

It was a novel and beautiful sight, to behold that imposing fleet of canoes, apparently so frail in texture that the dropping of a pebble between the skeleton ribs might be deemed sufficient to perforate and sink them, yet withal so ingeniously contrived as to bear safely, not only the warriors who formed their crews, but also their arms of all descriptions, and such light equipment of raiment and necessaries, as were indispensable to men who had to voyage long and far in pursuit of the goal they were now rapidly attaining. The Indians already encamped near the fort, were warriors of nations long rendered familiar, by personal intercourse, not only with the inhabitants of the district, but with the troops themselves; and these, from frequent association with the whites, had lost much of that fierceness which is so characteristic of the North American Indian in his rude state. Among these, with the more intelligent Hurons, were the remnants of those very tribes of Shawanees and Delawares, whom we have recorded to have borne, half a century ago, so prominent a share in the confederacy against England; but who, after the termination of that disastrous war, had so far abandoned their wild hostility, as to have settled in various points of contiguity to the forts to which they, periodically, repaired to receive those presents which a judicious policy so profusely bestowed.

The reinforcement just arriving was composed principally of warriors, who had never yet pressed a soil wherein civilization had extended her influence—men who had never hitherto beheld the face of a white, unless it were that of the Canadian trader, who, at stated periods, penetrated fearlessly into their wilds for purposes of traffic, and who to the bronzed cheek that exposure had rendered nearly as swarthy as their own, united not only the language but so wholly the dress—or rather the undress of those he visited—that he might easily have been confounded with one of their own dark blooded race. So remote, indeed, were the regions in which some of these warriors had been sought, that they were strangers to the existence of more than one of their tribes, and upon these they gazed with a surprise only inferior to what they manifested, when, for the first time, they marked the accoutrements of the British soldier, and turned with secret, but unacknowledged awe and admiration upon the frowning fort and stately shipping, bristling with cannon, and vomiting forth sheets of flame as they approached the shore. In these might have been studied the natural dignity of man. Firm of step—proud of mien—haughty yet penetrating of look—each leader offered in his own person a model to the sculptor, which he might vainly seek elsewhere. Free and unfettered in every limb, they moved in the majesty of nature, and with an air of dark reserve, passed, on landing, through the admiring crowd.

There was one of the number, however, and his canoe was decorated with a richer and a larger flag, whose costume was that of the more civilized Indians, and who in nobleness of deportment even surpassed those we have last named. This was Tecumseh. He was not of the race of either of the parties who now accompanied him, but of one of the nations, many of whose warriors were assembled on the bank awaiting his arrival. As the head Chief of the Indians, his authority was acknowledged by all, even to the remotest of these wild but interesting people, and the result of the exercise of his all powerful influence had been the gathering together of those warriors, whom he had personally hastened to collect from the extreme west, passing in his course, and with impunity, the several American posts that lay in their way.

All looked up to him as the defender and saviour of their race, and so well did he merit the confidence reposed in him, that it was not long after his first appearance as a leader in the war-path, that the Americans were made sensible, by repeated defeat, of the formidable character of the Chief, who had thrown himself into the breach of his nation's tottering fortunes, resolved rather to perish on the spot on which he stood, than to retire one foot from the home of their forefathers. What self-ennobling actions the warrior performed, and what talent he displayed during that warfare, the page of American history must tell. With the spirit to struggle against, and the subsequent good fortune to worst the Americans in many conflicts, these latter, although beaten, have not been wanting in generosity to admire their formidable enemy while living, neither have they failed to venerate his memory when dead. If they have helped to bind the laurel around his living brow, they have not been the less willing to weave the cypress that encircles his memory.

It was amidst the blaze of an united salvo from the demi-lune crowning the bank, and from the shipping, that the noble chieftain, accompanied by the leaders of those wild tribes, leaped lightly, yet proudly, to the beach; and having ascended the steep bank by a flight of rude steps cut out of the earth, finally stood amid the party of officers waiting to receive them. It would not a little have surprised a Bond Street exquisite of that day to have witnessed the cordiality with which the dark hand of the savage was successively pressed in the fairer palms of the English officers, neither would his astonishment have been abated, on remarking the proud dignity of carriage maintained by the former, in this exchange of courtesy, as though, while he joined heart to hand wherever the latter fell, he seemed rather to bestow than to receive a condescension.

Had none of those officers ever previously beheld him, the fame of his heroic deeds had gone sufficiently before the warrior to have insured him their warmest greeting and approbation, and none could mistake a form that, even amid those who were a password for native majesty, stood alone in its bearing: but Tecumseh was a stranger to few. Since his defeat on the Wabash he had been much at Amherstburg, where he had rendered himself conspicuous by one or two animated and highly eloquent speeches, having for their object the consolidation of a treaty, in which the Indian interests were subsequently bound in close union with those of England; and, up to the moment of his recent expedition, had cultivated the most perfect understanding with the English chiefs.

It might, however, be seen that even while pleasure and satisfaction at a reunion with those he in truth esteemed, flashed from his dark and eager eye, there was still lurking about his manner that secret jealousy of distinction, which is so characteristic of the haughty Indian. After the first warm salutations had passed, he became sensible of the absence of the English Chief; but this was expressed rather by a certain outswelling of his chest, and the searching glance of his restless eye, than by any words that fell from his lips. Presently, he whom he sought, and whose person had hitherto been concealed by the battery