

## INDIAN DISCONTENT

In the spring of 1763, the famous Indian war, designated in history as Pontiac's Conspiracy, or, as it was known in Western Pennsylvania, as Guyasutha's war, broke out along the border and extended from Lake Superior to Virginia.

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The fierce scenes that had taken place in the region of Venango during the period of the Seven Year's War had barely subsided, and the country scarcely transferred to the English, when smothered murmurs of discontent began to be audible among the Indian tribes. From the head of the Potomac to Lake Superior, and from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi, in every wigwam and hamlet of the forest, a deep-rooted hatred of the English increased with rapid growth. But when the accompanying circumstances that attach to this event in history are properly considered, the fact is not calculated to effect great surprise. We have seen with what sagacious policy the French labored to ingratiate themselves with the Indians, and the effective alliance they had succeeded in creating with them, bore witness to the success of their efforts. The Delawares and Shawanese, once the faithful allies of William Penn, had been effectually seduced by French blandishments; and the Iroquois had been greatly alienated from their former friendship for the English, and well nigh taken part against the colonists. The remote nations of the west had also joined in war; descending in their canoes for hundreds of miles, to fight against the enemies of France. All these tribes entertained against the English that rancorous enmity which an Indian always feels against those whom he has been opposed in war. Under these circumstances, it behooved the English to use the utmost care in their conduct towards the Indian tribes. During the conflict with France, the Indian policy of the English was one of comparative indifference, and when the war had ceased, the friendship of the tribes seemed a matter of no consequence. They were not only treated with neglect, but the intentions of the English soon became apparent to the aboriginal mind. The presents, which it had always been customary to give them at stated intervals, were in a great measure withheld, and many of the agents and officers of the Government frequently appropriated the presents to themselves, and afterwards sold them to the Indians at exorbitant prices.

When the French were in possession, they supplied the surrounding Indians with guns, ammunition, and clothing with a shrewd liberality. Thos occurred to such an extent as the cultivate among the tribe a taste for European goods, cause them to forget the garments and the use of the weapons of their forefathers, and to depend in great degree on the whites for support. All along the Alleghenies to the Mississippi, they had become dependent upon the French posts for their arms and clothing. When the supplies were withheld a calamity overtook them for which they were illy prepared, and want, suffering and death followed as a natural consequence. To this grievance was added the general conduct of the English furtraders, many of whom, with their employès, were men of the coarsest stamp, and guilty of numerous acts of rapacity, violence and unscrupulous conduct. They cheated, cursed, and plundered the Indians, outraged their families, and when compared with the French traders, whose conduct was more politic, they presented a most unfavorable example of the character of their nation.

But a still greater cause for the growing discontent of the tribes was the intrusion of settlers upon their lands, which was constantly producing and renewing Indian jealousy and hostility. The Delawares and Shawanese became aroused to the highest pitch of desperation. Their best lands had been invaded, and the remonstrances had been fruitless. They viewed with wrath and fear the steady progress of the white man, whose settlements had passed the Susquehanna, and were fast extending to the Alleghenies, eating away the forest like a spreading canker. The Senecas were likewise especially incensed at English intrusion, and by their contract with the French they were greatly stimulated in their prejudice and animosity.