

Encroachments on the Indians.

British Emissaries again at Work.

Tecumtha and his Family.

—why do you not make us happy, as our fathers, the French, did? They never took from us our lands; indeed, they were common between us. They planted where they pleased, and they cut wood where they pleased, and so did we. But now, if a poor Indian attempts to take a little bark from a tree to cover him from rain, up comes a white man and threatens to shoot him, claiming the tree as his own."¹ And so, with ample reason, they murmured on. Emissaries sent out by the British authorities in Canada fanned the flame of discontent; and Elliott, the old enemy of the Americans, still living near Malden, observing symptoms of impending war between the United States and Great Britain, was again wielding a potent influence over the chiefs of the tribes in the Northwest. Their resources, as well as privileges, were curtailed. Napoleon's Continental System touched even the savage of the wilderness. It clogged and almost closed the chief markets for his furs, and the prices were so low that Indian hunters found it difficult to purchase their usual necessaries from the traders. At the beginning of 1811 the Indians were ripe for any enterprise that promised them relief and independence.

A powerful warrior had lately become conspicuous, who, like Metacomet, the Wampanoag, and Pontiac, the Ottawa, essayed to be the savior of his people from the crushing footsteps of the advancing white man. He was one of three sons born of a Creek mother (Methoataske) at the same time, in a cabin built of sapling logs unhewn, and chinked with sticks and mud, near the banks of the Mad River, a few miles from Springfield, Ohio. They were named respectively Tecumtha, Elkswatawa,



BIRTHPLACE OF TECUMTHA AND HIS BROTHERS.

and Kamskaka. Tecumtha² was the warrior alluded to. His name signifies, in the Shawnoese dialect, "a flying tiger," or "a wild-cat springing on its prey." He was a well-built man, about five feet ten inches in height.³ Elkswatawa, "the loud voice," also became famous,

or, more properly speaking, notorious; but Kamskaka lived a quiet, retired life, and died in ignoble obscurity. As early as 1805, Elkswatawa, pretending to have had a vision, assumed to be a prophet, and took the name of Pemsquatawah, or "open door." Up to that period he had been remarkable for nothing but stupidity and intoxication. He was a cunning, unprincipled man, whose countenance was disfigured by the loss of an

¹ Governor Harrison to the Secretary of War.

² The late Colonel John Johnston, of Dayton, Ohio, who was Indian Agent among the Shawnoese and neighboring tribes for many years, and knew Tecumtha well, informed me that the proper way to spell that warrior's name, according to the native pronunciation, is as I have given it. On such authority I have adopted the orthography in the text. From Colonel Johnston, whose name will be frequently mentioned in the course of our narrative, I obtained much valuable information concerning the Indians of the Northwest from the year 1800 to 1812, during a visit with him in the autumn of 1860.

The birthplace of Tecumtha and his brothers was at the Piqua village, about five miles west from Springfield.* The engraving, copied by permission from Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio*, shows the place of his birth as it appeared a few years ago.³ It is on the north side of the Mad River. A small hamlet, called West Boston, now occupies the site of the Piqua village. The Indian fort at that place, consisting of a rude log hut surrounded by pickets, stood upon the hill seen on the left of the picture.

³ Colonel Johnston.

* This was ancient Piqua, the seat of the Piqua clan of the Shawnoese, a name which signifies "a man formed out of the ashes," and significant of their alleged origin. See Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio*, page 362. Modern Piqua, oftentimes confounded with that of the ancient one in speaking of Tecumtha, is a flourishing village on the Great Miami River, Miami County. Upper Piqua, three miles above the village, is a place of considerable historical interest. The reader is referred to Mr. Howe's valuable work for interesting details concerning the events which made it famous.

The Prophet's Vision

eye.¹ While his pipe one fell to the earth dead. Preparations were made for trial. When his were about to him, he opened and said, "Be nful. I have been Land of the E Call the nation er, that I may te what I have se heard." His I were speedily bled, and aga spoke, saying, beautiful young were sent to me Great Spirit, who The Master of veighed against to do with the I every imitation tha, possessed of all this impostu the Northwester lishing the wond The Prophet's est degree, and f was almost omn him, but the peop acquired power f euser and judge, charge of witcher vine mission was distances to see t Their numbers be Tecumtha's de

¹ The portrait of the I in 1808. He made a ske in Quebec in 1848, and by w Owing partly to his exce

² Drake's *Book of the In*

³ The Prophet was with ville, in Ohio, where Way tion of Tecumtha, no dou prophecy that the earth Alarm caused many to fle to a large number, his pla Indians. His disciples sp out of the ground as larg spread a belief that the bc It is said that so great a n igan were quite depopulat than one third ever return by scores upon their wear