



*A modern artist's conception of Chief Pontiac (c. 1720-1769), and of whom there is no known contemporary portrait.*

## **Major Robert Rogers’ “PONTEACH: Or the Savages of America. A Tragedy” (1766): *Some Excerpts***

*“This Dream no doubt is full of some great Meaning,  
And in it bears the Fate of your Design,  
But whether good or ill, to me 's a Secret.”*  
~ Act II, scene 2.

The influence of the Iroquois confederacy as a model for the United States form of government<sup>1</sup> has to some extent been exaggerated by some; since those who framed our Constitution had other examples to draw on, such as the *United Provinces* of the Netherlands; not to mention several ancient, medieval, and renaissance instances, of cities, (German) “electorates,” multi-provinces, or states, based on suffrage, and leagued or joined together under one democratic, republican, or else princely rule.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it seems that less than fair credit has been awarded the Native Americans for helping to stir us to revolt and spurring us to independent mindedness by way of the uprising in 1763 of the Ottawa tribesman Chief Pontiac (1763-1766; also and more properly titled, Chief Obwandiyag); an event probably most well known by way of Francis Parkman’s epic, if rather chauvinistic, chronicle *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851). Among some of the noted personages who participated in the war with the Ottawa chief was Major Robert Rogers, of Rogers’ Rangers fame.

Even more interesting than his fighting the Indians in the Pontiac uprising, Rogers (who’d personally known the great chief) afterwards in London in 1766 wrote and published a stage play portraying the rebelling natives in a sympathetic light, entitled “Ponteach Or the Savages of America. A Tragedy.” Though some scholars assume, it would seem correctly, that Rogers only contributed rather than penned the entire play; there is little question about his being the guiding hand and overriding heart and spirit behind it; and a close inspection of the text by experts has revealed or suggested input based on his own personal experience with Indians and white settlers. Moreover, “Ponteach” was, of course, not Rogers’ only literary work. In addition to his *Journal of the French and Indian War* (1765), he also wrote *A Concise Account of North America* (1765),<sup>3</sup> an eminently readable and capacious overview of Pre-War America from the perspective of a American royal subject -- but a royal subject who especially prizes and appreciates democratic assemblies and religious tolerance and freedom. In the same work, he as well provides some at length and detailed remarks delineating the Indians, their characters and customs (pp.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see something like this suggested or proposed as early as Archibald Kennedy’s *Importance of gaining and preserving the Friendship of the Indians* (1752).

<sup>2</sup> And yet *prior* to the Revolutionary War, a number of colonial Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, were highly impressed by the Iroquois confederacy as a stimulus for and model on the basis of which the disparate colonies, so they argued, ought themselves to unite. For further, see *Seeds of Liberty* (1948) by Max Savelle, pp. 328-329.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.archive.org/details/aconciseaccount00rogeuoft>

205-253); that are, not least of which given his intimate dealings and associations with them, valuable and insightful contributions on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

Though biographers are naturally prompted to give Rogers' life story, there is much about quite what happened to him that remains a substantial mystery and needs to be further elucidated. At one point, he ended up in debtor's prison in London; at another he was tried by the British for treason but was acquitted. Come time of the Revolution, he was offered a command by Congress and himself tendered his services to Washington. Moreover, Israel Putnam, John Stark and Moses Hazen numbered among his friends. Yet Washington not long after ordered him arrested, and it is believed by some (based on a report of a Loyalist) that Rogers had aided in the capture of Nathan Hale. As a matter of course then, he went to British for employment. Yet might Washington have been misinformed, or else was Rogers' alleged entrapment of Hale mistaken or fabricated? More than likely, his having been earlier accused of treason a few years earlier played some part in all this. As such and again, there is too much that we simply do not know otherwise. Poor Rogers! He is not little reminiscent of Capt. Robert Stobo (1727–1770) of Virginia, another French and Indian war officer and wartime acquaintance of Washington; of exceptional daring and no less exceptional martial escapades, but who subsequently took his own life in 1770.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps he and Stobo were haunted, mayhap even literally, by a ghost who jealously resented their success. Certainly at least to this writer such speculation, and given their mutually strange biographies and lamentable demises, is perhaps not so far fetched as some might out of hand assume.

As to "Ponteach" itself and as stated, it would be very odd if Rogers did not receive some material assistance in writing it. Its hendecasyllabic verse is written in familiar 18<sup>th</sup> century stage idiom and has its fair share of anachronisms; such as references to "lions" and "tygers"<sup>6</sup> by Native American speakers; while in Act III, scen. 3, stage directions tell us that the *Indian War Song* is to be sung "to the tune 'Over the Hills and far away.'"

Yet, as mentioned, Rogers stamp is still clearly on the thing, and it was extremely radical of him to be speaking out so passionately on behalf of Pontiac and the Indians -- something, after all, which would not likely have found much favor with either many British or Americans at the time. But not least of the play's fascination, some of the speeches Rogers gives Ponteach could with small revision sound as though they came from a zealous American colonial revolutionary -- most peculiar considering that come the Revolution he ended up a Loyalist.

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from Act I, scen. 2.

Scene II. A Desert.

*Enter Orsbourn and Honnyman, two English Hunters.*

*Orsbourn.*

Long have we toil'd, and rang'd the Woods in vain,  
No Game, nor Track, nor Sign of any Kind  
Is to be seen; I swear I am discourag'd  
And weary'd out with this long fruitless Hunt.  
No Life on Earth besides is half so hard,  
So full of Disappointments, as a Hunter's:

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<sup>4</sup> Among other points that might be noted in this regard, some of the Native American males evidently resembled Tacitus' Germans in dedicating their lives war and hunting; while (outside of harvesting) refusing to do any menial work of any sort; the last being deemed the proper province of women.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Memoirs of Major Robert Stobo* (1854), written by Stobo but not published till 1854; "The Fantastic Adventures of Captain Stobo," by Robert C. Alberts, *American Heritage Magazine*, August 1963, vol. 14, iss. 5 (available at <http://www.americanheritage.com/content/fantastic-adventures-captain-stobo>), and *The Most Extraordinary Adventures of Major Robert Stobo* (1965) also by Alberts.

<sup>6</sup> William Bartram, however, in his *Travels* (1791) perhaps offers us some explanation by his noting that what is called "Tiger" in the southern American states is denoted "Panther" in the northern. Part I, ch. 4, p. 46 n.

Each Morn he wakes he views the destin'd Prey,  
And counts the Profits of th' ensuing Day;  
Each Ev'ning at his curs'd ill Fortune pines,  
And till next Day his Hope of Gain resigns.  
By Jove, I'll from these Desarts hasten home,  
And swear that never more I'll touch a Gun.

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from Act. I, scen. 3.

*Cockum.*

What shall we do with these damn'd bawling Indians?  
They're swarming every Day with their Complaints  
Of Wrongs and Injuries, and God knows what—  
I wish the Devil would take them to himself.

*Frisk.*

Your Honour's right to wish the Devil his Due.  
I'd send the noisy Hellhounds packing hence,  
Nor spend a Moment in debating with them.  
The more you give Attention to their Murmurs,  
The more they'll plague and haunt you every Day,  
Besides, their old King Ponteach grows damn'd saucy,  
Talks of his Power, and threatens what he'll do.  
Perdition to their faithless sooty Souls,  
I'd let 'em know at once to keep their Distance.

*Cockum.*

Captain, You're right; their Insolence is such  
As beats my Patience; cursed Miscreants!  
They are encroaching; fain would be familiar:  
I'll send their painted Heads to Hell with Thunder!  
I swear I'll blow 'em hence with Cannon Ball,  
And give the Devil an Hundred for his Supper.

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from Act. I, scen. 3.

*2nd Chief.*

Frenchmen would always hear an Indian speak,  
And answer fair, and make good Promises.

*Cockum.*

You may be d——d, and all your Frenchmen too.

*Ponteach.*

Be d——d! what's that? I do not understand.

*Cockum.*

The Devil teach you; he'll do it without a Fee.

*Ponteach.*

The Devil teach! I think you one great Fool.  
Did your King tell you thus to treat the Indians?  
Had he been such a Duncce he ne'er had conquer'd,

And made the running French for Quarter cry.  
I always mind that such proud Fools are Cowards,  
And never do aught that is great or good.

*Cockum.*

Forbear your Impudence, you curs'd old Thief;  
This Moment leave my Fort, and to your Country.  
Let me hear no more of your hellish Clamour,  
Or to D——n I will blow you all,  
And feast the Devil with one hearty Meal.

*Ponteach.*

So ho! Know you whose Country you are in?  
Think you, because you have subdu'd the French,  
That Indians too are now become your Slaves?  
This Country's mine, and here I reign as King;  
I value not your Threats, nor Forts, nor Guns;  
I have got Warriors, Courage, Strength, and Skill.  
Colonel, take care; the Wound is very deep,  
Consider well, for it is hard to cure.

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from Act. I, scen. 3.

*Sharp.*

There's good and bad, you know, in every Nation;  
There's some good Indians, some are the reverse,  
Whom you can't govern, and restrain from ill;  
So there's some Englishmen that will be bad.  
You must not mind the Conduct of a few,  
Nor judge the rest by what you see of them.

*Ponteach.*

If you've some good, why don't you send them here?  
These every one are Rogues, and Knaves, and Fools,  
And think no more of Indians than of Dogs.  
Your King had better send his good Men hither,  
And keep his bad ones in some other Country;  
Then you would find that Indians would do well,  
Be peaceable, and honest in their Trade;  
We'd love you, treat you, as our Friends and Brothers,  
And Raise the Hatchet only in your Cause.

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from Act I, scen. 3.

*Ponteach.*

Your King, I hear 's a good and upright Man,  
True to his word, and friendly in his Heart;  
Not proud and insolent, morose and sour,  
Like these his petty Officers and Servants:  
I want to see your King, and let him know  
What must be done to keep the Hatchet dull,  
And how the Path of Friendship, Peace, and Trade

May be kept clean and solid as a Rock.

*Sharp.*

Our King is distant over the great Lake,  
But we can quickly send him your Requests;  
To which he'll listen with attentive Ear,  
And act as tho' you told him with your Tongue.

*Ponteach.*

Let him know then his People here are Rogues,  
And cheat and wrong and use the Indians ill.  
Tell him to send good Officers, and call  
These proud ill-natur'd Fellows from my Country,  
And keep his Hunters from my hunting Ground.  
He must do this, and do it quickly too,  
Or he will find the Path between us bloody.

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from Act I, scen. 3.

*Ponteach.*

Indians a'n't Fools, if White Men think us so;  
We see, we hear, we think as well as you;  
We know there 're Lies, and Mischiefs in the World;  
We don't know whom to trust, nor when to fear;  
Men are uncertain, changing as the Wind,  
Inconstant as the Waters of the Lakes,  
Some smooth and fair, and pleasant as the Sun,  
Some rough and boist'rous, like the Winter Storm;  
Some are Insidious as the subtle Snake,  
Some innocent, and harmless as the Dove;  
Some like the Tyger raging, cruel, fierce,  
Some like the Lamb, humble, submissive, mild,  
And scarcely one is every Day the same;  
But I call no Man bad, till such he's found,  
Then I condemn and cast him from my Sight;  
And no more trust him as a Friend and Brother.  
I hope to find you honest Men and true.

*Sharp.*

Indeed you may depend upon our Honours,  
We're faithful Servants of the best of Kings;  
We scorn an Imposition on your Ignorance,  
Abhor the Arts of Falsehood and Deceit.  
These are the Presents our great Monarch sent,  
He's of a bounteous, noble, princely Mind  
And had he known the Numbers of your Chiefs,  
Each would have largely shar'd his Royal Goodness;  
But these are rich and worthy your Acceptance,  
Few Kings on Earth can such as these bestow,  
For Goodness, Beauty, Excellence, and Worth.

*Ponteach.*

The Presents from your Sovereign I accept,  
His friendly Belts to us shall be preserved,

And in Return convey you those to him.  
[Belts and furs.  
Which let him know our Mind, and what we wish,  
That we dislike his crusty Officers,  
And wish the Path of Peace was made more plain,  
The Calumet I do not choose to smoke,  
Till I see further, and my other Chiefs  
Have been consulted. Tell your King from me,  
That first or last a Rogue will be detected,  
That I have Warriors, am myself a King,  
And will be honour'd and obey'd as such;  
Tell him my Subjects shall not be oppress'd,  
But I will seek Redress and take Revenge;  
Tell your King this; I have no more to say.

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from Act II, scen. 1.

[Sons of Ponteach -- Chekitan and Philip]

*Chekitan.*

Should War be wag'd, what Discords may we fear  
Among ourselves? The powerful Mohawk King [King Hendrick]  
Will ne'er consent to fight against the English,  
Nay, more, will join them as firm Ally,  
And influence other Chiefs by his Example,  
To muster all their Strength against our Father.  
Fathers perhaps will fight against their Sons,  
And nearest Friends pursue each other's Lives;  
Blood, Murder, Death, and Horror will be rife,  
Where Peace and Love, and Friendship triumph now.

*Philip.*

Such stale Conjectures smell of Cowardice.  
Our Father's Temper shews us the reverse:  
All Danger he defies, and, once resolv'd,  
No Arguments will move him to relent,  
No Motives change his Purpose of Revenge,  
No Prayers prevail upon him to delay  
The Execution of his fix'd Design:  
Like the starv'd Tyger in Pursuit of Prey,  
No Opposition will retard his Course;  
Like the wing'd Eagle that looks down on Clouds,  
All Hindrances are little in his Eye,  
And his great Mind knows not the Pain of Fear.

*Chekitan.*

Such Hurricanes of Courage often lead  
To Shame and Disappointment in the End,  
And tumble blindfold on their own Disgrace.  
True Valour's slow, deliberate, and cool,  
Considers well the End, the Way, the Means,  
And weighs each Circumstance attending them.  
Imaginary Dangers it detects,  
And guards itself against all real Evils.

But here Tenesco comes with Speed important;  
His Looks and Face presage us something new.

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from Act II, scen. 2

*Tenesco.*

Spoke like yourselves, the Sons of Ponteach;  
Strength, Courage, and Obedience form the Soldier,  
And the firm Base of all true Greatness lay.

*Ponteach.*

Our Empire now is large, our Forces strong,  
Our Chiefs are wise, our Warriors valiant Men;  
We all are furnish'd with the best of Arms,  
And all things requisite to curb a Foe;  
And now's our Time, if ever, to secure  
Our Country, Kindred, Empire, all that's dear,  
From these Invaders of our Rights, the English,  
And set their Bounds towards the rising Sun.  
Long have I seen with a suspicious Eye  
The Strength and growing Numbers of the French;  
Their Forts and Settlements I've view'd as Snakes  
Of mortal Bite, bound by the Winter Frost,  
Which in some future warm reviving Day  
Would stir and hiss, and spit their Poison forth,  
And spread Destruction through our happy Land.  
Where are we now? The French are all subdued,  
But who are in their Stead become our Lords?  
A proud, imperious, churlish, haughty Band.  
The French familiarized themselves with us,  
Studied our Tongue, and Manners, wore our Dress,  
Married our Daughters, and our Sons their Maids,  
Dealt honestly, and well supplied our Wants,  
Used no One ill, and treated with Respect  
Our Kings, our Captains, and our aged Men;  
Call'd us their Friends, nay, what is more, their Children,  
And seem'd like Fathers anxious for our Welfare.  
Whom see we now? their haughty Conquerors  
Possess'd of every Fort, and Lake, and Pass,  
Big with their Victories so often gain'd;  
On us they look with deep Contempt and Scorn,  
Are false, deceitful, knavish, insolent;  
Nay, think us conquered, and our Country theirs,  
Without a Purchase, or ev'n asking for it.  
With Pleasure I wou'd call their King my Friend,  
Yea, honour and obey him as my Father;  
I'd be content, would he keep his own Sea,  
And leave these distant Lakes and Streams to us;  
Nay, I would pay him Homage, if requested,  
And furnish Warriors to support his Cause.  
But thus to lose my Country and my Empire,  
To be a Vassal to his low Commanders,  
Treated with disrespect and public Scorn

By Knaves, by Miscreants, Creatures of his Power;  
Can this become a King like Ponteach,  
Whose Empire's measured only by the Sun?  
No, I'll assert my Right, the Hatchet raise,  
And drive these Britons hence like frighted Deer,  
Destroy their Forts, and make them rue the Day  
That to our fertile Land they found the Way.

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from Act II, scen. 2

*Chekitan.*

Would you the Mohawk Emperor [King Hendrick] displease,  
And wage a bloody War, by which you made  
Him and his num'rous Tribes your certain Foes?

*Ponteach.*

Most of his Tribes will welcome the Proposal;  
For long their galled Necks have felt the Yoke,  
Long wish'd for Freedom from his partial Sway,  
In favour of the proud incroaching Britons.  
Nay, they have oft, in spite of his Displeasure,  
Rush'd forth like Wolves upon their naked Borders,  
And now, like Tygers broken from their Chains,  
they'll glut themselves, and revel in their Blood.

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from Act III, scene 3.

*Ponteach.*

Do what he will, 'tis this explains my Meaning;  
[Taking up the hatchet.  
You all are well appris'd of my Design,  
Which every passing Moment but confirms:  
Nay, my Heart's pain'd while I withhold my Hand  
From Blood and Vengeance on our hated Foes.  
Tho' I should stand alone, I'll try my Power  
To punish their Encroachments, Frauds, and Pride;  
Yet tho' I die, it is my Country's Cause,  
'Tis better thus to die than be despis'd;  
Better to die than be a Slave to Cowards,  
Better to die than see my Friends abus'd;  
The Aged scorn'd, the Young despis'd and spurn'd.  
Better to die than see my Country ruin'd,  
Myself, my Sons, my Friends reduc'd to Famine,  
Expell'd from hence to barren Rocks and Mountains,  
To curse our wretched Fate and pine in Want;  
Our pleasant Lakes and Fertile Lands usurp'd  
By Strangers, Ravagers, rapacious Christians.  
Who is it don't prefer a Death in War  
To this impending Wretchedness and Shame?  
Who is it loves his Country, Friends, or Self,  
And does not feel Resentment in his Soul?  
Who is it sees their growing Strength and Power,  
And how we waste and fail by swift Degrees,



That does not think it Time to rouse and arm,  
 And kill the Serpent ere we feel it sting,  
 And fall the Victims of its painful Poison?  
 Oh! could our Fathers from their Country see  
 Their ancient Rights encroach'd upon and ravag'd,  
 And we their Children slow, supine, and careless  
 To keep the Liberty and Land they left us,  
 And tamely fall a Sacrifice to Knaves!  
 How would their Bosoms glow with patriot Shame,  
 To see their Offspring so unlike themselves?  
 They dared all Dangers to defend their Rights,  
 Nor tamely bore an Insult from a Foe.  
 Their plain rough Souls were brave and full of Fire,  
 Lovers of War, nor knew the Pain of Fear.  
 Rouse, then, ye Sons of ancient Heroes, rouse,  
 Put on your Arms, and let us act a Part  
 Worthy the Sons of such renowned Chiefs.  
 Nor urge I you to Dangers that I shun,  
 Or mean to act my Part by Words alone;  
 This Hand shall wield the Hatchet in the Cause,  
 These Feet pursue the frighted running Foe,  
 This Body rush into the hottest Battle;  
 There should I fall, I shall secure my Honour,  
 And, dying, urge my Countrymen to Vengeance  
 With more Success than all the Force of Words.  
 Should I survive, I'll shed the foremost Tear  
 O'er my brave Countrymen that chance to fall;  
 I'll be the foremost to revenge their Blood,  
 And, while I live, honour both them and theirs,  
 I add no more, but wait to hear your Minds.

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from Act III, scen. 3

*The Bear.*

What is the Greatness of their King to us?  
 What of his Strength or Wisdom? Shall we fear  
 A Lion chain'd, or in another World?  
 Or what avails his flowing Goodness to us?  
 Does not the ravenous Tyger feed her Young?  
 And the fierce Panther fawn upon his Mate?  
 Do not the Wolves defend and help their Fellows,  
 The poisonous Serpent feed her hissing Brood,  
 And open wide her Mouth for their Protection?  
 So this good King shows Kindness to his own,  
 And favours them, to make a Prey of others;  
 But at his Hands we may expect no Favour,  
 Look back, my Friends, to our Forefathers' Time,  
 Where is their Country? where their pleasant Haunts?  
 The running Streams and shady Forests where?  
 They chas'd the flying Game, and liv'd in Plenty.  
 Lo, these proud Strangers now possess the Whole;  
 Their Cities, Towns, and Villages arise,  
 Forests are spoil'd, the Haunts of Game destroy'd,  
 And all the Sea Coasts made one general Waste;

Between the Rivers Torrent-like they sweep,  
And drive our Tribes toward the setting Sun.  
They who once liv'd on yon delightful Plains  
Are now no more, their very Name is lost.  
The Sons of potent Kings, subdu'd and murder'd,  
Are Vagrants, and unknown among their Neighbours.  
Where will the Ravage stop? the Ruin where?  
Does not the Torrent rush with growing Speed,  
And hurry us to the same wretched End?  
Let us grow wise then by our Fathers' Folly,  
Unite our Strength, too long it's been divided,  
And mutual Fears and Jealousies obtain'd:  
This has encourag'd our encroaching Foes,  
But we'll convince them, once, we dare oppose them.

*The Wolf.*

Yet we have Strength by which we may oppose,  
But every Day this Strength declines and fails.  
Our great Forefathers, ere these Strangers came,  
Liv'd by the Chace, with Nature's Gifts content,  
The cooling Fountain quench'd their raging Thirst.  
Doctors, and Drugs, and Med'cines were unknown,  
Even Age itself was free from Pain and Sickness.  
Swift as the Wind, o'er Rocks and Hills they chas'd  
The flying Game, the bounding Stag outwinded,  
And tir'd the savage Bear, and tam'd the Tyger;  
At Evening feasted on the past Day's Toil,  
Nor then fatigu'd; the merry Dance and Song  
Succeeded; still with every rising Sun  
The Sport renew'd; or if some daring Foe  
Provok'd their Wrath, they bent the hostile Bow,  
Nor waited his Approach, but rush'd with Speed,  
Fearless of Hunger, Thirst, Fatigue, or Death.  
But we their soften'd Sons, a puny Race,  
Are weak in Youth, fear Dangers where they're not;  
Are weary'd with what was to them a Sport,  
Panting and breathless in One short Hour's Chace;  
And every Effort of our Strength is feeble.  
We're poison'd with the Infection of our Foes,  
Their very Looks and Actions are infectious,  
And in deep Silence spread Destruction round them.  
Bethink yourselves while any Strength remains;  
Dare to be like your Fathers, brave and strong,  
Nor further let the growing Poison spread.  
And would you stop it, you must resolve to conquer,  
Destroy their Forts and Bulwarks, burn their Towns,  
And keep them at a greater Distance from us.  
Oh! 'tis a Day I long have wish'd to see,  
And, aged as I am, my Youth returns  
To act with Vigour in so good a Cause.  
Yes, you shall see the old Wolf will not fail  
To head his Troops, and urge them on to Battle.

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from Act IV, scen. 3.

*Messenger.*  
Huzza! for our brave Warriors are return'd  
*Loaded with Plunder and the Scalps of Christians.*

[Enter Warriors.

*Ponteach.*  
What have you done? Why all this Noise and Shouting?

*1st Warrior.*  
Three Forts are taken, all consum'd and plunder'd;  
The English in them all destroy'd by Fire,  
Except some few escap'd to die with Hunger.

*2nd Warrior.*  
We've smok'd the Bear in spite of all his Craft,  
Burnt up their Den, and made them take the Field:  
The mighty Colonel Cockum and his Captain  
Have dull'd our Tomhocks; here are both their Scalps:  
[Holding out the two scalps.  
Their Heads are split, our Dogs have eat their Brains.

*Philip.*  
If that be all they've eat, the Hounds will starve.

*3rd Warrior.*  
These are the scalps of those two famous Cheats  
Who bought our Furs for Rum, and sold us Water.  
[Holding out the scalps, which Ponteach takes.  
Our Men are loaded with their Furs again,  
And other Plunder from the Villains' Stores.

*Ponteach.*  
All this is brave!  
[Tossing up the scalps, which others catch, and toss and throw them about.  
This Way we'll serve them all.

*Philip.*  
We'll cover all our Cabins with their Scalps.

*Warriors.*  
We'll fat our Dogs upon their Brains and Blood.

*Ponteach.*  
Ere long we'll have their Governors in Play.

*Philip.*  
And knock their grey-wig'd Scalps about this Way.

*Ponteach.*  
The Game is started; Warriors, hunt away,  
Nor let them find a Place to shun your Hatchets.

*All Warriors.*

We will: We will soon shew you other Scalps.

*Philip.*

Bring some alive; I long to see them dance  
In Fire and Flames, it us'd to make them caper.

*Warriors.*

Such Sport enough you'll have before we've done.  
[Exeunt.]

*Ponteach.*

This still will help to move the Mohawk King [Hendrick].  
Spare not to make the most of our Success.

*Philip.*

Trust me for that—Hark; there's another Shout;  
[Shouting without.  
A Shout for Prisoners—Now I have my Sport.

*Ponteach.*

It is indeed; and there's a Number too.

*Enter Warriors.*

*1st Warrior.*

We've broke the Barrier, burnt their Magazines,  
Slew Hundreds of them, and pursu'd the rest  
Quite to their Settlements.

*2nd Warrior.*

There we took  
Their famous Hunters Honnyman and Orsbourn:  
The last is slain, this is his bloody Scalp [of Orsbourn].  
[Tossing it up.  
With them we found the Guns of our lost Hunters,  
And other Proofs that they're the Murderers;  
Nay, Honnyman confesses the base Deed,  
And, boasting, says, he's kill'd a Score of Indians.

*3rd Warrior.*

This is the bloody Hunter: This his Wife;  
[Leading them forward, pinioned and tied together.  
With two young Brats that will be like their Father.  
We took them in their Nest, and spoil'd their Dreams.

*Philip.*

Oh I could eat their Hearts, and drink their Blood,  
Were they not Poison, and unfit for Dogs.  
Here, you Blood-hunter, have you lost your Feeling?  
You Tygress Bitch! You Breeder up of Serpents!  
[Slapping Honnyman in the face, and kicking his wife.

*Ponteach.*

Stop—We must first consult which way to torture.  
And whether all shall die—We will retire.

*Philip* [going].  
Take care they don't escape.

*Warrior*.  
They're bound secure.  
[Exeunt Indians; manent Prisoners.

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from Act IV, scen. 4.

*Honnyman*.  
I am indeed. I murder'd many of them,  
And thought it not amiss, but now I fear.

*Mrs. Honnyman*.  
O shocking Thought! Why have you let me know  
Yourself thus guilty in the Eye of Heaven?  
That I and my dear Babes were by you brought  
To this Extreme of Wretchedness and Woe?  
Why have you let me know the solemn Weight  
Of horrid Guilt that lies upon us all?  
To have died innocent, and seen these Babes  
By savage Hands dash'd to immortal Rest,  
This had been light, for this implies no Crime:  
But now we die as guilty Murderers,  
Not savage Indians, but just Heaven's Vengeance  
Pursues our Lives with all these Pains and Tortures.  
This is a Thought that points the keenest Sorrow,  
And leaves no Room for Anguish to be heighten'd.

*Honnyman*.  
Upbraid me not, nor lay my Guilt to Heart;  
You and these Fruits of our past Morning Love  
Are innocent. I feel the Smart and Anguish,  
The Stings of Conscience, and my Soul on Fire.  
There's not a Hell more painful than my Bosom,  
Nor Torments for the Damn'd more keenly pointed.  
How could I think to murder was no Sin?  
Oh, my lost Neighbour! I seduc'd him too.  
Now death with all its Terrors disappears,  
And all I fear 's a dreadful Something-after;  
My Mind forebodes a horrid, woful Scene,  
Where Guilt is chain'd and tortur'd with Despair.

*Mrs. Honnyman*.  
The Mind oppress'd with Guilt may find Relief.

*Honnyman*.  
Oh, could I reach the pitying Ear of Heaven,  
And all my Soul evaporate in Sound,  
'T would ask Forgiveness! but I fear too late;  
And next I'd ask that you and these dear Babes  
Might bear no Part in my just Punishment.  
Who knows but by pathetic Prayers and Tears  
Their savage Bosoms may relent towards you,

And fix their Vengeance where just Heaven points it?  
I still will hope, and every Motive urge.  
Should I succeed, and melt their rocky Hearts,  
I'd take it as a Presage of my Pardon,  
And die with Comfort when I see you live.  
[Death halloo is heard without.

*Mrs. Honnyman.*

Hark! they are coming—Hear that dreadful Halloo.

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from Act V, scen. 5.

*Ponteach*

What are your Tidings?—I have no more Sons.

*Tenescó.*

But you have Subjects, and regard their Safety.  
The treacherous Priest, intrusted with your Councils,  
Has publish'd all, and added his own Falsehoods;  
The Chiefs have all revolted from your Cause,  
Patch'd up a Peace, and lend their Help no more.

*Ponteach.*

And is this all? we must defend ourselves,  
Supply the Place of Numbers with our Courage,  
And learn to conquer with our very Looks:  
This is a Time that tries the Truth of Valour;  
He shows his Courage that dares stem the Storm,  
And live in spite of Violence and Fate.  
Shall holy Perfidy and seeming Lies  
Destroy our Purpose, sink us into Cowards?

*Tenescó.*

May your Hopes prosper! I'll excite the Troops  
By your Example still to keep the Field.  
[Exit.

*Ponteach.*

'Tis coming on. Thus Wave succeeds to Wave,  
Till the Storm's spent, then all subsides again—  
The Chiefs revolted:—My Design betray'd:—  
May he that trusts a Christian meet the same;  
They have no Faith, no Honesty, no God,  
And cannot merit Confidence from Men.  
Were I alone the boist'rous Tempest's Sport,  
I'd quickly move my shatter'd, trembling Bark,  
And follow my departed Sons to Rest.  
But my brave Countrymen, my Friends, my Subjects,  
Demand my Care: I'll not desert the Helm,  
Nor leave a dang'rous Station in Distress;  
Yes, I will live, in spite of Fate I'll live;  
Was I not Ponteach, was I not a King,  
Such Giant Mischiefs would not gather round me.  
And since I'm Ponteach, since I am a King,  
I'll shew myself Superior to them all;

I'll rise above this Hurricane of Fate,  
And shew my Courage to the Gods themselves.

[Enter Tenesco, surprised and pausing.]

I am prepar'd, be not afraid to tell;  
You cannot speak what Ponteach dare not hear.

*Tenesco.*

Our bravest Troops are slain, the rest pursu'd;  
All is Disorder, Tumult, and Rebellion.  
Those that remain insist on speedy Flight;  
You must attend them, or be left alone  
Unto the Fury of a conquering Foe,  
Nor will they long expect your Royal Pleasure.

*Ponteach.*

Will they desert their King in such an Hour,  
When Pity might induce them to protect him?  
Kings like the Gods are valued and ador'd,  
When Men expect their Bounties in Return,  
Place them in Want, destroy the giving Power,  
All Sacrifices and Regards will cease.  
Go, tell my Friends that I'll attend their Call.

[Rising. Exit Tenesco.]

I will not fear—but must obey my Stars:

[Looking round.]

Ye fertile Fields and glad'ning Streams, adieu;  
Ye Fountains that have quench'd my scorching Thirst,  
Ye Shades that hid the Sun-beams from my Head,  
Ye Groves and Hills that yielded me the Chace,  
Ye flow'ry Meads, and Banks, and bending Trees,  
And thou proud Earth, made drunk with Royal Blood,  
I am no more your Owner and your King.  
But witness for me to your new base Lords,  
That my unconquer'd Mind defies them still;  
And though I fly, 'tis on the Wings of Hope.  
Yes, I will hence where there's no British Foe,  
And wait a Respite from this Storm of Woe;  
Beget more Sons, fresh Troops collect and arm,  
And other Schemes of future Greatness form;  
Britons may boast, the Gods may have their Will,  
Ponteach I am, and shall be Ponteach still.

*Finis.*

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For the complete text of “Ponteach” (in .txt format) and that includes a helpful and informative preface and commentary by Montrose J. Moses, see Project Gutenberg at:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29223/29223-h/29223-h.htm>

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