

## PONTIAC; OR THE SIEGE OF DETROIT.

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BY J. T. HEADLEY.

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The elevated belt of inland seas which stretches from the St. Lawrence to the tenth parallel of west longitude has always formed one of the most striking and important features of this continent. At the outset, when an unbroken forest extended in the southern section, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, through which the settler must hew his difficult way with an ax, he could by these great inland seas, penetrate to its very center. The French who claimed the Canadas by right of discovery, extended their explorations to Michilimackinac, and thence south to the mouth of the Mississippi. But the English colonies, pushing in from the Atlantic seaboard south of the St. Lawrence, forced them back, till the lakes and the river became the boundary line between the two, and the scene of bloody conflicts. So in the revolution a fiercer struggle took place along this belt of water. In the war of 1812 it became the great battle ground between the two countries; and if so great a misfortune as a third war between England and America should ever occur, it would be the scene of the most sanguinary battles the world has ever seen. The importance of this water belt, in a commercial point of view, may be seen in the fleets that cover it and the vast amount of wealth that floats on its bosom.

The French early saw that the Detroit river was a miniature straits of Gibraltar to all the water that lay beyond, and as far back as 1701, established there its most important western station. It was composed of a military colony, extending for twelve or sixteen miles up and down the west bank of the river, in the center

of which stood the fort, a quadrilateral structure embracing about 100 houses. Numerous white dwellings lay scattered along the banks, each surrounded with a picket fence, while orchards and gardens and outhouses exhibited the thrift of the Canadian settlers. It altogether formed a beautiful and sunny opening to the gloomy wilderness; and to the trader and soldier, weary with their long marches and solitary bivouacks in the forest, it was ever a most welcome sight. Three large Indian villages were embraced in the limits of the settlement. A little below the fort, and on the same side of the river, were the lodges of the Pottawatomies; nearly opposite them those of the Wyandots; while two miles further up lay sprinkled over the green meadows the wigwams of the Ottawas.

The French and English struggled long and stubbornly for the control of the western continent, but at last the decisive conflict came, when the Canadas were put up and battled for on the plains of Abraham. With the fall of Montcalm the French power was forever broken; and the surrender of Montreal, which soon followed, virtually closed the war. The St. Lawrence and the lakes now being in possession of the English, nothing remained for the weak western posts but to submit quietly to their new masters.

The news of the overthrow of the colonial government had reached them, but having received no formal summons to surrender, they still kept the flag of France flying; and Capt. Rogers, a native of New Hampshire, was sent with 200 rangers, in fifteen whale-boats to take possession of them. On the 7th of November he encamped on the present site of Cleveland—a point never before reached by British troops. Here a deputation of Indians met him, in the name of Pontiac, the savage lord of this wilderness. Before night the chief himself arrived and demanded the reason of Rogers' visit. The latter told him that the French had ceded all Canada to the British, who now had undisputed sway, and he was on his way to take possession of Detroit. Pontiac staid till morning, and in another interview with the ranger professed a desire for peace. Rogers then kept on, and at length reached Detroit, over which the lilies of France were still waving. The British colors at once supplanted them, and the surrounding Canadians swore allegiance to the British crown.

The Indians, who had been on the most friendly terms with the French, soon had cause to regret their change of masters. The English always practiced a cruel policy toward the Indians, which soon showed its legitimate fruits among the tribes in the neighborhood of Detroit. There was one chief among them who held undisputed sway by the

force of his genius and the loftiness of his character. Like Tecumseh and Red Jacket, he was one of those few savage monarchs that seemed made for a nobler destiny than to be the acknowledged leader of a few thousand naked barbarians. He saw, with great forecast of thought, the humiliation of the Indians if the British were allowed undisputed sway; for, with the French no longer allies, he could not resist successfully their aggressions. He resolved, therefore, before the British got firmer foothold, to overwhelm them with savage forces, trusting to French aid to complete the work. So, in May, 1762, he sent messengers to the various surrounding tribes, summoning them to assemble for consultation on the banks of Ecorces river, a short distance from Detroit.

Pontiac was chief only of the Ottawas, though the other tribes acknowledged his authority. He was at this time about 50 years of age, and, though not above the middle height, bore himself with wonderful dignity. No monarch ever trod the floor of his palace with a haughtier step than did this swarthy chieftain the green sward where the council sat. His features were not regular, but there was a boldness and sternness in their expression which awed the beholder; and the dark eye had a strange fascination in its glances.

Detroit and its environs at this time presented a picturesque appearance. The fort, with its little garrison of 120 men, surrounded with palisades twenty-five feet high and a bastion at each corner, formed the central figure. The bright river, here only half a mile wide, flowed past it, almost washing its foundations. Above and below, fringing the stream as far as the eye could reach, gleamed the white farm houses, rising from green orchards, while the pastures were alive with cattle. Within sight of the ramparts lay the villages of the Indians, their wigwams sprinkling the meadows, over which the listless warrior lounged, and the dusky maiden, shining in beads and vermillion, gayly tripped; while, skinny, shriveled hags, roamed along the outskirts of the forest, and troops of naked children rolled and shouted in the sun. The great solemn wilderness encompassed all, inclosing a scene of great contrasts—of great wilderness and beauty combined. The red uniform of the soldier and the swarthy naked form of the savage; the sweet and stirring strains of the band, and the hoarse beat of the Indian's drum and his discordant yells; the rude wigwam with its dusky group beneath and the farmhouse with its well-set table; the stately schooner riding at anchor in the stream, and birch bark canoes glancing over the water; the smoke of the chimney and the smoke of the camp fire all mingled together on this oasis in the wilderness in strange harmony.

The tribes responded to Pontiac's call. Soon the fierce Ojibwas and Wyandots assembled at the place of rendezvous, and took their seats on the grass in a circle. For a long time not a word was spoken in the council. At last Pontiac strode into its midst, plumed and painted for war. Casting his fierce glance around on the waiting group, he commenced denouncing the English, and calling on the chiefs to arise in defense of their rights. His voice at times pealed like a bugle, and his gestures were sudden and violent. After arousing the chiefs by his eloquence he unfolded his plans.

He proposed that on the 2d of May they should visit the fort, under pretense of interchanging friendly and peaceful greetings; and then, when the garrison was suspecting no treachery, suddenly fall on them and massacre the whole. They all readily assented to his scheme.

Gladwyn, commander of the fort, had seen nothing to rouse his suspicions, and everything betokened a quite summer, until, just before this premeditated massacre, when a Canadian woman, who had visited the Ottawa village to buy some venison and maple sugar, reported that as she was passing among the wigwams, she observed the warriors busily engaged in filing off their gun-barrels. A blacksmith, hearing of it, said that for some days the Indians had been borrowing files and saws of him, which struck him as singular. This excited suspicion, and report was made to Gladwyn. He only laughed at the fears created by it; for nothing had occurred to break the harmony that had now lasted for nearly two years.

Among the Ojibwas was a young Indian girl of rare beauty and exquisite form. Large, dark, and dreamy eyes lighted up her nut-brown complexion, revealing a loving and passionate nature, while her moccasined foot pressed the green sward light and gracefully as a young fawn's. Struck with her exquisite loveliness, Gladwyn had become enamoured of her; and his passion being returned, she had become his mistress. The next day after the report of the woman was made this girl came into the fort bringing some elk-skin moccasins, which she had worked with porcupine quills, as a present for Gladwyn. He noticed that she looked pensive and sad; but made no remark upon it, and she left him without saying anything to alarm his suspicions. She did not go away, however, but lingered outside the door as if unwilling to leave. A sentinel having watched her strange and apparently distressed manner for some time reported it to Gladwyn, hinting that he had better question her. Gladwyn called her in, and catching the earnest expression of her eye, saw at once there was something more than common on her mind, and began to interrogate

her. But she only shook her head and would make no answer. Her pertinacity and the melancholy manner in which she resisted his importunities convinced him that she held a secret of serious import, and he pressed her still more earnestly. At last her firmness gave way before his warm pleadings, and the loving heart triumphed over its fears. She no longer saw her angry tribe and the vengeful chieftians demanding her death as the betrayer of her race. She saw only the adorned form of her lover before her, and her lips broke their painful silence.

Making him promise not to betray her secret, she told him that the Indians had sawed off their gun-barrels so that they could carry them concealed under their blankets; and Pontiac, with his chiefs thus armed, was about to visit the fort to hold a council. He would make a speech, and at its close present to Gladwyn a peace-belt of wampum. When he reversed it in his hands it was to be the signal for a general massacre of all but the Canadians. Gladwyn warmly thanked the trembling beauty for this proof of her devotion, and bade her return to the village and neither do nor say anything to awaken suspicion.

The next morning a pouring rain set in and continued all day, and the Indians did not make their appearance, though the garrison was kept under arms and every precaution made to prevent a surprise. Toward evening it cleared up; the broken clouds drifted away before the brisk west wind, and the sun sunk in a blaze of glory behind the western forest, its last beams glancing on the British colors that fluttered from the flag-staff. Twilight soon deepened into the full shadows of night and darkness fell on the forest and stream. Gladwyn, whose fears had now become thoroughly aroused would not retire to his quarters but walked the ramparts all night. The scene, the time and the imminent danger combined to render him sad and thoughtful. War was evidently determined upon by Pontiac and he was unprepared for it. He was there in the heart of the wilderness, far removed from succor, with only 120 men in a fort presenting but feeble defences to a determined foe. He contrasted the quiet scene before him with the aspect it would present in a few days. Now all was serene. The river flowed by with a low, monotonous sound, reflecting the stars in its bosom; and the great forest slept black and motionless against the sky. Before morning that stream might swarm with hostile boats, and those silent woods resound with maddened yells and fierce shouts of vengeance. But the night passed on without disturbance, save now and then there arose the roll of the Indian drum in the distance, accompanied by bursts of

yells as the Indians danced around their camp fires that redened the heavens far and near with their glow.

When the welcome light of morning broke over the forest all was bustle and commotion within the fort. The sun rose bright and clear; but a heavy mist lay along the river, entirely shrouding it from view. At length the heavy folds began to move and lift, and finally parted and floated gracefully away on the morning air, revealing the water covered with bark canoes moving steadily across the river. Only two or three warriors appeared in each, the others lying flat on their faces on the bottom to avoid being seen. Pontiac had ordered this to be done so as not to awaken any suspicions in the garrison that his mission was not what he represented it to be—a peaceful one. He could not leave them behind, for he would need them in the approaching conflict. There was a large common behind the fort; this was soon filled with a crowd of Indian squaws, children and warriors mingled together, some dressed in fantastic costumes or 'gaudily painted, and all apparently preparing for a game of ball. Pontiac slowly approached the fort with sixty chiefs at his back, marching in Indian file. Each was wrapped to the chin in his blanket, underneath which, grasped with his right hand, lay concealed his trusty rifle. From the heads of some waved the hawk, the eagle, and raven plume. Others showed only the scalp lock, while a few wore their hair naturally, the long, dark locks hanging wildly about their malignant faces.

As Pontiac passed through the gate of the fort he uttered a low ejaculation of surprise. Well might he do so, for the unexpected sight that met his gaze would have startled a greater stoic even than he. Instead of beholding the garrison lulled into security, and entirely off its guard, he found himself between two lines of glittering steel drawn up on each side of the gate to receive him. The houses of the traders and those employed by the garrison were all closed, and the occupants armed to the teeth, standing on guard upon the corners of the streets, while the tap of the drum, heard at intervals, told in language that Pontiac could not mistake that the garrison, which he expected to find careless and insecure, was in a state of the keenest vigilance and apparent alarm. Casting a dark and moody glance around on these hostile preparations, he strode haughtily through the principal street of the place and advanced direct to the council house, followed by his chiefs.

Passing through the door he saw Gladwyn and the other officers seated at the further end, each with a sword by his side and a brace of pistols in his belt. Pontiac's brow darkened at this additional proof that his treacherous and bloody plot had been discovered. Controlling



himself, however, by a strong effort he rallied; and addressing Gladwyn said, in a somewhat reproachful tone: "Why do I see so many of my father's young men standing in the streets with their guns?" Gladwyn replied carelessly that he had just been drilling them to keep up proper discipline. Pontiac knew this to be false; but he could not do otherwise than appear to believe it, and the chiefs sat down. Pontiac then arose and began his address, holding in the meantime the fatal wampum belt in his hand. Gladwyn paid indifferent attention to his speech, but kept his eye glued to that belt of wampum; for when the deadly signal should be given, no time must be lost. Pontiac spoke with all that plausibility and deep dissimulation so characteristic of the Indian when plotting treachery. His mind was evidently divided between the speech he was making and the course which, under this unexpected aspect of affairs, he ought to pursue. He could not tell whether rumors of his treachery had reached the fort, causing the garrison to be suspicious and watchful, or whether his entire plot, in all its details—even to the signal of attack—was known; and his countenance wore a disturbed, doubtful expression. Beyond the wrathful gleam of his fierce eye there was a troubled look, revealing the intense working of his fierce soul under that calm exterior. He had read the human countenance too long and carefully not to see that the faces of the soldiers wore not so much an expression of anxiety and suspicion as of calm, grim determination—of certain knowledge and a fixed purpose. Still the thought of abandoning his plan entirely roused all the deep passions of his savage nature; and before he did this he determined to test the accuracy of Gladwyn's knowledge to the uttermost.

At length his speech was finished, and he paused a moment irresolute. The profoundest silence followed, so deep and awful that the suppressed breathing of the excited actors in this strange scene could be distinctly heard. Gladwyn, who knew that the decisive moment had come, never for a moment turned his eye from that suspended belt of wampum. A single movement and the wild warwhoop would burst on the startled ear, and the clash of weapons and the fierce death grapple come. Never was there a scene of more thrilling, absorbing interest. There stood Pontiac—motionless, silent—the arm half extended, on which were fixed the glaring eyes of his chiefs, while the officers before him sat with compressed lips and bent brows, sternly awaiting the next movement.

Pontiac slowly reached forth his hand and began to reverse the wampum. Gladwyn saw it and, quick as lightning, made a light rapid gesture—a signal before agreed upon. In an instant every hand sought

the sword hilt, and the quick clank of arms through the open door smote ominously on the ear. The next moment the rolling sound of the drum, beating the charge, echoed afar through the streets. The effect was electrical. Pontiac paused, confounded. He now knew that his dark plot had been discovered. The look of baffled rage and undying hate which he threw around him was followed by an uncertain, disturbed look. He dared not make the signal agreed upon, for a girdle of steel surrounded him. The lion was caged; the haughty lord of the forest caught in his own trap. But beating back his swelling rage, smothering with a strong effort the fires ready to burst into conflagration, he resumed his composure and sat down. Gladwyn rose to reply. Indulging in no suspicions, he received the belt of wampum as if it had been offered in the true spirit of conciliation and kindness. Pontiac was compelled to swallow his fierce passions and listen calmly, nay, outwardly with meekness, to the hypocritical harangue. The farce was the more striking for its being the finale of such an intended tragedy. These two men, burning with hatred against each other yet wearing the outward guise of friendship and expressing mutual trust and confidence, while such an unsprung mine of death and slaughter lay at their feet, presented a scene not soon to be forgotten by the spectators. At length the council broke up, and Pontiac, casting haughty and fierce glances on the ranks as he passed out, strode through the gate of the fort and returned, silent and moody, to his wigwam.

Determined not to be baffled so, he next morning returned to the fort, with but three chiefs, to smoke the calumet of peace, and another farce was enacted in which each endeavored to outdo the other in dissimulation.

To keep up this show of friendly relations, Pontiac, after the interview was over, retired to the field and, calling his young warriors together, had one of their wild, grotesque, indescribable games of ball. The next Monday, early in the morning, the garrison found the common behind the fort thronged with the Indians of four tribes. Soon after Pontiac was seen advancing toward the fort accompanied by his chiefs. Arriving at the gate he demanded admittance. Gladwyn replied that he might enter alone, but that none of his riotous crew should accompany him. Pontiac, in a rage, turned away and repeated Gladwyn's reply to the Indians who lay hidden in the grass. In an instant the field was in an uproar. They leaped up, yelling and shouting, and finding nothing else to wreak their vengeance upon, went to the house of an old English woman and, dragging her forth, murdered



her. They also mangled and butchered a man by the name of Fisher. Pontiac, scorning such revenge, hastened to the shore and launched his boat, sprang in, and turned its prow up the stream. With strong and steady strokes he urged it against the current till he came opposite the village of his tribe, when he halted, and shouted to the women to immediately remove to the other side of the river from that on which the fort stood. Pontiac then retired to his cabin and spent the day pondering future schemes of revenge. By night the removal was effected; and the warriors having returned from the fort, all were assembled on the grass. Suddenly Pontiac, in full war costume and swinging his tomahawk above his head, leaped into their midst and began a fierce and exciting harangue. When he had closed a deep murmur of assent followed and open war was resolved upon.

Gladwyn, now thoroughly alive to the danger that threatened him, kept the garrison under arms all night. Toward dawn the air was suddenly filled with yells, and the next moment the fort and surrounding landscape were lit up by the flash of muskets. The bullets struck the palisades like hail, and it was one incessant scattering fire from the unseen foe. At length the sun rose over the wilderness; but the light failed to reveal the lurking assailants. The garrison expected every moment to see their dusky forms pour in one fierce torrent over the frail works. But the Indians could not make up their minds to come in such close and deadly conflict with the soldiers, fully prepared to receive them. They lay hid in the grass and hollows, behind bushes, fences and barns, while all along a low ridge were incessant puffs of smoke from the invisible foe.

Within close shot of the fort stood a cluster of outbuildings, behind which the Indians collected in great numbers and picked off every man that dared show his head or expose a limb. The fire was especially galling from this spot. Finding it impossible to dislodge the savages with grape shot, Gladwyn ordered a quantity of spikes to be heated and fired instead. These were thrown red hot in handfuls down the cannon and hurled into the outbuildings. The heated metal, lodged in the beams and boards, set them on fire. Igniting in so many places simultaneously, the smoke had scarcely begun to ascend before they were wrapped in conflagration, the flames hissing and roaring through the entire mass with incredible velocity. The Indians, driven out by the heat, broke cover and ran leaping and yelling over the fields in such grotesque terror that the garrison burst into loud and derisive laughter.

This random, scattering fire was kept up for six hours, when the Indians withdrew. Gladwyn immediately sent La Butte, an interpreter,

to Pontiac to demand the reason of this attack. The chieftain received him kindly, but said he wished to consult with the English fathers, meaning the officers. Maj. Campbell, second in command, proposed to go, accompanied by Lieut. McDougal. Many suspected treachery, and advised them not to trust themselves in the hands of the Indians. They, however, persisted. The moment their red uniforms were seen in the distance the savages set up loud yells, brandishing sticks and assuming hostile attitudes while the dogs swelled the clamor with their furious barking. Pontiac calmed the tumult, received them courteously and called a council in one of the lodges. Campbell made a conciliatory speech, to which Pontiac deigned no reply whatever; and they sat there a whole hour in silence. This was ominous, and feeling ill at ease, Campbell arose to return to the fort, but Pontiac stopped him and retained both him and the lieutenant as prisoners. They never saw the fort again.

On the 12th of May the Indians again surrounded the place and laid regular siege to it, investing it night and day, evidently with the determination of starving the garrison out. Not a head could expose itself at a loophole or above the parapets but it instantly became the target of a hundred guns. The garrison were now kept constantly on the alert. No one took off his clothes or snatched a moment's repose except with his weapons by his side. They gradually cleared away by bold sallies all the outbuildings, fences and orchards in the vicinity of the fort, which furnished a covering to their assailants, so that the cannon could sweep the entire space. In the meantime two schooners that lay in the river brought their broadsides to bear, so as to sweep the northern and southern curtains, thus relieving the feeble garrison from the care of those two sides. The Indians, by crawling through the grass, endeavored to set the thatched roofs of the houses on fire with burning tow, but Gladwyn, anticipating this, had provided tanks and cisterns, so that the fire was extinguished as fast as it caught.

While these events, possessing such fearful interest to the beleaguered garrison, were transpiring the advancing spring had come in all its glory. The sparkling meadows had put on their robes of richest green, the bending tree tops swayed to the passing breeze, the forest spread its sea of verdure as far as the eye could reach, flowers dotted the winding river banks, the birds filled the air with their melody, and all nature seemed rejoicing in its own beauty and brightness.

The Canadian settlers were unmolested by the Indians and continued their peaceful pursuits. The farmer drove his team afield, the herds roamed the pastures, or reclined under the trees, untroubled by the

conflict raging so near them. It was a sweet, lovely spot in the bosom of the wilderness.

But what a contrast did that little fort present! Provisions were getting low; grease, tallow, and everything that could support life was hoarded with scrupulous care and distributed in parsimonious morsels. The streets were deserted and silent, for the soldiers lived on the ramparts. Occasionally a lazy Canadian, or weary sentinel, or an Indian girl in her gaudy trappings—mistress of some officer—would saunter along, breaking the otherwise sad monotony of the scene.

At this time Gladwyn heard that a detachment with provisions was on its way to Detroit. He immediately dispatched the smallest of the two schooners to hurry up the convoy. The Indians kept up their scourging fire every day, compelling the garrison to incessant watchfulness, which at length began to tell fearfully upon them. The news of the approaching convoy kept up their courage, and day after day the weary eye was strained along the river to catch the first sight of its coming. With the light of every morning many an anxious watcher turned his gaze down the river and looked till the fading twilight shut out his view. But not a word could be heard from the convoy or the schooner sent to hasten its advance. As the time passed by for its appearance the gravest fears began to be entertained for its safety, and men looked sadly in each other's faces.

At length one morning, the 30th of May, a shout was heard from the sentinel on the east bastion, announcing that the convey was in sight. The news spread like wild-fire through the garrison. Soldiers rushed out of the gate that was protected by the guns of the schooners and, crowding the banks of the river, saw with unbounded delight, far away around a distant point, the fleet of boats slowly sweeping into view—the oars flashing in the sun, and the English flag fluttering in the breeze. Every heart bounded with excitement and joy, and three rousing cheers were sent over the water; while the guns fired a salute, shaking the banks with their stern welcome. But no answering cheers came back; and the fleet kept on in dead silence.

Suddenly swarthy figures arose in the boats, and, with wild gestures, sent back savage yells in response to the cheers. The soldiers looked on each other in blank dismay and silent terror. The fearful tidings needed no lips to give them utterance. Those yells and wild gestures told the whole melancholy story. The effect on the overtasked garrison was frightful. From the very summit of hope and joy they had fallen, without a moment's warning, to the lowest abyss of despair. Gloomy

and sad, they watched the approach of the boats—eighteen in number—till the occupants could be distinctly seen.

They were filled with Indians, in the midst of whom were placed English soldiers as rowers. In the leading boat were four soldiers and only three Indians. As this drew near the schooner one of the soldiers determined to make an attempt to escape. He made known his plans to his companions; and, under pretense of changing places with one of the oarsmen, threw himself on the most powerful of the three Indians and leaped overboard. The savage, taken off his guard, was easily overturned, but with the quickness of his race he seized the soldier as he was going under and plunged his knife into his side. Then followed a fearful struggle. Both were powerful men and they rolled over and over, the Indian locked in an embrace that only death could sunder. They came again and again to the surface. Sometimes the dripping scalp-lock and distorted, fiendish face of the savage uppermost, and then the pale, resolute countenance of the soldier gleaming a moment above the surface and as quickly disappearing in the boiling water. At last they sank together, and the eddying stream closed smoothly above them. The two remaining Indians, frightened at the onset that had precipitated their companion overboard, leaped into the river and swam for the shore. The soldiers then turned and pulled for the schooner. Some Indians, seeing this, put off in their light canoe and gave chase, firing as they approached, and wounding one of the soldiers. The others could make but slow headway with their heavy boat, and their pursuers rapidly gained on them. At length the schooner got her guns to bear and a round shot, skimming close to the English boat and plowing up the water among the light canoes of the Indians, sent them in consternation to the shore.

The convoy had been captured while making a landing on Lake Erie. The Indians, seeing the boats approach the shore, lay in ambush, and falling on the troops while in confusion on the beach, took prisoners or killed more than two-thirds of the whole. The commander and forty others succeeded in making their escape, and finally reached Niagara—the first to announce the fearful fate that had overtaken the detachment. The Indians had brought with them over ninety prisoners to meet a more terrible doom than the one which had befallen their comrades who perished in the fight.

With their appetite for the blood whetted by their long abortive attempts to capture the fort, the Indians entered on the massacre of these men with unusual relish and refinement of cruelty that was fiendish. Some were compelled to run the gantlet, slashed at every

step by knives in the hands of women, till they were literally hacked to pieces. Others were roasted before a slow fire; while others still were chopped up piece-meal. This barbarous mutilation and protracted torture were not the work of one or two days; and the survivors were compelled to witness agonies which they knew must soon be their own. The morning and evening gun of the fort broke sadly on their ears; reminding them of friends and home; but no succor could reach them, and they one after another fell under the fagot and knife of the savage. Those in the garrison could hear the yells of the savages and knew what they betokened, but could make no attempt at a rescue. Day after day the stream was cumbered with the charred and mutilated corpses with dissevered head and limbs; and as they came floating past the fort and the schooners at anchor abreast of it—the “fish nibbling at the clotted blood of faces and limbs”—many turned away weeping from the sad spectacle, while gloomy forebodings filled all hearts, for it told what their own fate would be should famine compel them to surrender or a successful surprise place the fort in the hands of the savages. But the stern-hearted looked on with flashing eyes and clenched teeth, while deep and fearful oaths were sworn to avenge their slaughtered comrades. All cursed the hour that Pontiac was allowed to leave the fort with his chieftians after his murderous purpose was known.

The clouds were now gathering dark and threatening around the brave little garrison, but a gloomier prospect awaited it. Shortly after this terrible overthrow of their hopes of relief, a party of savages appeared toward evening in the pastures behind the fort with scalps elevated on poles. They were the scalps of the garrison at Sandusky, which had fallen into the hands of the Indians.

A few days later word was brought in by some Canadians that the warlike Ojibwas had joined Pontiac, swelling the number of his warriors to 820. These with their squaws and children, amounted to 3,000, scattered about and encamped in the meadows.

The odds were heavy against the garrison, and their prospects of relief were growing less every day; but the gallant officer in command surveyed the danger that surrounded him with a cool courage, and determined that the flag floating above him should never be struck while there was one arm left to wield a sword. Meanwhile the disastrous news kept arriving of the fall of one post after another, till Detroit alone remained in the hands of the English. The cross of St. George had disappeared from the western waters, and the only symbol of Eng-

land's power beyond Lake Erie was that solitary flag that still, morning and evening was reflected in the stream that flowed by Detroit. One hundred and twenty men, grouped beneath it, stood sole representatives of her dominions throughout that vast territory.

At length, on the nineteenth of June, a rumor reached the fort that the schooner Gladwyn, that had been dispatched to hasten up the ill-fated convoy, was on its way back, bringing with it the survivors. She had nearly arrived in sight of the garrison when the wind failed and she dropped down the stream. Before her approach could be seen from the fort she would be compelled to pass a narrow part of the channel where 800 Indians were lying in ambush to attack her. The garrison, knowing that those on board could not be aware of the premeditated attack, were kept in a state of intense anxiety and painful suspense. The sentinels on watch turned their eyes incessantly down the river, hoping to catch a glimpse of the white canvas as it drifted around the distant point; but in vain. Morning dawned and night came, and still naught but the fish-hawk lazily wheeling above the tranquil stream, met the anxious gaze.

Thus day after day passed by without any appearance of the vessel or any report of her fate. So long a time had passed since she was seen only a few miles below that the garrison would have given up all hope of ever seeing her, believing she had shared the fate of the convoy, had it not been that the weather had continued unusually calm. They knew the schooner would not attempt to stem the current in that narrow channel without a favorable wind, and there had been none since the first announcement of her arrival. Day after day the stream lay like glass shimmering in the sun. The morning brought no breeze strong enough to ripple the surface of the river, and the deep red sun went down each night in the fiery west, leaving forest and stream calm and slumberous as before.

At length late in the afternoon of the twenty-third, a great commotion was observed among the Indians, and it was soon ascertained that the vessel had got under way. Gladwyn immediately ordered two cannons to be fired, to let those on board know that the fort still held out. The heavy reports were sent back by the surrounding forest, echoed away on the summer evening air, but no answering echo came back. As soon as the gallant little schooner felt the strength of the southern breeze, she weighed anchor, and spreading her sails to the wind, moved steadily up the channel between the main shore and Fighting island.

There were sixty men on board, though only a few were visible, in order to tempt the Indians to make an attack. These lay hid in the



tall grass, watching her movements with flashing eyes, and waiting till she should reach the narrowest part of the stream. This she had now done, and they were just ready to pour in a volley of musketry, when the wind suddenly dies away. The sails flapped idly against the mast, and the vessel, losing her headway, yielded to the force of the current, and began to drift slowly back. Thinking the breeze might soon spring up again and enable them to pass up the channel, an anchor was dropped, and she held there in the narrow part of the stream. But no breeze arose. The flaming sun went down in the glittering west, lighting up forest and river like a great conflagration, and painting that vessel with her sails still standing, against the green background of forest. But not a leaf rustled, nor the shadow of a passing breeze crept over the water. Unwilling to lose the ground she had won, the schooner still lay where she had anchored. At length the glorious sunset faded from the heaven, and the browner shadows of the summer evening stole over the landscape.

The savages, in their green hiding-place, saw with glittering eyes the vessel holding her place in the narrow channel; and restraining their wild impulse to make an immediate attack, plotted her surprise when deep midnight would conceal their approach.

The crew had seen no indications of Indians, but, suspicious that the schooner's movements had all been watched, kept a strict look-out. After sunset a watch was set, while the men below lay upon their arms. Night settled slowly on the shore, until only its dim outline, and that of the dark forest could be seen. The schooner lay stripped of her canvas, and in the deep shadows of that moonless night her slender spars and rigging could not be traced against the sky. Only her dark hull loomed up in the gloom, like some black monster sleeping on the tide. Not a sound was heard on board; not a sound crept along the shore. A deep silence rested on everything, broken only by the piping frogs along the edges of the river, and the low steady rush of the water around the bows and along the sides of the vessel. The watch was ordered the moment they saw any signs of moving objects shoreward to give the alarm. But hour after hour passed on, and the warm summer night remained tranquil and serene; and that black, silent monster lay apparently deserted under the shadows of the overhanging forest.

At length the sentinel—whose eye by long and intent watching, had become accustomed to the darkness—detected moving shadows on the water, within gunshot of the vessel. Word was immediately passed below, and the men rapidly but silently took their appointed stations.

It had been arranged that the tap of a hammer on the mast should be the signal to fire. On came the gliding shadows, without a sound, moving slowly but steadily, so as to make no ripple—crowding closer and closer on the dark object looming up before them, little dreaming of the keen eyes that measured the steady advance.

At length, when within a few rods, the quick, sharp blow of the hammer on the mast rung out with startling clearness on the night air. In an instant that huge monster gaped and shot forth flame. The whole heavens were illuminated. From deck and sides, from cannon and musketry, the devastating storm fell. The surrounding shores, the dark forest, the vessel—masts and crew—and the crowd of naked and painted savages huddled together on the stream, were revealed as by a sudden flash of lightning. The schooner had allowed the Indians to approach so near before she opened her fire that the guns seemed to burst among the boats, blowing them out of the water. The effect was terrific. The roar and flames of such a volcano, opening in their very midst and scattering such ruin around, for a moment utterly paralyzed the Indians. The next moment they were flying in every direction, yelping and screeching, and never stopping till they had hid their swarthy bodies in the tall grass on shore. In this short time they had nearly thirty killed and wounded.

After a while they commenced firing from their place of concealment; when the schooner, giving them a parting broadside, lifted her anchor and dropped quietly down the river.

A few days after, taking advantage of a steady breeze, she again stood up the stream, passing the channel in safety. Steering close to the shore, when she came opposite the Wyandot village she poured in a shower of grape which sent them leaping and yelling to the woods for shelter. Keeping gallantly on her way, while cheer after cheer arose from the garrison, she moved to the side of her old consort, furled her white sails, and, dropping her anchor, swung once more abreast of the fort. Her arrival was most welcome, and the greetings which the newcomers received came from warm and overflowing hearts. She brought, besides an accession of strength, munitions of war and provisions, of which they stood in most pressing need.

Pontiac was enraged that the vessel had got through safely. One convoy had been captured, and he believed that if he could keep men and provisions away a little while longer the fort would be compelled to surrender. He now had the long siege to go over again. This was discouraging; and as a last, desperate resort, he sent word to Gladwyn that 800 Ojibwas were on their way to reinforce him, and if the com-

mander did not surrender the fort he would take it by storm. To this imperious summons Gladwyn returned a contemptuous reply. Pontiac then called a council of war, to which he invited the Canadians, and made a long speech to induce them to join with him in reducing the fort. But his stirring appeals, and repeated declarations that theirs was a common cause, could not prevail on them to change their attitude of neutrality. Neither would they accede to his request to teach him the European method of making regular approaches against a fort.

Baffled in this scheme, the proud chieftian turned away, mortified but not humbled. He dared not come in open collision with them, for he had always placed his chief hopes of final success on the co-operation of France.

The two schooners had from the first been objects of great fear and dread. Not only did they keep the communication open with Niagara, which Pontiac was especially anxious to close, but their power of locomotion, by which they were enabled to take up new positions to counteract his movements, annoyed him excessively. Gladwyn, seeing this, resolved to make them still more effective. A large encampment having been formed on the shore above, beyond reach of the cannon in the fort, he resolved to break it up. So one day, taking with him some officers, he went on board the Gladwyn and weighing anchor and hoisting sail, he stood boldly up stream. There was a strong wind blowing almost dead ahead and he was compelled to tack from side to side to make progress. Crowding all sail, the schooner swept backward and forward up the river, to the great amazement of the Indians on shore, who stood wondering at this extraordinary movement. Right in the teeth of the wind she worked her way up stream, each tack causing fresh surprise to the savages. At length she made a long tack and came straight toward the Indian camp. Heeled over by the force of the wind, she lay on her side till the muzzles of her guns almost dipped into the water. The foam rolled away from her bows as, with bellying sails and leaning masts, she came gallantly on, driving, as the Indians fondly believed, straight on the shore. But when nearly aground the helm was jammed hard down, the bow swung gracefully into the wind, the sails fluttered and rattled in the gale the next moment, and bowing gracefully as she swung over, she lay on the other side and moved off on the opposite tack. A few rods brought her directly abreast of the encampment, when the anchor dropped with a sudden splash into the water. The cable ran sharply out, the sails came down on a run to the deck, and she lay motionless broadside to shore. While the Indians stood wondering what all this meant, her guns suddenly

opened and round shot and grape went hurling and rattling among their wigwams, and crashed into the forest beyond, the loud explosion shaking the shore. The effect was indescribably ludicrous. The warriors, giving a terrified yell, turned and fled; the women snatched up their children, followed by the shriveled hags, yelping and screeching like whipped hounds, scuttled away for the woods as fast as their legs could carry them.

This experiment was afterwards repeated as often as the Indians pitched their tents near the shore. Constantly harrassed by these flying batteries, and enraged at their immunity from vengeance, Pontiac invented a new method to compass their destruction, which was new to him, though old in maritime warfare. This was no less than the construction of fire ships, to be floated down upon the schooner. From the outset this savage chieftain had shown a fertility of resource which, if it had been joined to a little more scientific and practical knowledge, would have reduced the fort long before. The first raft was too small, and its time of greatest conflagration was miscalculated, as well as the course it would take when left to the current, and it miserably failed of its object. The second, planned with greater care and on a grander scale, was well calculated to produce the designed effect. The crews of the vessels were ignorant of the preparations going on for their destruction. But suspecting that the first attempt would be repeated, they kept a sharp lookout. One night, a little after dark, they saw, far up the river, a small, bright flame, not larger than a fisherman's torch, and apparently resting on the water. They watched it narrowly, as it began to broaden and brighten, till the whole channel was illumined by its glare. The owl flew hooting from his perch as the fiery apparition passed. The dogs set up a furious barking on shore, while the garrison crowded the ramparts to watch the progress.

It was an immense fire raft; and as the huge pile of combustible materials that loaded it became thoroughly ignited, and it drifted nearer, it illuminated the whole atmosphere like a burning ship. The leaping, crackling flames swayed to and fro in the night air, and a baneful light was cast on the shores and the neighboring forests, as the burning mass slowly floated down the current. When almost abreast the ships the light was so intense that the neighboring farm houses, the crowded ramparts of the fort and the crews of the two vessels at anchor stood revealed as in the clear light of day. By the same lurid gleam a vast crowd of naked, painted savages could be seen on shore watching the effect of their scheme. One of the schooners observing them suddenly threw a shower of grape into their midst, when they quickly vanished.

By good fortune, the blazing raft drifted too far inland, and passed between the vessels and the fort, just out of harm's way. The towering mass presented a sublime spectacle, as it moved majestically by, the burning logs and fragments breaking loose and tumbling down its sides, while showers of sparks and flames shot upward in the still air. The garrison and crews could see each other's faces in the red light, and each spar and rope of the two vessels was traced in lines of fire against the dark sky. When those in the fort saw that the fearful messenger had failed in its mission, and all danger was past, they sent up three cheers, which were answered with a will from those on board the vessels, and they breathed free again. The flaming, crumbling structure drifted slowly away, growing dimmer and dimmer as it receded, till it disappeared altogether and darkness and quiet once more settled on the landscape. This was too narrow an escape to let the experiment be tried again; and so boats were anchored up stream across the channel to arrest any raft that should hereafter be sent against them. The Indians commenced another, but seeing the precautions that had been taken abandoned it.

The siege had now lasted between two and three months and both parties were suffering severely from want of provisions. Pontiac was afraid to permit his warriors to seize them from the Canadians by force, and, bankrupt in his treasury, was compelled to issue promissory notes, written on birch bark, with which to buy them. To his credit it must be said, that he afterwards faithfully redeemed these notes. In this state of affairs negotiations were again opened, and the Wyandots and Pottawatomies came forward to make peace. When the deputation from these tribes first visited the fort it was their intention to murder Gladwyn; but the commander noticing an Ottawa among them, called in the guard to arrest him. This intimidated them, and they subsequently ratified a treaty of peace. The Ottawas and Ojibwas, however, continued the siege and every day there were more or less firing and casualties.

Meantime unbeknown to the garrison, an expedition had been fitted out at Niagara for the relief of Detroit. It was placed under the command of Maj. Rogers, and consisted of twenty-two barges, loaded with cannon, provisions and munitions, and accompanied by 280 men. On the twenty-eighth of July it reached the mouth of the Detroit river, not many miles below the fort. That night a dense fog settled on the water, and under cover of it Rogers began slowly to stem the stream. His progress was tedious and difficult, but the same dense curtain that hid the shores from his view, also effectually concealed his movements from the Indians. Next morning as the sentinel looked



from the ramparts, an impenetrable fog met his gaze on every side, shutting out the sky itself. But as the sun mounted the heavens the increasing heat began to act on the massive folds of mist, and parting one after another, they let down shafts of sunlight on the earth and water. At length the irradiated mass began to lift and move upward, and finally, gently breaking into fragments, sailed gracefully away on the freshening breeze. Through the dim vapory mist that still floated in spiral wreathes along the steaming surface of the river, the sentinel could detect a group of dark objects moving up toward the fort. The alarm was given, and soon eager eyes were bent on the suspicious apparition. The next moment a sudden puff of air swept the stream, and there on its glittering bosom lay the fleet of barges sweeping steadily toward the fort. No sudden joy followed the announcement, for the garrison did not know whether they were friends or foes. They had not heard a word of this expedition being sent to their relief, and they remembered their former bitter disappointment. They watched the approach of the barges for a while in silence; but as they drew nearer hope began to take the place of doubt, and Gladwyn ordered a salute to be fired. Before the echoes had died away in the forest a puff of smoke was seen to issue from the leading barge, and the next moment the answering report rung over the shores. All doubt was now at an end, and cheer after cheer went up from rejoicing, thankful hearts. The news flew through the town, and the hitherto deserted, silent streets were thronged with eager questioners. Their friends had come at last; they had not been forgotten, after all; and visions of plenty and final deliverance rose before them.

When the Indians from their lodges on shore saw this large convoy they could scarcely believe their eyes. It seemed impossible that it could be so near its destination and no rumor of its approach have reached them. Even the two tribes who had recently made peace could not conceal their annoyance and opened a sharp fire upon the fleet. The barges returned it, and for a long time two parallel lines of smoke, slowly advancing, alone told the progress of the expedition. The garrison watched the contest with intense interest: but at length the Indians, in following along the banks, came within range of the guns of the schooners, when they suddenly retired.

So sharp had been the contest that the English had fifteen killed, besides many wounded. As barge after barge came to shore it was received with frantic cheers. Friends rushed into each other's arms; strangers met as old familiar friends. After the debarkation the troops were drawn up and marched into the town, with colors flying and



drums beating—the inhabitants welcoming them with long and continued cheers. There was no room for them, however, in the barracks and they had to be quartered with the inhabitants outside. That was a day of feasting and joy in Detroit. The gloomy streets looked gay and cheerful again and a brighter sun never went down on this oasis in the wilderness than that night flooded the heavens with glory. The mournful death-march and the parting volley over the graves of those who had fallen in their efforts to reach them, was the only sad interruption to the abounding gladness and joy.

Capt. Dalzell, who had won great renown as a partisan warrior with Putnam, proposed next day a night surprise of Pontiac's encampment. This had been fixed just beyond Parent's creek—since called Bloody river—which was about a mile and a half from the fort. A narrow bridge crossed the creek at this point, which was only a few rods from its entrance into the Detroit river. Gladwyn opposed Dalzell's project for he had seen enough of Pontiac to doubt the success of any scheme based on taking that chieftain by surprise. He had much rather measure strength with him in the open field. Dalzell, however, persisted, and Gladwyn, knowing his skill and bravery, finally gave a reluctant consent.

The night of July 31 was fixed upon for the enterprise. What the result might have been had the premeditated attack been kept a profound secret it is impossible to say, but some Canadians gave information of it to Pontiac, who took his measures to defeat it with that sagacity which distinguished him.

At 2 o'clock in the morning the gates of the fort were thrown open, and Dalzell, at the head of 250 men, moved silently out, and filed two deep along the road. Two batteaux kept abreast of them in the river. The night was close and sultry, but the soldiers, in their light undress, moved confidently forward. Past waving cornfields, orchards laden with fruit, and quiet farm houses, the little column kept silently on. But the dogs, aroused by the unwonted spectacle, barked furiously, and the inhabitants, awakened by the clamor, leaped from their beds and gazed wildly out upon the gleaming bayonets, and listened with beating hearts to the muffled tread till it died away in the distance. Lieut. Brown commanded the advance guard of twenty-five men, Capt. Gray the center, and Capt. Grant the rear. The utmost precaution had been taken to prevent any noise that might alarm the enemy. But it was useless, for all this time dusky forms were flitting from barn to barn and cornfield to cornfield, noting each movement and

reporting them to Pontiac. This chief had already broken up his camp and was on his way to surprise Dalzell.

The advanced guard had just crossed the bridge, and the main body was on it, when there arose a yell out of the ground at their very feet, followed by a volley that stretched half their number on the earth. In an instant all was confusion; for no foe could be seen, while infernal yells filled the air, and fierce volleys flashed in their faces. Dalzell, whom no surprise could confuse, raised his voice above the clamor and, rallying his men to his side, charged on a run over the bridge. Pushing sternly on up the ridge on which Pontiac's entrenchments stood, to his dismay he found no foe, though behind, around, and on every side the deadly volleys flashed and the yells arose. At length he became completely entangled in a net-work of entrenchments and buildings, and not knowing which way to turn in the darkness, gave orders to retreat and wait for daylight. Capt. Grant was able to secure the bridge, when the dead and wounded were placed on board the batteaux and the crippled column began to fall back toward the fort. It had proceeded only about half a mile when it came to some outhouses and a new cellar, behind and in which the Indians lay packed, waiting for their enemy to arrive. Suddenly a yell arose and a wasting volley was poured in their very faces. The men, panic stricken, rushed together in confusion, only to fall a more easy prey to their foes. Dalzell, although bleeding from two wounds, rushed among them, sending his voice over the tumult, and endeavoring, by his own brave example and reckless exposure of his life, to reanimate their courage. He mingled threats with commands, and even smote with the flat of his sword those who refused obedience. By his great personal exertions he at length succeeded in restoring partial order, and the retreat recommenced.

It was not yet daylight and the invisible foe hung on the rear, revealing their presence only by the flashes of their guns. At length the day dawned dimly through the fog, but the work of destruction went on. Where the shot fell thickest there was Dalzell, steadying his men. At length a sergeant fell wounded, and seeing his comrades about to leave him, turned such a piteous look on Dalzell that the brave and generous warrior could not resist it and rushing back to his rescue fell dead by his side. Maj. Rogers threw himself with his detachment into the house of a Canadian farmer named Campau and held it. Grant, a half mile ahead, made a stand in an orchard and some inclosures and kept the savages at bay, until he effected a communication with the fort. The women in Campau's house were fastened below, and for a

while the fight was close and sanguinary there, and shots, and yells, and oaths mingled in wild confusion. The soldiers dared not break cover and fall back on the fort for the road swarmed with savages. At length, however, the batteaux, having discharged their load of wounded and dead in the garrison, returned, and opening their swivels on the Indians scattered them into the forest. Under their protection the detachment emerged from their cover and fell back on the fort. No sooner had they left than the Indians rushed in to scalp the dead. One squaw slashed open the dead body of a soldier, and scooping up the warm blood in her hands, drank it. At eight o'clock the last of the column, limping and bleeding, staggered through the gates, and the struggle was over. For six hours this disorderly conflict had raged, in which fifty-nine soldiers had been either killed or wounded. The Indians had suffered comparatively little, and were wild with joy at their astonishing victory. Runners were dispatched in every direction with the exciting news, which was followed everywhere by war dances and gathering of the tribes to battle, till the wilderness swarmed with the inpouring reinforcements.

But that was a sad day for the garrison. In one short morning all their bright prospects had vanished. One-quarter of those sent to succor them had already fallen, and their enemies, instead of being disheartened by the increased strength they had received, were more elated than ever. The streets presented a funereal aspect, and the hearts that had throbbed high with expectation now beat mournful time to the music of the muffled drum, as it accompanied rows of dead to their graves. The bodies of many could not be recovered; and the Canadians as they went to their harvest fields in the morning, stumbled over many a stalwart soldier stretched on the green sward. It was a gloomy day, and the boom of the evening gun at sunset that night awoke mournful memories and sad forebodings in the hearts of the garrison. The Indians now grew bolder, and reinforcements coming in, the country was covered with their encampments.

Previous to the attack on Pontiac's camp, the schooner *Gladwyn* had been sent to Niagara with letters and dispatches. Her return was narrowly watched by the Indians, who determined that she should not escape them the second time. She had a crew of only ten men, with six friendly Iroquois on board. The schooner entered the river on the night of the 3d, and next morning foolishly let the Indians go ashore. They gave information of the schooner's weakness in force to the hostile tribes. Three hundred and fifty immediately started in pursuit.

The vessel kept on till nightfall, when the wind dying away she came to anchor within nine miles of the fort.

The sky was heavily overcast, so that when night had fully set in the darkness was almost total. Remembering her former experience in the same locality, a strict watch was kept; but the darkness was so impenetrable that no object could be seen a few yards from the vessel. This was favorable to the Indians, who knew that if they could once reach the schooner without being swept by grape-shot, they could soon overpower the feeble crew. Dropping noiselessly down the current in their bark canoes, those three hundred and fifty Indians were almost against the vessel before they were discovered. The alarm was instantly given, and the next instant the whole scene was lit up by her broadsides. Before a second one could be given, however, the Indians, with knives in their teeth, were climbing thick as ants up the sides of the schooner, yelling and shouting like demons. The crew had only time to give one volley of musketry when the Indians began to pour over the bulwarks and it became a fierce hand-to-hand fight. The whites saw at once that the struggle was a hopeless one; but they resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. At this critical moment the mate called out to blow up the schooner. The order rang out clear and distinct over the din of the conflict, and some of the Wyandots, understanding its import, gave the alarm. The sudden broadside of a frigate within pistol-shot would not have created such a panic. The frightened wretches did not stand on the order of their going, but with unearthly yells plunged overboard and dropped like rats from the rigging on which they were hanging, and swam for shore, ducking their heads like otters, as if they expected every moment to see the air filled with the blazing fragments of the shattered vessel. They were so thoroughly frightened that they did not venture to return, and the remainder of the night passed quietly.

The fight lasted but a few moments, yet so fierce and deadly had it been that twenty-seven Indians were killed or wounded, while of the crew of ten only four remained untouched. The next morning the schooner hoisted sail, and soon her answering salute told the anxious garrison that she had escaped the clutches of the savages. Her single broadside of the night before had alarmed the garrison and not hearing it repeated, they had been filled with the gravest fears. She brought provisions sufficient to last only a short time, and all were put on short allowance.

The long and weary summer at length wore away, and the frosty nights and chilling winds of autumn reminded them of the approach of

winter, when they would be blocked in beyond all hope of succor. The Indians had neglected their crops, and they, too, began to look anxiously forward to the winter, for which they were poorly provided. At the end of September several of the tribes broke up their camps and left. Pontiac, however, remained, and though he dared not attack the fort, he kept the garrison as closely confined as they would have been if besieged by an army of 10,000 men. The beautiful month of October passed like the sultry summer. The farmers had gathered in their harvests; the forests had put on the glorious hues of autumn, till the wilderness was one immense carpet of purple and gold and green. The placid river reflected if possible, in still brighter colors, the gorgeous foliage that overhung its banks. And when the mellow breeze ruffled its surface, broke up the rich flooring into ten thousand fragments and forms, till it looked like a vast kaleidoscope. The dreamy haze of the Indian summer overspread the landscape; the forest rustled with falling leaves, the wild fowl gathered in the stream, or swept in clouds overhead, winging their way to the distant ocean; and all was wild and beautiful in that far-off island of that wilderness. But all this beauty passed unnoticed by the little beleaguered garrison.

At length the cold storms swept the wilderness filling the heavens with leaves and scattering them thick as snow flakes over the bosom of the stream, until the gaily decorated forest stood naked and brown against the sky. Still Pontiac lingered, determined to starve his enemies out. But as November approached he received a message from Fort Chartres on the Mississippi, which, at the same time it filled his daring spirit with rage, crushed his fondest hopes. It was a dispatch from the French commander at that post, telling him that he must no longer look for help from that quarter, as the French and English had made peace. Enraged and mortified he broke up his camp and retired with his warriors to the Maumee.

Soon after Pontiac left, word arrived from Maj. Wilkins who was on his way with a detachment to relieve the fort, that he had been overtaken by a storm, his boats wrecked with all the ammunition and stores, and seventy of his company had perished. This was gloomy tidings with which to commence the winter. At last the river was bridged with ice, the drifting snow piled up around the fort, and the rigors of a winter in that high latitude were upon them. Though no longer fearing an attack, the soldiers could not stray beyond cannon range or hunt in the woods, without danger of being shot, as scattering Indians still lingered in the vicinity. Much suffering was experienced during the winter and the cold months passed wearily away. The first



flight of wind fowl from the south, heralding the spring, was hailed with joy; but the mild weather soon brought back also tribes of Indians, who again commenced their attacks on the fort. This was kept up till mid-summer, when Bradstreet arrived with a large force and relieved the garrison from its fifteen month's close confinement.

The posts that had fallen into the hands of the Indians were soon regained, and Capt. Morris, was sent to Pontiac to offer terms of peace. The haughty chieftain received him on the outskirts of his camp, and refusing to give him his hand, bent his flashing eye on him and exclaimed, "The English are liars!" He indignantly spurned all proposals, and taking with him his 400 warriors, broke up his camp at Maumee, and crossing the Wabash, passed from village to village among the tribes, calling on them to arm in a common cause. Finding them timorous from the repeated chastisements they had received from the English, he threatened them, saying, "If you hesitate, I will consume your tribes as the fire consumes the dry grass on your prairies." Terrified at his menaces, they consented to rally to his support.

Keeping on his fiery way, Pontiac reached Fort Chartres on the Mississippi. St. Ange, the commander, who had been troubled enough by the discontented tribes, was completely disheartened when Pontiac, with his 400 warriors at his back, stalked into the fort. He made all sorts of explanations and excuses when the chieftain claimed his assistance in exterminating the English. But Pontiac would listen to none of them. He had not been borne up by a lofty purpose so long to abandon it now, and still clinging to the hopes of French aid, he turned to the countless tribes that swarmed the western wilderness and endeavored to band them in one great united crusade against the English. Haughtily leaving the fort he encamped without and immediately dispatched messengers down both sides of the Mississippi to enlist the tribes along its banks in his grand scheme. They were everywhere successful, and the western wilderness was filled with ominous murmurings that betokened a rising storm. It was no common mind that planned this comprehensive scheme, which was not based on mere desire for war or plunder, but adopted as the only means of saving the red man from extermination. Years afterward Tecumseh conceived the same bold undertaking.

Pontiac's messengers continued down the Mississippi till they reached New Orleans, where they had an interview with the French governor. He threw cold water on the whole project, saying that Pontiac must not expect any help from the French, as they had made peace with



the English. This report, brought back to the chief, discouraged him. All his appeals to the various tribes had been backed by the promise of aid from the French, and only on the fulfillment of this promise could he hold them. He felt that his long cherished scheme must be abandoned. Baffled and mortified, yet filled with rage, he knew not which way to turn. At last, yielding to inevitable fate, he bowed his haughty spirit and returned to Detroit and accepted the offers of peace.

Pontiac appears no more on the scene till 1769, when he visited Fort St. Louis, then commanded by his old acquaintance, St. Ange. While here he heard that there was a great frolic among the Illinois Indians across the river; and though urged by St. Ange not to go, he went over. One day, excited by the fumes of liquor, he entered the forest to perform some incantation, when he was followed stealthily by an Indian, who had been bribed with a barrel of whisky by an English trader to assassinate him. Creeping behind the unsuspecting chieftain he buried his tomahawk in his head. The Illinois defended the act, and a terrible war followed. The warriors who had listened to Pontiac's eloquence gathered together from far and near, and torrents of blood flowed to avenge his ignominious death. The Illinois never recovered from the terrible punishment they received for this dastardly act of one of their tribe.

Thus passed away this barbaric chieftain, who, had he occupied the same relative position in civilized life, with all its advantages of education, would have been one of the great men of the world. His body lay upon the spot where it had fallen until St. Ange sent to claim it and buried it with martial honors near his fort. No mound or tablet marked his burial place; but above it has since arisen St. Louis, the Queen City of the Northwest, and the palefaces, whom he hated so intensely, tread in thousands over the forgotten grave of the forest hero.