor, for which they have an inexpressible passion." Two years later we read that the trade at Niagara and Frontenac is no better. "The suppression of the brandy trade, added to the bad quality of *écarlatines* and low price of beaver, disgust the Indians who come there to trade—they pass on to Oswego." And still later, in 1740, the Sieur Boucherville, then recently in command of the garrison at Niagara, gave several reasons to the Intendant, Hocquart, to show why trade was so bad at that post. First, he said, for several years past the brandy trade had been forbidden at Niagara; and every year there came down from the upper country many canoes loaded with beaver and deer skins, but if on reaching Niagara the Indians could not get brandy they would not part with their peltries, but continued on to Oswego. Besides that, Indian traders in the pay of the English constantly intercepted the hunters as they came from the west and north, securing their peltries and effectively blocking the opportunities for trade with the French at Niagara.

The Intendant consulted with the Minister at Versailles as to what might be done; but that dignitary was able to suggest nothing more effective than to send messages to the chiefs of the Mohawks, the Oneidas, and the Onondagas, who were the intermediary agents of the English, that they must cease favoring the English trade, or their canoes would be stopped and pillaged. M. de Beaucourt was sent to a council at Onondaga, charged with this delicate mission. The assembled chiefs listened, apparently in complacent humor, and sent him away with the equivocal assurance that they would spread his words among the villages.

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52. *Cas reservé,* a grave offense, decision in which is reserved for the bishop or other superior officer of the Church.

In 1740 the Sieur Michael (sometimes written "St. Michael") succeeded Boucherville as commandant at Fort Niagara, being sent there because of his supposed ability to build up trade; but in official circles at Quebec, as no doubt generally in the gossip of the day, the opinion prevailed that if the fur trade at Fort Niagara was to flourish the amount of the annual lease should be reapportioned with regard to the traffic; and be accompanied by a freer dispensation of brandy.

The fur trade at the posts was carried on in two ways; either by lease *(bail)*, the Intendant giving lease-hold to the highest and best bidder for the trade of a post, and the rent giving the exclusive rights to the lessee throughout the extent of his post; or by permits *(congé)*, the Governor granting permissions to trade in certain forts. These permits were granted in great numbers to persons whom the Governor judged proper. Those who received permits paid a certain sum *(redevance)* yearly. The proceeds, whether by lease or by *congé*, were received by the Governor, who distributed them in pensions or perquisites to certain officers, in gifts and alms to widows and children of officers, or other expenses of this sort. If at the end of the year, there remained any funds accruing from this source, they were turned into the general treasury.[53]

The posts of Frontenac, Niagara and Toronto at first were leased, but after a trial of that system, they were reserved for the King's trade, because of the keen rivalry of the English in these quarters. The lessees of these posts having put on their goods prices which seemed too high to the Indians, the English sent wampum belts among the tribes, with intelligence of the goods and liquor which they had at Oswego, and which they offered at lower prices than the French. As a consequence, the Indians would not stop to trade at Niagara. To checkmate this move, it was necessary to cancel the lease at Niagara, and at the other trading-posts on Lake Ontario; and by successive reductions in the price of goods, to regain the Indian trade. Niagara was

53. "Mémoire pour M. Francois Bigot . . .," Paris, 1763, p. 21.

more convenient for the Indians than Oswego, being nearer to their hunting grounds. The reduction of prices at Niagara, however, was carried so far that goods were sold there on royal account at less than they had cost the King. For some years, there seemed no middle course. The French saw that they must submit to this loss at Niagara, or renounce the Indian trade and abandon the whole region to the English. After all, this diminution in the price of merchandise was less a real loss than a diminished profit, because the furs which the King received in trade were sold at Quebec, bringing as much as and sometimes more than the price paid by the King for goods traded to the Indians.[54]

So unsatisfactory was the state of trade, in the years following the erection of the stone house, that it was proposed once more to change the system of trade there. D'Aigremont wrote to the Minister, Oct. 15, 1728: "I believe it will be advantageous to lease the posts of Niagara and Frontenac, for there is now much loss in the trade made on the King's account, and it will always be so."

In 1727 we find Beauharnois complaining of Dupuy's management of the trading-posts. "He has farmed out for 400 francs the post at Toronto to a young man who is not at all fit. M. d'Aigremont, to whom M. Dupuy sent the agreement for signature, refused to sign, saying that he would talk about it with the Intendant, showing him that this would work great wrong to the trade at Frontenac and Niagara." Notwithstanding all that, Dupuy returned the agreement next day, but he refused to sign, alleging that he knew of another man who for some years past had offered a thousand crowns[55] for the lease. The statement, which M. de Longueuil confirmed, illustrates the favoritism and "graft" for which the administration of the colony was soon to become notorious.

Although the building of the stone house at Niagara did somewhat stimulate the traffic at that point, it by no

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54. Bigot to the Minister, Sept. 30, 1750.

55. "*Mille escus.*" The value of the *écu* is usually given at 2s. 6d. English.

means removed all difficulties. The King's account suffered much at the hands of incompetent, careless or dishonest agents. In the year 1728 Saveur Germain Le Clerc, who was in charge of the trading at Niagara in 1727, died after a long illness, during which his accounts were so neglected that M. d'Aigremont, reporting on the trade of the posts for that year, was unable to find out what goods or stores had been traded or used at Niagara; and he despaired of being able to tell any better the following year, "M. Dupuy having sent to Niagara to replace the Sieur Le Clerc, a man who is scarcely able to read and sign his name, notwithstanding representations which I have made regarding it. This man is Rouville la Saussaye, to whom was leased last year the post at Toronto for one year for 400 livres. He still has that lease, which is not compatible with his employment as clerk *("commis")* and storekeeper *("garde-magazin")* of Niagara. This lease-hold which is at the foot of Lake Ontario and which has been exploited in the King's interest in past years as a dependency of Fort Niagara, ought not to be leased to the storekeeper in charge of trade at Niagara, because of the abuses which may spring from it—this man may send off to the Toronto post the Indians who come to Niagara, under pretext that he has not in the storehouse there the things they ask for. Furthermore he might make exchanges of good peltries for bad ones, and besides could intercept all the Indians in Lake Ontario, and so utterly ruin the trade at Forts Niagara and Frontenac."

The representations of M. d'Aigremont were not without effect, for Rouville la Saussaye was soon succeeded by one La Force, who held the post for some years, though evidently not greatly to the King's profit. He carried on the barter with the Indians at Niagara, apparently in a loose way, with little or no balancing of books or auditing of accounts, from 1729 till 1738, when the Intendant, Hocquart, suspecting that all was not right, sent the Sieur Cheuremont to Niagara to investigate. The result was that La Force was found to be a debtor to the King's account in the

amount of 127,842 *chats*. The *chat* or cat of the French fur-traders was probably the raccoon,[56] and the meaning of La Force's singular indebtedness is best given in the words of M. Hocquart: "According to the traders' method of keeping accounts, the cats are regarded at Niagara as [the unit of] money by means of which they estimate the price of goods and of peltries. For instance, a blanket will sell for eight cats, a pound of beaver-skin for two; similarly with other articles of merchandise and furs." The Sieur Cheuremont informed Hocquart that he had reckoned on La Force's account all the provisions, stores and goods for trade which had been shipped to him, with allowance for all that he had used, and accepting his own figures as to goods sold. The Intendant summoned the involved commissary to Quebec, but when he demanded an explanation of the deficit, La Force could only say that Cheuremont had made such calculations as he chose; as for himself, he had traded according to the established tariff. This tariff, he said, did not take into account the goods which were ruined, and he adduced yet other reasons for his great shortage. La Force had long had the reputation of a man of probity; there was nothing on which to base a charge against him of theft. The Intendant therefore reached the conclusion that there had been nothing worse than great negligence in La Force's conduct of affairs, "and that his numerous family of eight or nine children had considerably increased the expenditures." Cheuremont toiled for three months in a vain effort to straighten the Niagara accounts; meanwhile La Force was asking to be paid 1000 livres which he claimed due him each year, but which were withheld from him.

The Intendant finally in 1739 replaced La Force with the Sieur Le Pailleur, whom he describes as "the most honest

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56. *Chat* and *chat sauvage* are terms which are very often encountered in the old reports, and would naturally be taken to mean wild-cat—either the *Lynx rufus* or the Canadian lynx, *Lynx Canadensis*. A careful study of the subject by J. G. Henderson, in a paper read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1880, reaches the conclusion that the *chat* of the early traders was really the *raton* of France, or in English, the raccoon. The fisher *(Mustela canadensis)*, also often called wild-cat, is believed to be the *pecan* or *pekan* of the French-Canadian traders.

man I can find for this employ." And again there were obstacles to a business-like administration of the post. Le Pailleur had scarcely taken up the duties at Niagara when he had an adventure with a mad bull, being dragged over two arpents of road, and thus put *hors d'êtat* for work, so that for the year 1739 he was unable to keep up his trading accounts or even to make an inventory of merchandise in the storehouse.

There are preserved many reports regarding skins received at the Lake Ontario posts in these years. Niagara, Frontenac and Toronto are often summed up in one schedule. These lists, enumerating the number of each sort of fur received, with the price allowed, are not without interest, for they illustrate not only the state of the market, but the relative abundance of different animals taken by the Indians. Some of the old French names of species are difficult to identify. In the following schedule of furs received at Niagara and Frontenac, season of 1727, "*chat*" has been rendered as raccoon, "*vison*" as mink, "*pecan*" as fisher (*Mustela canadensis*), and "*loup-cervier*" as wolverene (*Gulo luscus*).

Kind.		Number.	Valuation Per Skin.
Castor	beaver	2580	7 li. 6s.
Chevreuil	buck	295	
Chevreuils verts	buck (green)	1875	
Boeufs Illinois	bison	4	
Cerfs	red deer	844	
Orignaux	moose	7	
Chats	raccoon	448	28s.
Loutres	otter	167	3 li. 5s.
Loups-cerviers	wolverene	8	7 li.
Loups-de-bois	wolf	4	3s.
Martres	marten	247	3 li. 9s.
Grands ours	bear	378	3 li. 12s.
Oursons	cub	52	60@38s.
Ours moyens	bear, half-grown	8	
Pecans	fisher	84	4 li. 9s.
Pichoux	polecat	104	55s.
Reynards rouge	red fox	6	55s.
Visons	mink	5	10s.
Rat musqués	muskrat	8	1s. 6d.

The above is one of many lists and schedules to be found in the reports of the trading-posts. Niagara and Frontenac are invariably coupled, and no separate mention is made of Toronto, which for trade purposes was regarded as a part of Niagara. Toronto was at first treated as a separate leasehold. Later, it was made virtually a branch of Niagara. In 1729 we find the storekeeper at Niagara directed to send goods to Toronto as needed, the accounts to be included with those of his own post.

While the beaver market continued good, and the animals themselves abundant, many other fur-bearing animals whose skins are now highly prized, appear to have been neglected by the trappers. The beaver was the great staple and object of trade, although at times the market so fell off that there was little if any profit in the business as carried on by the French. Of all our fur-bearing animals the beaver was the most widely distributed. Wherever the conditions of lake or pond, marsh or forest supplied him with the means for his natural habitat, there he was to be found. But the records, even at the very beginning of the French occupancy on the Niagara, indicate that at that time the beaver-hunting grounds were some distance west and north of the old Iroquois stronghold of Central and Western New York. In Joncaire's day the main supplies for the trade at Niagara appear to have been brought by Indians from the territory north of Lake Erie, the country around Lake Huron, and the remoter regions of the Lake Superior section. In 1739 we find Beauharnois making strenuous efforts to increase the beaver trade by establishing posts among the Sioux. In that year, as at some earlier periods, war between tribes had interfered with the hunting; while other tribes, which gleaned some of the best beaver grounds, the Ottawas and Saulteux of Lake Huron, persistently refused to stay their loaded canoes at Fort Niagara, drawn to the English "by the brandy distributed without measure, and cheap goods."

The attention paid to the beaver trade in the official correspondence of Canada, even in its relation to the lower lake posts during the years we are considering, would fill an ample volume. The larger aspects of that trade cannot

be considered, here, the present aim being only to remind the reader that the quest of the beaver, more than anything else, brought Fort Niagara into existence.

There were amusing difficulties, in those days, on the part of the storekeeper at Niagara, and his brother traders elsewhere, in trying to make the Indians understand the basis of exchange. They could never be made to recognize the distinction between the skins of the full-grown and half-grown animals. One exasperated report compares the confusion growing out of this classification, to the selling of an old *robe de chambre,* of which the sleeves and bottom of the gown are sold at one price, and the back and facings at another, "according as the parts of this robe were near the body." At a meeting of agents and merchants at Château St. Louis in Quebec in 1728, it was agreed that, beginning Jan. 1, 1730, full-grown and half-grown beavers should be taken on a valuation of 3 li. 10 s. per pound, and *"castor veulle"* (? old beaver) at 48 s. per pound; a reduction from rates then prevailing. At this meeting was again heard the inevitable complaint that any effort to make the Indians recognize distinctions in beaver pelts made them carry their furs to Oswego.

The famine of 1733 contributed to the diminution in the receipt for beaver, and by a fire in April of that year at Montreal, more than 2000 pounds were burned.

The combined trade at Forts Niagara, Frontenac, and the head of the lake during the season of 1724-25 showed a profit of 2382 livres, 3 sols, 9 deniers—about $476 on the present basis of values. A report of 1725 says: "Two hundred and four 'green' deer-skins and twenty-three packets made up of various furs are left at Fort Frontenac or Niagara, which is a mere trifle, and shows how the English have taken nearly all the trade away from Niagara. They even come to trade within ten leagues of Frontenac. Moreover the price of furs has so fallen that bear-skins have been sold this year for 47s. apiece." It is difficult to fix the purchasing power of the sol (sou) at that day, but at its nominal value of a half-penny (English), it puts the price of a bearskin in 1725 at less than half a dollar.

The falling off in trade in 1725, over 1724, is striking. Furs from the three posts above designated realized, in 1724, 29,297 li. 10s.; in 1725, only 9,151 li. 15s. 6d. Against the total receipts of 38,449 li. 5s. 6d. in the two years, there were charged 36,067 li. 1s. 9d. for expenses, leaving the balance of profit as above given. One item of expense was the salary of 600 livres paid to the storekeeper or agent at Niagara. In these figures and many others to like purport which are contained in the records, are to be found the real reason for building the stone Fort Niagara. The effect of that enterprise was immediate. In 1726, long before the new work was finished, we read: "The house at Niagara had a good effect on the beaver trade." Yet for that year, receipts from Niagara, Frontenac and "head of the lake" were only a little over 8,000 li., with expenses of over 13,000 li. "This trade," says a note of Oct. 20, 1726, "is so poor only because the English were all the spring and part of the summer in the neighborhood of Niagara and gathered in all the best skins. There were also *coureurs de bois* from Montreal who spent the winter in trade at Fort Frontenac, who made a good deal of money there. Added to all that, the price of skins has greatly fallen."

XII. Annals of the Wilderness.

A not infrequent source of disturbance and annoyance at Fort Niagara was the passing of unlicensed voyageurs and traders, many of whom brought retinues of savages, their canoes fur-laden, and tauntingly defied the commandant at the river's mouth. As early as 1727 we found record of men of this class from Louisiana, coming down Lake Erie on their way to Montreal, and of Canadians passing up the Niagara on their way to the Mississippi, making off with cargoes of goods for which they had not paid. Efforts were made at Niagara to arrest this class of free-booters. One Claude Chetiveau de Roussel, who came up the Mississippi and through the Lakes without a passport, was

arrested, put on board ship at Quebec, and sent to the Rochefort prison. In 1732 peremptory orders were given to the commandant at Niagara, that the goods of all traders seeking to pass up or down the river without a permit, should be seized.

As the great stone house neared completion and life at the mouth of the Niagara passed from the bustle of construction to the routine of a small garrison, Longueuil relinquished command once more to Joncaire; but in the latter's absence, in the season of 1727, a man named Pommeroy—the documents speak of him merely as "Monsieur"—was in command at the fort. The change was scarcely made when an incident occurred which illustrates a condition no doubt arising often in those days. One Desjardin, a resident of Detroit, arrived at Niagara, "bound up" as the phrase is in modern lake traffic, with a canoe loaded with merchandise. When his pass was called for by Le Clerc, in charge of the trade at Niagara, he replied that a companion trader, Roquetaillade, who was a little ways behind with three more canoes, had the passes for all four. The next day Roquetaillade arrived with a permit for only three canoes. Desjardin, whose representations were seen to be fraudulent, had taken his goods across to the west side of the Niagara. Le Clerc deemed that the circumstances warranted him in seizing the cargo. With the younger Joncaire (Chabert junior) and other soldiers he crossed the river and confiscated the goods in the name of the King. The contents of the canoe would have stocked a country store in more modern times, and indicates the needs and whims of the far-off post of Detroit at this early day. There were goods for the Indians and goods for the French settlers and their wives: four packages of biscuit, six sacks of flour, a sack of gunflints, numerous guns, a bundle of leather, a large covered kettle and seven small kettles, 322 pounds of lead in five sacks, and other things, all of which were taken to the storehouse at Niagara. When the packages were opened there they revealed men's clothing, four pairs of children's shoes, a pair of women's slippers, boys' and men's shoes,

fifteen small hatchets, a barrel of prunes and another of salt, a white blanket and two red ones, two pieces of the woolen fabric called *calmande,* with rolls of other weaves indicated as *estamine au dauphine,* and *indienne* or cotton print. Still another package contained wax, cotton wicks for candles, French thread *("fil de Rennes")*, cotton cloth, shoemaker's thread, and blue cotton stockings for women—perhaps the earliest indication we have of the *bas bleues* in the Lake region. The confiscation of such a cargo of frontier necessities was a serious loss to the unlucky Desjardin. His large bark canoe *("canoe d'ecorse de huit places")* was also confiscated. Such was the penalty for failure to comply with the prescribed regulations of trade.

Perhaps worthy of note, in these minor annals of the frontier, are the names of the soldiers which with those of Le Clerc and Joncaire, Jr., are signed to the report of the seizure, under date Aug. 21, 1727. Here we meet, as it were, St. Maurice de la Gauchetière, La Jeunesse de Bud-mond, L'Esperance de Port Neuf, Sans Peur de Deganne, St. Antoine de Dechaillon, St. Jean de Lignery, and Bon Courage de Deganne. Surely, with Youth, Hope, Fearlessness and Good Courage for comrades in the wilderness, to say nothing of the saints, life at Fort Niagara in the grey old days could not have been wholly forlorn.

On a day in the spring of 1735 two canoes, deeply laden, came skirting the northern shore of Lake Erie to the discharge; took the good channel through the little rapids, and were speeded along at a pace of some six to eight miles an hour, past the low shores over which Buffalo now extends. In the wider reaches of the river at the head of Grand Island, where the current slackens to some two miles, the red voyageurs plied again the paddles, and soon made the ancient landing at the margin of the river above the great cataract. Here, as they stepped ashore, the party was seen to consist of eight Indians and their employer, a half-breed trader, who though well-nigh as dark-skinned as his followers, spoke the French of Quebec with fluency. There was a quick agreement with the resident Senecas, who car-

ried his packs and his canoes over the old portage path, down to the lower river, receiving for their labors one hundred beaver-skins. Reëmbarking, the little flotilla hastened out of the Niagara and on along the Ontario shore to Oswego fort, where the suspicious trader stayed on the strand with his canoes, sending the Indians into the fort to dispose of his furs. The sale accomplished, he made his way westward, once more stole his way past Fort Niagara, and after gaining again the upper river, hastened on, weary league on league, until he finally came again to his abiding-place at Missilimackinac.

This was Joseph La France. His father was a French Canadian, his mother of the nation of Sauteurs, living at the falls of St. Mary, between Lakes Superior and Huron. Here he was born about 1707. His mother died when he was five years old, and his father took him to Quebec, where he spent six months and learned French. Quebec had then, according to the subsequent testimony of La France, "4 or 5,000 men in garrison, it being about the time of the Peace of Utrecht." Returning to his people at St. Mary's, he resided there until the death of his father in 1723, when the son, then sixteen, embarked upon the career of an independent trader. He took what furs and skins his father had left him, went down to Montreal by the Ottawa-river route, disposed of his goods and returned to acquire a new stock for barter. For the next ten years or so he seems to have taken his furs regularly to the French. In 1734 he adventured in new fields, going down the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, and down that stream to the mouth of the Missouri, returning by the same route.

In 1735, stealing by night past the French settlement at Detroit, for fear of being stopped, he came down Lake Erie, on his way to try the English at Oswego. As on the Detroit, so on the Niagara, he appears to have avoided the French, whom he subsequently reported to have "a fort on the north side of the Fall of Niagara, between the Lakes Errie and Frontenac, about 3 Leagues within the Woods from the Fall, in which they keep 30 Soldiers, and have about as

many more with them as Servants and Assistants; these," he added, "have a small trade with the Indians for Meat, Ammunition and Arms."[57] Probably his dealings with the English became known to the French; for later, when he went again to Montreal with a cargo of furs, although he gave the Governor a present of marten-skins and 1000 crowns, for a license to trade the following year, the Governor would neither give the license nor restore the money, charging La France with having sold brandy to the Indians, and threatening him with imprisonment. La France escaped from Montreal, and toilfully made his way up the Ottawa, reaching Lake Nipissing, after forty days of paddling and portaging. At Mackinac he gathered another stock of furs and set out once more to try his fortunes with the French; but on the way to Montreal, in the Nipissing [French] River, he suddenly met the Governor's brother-in-law with nine canoes and thirty soldiers. They took all he had and arrested him as a runaway without a passport; but he made his escape through the woods at night, and after weeks of hardship returned to St. Mary's, resolved to be done for ever with the French. Having lost all, he determined to go to the English at Hudson's Bay. His subsequent adventures belong to the history of the fur trade of the far north and west. His testimony, given in an enquiry regarding the operation of the Hudson's Bay Company, affords many useful glimpses of the conditions of the time.

La France was the type of a class of men who at this period were a source of great trouble alike to the French and the English. The French especially, at Frontenac, at Niagara and Detroit, were exasperated by their disregard of the *congé,* their unlicensed brandy-selling to the Indians, and their journeys to the upstart British post at Oswego. As La France made his way past Fort Niagara, with canoes loaded to the gunwale with winter furs, the French of that

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57. La France was the first man of whom we have record, to cross from Lake Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay. The account of his presence on the Niagara is found in Vol. II of the "Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the State and Condition of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, and of the Trade carried on there," etc., London, 1749.

little garrison, if not indeed Joncaire himself, may have noted the passing, standing impotent to prevent it, or perchance enraged by the yells and derisive cries of the defiant freebooters, no longer at pains to conceal themselves when once safely past the fort.

There developed in England at this time a considerable outcry against the monopoly enjoyed by the Hudson's Bay Company; and an ingenious advocacy of free trade in North American fur-gathering. The experiences of Joseph La France provided a fruitful text for those who, like the author of "An Account of the Countries Adjoining to Hudson's Bay," etc., undertook to show their countrymen and their king how British trade might be extended in the Lake Erie region, and the French at the Lake Erie and Niagara posts utterly routed. Arthur Dobbs, who combined with the natural British hostility to the French, a bitterly critical attitude towards the Hudson's Bay Company, set forth at length in his book views which no doubt met the approval of many of the British public of his day. Curiously enough, one of his strongest arguments was based on a map-maker's blunder. On the large map which accompanies his work, the Great Lakes are shown, with "the great fall of Niagara" properly indicated at the outlet of "Conti or Errie Lake." The whole region of the Lakes is shown, as accurately on the whole as on many another map, up to that time; but running into Lake Erie, a few miles south of the present site of Buffalo, the unknown geographer has added a stream of considerable size, and named it "Conde River." Its real prototype, in the annals of earlier explorers, may have been the Cattaraugus or Eighteen-Mile Creek; but here we have it, shown unduly large, as the only stream entering Lake Erie, its head-waters coming from vague mountains to the southeast.

Contemplating this stream, and the exigencies of the fur trade in the region, Mr. Dobbs saw a great opportunity for the British, "by forming a Settlement on the River Conde, which is navigable into the Lake Errie, which is within a small Distance of our Colonies of Pennsylvania and Mary-

land, and being above the great Fall of Niagara, and in the Neighborhood of the Iroquese, who are at present a Barrier against the French, and a sufficient Protection to our Fort and trading House at Oswega, in their Country upon the Lake Frontenac, who by that Trade have secured the Friendship of all the Nations around the Lakes of Huron and Errie. We should from thence, in a little Time, secure the Navigation of these great and fine Lakes, and passing to the southward, at the same time, from Hudson's Bay to the Upper Lake, and Lake of Hurons, we should cut off the Communication betwixt their Colonies of Canada and Mississippi, and secure the Inland Trade of all that vast Continent." Further on we have more details of the geography, real and imagined, of our region: "The Streight above Niagara at the Lake is about a League wide. From this to the River Conde is 20 Leagues South-west; this River runs from the S. E. and is navigable for 60 Leagues without any Cataracts or Falls; and the Natives say, that from it to a River which falls into the Ocean, is a Land Carriage of only one League. This must be either the Susquehanna or Powtomack, which fall into the Bay of Chisapeak." He further argues the wisdom of making a settlement on this wonderful river Conde, of building proper vessels there to navigate these lakes, so that "we might gain the whole Navigation and Inland Trade of Furs, etc., from the French, the Fall of Niagara being a sufficient Barrier betwixt us and the French of Canada," etc. It was alleged that the British Government might readily induce colonists from Switzerland and Germany "to strengthen our settlements upon this River and Lake Erie." Another suggestion was that disbanded British troops be sent on half pay to Lake Erie, where they would "make good our possessions, which would be a fine retreat to our Soldiers, who can't so easily, after being disbanded, bring themselves again to hard Labour, after being so long disused to it." The more Mr. Dobbs dwelt upon it the more important this particular project appeared. The French were to be cut off from communication with the Mississippi; Canada was to be "made

insignificant for the French." The entire free trade of North America was to fall into the hands of the English. And finally, with a burst of sentiment which recalls the devout aspirations of the French missionaries, but is an anomaly in the plans of British traders, he exclaims: "How glorious would it be for us at the same time to civilize so many Nations, and improve so large and spacious a country! by communicating our Constitution and Liberties, both civil and religious, to such immense Numbers, whose Happiness and Pleasure would increase, at the same Time that an Increase of Wealth and Power would be added to Britain."[58]

Life at Fort Niagara never ceased to be dependant on the King's provision ships. If the annual shipment came early in the season, the garrison abated its chronic discontent in reasonable assurance that it could endure until spring on the inevitable flour and pork. But often the ships reached Quebec so late that the annual cargo of food and other necessaries could not be sent through to Niagara until the following spring. In 1732 the Ruby, bringing subsistence for the forest garrisons, reached Quebec late in September. The utmost dispatch was made, but the supplies designed for Niagara got no further that fall than Frontenac. The winter of 1732-33 was a most severe one, the meager harvests of the colony had been even smaller than usual, and there were privation and distress in the towns as well as at the lake posts. At Niagara they felt the additional burden of the smallpox, which this winter ran through the Iroquois villages, interfering with the usual hunting and trapping. In the summer of 1733, stimulated by the urgent tone of the official reports, the King's ship anchored off Quebec on July 9th. Even with this early arrival, it was September before the barrels of flour which she brought were safe in the storehouse at Niagara. In 1734, the Ruby arrived, August 16th; but in 1735 there was another failure to receive anything; the Niagara provisions indeed reached

58. *See* "An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay," etc., by Arthur Dobbs, London, 1744.

Frontenac, and were loaded on a batteau; but when the lumbering, laden craft essayed the autumnal lake, a gale drove her ashore and the trip was abandoned—with what result at the waiting garrison, may be imagined. There, short rations and bad more than once bore fruit in mutiny and desertion. Again the Government sought to atone for the costly delays of one season, with excess of zeal in the next; so that in 1736 the King's ship was at Quebec on August 7th, and in the next summer the Jason arrived August 8th. And so it went, with varying uncertainty, the efficiency and well nigh the existence of Niagara depending largely on the modicum of attention it might receive from the Minister and his agents in France.

Although the two barques which had been constructed at Frontenac in the winter of 1725 were only eight years old in 1733, one of them had then become unfit for service, so that there remained but one sailing vessel on Lake Ontario that season. The Intendant, Hocquart, sent four ship-carpenters to Frontenac to repair the other, but they found it so far gone that the best they could do was to take the iron-work from it and build a new vessel. This they did, at an expense of some 5,000 livres. The second boat, says a report of that summer, was greatly needed to carry goods to Niagara.

At Detroit, after the first few bitter years, conditions for self-maintenance were far better than they ever were at Niagara. The latter post never had the thrifty class of settlers about it, which very early began to provide flour and other produce not only for Detroit but for Mackinac and other upper-lake posts as well.

So productive were those early grain fields about Detroit that in 1730 a memoralist of the Crown—possibly De Noyan, though this particular memorial[59] is not signed—seeking certain privileges in the western trade, unfolded a plan for supplying Niagara with flour. To further this project, the Government was asked to build one or two

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59. "Mémoires concernant l'état-present du Canada en l'an 1730," MS. copy in the Archives Office, Ottawa.

light-draught vessels *("barques plates")* to navigate between the Niagara, Detroit and the upper lakes. The advantage of such vessels, in case of Indian troubles, was pointed out: soldiers could be quickly transported. But the opportunities of trade loomed large in the eye of this speculator. At present, he wrote, it costs the *voyageurs* twenty livres freight per packet of furs, from Detroit to Montreal. With the desired sailing vessels the furs could be carried for ten or twelve livres per packet. Detroit would gather from its tributary country annually 1,000 to 1,200 packets; Mackinac and the upper posts could be counted on for 2,000 more. The petitioner knew well the conditions of the fur trade. The *voyageurs*—canoe freighters—reached market by the Ottawa route. By the Niagara route he proposed to carry them at fifteen livres each. Thus on 1,000 packets from Mackinac he counted on 15,000 livres, and on 1,000 from Detroit, 10,000 more; and 25,000 livres freight receipts in one season should have appealed to a ministry accustomed to know only of outlay in connection with the lake posts.

True, some expense must be incurred, to start the business. This plan contemplated the construction of a palisaded warehouse above the Niagara fall, at a point where the barques could make easy and safe harbor. The portage road was to be extended and improved. There would have to be a clerk at the warehouse above the falls, and carts for carrying the peltries down to the lower river—the landing of the old Magazin Royal—where two flat-boats would be needed to convey them on down to the mouth of the river each summer in July or early in August. The desired barques, it was urged, could make at least three voyages, Niagara to Mackinac, between June and mid-August. On their first down trip they could bring away the furs collected in the neighborhood of Mackinac; on the second and third trips, they would take the packets which by that time would have been brought in from the Lake Superior and more distant posts. The author of this memoir foresaw the prejudice which he would have to overcome among the

traders; but if even half of them were afraid to risk Niagara, and chose to forward by canoe down the Ottawa route, he figured that even then the profit with the barques would be considerable. Each packet paid in freight twenty-five livres, Mackinac to Montreal, by the Niagara, where the Ontario barques would receive them. It was recommended that the Lake Erie craft be built "five or six leagues above the Niagara portage," and the promoter thought that with a master and four sailors for each vessel, business could begin, especially if soldiers from Fort Niagara and other posts could be called on for service when required.

This was probably the first project for trade by sailing vessels from the Niagara to the upper lakes, since the disastrous voyage of La Salle's Griffon, fifty years before. The Government did not lend its aid, and the plausible and elaborate memoir bore no immediate fruit.

With the growth of trade and settlement at Detroit, and, from about 1730, the increasing substitution of the Niagara route over that of the Ottawa—the *grande rivière* of the toilful old days—traffic adjusted itself to a recognized tariff; so that, in the latter days of the period we are studying, if not indeed to the very end of the French dominion on the Lakes, transportation by the Niagara route was to be counted on for its fixed charges as much as any inland transportation by boat or rail is today; but how different the items! The Detroit merchant of say 1730, returning homeward from Montreal with goods, brought them by canoes or flat-boats to Fort Frontenac, there transferred them to the little barque that took its chances with all the winds of heaven, on the long traverse to Fort Niagara, some seventy leagues, as the old sailing-masters made it. Reloaded on batteaux, the freight was poled and pulled up the Niagara, to the foot of the portage. There, in the earlier years, each packet and cask was hoisted to the shoulders of an Indian or Canadian *engagé*, for the hard climb up the levels and through the forest, some seven miles to the point of reëmbarking above the cataract. Just when horses or oxen were first used on the portage road is uncertain. We know that

the English had proposed to use them there, in 1720, and that the French did use them for a number of years. All this transportation was paid for by a percentage on the weight. The cost of outfit, too, was considerable. If the merchant owned his own canoe—a *canot de maître,* of six or eight places—it cost him at least 500 francs. For the journey, he paid his six *engagés,* who not only paddled the canoe but helped make the portage, 250 francs each. The needed food for the journey would include at least 100 pounds of biscuit and twenty-five pounds of pork or bacon, per man. These with other necessaries brought the cost of equipment and maintenance to 2,260 francs. Such are the actual figures of one "voyage."

It has been noted that the winter's supplies occasionally failed to reach the Niagara garrison. Sometimes the supplies which were there were bad. There was a serious state of affairs in 1738, owing to the wretched quality of flour furnished by the Government for the subsistence of the garrison. The supply was eked out by Canadian flour, of which there was great scarcity. The commandant, to head off, if possible, the desertions to which the soldiers at Niagara were always prone, if not indeed a mutiny of the whole garrison, sent several officers as an express to Montreal. They reported that the soldiers were absolutely unable to live on their short rations of bad bread and salt meat, and begged that better supplies be sent. Some relief was gained from the Canadian harvest, and the spoiled French flour was shipped back from the lake posts to Montreal.

In the summer of 1729, life at the little garrison had been disturbed by a mutiny among the soldiers, due probably to bad food and not enough of it. Whatever the cause, it made a most crucial season for Rigauville, commandant at the time. The prime mover in the uprising was one Charles Panis, and with him in rebellion were Laignille, La Joye, one Bernard—"called Dupont,"—and so many others that the maintenance of any discipline at all was in jeopardy. The especial enmity of the mutineers was directed against the commandant and Ensign Ferrière. A Government sec-

retary, Bernard, who was at Niagara at the time auditing the accounts of the store-keeper, was sent off post-haste to Montreal with a report of the affair. Beauharnois promptly sent back Captain Gauchetière and Ensign Céloron, with a detachment of twenty trusty men to replace the rebels. The latter were taken to Montreal, where they were held under arrest, in irons. An affair followed which made more of a stir than the original mutiny. The uprising at Niagara had occurred on July 26th. It was not until after a long and dangerous delay that the offenders were brought to trial before a council of war, which in due time, pronounced sentence. Laignille and La Joye were condemned to be hanged and broken [*"pendus et rompus"*]; while Dupont, a deserter, was merely to be hanged. Early in the morning of October 18th, before the executions were to take place, one of the condemned men cried out for help for his comrade, who feigned to be sick. The jailor's daughter ran to them, but scarcely had she opened the door of their dungeon, than the three criminals, who had broken off their irons, threw themselves upon her, overcame the sentry, climbed over the palisades and ran away. The gallows and platform, which had been made ready for the executions, were surreptitiously taken down and carried off, by whom the authorities could not learn. As it was deemed necessary to make an example of someone, the jailor was removed from his post, though it was not shown that he was in any wise responsible for the escape. There is no record found that any of the seditious soldiers were punished.

The official reports became very fretful over the matter. It was complained that the priests and women had meddled with the affair, creating sympathy for the prisoners. The whole system of procedure was criticised; there had been shown a complete ignorance of the laws and ordinances. "There is scarcely an officer in the country, and especially at Montreal, who knows how to conduct a procedure of this sort." "If the officers who composed the council of war had been instructed in the ordinance of July 26, 1668, the execution of the criminals need not have been delayed more than

twenty-four hours," etc. The Governor and Intendant took the occasion to renew with great urgency their frequent request that more troops be sent to the colony.

As for "Charles Panis," the instigator of the Niagara mutiny, he was put aboard the French vessel St. Antoine, and sent to Martinique in banishment. The governor there was requested to hold him forever as a slave, forbidding him ever to return to Canada or to go even to the English colonies. This culprit, whose name is written in the documents as Charles Panis, may not unlikely have been Charles, a Panis or Pani, the name by which the French designated the Naudowasses or slave Indians. These people occupy a strange position in the history of North American tribes. In Joncaire's time, they are frequently found as slaves and menials not only among the Senecas and other warlike tribes, but among the French. Nor is it wholly improbable that such an Indian should have been the instigator of a mutiny among French soldiers, for more than once in the records may be found mention of Panis who served with the French troops. Several of them, in Péan's following, were killed at Fort Necessity in July, 1754. In 1747 a runaway Panis was shipped from Montreal to Martinique, there to be sold for the benefit of his owner. Facts like these, and the further fact that "Panis" is an unlikely French name, pretty clearly point out the character of the instigator of the mutiny at Fort Niagara.[60]

As for Laignille and his lawless associates, they no doubt soon found their way into the ranks of *coureurs de bois* and unlicensed traffickers with the Indians, not improbably allying themselves with some remote tribe, where they forever merged their identity with that of their savage associates. The wilderness lodges were harbingers of many a white outlaw in those days.

To the period we are considering, belongs—if it belongs to history at all—the Niagara visit of the Sieur C. Le Beau,

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60. Details of the Fort Niagara mutiny are given in a report of Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister, Oct. 23, 1730, and in other documents of the time.

"avocat en parlement," romancer and adventurer at large. According to his own testimony, this young man, a native of Rochelle, went to Paris in 1729, and in the same year was drawn from his legal studies into a voyage to Canada. Shipwrecked in the St. Lawrence, he arrived at Quebec, in sad plight, June 18, 1729. He found employment as a clerk in the fur business (*"bureau du castor"*), where he continued, making his home with the Recollect Fathers, for more than a year. He ran away from sober pursuits, in March, 1731, and took to the woods with two Indians. His many adventures are too numerous, and of too little consequence, to make even a summary of them worth while here. His narrative puts the time of his arrival at Niagara in June, 1731, and under sufficiently fantastic conditions. He was accompanied, with other Indians, by his mistress, an Abenaki maiden, with whom he had exchanged clothes. He had resorted to this and other disguise to avoid arrest by the French as a deserter. A long story is made of his encounter with soldiers from Fort Niagara, and of his final sanctuary in Seneca villages. He says that letters were received from Montreal, by the commandant at Fort Niagara, ordering his arrest, if he appeared in the neighborhood.

Needless to say, no mention of Le Beau is found in the official correspondence. His book has for the most part the air of truth; he is precise with his dates, and in his account of Indian customs shows much accurate knowledge. Among the things that tell against him are his allusions to a Jesuit priest, Father Cirene, among the Mohawks; but this name is not found in all the Relations of the order. His account of Niagara falls is dubious; he says they are 600 feet high. This is La Hontan's figure of many years before. Le Beau has much to say of La Hontan and his misrepresentations, but the indications are that he accepted one of that gay officer's wildest exaggerations, and that he may never have seen Niagara at all. He probably came to Canada and had some experience among the Indians; and when he wrote his book, chose to so enlarge upon what he had really seen and

experienced, still holding to a thread of fact, that the result has little interest as fiction, and no value whatever as history.[61]

Chapter XIII. Joncaire Among the Shawanese—His Death at Niagara.

From the time of the establishment of Fort Niagara, Chabert Joncaire the elder was more and more an object of jealousy and hatred for the English. It was not without reason that they ascribed to him the success of the French on the Niagara. Now rumors began to fly. It was reported to the French King, on the word of Sieur de La Corne, that an Indian had promised the English that the house at Niagara should be razed, and that the Iroquois had been bribed by the Albany people to get rid of Joncaire. Louis approved the order to send word to Joncaire himself of all this, and instructed him to learn the truth of these reports, and to prevent the accomplishment of English designs. As the English at this time were making lavish presents to the Indians, Joncaire's task was no light one. They even sent wampum peace belts to remote tribes—to the Indians of Sault St. Louis, the Lake of the Two Mountains, to the Algonkins and Nepissings, inviting them all to remain quiet while the Iroquois were tearing down Fort Niagara. When the English overtures took any other form than substantial gifts, the Indians tired of them. As we have seen, to the English demand that the Iroquois should allow them to build a fort on the west side of the Niagara, opposite the French establishment, the savages replied that they did not wish to be troubled further about it; that they did not regret having given their consent to the French; and if the Eng-

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61. *See* the "Avantures du Sr. C. Le Beau, avocat en parlement, ou Voyage curieux et nouveau, parmi les Sauvages de l'Amerique Septentrionale," etc., Amsterdam, 1738. So far as I am aware, this curious book has never been published in English. While the cause of history would scarcely be promoted by such a publication, yet it is singular in these days of reprinting anything that is old and curious, that no publisher has given us a new edition—"with notes"—of Le Beau.

lish wished to build on the Niagara, they must settle it with "Onontio"; as for them, they would not interfere;[62] which, after all, was not bad diplomacy on the part of the savage.

For the next few years Joncaire's chief employment was to inform his superior officers of English intrigues among the Iroquois, and to thwart them by his experience and influence. He was among the Senecas on such a mission in 1730, the Sieur de Rigauville being then in command at Fort Niagara.

It was at this time (1730) that he appears to have essayed to repeat, at Irondequoit bay, his achievements on the Niagara, but without a like success. I find no record of the enterprise in the French documents; the English report of it puts Joncaire in a ridiculous rôle. It was Lawrence Claessen who carried the news to Albany in the autumn of this year, that Joncaire with a following of French soldiers, had gone among the Senecas and told them "that he having disobliged his governor was Duck'd whip'd and banished as a malefactor, and said, that as he had been a prisoner among that Nation, and that then his life was in their hands, and as they then saved his life, he therefore deemed himself to be a coherent brother to that Nation, and therefore prayed that they might grant him toleration to build a trading house at a place called Tiederontequatt, at the side of the Kadarachqua lake about ten Leagues from the Sinnekes Country, and is about middle way Oswego and Yagero [Niagara] . . . . and that he the said Jean Ceure entreated and beg'd the Sinnekes that they would grant him liberty to build the aforesaid Trading house at that place, in order that he might get his livelyhood by trading there and that he might keep some Soldiers to work for him there whom he promised should not molest or use any hostility to his Brethren the Sinnekes," etc., etc. He was further said to be an emissary of the Foxes.

Some correspondence ensued, on this extraordinary report by Claessen. The commissioners for Indian affairs at Albany made it the subject of a long letter to representa-

62. Marquis de Beauharnois to the Minister, Sept. 25, 1726.

tives of English interests among the Senecas, but even they saw the absurdity of Joncaire having a following of French soldiers if he had been banished from Canada. The part assigned to him in this affair by the Dutch interpreter is at utter variance with what we know of Joncaire's character and employment at this time.

The more one studies the old records, with the purpose of gaining therefrom a true conception of Joncaire's character —of discovering just what manner of man he was, and what is his true position among the men who made the history of his times, the less does he appear as a half-wild sojourner among the savages, the more is he seen to be a man of character, of marked ability to control others, and of some social standing and culture, as those qualities went at the time. His own letters, written in a day when many, even men of affairs, knew not how to hold a pen, testify to the excellent quality of his mind. He had the reputation among his brother officers of being a braggart; but even those who charged him with it, admitted that his achievements, especially in handling the Senecas, gave good warrant for boasting.

For forty years his relations with the missionaries, especially of the order of Jesuits, were intimate. His association in his early years with Fathers Milet, Bruyas and Vaillant has been noted in the narrative. For Charlevoix he became host on the banks of the Niagara, and no doubt gave the priest many useful suggestions for his famous journey up the Lakes in 1721. It was Joncaire who told Charlevoix of the famous oil spring at Ganos,[63] now near Cuba, N. Y. "The place where we meet with it," wrote Charlevoix, "is called Ganos; where an officer worthy of credit [Joncaire] assured me that he had seen a fountain, the water of which is like oil and has the taste of iron. He said also that a little further there is another fountain exactly like it, and that the savages make use of its waters to appease all manner of

63. *Ganos* is derived from *Genie* or *Gaienna,* which in the Iroquois signifies oil or liquid grease (Bruyas). This oil spring is in the town of Cuba, Allegany Co., N. Y. The other referred to is in Venango Co., Pa.

pains." Joncaire may have been the first white man to visit these or other oil springs in the region, and so, possibly, to become the discoverer of petroleum. But others had heard of them, whether they visited them or not, long before Joncaire's day. The "Relation" of the Jesuits for 1656-57, edited by LeJeune, says, in its description of the Iroquois country: "As one approaches nearer to the country of the Cats [i. e., the Eries], one finds heavy and thick water, which ignites like brandy, and boils up in bubbles of flame when fire is applied to it. It is moreover so oily that all our savages use it to anoint and grease their heads and their bodies." Father Chaumonot was among the Senecas in 1656, as were, at various times, Fathers Fremin, Menart and Vaillant. These or still other missionaries may have been led to the oil springs more than half a century before Joncaire; to whom none the less belongs some credit for making them known.

One of the few students of our history who have discovered in Joncaire anything more than a rough soldier and interpreter, erroneously calls him a "chevalier," and pictures him as especially zealous in behalf of the Roman Catholic religion. "To extend the dominion of France," says William Dunlap, "and of the Roman religion, this accomplished French gentleman bade adieu to civilized life, and by long residence among the Senecas, adopting their mode of life, and gaining their confidence, he procured himself to be adopted into the tribe, and to be considered as a leader in their councils. His influence with the Onondagas was about as great as with his own tribe. By introducing and supporting the priests, and other missionaries, employed by the Jesuits and instructed by the Governor; by sending intelligence to Montreal or Quebec, by these spies; by appearing at all treaty councils, and exerting his natural and acquired eloquence—it is necessary to say, he was master of their language—he incessantly thwarted in a great measure the wishes of the English, and particularly set himself in opposition to the Government of New York. But the views of

Burnet, in regard to the direct trade, backed by the presents displayed to the savages, met their approbation in despite of Joncaire and the Jesuits." Dunlap adds that the conduct of Joncaire is only paralleled by that of the Jesuit Ralle [Rasle]. "It is not improbable," he continues, "that Joncaire as well as Ralle, was of the Society of Jesuits, for it is the policy of this insidious combination that its members shall appear as laymen, in many instances, rather than as ecclesiastics."[64]

Obviously hostile, with the old-time prejudice of his kind, to the work of the Catholic missionaries, Dunlap nevertheless does a certain justice to Joncaire, in bringing out this phase of his activities. There is no warrant found in the documents for the supposition that Joncaire was a member of the Society of Jesus; many things indicate that he was not. Nor was he, probably, above the average standard of morality among the French soldiers of his day—a type, as we well know, not conspicuous either for piety or purity. But it remains true that Joncaire's services among the Senecas were calculated to help on the efforts of the missionaries, who found him an invaluable ally against the ungodly English.

There exists, of date 1725, a memoir "by a member of the Congregation of St. Lazare," in which various measures are urged to prevent the English from working injury to the colony of Canada and the cause of true religion among the Indians. The author suggests that the Recollects (who were Franciscans), should be allowed to remain at any posts where they then were, in capacity of missionaries or chaplains; and that in these capacities they be sent to posts which should thereafter be established, where regular parochial organization could not be effected; but that the Jesuits, who preferred to be missionaries among the Indians rather than chaplains at the French posts, might nevertheless be established at Niagara, "in order that from this post they

64. "History of the New Netherlands," etc., by William Dunlap (N. Y., 1839), Vol. I, pp. 286, 287.

may carry on their mission among the Iroquois. It is highly important to the Colony to establish and to maintain these missions in the interests of France. To the end that the Jesuits may find means to hold the Iroquois nations it is desirable to give to them a tract of land near Niagara where they may build a house and make an establishment."

This plea for a Jesuit establishment at Niagara, which, plausibly, was made with the knowledge and endorsal of Joncaire, was not granted; but when the new post was garrisoned, it is probable that the first priest who as chaplain accompanied troops thither, was a Jesuit. The traditions of the post already associated it with that order. At least three Jesuits had been at the short-lived Fort Denonville on the same spot—Fathers Enjalran, Lamberville and Milet. No priest is mentioned among the soldiers who brought new life and stir to the old plateau in 1726. The first clergyman of whom we find record at Fort Niagara was Father Emmanuel Crespel, also a Jesuit. He was stationed there for about three years from 1729, interrupting his ministrations there with a short sojourn at Detroit where a mission of his order had been established.

Of Fort Niagara at this time he says: "I found the place very agreeable; hunting and fishing were very productive; the woods in their greatest beauty, and full of walnut and chestnut trees, oaks, elms and some others, far superior to any we see in France. The fever," he continues, "soon destroyed the pleasures we began to find, and much incommoded us, until the beginning of autumn, which season dispelled the unwholesome air. We passed the winter very quietly, and would have passed it very agreeably, if the vessel which was to have brought us refreshments had not encountered a storm on the lake, and been obliged to put back to Frontenac, which laid us under the necessity of drinking nothing but water. As the winter advanced she dared not proceed, and we did not receive our stores until May." Father Crespel records that while at Niagara he learned the Iroquois—probably the Seneca—and Ottawa languages well

enough to converse with the Indians. "This enabled me," he writes, "to enjoy their company when I took a walk in the environs of the post."[65] The ability to talk with Indians afterward saved his life. When his three years of residence at Niagara expired, he was relieved, according to the custom of his order, and he passed a season in the convent at Quebec. While he was, no doubt, succeeded at Niagara by another chaplain, it is not until some years later that we find in the archives any mention of a priest at that post.

In 1731 Joncaire entered upon a new service, which, apparently, was to be his chief employment for the few remaining years of his life. He was now past sixty years. Grown gray in the King's service, seasoned by a lifetime of exposure and arduous wilderness experience, wise in the ways of the Indian, and understanding the intrigues and ambitions of the English, he was preëminently a man to be entrusted with an important mission. It is not to be inferred, however, that his lifetime of service on the outposts had cut him off from the official, the military or the domestic associations of Quebec and Montreal. The latter town, then of not above 5,000 inhabitants, was his home; and there, from 1707 to 1723, Madame de Joncaire bore to him, as we have already noted, ten children, the eldest of whom, Philippe Thomas, and his younger brother Daniel, known respectively as Chabert the younger and Clausonne, are both to bear a part in the history of the Niagara. In 1731, Chabert, Jr., then about twenty-four years old, accompanied his father to the Senecas' villages, and probably to Niagara. He had even then "resided a long time among those Indians" and was "thoroughly conversant with their language." But now he was to be intrusted with new responsibilities; he was to assume the rôle which his father had filled for so many

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65. "Voiages du R. P. Emmanuel Crespel, dans le Canada et son naufrage en revenant en France. Mis au jour par le Sr. Louis Crespel, son Frére. A Francfort sur le Meyn, 1742." There are numerous editions: 1st German, Frankfort and Leipsig, 1751; 2d French, Frankfort, 1752; Amsterdam, 1757; an English edition, 1797, etc., with numerous variations in title. The rare first edition was reprinted at Quebec in 1884.

years among these vacillating and uncertain people. Reporting on these arrangements to the French Minister, de Maurepas, in October, 1731, Beauharnois wrote: "There is reason to believe that Sieur de Joncaire's presence among the Iroquois has been a check on them as regards the English, and that by keeping a person of some influence constantly among them, we shall succeed in entirely breaking up the secret intrigues they have together. On the other hand, the Iroquois will be more circumspect in their proceedings, and less liable to fall into the snares of the English, when they have some one convenient to consult with, and in whom they will have confidence. Sieur de Joncaire's son is well adapted for that mission."

The story of this son, and his share in Niagara history, belong for the most part to a later period than we are now considering. It may be noted here, however, that it was Chabert the younger who, in the winter of 1734, came from Montreal to Fort Niagara on snowshoes, bringing letters from the Governor. He returned through the heart of New York State, visiting the Iroquois villages *en route*. He was then in his twenty-seventh year; active, hardy, speaking the Seneca and probably other dialects of the Iroquois as well as his native French, "wise and full of ardor for the service." Later in this year he was serving in the company commanded by Desnoyelles, and from this time on his career becomes more and more a part of Niagara history.

It is plain that no credence was given by Beauharnois to the reports reflecting on the integrity of the elder Joncaire's character. That he was thoroughly loyal to the French might also be inferred from the responsibility of his new mission. He was entrusted with the removal to a new place of residence of the Chaouanons.

These people are better known as the Shawanese. To enter fully into their history here would be to travel afar from our especial theme. It will suffice to state that they were of southern origin. About 1698, three or four score families of them, with the consent of the Governor of Penn-

sylvania, removed from Carolina and established themselves on the Susquehanna, at Conestoga. Others followed, so that by 1732, when the number of Indian fighting men in Pennsylvania was estimated at about 700, one half of them were Shawanese immigrants. About the year 1724 the Delaware Indians, in quest of better hunting-grounds, removed from their old seats on the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers, to the lower Allegheny, upper Ohio and its branches, and from 1728 the Shawanese gradually followed them.

The friendship of these Ohio Delawares and Shawanese became an object of rivalry for the British and French; the interests of the latter among them were now confided to Joncaire. The vanguard of the Shawanese migrants appears to have gained the upper Ohio as early as 1724, for in that year we find that Vaudreuil had taken measures to weld them to the French. An interpreter, Cavelier, had been sent among them, and had even induced four of their chiefs to go with him to Montreal, where they received the customary assurances of French friendship. At this date, the Ohio Shawanese numbered over 700, but their attachment to the English appears to have been even greater than to the French. They evidently paid some respect to the authority of the French in the Ohio valley, for on this Montreal visit they asked if the French Governor "would receive them, and where he would wish to locate them." Beauharnois replied that he would "leave them entirely at liberty to select, themselves, a country where they might live conveniently and within the sound of their Father's voice"—i. e., within French influence; "that they might report, the next year, the place they will have chosen, and he should see if it were suitable for them."

In the spring of 1732 Joncaire reported to the Governor that these Indians were settled in villages *("en village")* "on the other side of the beautiful river of Oyo, six leagues below the River Atigué. The "Beautiful river," or Ohio, at that time designated the present Ohio and the Allegheny to its source. The Atigué[66] was the Rivière au Boeuf, now

66. *See* Bellin's "Carte de la Louisiana."

known as Le Boeuf creek or Venango river. This seat of the Shawanese, therefore, was a few miles below the present city of Franklin, Pa. To them Joncaire was remanded with gifts and instructions to keep English traders away, and to do all possible to cement their friendship with the French.

In this connection may be noted a curious statement made by an old Seneca chief, whose name is written by the French as Oninquoinonte. Being with Joncaire at Montreal in 1732, the Seneca made a speech to the Governor in which he said: "You know, my father, it is I who made it easy to build the stone house at Niagara, my abode having always been there. Since I cannot conquer my love for strong drink, I surrender that place and establish myself in another place, at the portage of the Le Boeuf river, which was and is the rendezvous of the Chaouanons." He added with unwonted ardor, that the French were masters of all this region, and he would die sooner than not sustain them in their work of settling the Shawanese.

A fair degree of success appears to have rewarded Joncaire's efforts. He is hereafter spoken of as commandant among the Shawanese, and his residence for a considerable part of each year was in the beautiful valley that stretches between long-sloping hills below the junction of the Venango and the Allegheny. Already a historic region, it was destined in a few years to be the scene of important events which should link its story yet more closely with that of the Niagara. Here at the junction of the rivers, Washington is to camp on his way to demand that the French withdraw from the region. Here France is soon to stretch her chain of forest-buried forts, that rope of sand on which she vainly relied for the control of a continent.

The disposition to migrate further west, shown by several of the Indian tribes at this period, gave a remarkable turn to the policies of the rival white nations on the continent. It was an early wave in the movement of an inevitable flood; though there is little in the old records to indicate that either the English or French saw very far into the future, or gave much heed to anything save relations

of immediate profit and advantage. The migrations of the Shawanese covered many years, and included many removes. In 1736 Joncaire found his villages on the Allegheny restless with the prospect of a new settlement in the vicinity of Detroit, on lands ranged over by their friends the Hurons. The next year, the sale by the Senecas and Cayugas of certain lands on the Susquehanna, near where some of the Shawanese had continued to live, started a new migration, and fostered bitterness towards the English. From this time on for many years—for many years indeed after the fall of New France—we find traces of the Shawanese at many points in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys; and not until the French were finally forced out did the rivalry cease for the friendship of these shifty and uncertain savages; not, obviously, for the sake of that friendship, but because the rival Powers deemed it essential for their control of the inland highways and of the fur trade.

Regarding the proposed settlement at Detroit, the Shawanese pledged themselves to Joncaire to go to Montreal in the spring of 1737, "to hear the Marquis de Beauharnois discourse on their migration." Louis XV., whose phrase has just been quoted,[67] thought that the proposed settlement "is very desirable, so as to protect the fidelity of these Indians against the insinuations of the English. But the delay they interpose to that movement induces His Majesty to apprehend that the Marquis de Beauharnois will meet with more difficulties than he had anticipated, and that the English, with whom His Majesty is informed they trade, had made sufficient progress among them to dissuade them therefrom."

And the main instrument on whom both Governor and King relied was the veteran Joncaire. But the time of his achievements was at an end. On June 29, 1739, he died at Niagara. A band of Shawanese, conducted by Douville de la Saussaye, reached Montreal on July 21st following, and carried the news of the death of the veteran. As the dis-

67. Dispatches, Versailles, May 10, 1737.

patches speak of the receipt at Montreal of news of his death, and do not state that his body was carried there, the conclusion is at least plausible that he was buried somewhere at Niagara.

On Sept. 12, 1740, the Five Nations sent a deputation to Montreal, where they addressed M. de Beaucourt, the Governor, with much ceremony and the presentation of many wampum belts. "Father," said their spokesman, extending a large belt, "you see our ceremony; we come to bewail your dead, our deceased son, Monsieur de Joncaire; with this belt we cover his body so that nothing may damage it. . . . The misfortune which has overtaken us has deprived us of light; by this belt [giving a small white one] I put the clouds aside to the right and to the left, and replace the sun in its meridian. Father," the orator continued, holding out another string of wampum, "by this belt I again kindle the fire which had gone out through our son's death"; then, by way of condolence, with still another belt: "We know that pain and sorrow disturb the heart, and cause bile; by this belt, we give you a medicine which will cleanse your heart, and cheer you up." Eight days later, the Governor, who had been detained at Quebec, sent reply to the warriors: "You had cause to mourn for your son Joncaire, and to cover his body; you have experienced a great loss, for he loved you much. I regret him like you." The marquis promised to send back with them Joncaire's son, already well known to them. "He will fill, near you, the same place as your late son. Listen attentively to whatever he will say to you from me." And thenceforth, in the affections of the Senecas of Western New York, the son is to reign in his father's stead. The story of Chabert de Joncaire the elder is ended.

NOTE.—Much of the data in the foregoing chapters, especially chapters XI. and XII., is drawn from the unprinted "*Correspondance Générale,*" and accompanying *mémoires,* special reports and letters preserved in the Archives at Paris, and in part, by means of copies, in the Archives at Ottawa.

ERRATUM.—Page 85, for "Le Barre," read "La Barre."