

CHAPTER II

THE DELAWARE PROPHET AND PONTIAC

Q-1-2
Hear what the Great Spirit has ordered me to tell you: Put off entirely the customs which you have adopted since the white people came among us.—*The Delaware Prophet*.

This is our land, and not yours.—*The Confederate Tribes, 1752.*

The English advances were slow and halting, for a long period almost imperceptible, while the establishment of a few small garrisons and isolated trading stations by the French hardly deserved to be called an occupancy of the country. As a consequence, the warlike northern tribes were slow to realize that an empire was slipping from their grasp, and it was not until the two great nations prepared for the final struggle in the New World that the native proprietors began to read the stars aright. Then it was, in 1752, that the Lenape chiefs sent to the British agent the pointed interrogatory: "The English claim all on one side of the river, the French claim all on the other—where is the land of the Indians?" (*Bancroft, 1.*) Then, as they saw the French strengthening themselves along the lakes, there came a stronger protest from the council ground of the confederate tribes of the west: "This is our land and not yours. Fathers, both you and the English are white; the land belongs to neither the one nor the other of you, but the Great Being above allotted it to be a dwelling place for us; so, fathers, I desire you to withdraw, as I have desired our brothers, the English." A wampum belt gave weight to the words. (*Bancroft, 2.*) The French commander's reply was blunt, but more practiced diplomats assured the red men that all belonged to the Indian, and that the great king of the French desired only to set up a boundary against the further encroachments of the English, who would otherwise sweep the red tribes from the Ohio as they had already driven them from the Atlantic. The argument was plausible. In every tribe were French missionaries, whose fearless courage and devotion had won the admiration and love of the savage; in every village was domiciliated a hardy voyageur, with his Indian wife and family of children, in whose veins commingled the blood of the two races and whose ears were attuned alike to the wild songs of the forest and the rondeaus of Normandy or Provence. It was no common tie that bound together the Indians and the French, and when a governor of Canada and the general of his army stepped into the circle of braves to dance the war dance and sing the war song with their red allies, thirty-three wild tribes declared on the wampum belt, "The French are our brothers and their king is our father. We