

applicable not to the present but to a past generation :—

“Fatal day, when a Christian people first penetrated the forests, to teach the arts of civilization to the poor Indian! Till then, water had been his only beverage, and himself and his race possessed all the vigor of hardy savages. Now, no Indian opens his lips to the stream that ripples by his wigwam, while he has a rag of clothes on his back, wherewith to purchase rum; and he and his squaw and his children wallow through the day in beastly drunkenness. Instead of the sturdy warrior, with a head to plan, and an arm to execute vengeance upon the oppressors of his country, we behold the puny besotted wretch, squatting in his house, ready to barter his country, his children, or himself, for a few gulps of that deleterious compound, which, far more than the arms, of the United States, is hastening to extinguish all traces of his name and character. Tecumseh himself, in early life, had been addicted to intemperance, but no sooner did his judgment decide against, than his resolution enabled him to quit, so vile a habit. Beyond one or two glasses of wine he never afterwards indulged.”

By whom are the savages led? was the question, for many years, during the wars between the Americans and Indians. The name “Tecumseh!” was itself a host on the side of the latter, and the warrior chief, while he signalized himself in all, came off victorious in most, of the many actions in which he had ought and bled. American editors, super-added to a national dislike to the Indians, have some special reasons, which we shall develop presently, for blackening the character of Tecumseh. They say that he neither gave nor accepted quarter. His inveterate hatred to the Americans, considering them, as he did, to have robbed his forefathers of their territory, render such a proceeding, in a savage, not improbable. European history, even of modern date, informs us that the civilized soldier can go into battle with a similar determination. Mr Thomson says of Tecumseh, that, “when he undertook an expedition, accompanied by his tribe, he would relinquish to them the spoil, though he would never yield the privilege of destroying the victim,” and yet it was from an American

publication* that we extracted the account of Tecumseh’s killing a brother chief, because the latter wanted to massacre an American prisoner. This trait in Tecumseh’s character is corroborated by all the British officers who have served with him.

That it did not however proceed from any good will towards the Americans, was made known, in an extraordinary manner, at the taking of Detroit. After the surrender of the American troops, General Brock desired Tecumseh not to allow the Indians under him to ill-treat the prisoners. Tecumseh promptly replied, “I despise them too much to meddle with them.” Nor is there a single act of violence charged to the Indians on that occasion. As a proper contrast to this an American writer,† describing a battle between General Jackson and the Creek Indians, in March 1814, says, “of about one thousand Creeks, only ten of the men are supposed to have escaped with life, sixteen of the Creeks, who had hid themselves, were killed the morning after the battle.” The American commander said, in his despatches that he was *determined to exterminate* the tribe, “of course,” proceeds the editor, “no quarter was given except to a few women and children.”

Few officers in the United States service were so able to command in the field, as this famed Indian Chief. He was an excellent judge of position, and not only knew, but could point out, the localities of the whole country through which he had passed. To what extent he had travelled over the western part of the American continent may be conceived from the well known fact, that he visited the Creek Indians, in the hopes of prevailing on them to unite with their northern brethren, in efforts to regain their country as far as the banks of the Ohio. His facility of communicating the information he had acquired, was thus displayed before a concourse of spectators :—Previously to General Brock’s crossing over the Detroit, he asked Tecumseh what sort of a country he should have to pass through, in case of his proceeding farther. Tecumseh taking a roll of elm bark, and extending it on the ground by means of four stones, drew forth his scalping knife, and,

* Sketches of the War.

† Political and Historical Register, page 186