

been most exasperated, and in the summer of 1761 the commandant at Detroit was apprised that a deputation of Senecas had come to the neighbouring village of the Wyandots for the purpose of instigating the latter to destroy himself and his command. On enquiry this was found to be a general conspiracy: Niagara, Fort Pitt (Du Quesne) and the other posts were to share the fate of Detroit. A similar plot was discovered in the summer of 1762, but neither came to maturity as a leader capable of combining the tribes for a common object had not yet declared himself. Pontiac had been an especial favorite of the Marquis de Montcalm, was much respected by the French officers, treated with discourtesy and neglect by the English, now undertook the control of the conspiracy persuaded thereto by the falsehoods of the Canadian traders who assured him that the armies of King Louis were advancing to restore the power of France. At the close of the year 1762, he sent out messengers to the different nations comprising the Algonquin stock to whom were united the Wyandots, Senecas, and several tribes of the Lower Mississippi. The Senecas were the only members of the Iroquois confederacy who joined the conspiracy, the remainder of the Six Nations being kept quiet by the influence of Sir W. Johnston with great difficulty. It was agreed that the blow was to be struck at a certain time in the month of May following, to be determined by the changes of the Moon.

Early in March, 1763, Ensign Holmes, commanding at Fort Miami, was told by a friendly Indian that the Warriors in the neighboring village had lately received a war-belt with a message urging them to destroy him and his garrison and that they were purposing to do so. Holmes called the Indians together charged them with their design and demanded their reasons for this conduct, they acknowledged it was true but charged the fault on a neighboring village and professed themselves faithful to the English. He reported the circumstances duly to Major Gladwyn, commanding at Detroit, who in his turn reported to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, stating his opinion that there was a general irritation among the Indians but that it would soon blow over, and that in the neighborhood of his own post the savages were perfectly tranquil.

As spring approached the Indians in small parties began to come in from the wintering grounds and appear about the forts which they seldom entered, encamping about in the adjoining woods.

At the head of the English forces in America was Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the able and resolute soldier who had achieved the conquest of Canada, and a man fitted for the emergency. Cautious, active, bold, farsighted, and capable of infusing his own energy and zeal into those who served under him. The results of this war, lamentable as they were, would have been much more dis-

asterous but for his promptness and vigor. * In organising her new acquisitions into separate governments England left the valley of the Ohio and adjacent regions as Indian domain, and by proclamation of 7th October, 1763, prohibited the intrusion of settlers into these lands; could this just arrangement have been carried out it is probable there would have been no Indian war, but the restlessness of the frontier settlers and the greediness of the chartered companies rendered all efforts of this kind futile.

Meanwhile the emissaries of Pontiac had achieved the task assigned them, and great numbers of Ottawas, Chippawas, Ojibowas, and Hurons, with numbers of other tribes assembled at the Pottawatamie village near the River Ecorces, not far from Detroit. On the 27th of April, 1763, a grand council was held at a short distance from the village, in which the whole cause of quarrel with the English was narrated by the astute Chief with all the exaggerations of Indian eloquence; he told them that their great father the King of France had sent him a wide-belt of wampum, which he held forth to his audience, and had charged him to fight against the English as his great war canoes would soon sail up the St. Lawrence to drive them out of the country. All present were eager to attack the British fort, but Pontiac restrained their ardour by shewing how necessary it was that Niagara, Le Beouf, Venango, and Fort Pitt, and all the outlying forts should be attacked simultaneously, while with a chosen band of companions he would gain admittance to Detroit and discover the weakness of that post. The assembly now dispersed, and as it was customary for the Indians to return to their villages in the vicinity of Detroit after the winter's hunt was over, their appearance on this occasion excited no suspicions.

On the 1st of May, attended with forty men of the Ottawa tribe, Pontiac made his appearance at the gate of the Fort and asked for permission to enter and dance the calumet dance before the officers of the garrison. After some hesitation he was admitted, and proceeding to the corner of the street where the house of Major Gladwyn stood, he and thirty of his warriors began their dance, each recounting his own exploits and boasting himself the bravest of mankind. The officers and men gathered around them while in the meantime the remaining ten of the Ottawas strolled about the fort observing everything it contained. When the dance was over they all withdrew without any suspicion of their sinister design on the part of the garrison.

After a few days elapsed another council meeting took place at the Pottawatamie village—here was a large structure of bark erected for Public use on similar occasions—to prevent any interruption sentinels were posted around the house, and the possibility of disclosure avoided by sending all the squaws and children out of the village. The

great chieftain once more addressed the assembly, inciting them to hostilities against the English, and concluded by proposing for their consideration a plan for the capture of Detroit. It was that himself and the principal chiefs should demand a council with the commandant on matters of great importance, by this means they would be admitted into the fort; they were all to carry weapons concealed beneath their blankets, and for this purpose were to have the barrels of their rifles and guns cut short; while in the act of addressing the commandant in the council room, Pontiac was to make a certain signal upon which the others were to raise the war whoop, rush upon the officers and strike them down, the other Indians waiting meanwhile at the gate or loitering among the houses, on hearing the yells and firing within the building, were to assail the astonished and half armed soldiers, and thus Detroit would fall an easy prey. This scheme was at once agreed to, and the members of the Council withdrew to their respective villages to prepare for the destruction of the lonely garrison.

Detroit, at the head of the strait or channel which joins Lakes St. Clair and Erie, was founded in 1701, by La Motte Cadillac, as a military colony and trading post; its situation is good, standing on the west shore of the river, and at the period under consideration contained 2,500 inhabitants. The centre of the settlement was the fortified village called the Fort, to distinguish it from the straggling dwellings along the river banks; it covered a small portion of the ground now occupied by the city of Detroit, and contained about one hundred houses compactly crowded together surrounded by a palisade of about twenty feet in height, the ground plan was nearly square having at each corner a wooden bastion and over each gate-way, of which there were four, a wooden *caponniere* or block-house. A broad street, called the *Chemín-du-ronde*, separated the houses from the palisades, the streets were very narrow and the houses built of wood thatched with straw or bark; there was neither rampart, banquette, ditch, nor any other mode of defence than what was afforded by the palisaded wall made of the trunks of chesnut and white oak; the bastions had wooden platforms and were armed with a few pieces of light artillery, four and six pounders; two small armed vessels, the *Beaver* and *Gladwyn's* schooners, lay anchored in the stream; the garrison consisted of 120 soldiers and about 40 voyageurs and Canadians. With this force and such fortifications the commandant was called upon to sustain one of the most remarkable sieges for duration in the annals of American warfare.

Standing on the water bastions of Detroit, the scene which presented itself to the vision, was at that period sufficiently remarkable; for eight miles on either side the white washed cottages of the French Canadian could be seen dotting the shores of the river,