

The Prophet's Vision.

Tecumtha's Craft.

His Inspiration.

The superstitious Indians excited.

eye.¹ While lighting his pipe one day, he fell to the earth, as if dead. Preparations were made for his burial. When his friends were about to remove him, he opened his eyes and said, "Be not fearful. I have been in the Land of the Blessed. Call the nation together, that I may tell them what I have seen and heard." His people were speedily assembled, and again he spoke, saying, "Two beautiful young men were sent to me by the Great Spirit, who said, The Master of Life



THE PROPHET.

veighed against drunkenness and witchcraft, and warned his people to have nothing to do with the pale-faces, their religion, their customs, their arms, or their arts, for every imitation of the intruders was offensive to the great Master of Life. Tecumtha, possessed of a master mind and a statesman's sagacity, was the moving spirit in all this imposture. It was a part of his grand scheme for obtaining influence over the Northwestern tribes for political purposes, and he went from tribe to tribe publishing the wonders of his brother's divine mission.

The Prophet's harangues excited the latent superstition of the Indians to the highest degree, and for a while his sway over the minds of the savages in the Northwest was almost omnipotent. The chiefs and leading men of his own tribe denounced him, but the people sustained him. Success made him bold, and he used his newly-acquired power for the gratification of private and public resentments. He was accuser and judge, and he caused the execution of several hostile Delaware chiefs on a charge of witchcraft. A terrorism began to prevail all over the region where his divine mission was recognized. The credulous—men, women, and children—came long distances to see the oracle of the Great Spirit, who, they believed, wrought miracles.³ Their numbers became legion, and the white settlers were alarmed.

Tecumtha's deep scheme worked admirably. In the great congregation were lead-

¹ The portrait of the Prophet is from a pencil sketch made by Pierre Le Dru, a young French trader, at Vincennes, in 1808. He made a sketch of Tecumtha at about the same time, both of which I found in possession of his son at Quebec in 1848, and by whom I was kindly permitted to copy them. That of Tecumtha will be found in Chapter XIV. Owing partly to his excessive dissipation, the Prophet appeared much the elder of Tecumtha.

² Drake's *Book of the Indians*, page 624.

³ The Prophet was without honor in his own country, and he left Piqua and settled in a village of his own at Greenville, in Ohio, where Wayne held his great treaty in 1795, on lands already ceded to the United States. At the instigation of Tecumtha, no doubt, he sent emissaries to the tribes on the Lakes and on the Upper Mississippi, to declare his prophecy that the earth was about to be destroyed, except in the immediate residence of the Prophet at Greenville. Alarm caused many to flock thither as a place of refuge, and this gave Tecumtha an opportunity to divulge with ease to a large number, his plans for a confederacy. The Prophet made many predictions concerning the future glory of the Indians. His disciples spread the most absurd tales about his wonderful power—that he could make pumpkins spring out of the ground as large as wigwams, and that his corn grew so large that one ear would feed a dozen men. They spread a belief that the body of the Prophet was invulnerable, and that he had all knowledge, past, present, and future. It is said that so great a number flocked to Greenville to see him, that the southern shores of Lakes Superior and Michigan were quite depopulated. The traders were obliged to abandon their business. Of these deluded fanatics not more than one third ever returned, having died in consequence of the privations of hunger, cold, and fatigue. They perished by scores upon their weary pilgrimage. *MS. Life and Times of Tecumseh*, by Henry Onderdonk, Jr., 1842.

tha and his Family.

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met, the Wam- ople from the sons born of a pling logs un- l River, a few t, Elkwatawa, amskaka. Te- ² was the war- ded to. His gnifies, in the ese dialect, "a tiger," or "a t springing on y." He was a ult man, about et ten inches ut.³ Elkwata- re loud voice," ecame famous, etired life, and

sumed to be a to that period n. He was a the loss of an

see and neighboring rrior's name, accord- igraphy in the text. I obtained much val- visit with him in the

m Springfield.* The birth as it appeared ow occupies the site kets, stood upon the Colonel Johnston.

a man formed out of 362. Modern Piqua, ge on the Great Mia- torical interest. The made it famous.