

Unsuccessful Attempts to conciliate Tecumtha.

Roving Plunderers.

Tecumtha's Fears and Duplicity.

publicly disavowed any intention of attacking the governor and his friends on the preceding day. When asked whether he intended to persist in his opposition to the late treaty, he replied firmly that he should "adhere to the old boundary." Chiefs from five different tribes immediately arose, and declared their intention to support Tecumtha in the stand he had taken, and their determination to establish the proposed confederacy.

Harrison well knew the great ability and influence of Tecumtha, and was very anxious to conciliate him. On the following day, accompanied only by Mr. Barron, he visited the warrior in his camp, and had a long and friendly interview with him. He told Tecumtha that his principles and his claims would not be allowed by the President of the United States, and advised him to relinquish them. "Well," said the warrior, "as the Great Chief is to determine the matter, I hope the Great Spirit will put sense enough into his head to induce him to direct you to give up this land. It is true, he is so far off he will not be injured by the war. He may sit still in his town and drink his wine, while you and I will have to fight it out."¹ The conference ended by the governor's promising to lay the matter before the President.

War with the followers of Tecumtha and the Prophet now seemed probable, and Harrison commenced measures to meet it. A small detachment of United States troops, under Captain Cross, stationed at Newport, Kentucky, were ordered to Vincennes, there to join three companies of militia infantry and a company of Knox County dragoons, in the event of an attack from the savages. The governor had paid particular attention to drilling the militia, and now, when their services were likely to be needed, they felt much confidence on account of their discipline.

The Indians on the Wabash, grown bold by the teachings of their great military leader, the oracular revelations of the Prophet, and the active encouragement of the British in Canada, began to roam in small marauding parties over the Wabash region in the spring of 1811, plundering the houses of settlers and the wigwams of friendly Indians, stealing horses, and creating general alarm. Tecumtha was exceedingly active, at the same time, in efforts to perfect his confederacy and inciting the tribes to war; and, early in the summer, the movements of the Indians were so menacing that Governor Harrison sent Captain Walter Wilson, accompanied by Mr. Barron, with an energetic letter to the Shawnoe brothers.^a He assured them that he was fully prepared to encounter all the tribes combined, and that if they did not put a stop to the outrages complained of, and cease their warlike movements, he should attack them.

Tecumtha was alarmed. He received the messengers very courteously, and promised to see the governor in person very soon, when he would convince him that he had no desire to make war upon the Americans. He accordingly appeared at Vincennes on the 27th of July, accompanied by about three hundred Indians, twenty of them women. The inhabitants were alarmed. It was believed that the wily savage had intended, with these warriors at hand, to compel the governor to give up the Wabash lands. But when, on the day of his arrival, he saw seven hundred and fifty well-armed militia reviewed by the governor, he exhibited no haughtiness of tone and manner. He was evidently uneasy. He made the most solemn protestations of his friendly intentions and desires to restrain the Indians from hostilities, yet he earnestly but modestly insisted upon a return of the lands ceded by the treaty at Fort Wayne. His duplicity was perfect. He left Vincennes a few days afterward with twenty warriors, went down the Wabash, and, as was afterward ascertained, visited the Southern Indians—Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws—and endeavored to bring them into his league against the white people. The remainder of his followers from the Prophet's town, astonished at the military display at Vincennes, returned to their rendezvous on the Tippecanoe, filled with doubt and alarm.

¹ Dawson's *Life of Harrison*, page 59; Drake's *Book of the North American Indians*.