

Signs of Indian Hostilities.

The Mission of Joseph Barron.

His hostile Reception by the Prophet.

more alarming, because the warlike Wyandots, on the southern shores of Lake Erie, whom all the tribes so feared and respected that they called them uncles, had lately become the allies of these Shawanoese brothers.

In the spring of 1810 the Indians at the Prophet's town gave unmistakable signs of hostility. They refused to receive the "annuity salt," and insulted the boatmen who took it to them by calling them "American dogs." These and other indications of hostility caused Harrison to send frequent messengers to the Prophet and his brother. Finally, in July, he sent a letter to them by Joseph Barron, a Frenchman, known to and respected by all the Indian tribes in that region as a faithful and kind-

hearted interpreter. He was instructed to invite the brothers to meet the governor in council at Vincennes, and lay their alleged grievances before him. Barron was received by the Prophet in a most unfriendly spirit. The oracle was surrounded by several Indians, and when the interpreter was formally presented his single eye kindled and gleamed with fiercest anger. Gazing upon the visitor intently for several minutes without speaking, he suddenly exclaimed, "For what purpose do you come here? Brouillette was here; he was a spy. Dubois was here; he was a spy. Now you have come. You, too, are a spy." Then, pointing to the ground, he said, vehemently, "There is your grave, look on it!" At that moment Tecumtha appeared, assured Barron of his personal safety, heard the letter of Governor Harrison, and promised to visit Vincennes in the course of a few days.¹



JOSEPH BARRON.

On the morning of the 12th of August Tecumtha appeared at Vincennes. He had been requested to bring not more than thirty warriors with him; he came with four hundred fully armed, and encamped in a grove on the outskirts of the town. The inhabitants, most of whom were unarmed, were startled by this unexpected demonstration of savage strength, and, partly on

¹ Statement of Mr. Barron, quoted by Dillon in his *History of Indiana*, page 441. Mr. Barron was a native of Detroit. He was employed by Harrison as interpreter about eighteen years. He was an uneducated man, of much natural ability, and very interesting in conversation. He was slender in form, about a medium height, had black eyes, sallow complexion, a prominent nose, small mouth, and wore his hair in a cue, *à la aborigène*, with a long black ribbon dangling down his back. He was a facetious, pleasant, social, and entertaining man, full of anecdotes and *bon mots*. He was fond of music, and played the Indian flutes with skill. Barron was acquainted with most of the Indian dialects east of the Mississippi. In 1837 he accompanied emigrating Pottawatomies to the West. He also accompanied another party of the same tribe in 1838 to their lands beyond the Mississippi. He afterward returned to the Wabash, and, after a protracted illness, died on the 31st of July, 1843, at an advanced age, at the residence of his son on the Wabash, near its confluence with the Eel River.

Mr. Barron was at the battle of Tippecanoe with Harrison, and this circumstance greatly exasperated the Indians against him. They were very anxious to capture and torture him. So important did they consider him, that they made rude sketches of his features on the barks of trees, and sent them among the various tribes, that they might know and catch him. One of these was for some time in possession of Mr. Compret, of Fort Wayne. It was carried to Germany by a Catholic priest as a great curiosity. Another, on a piece of beech bark, was preserved a long time at Fort Dearborn, and in 1836 was in possession of James Hertz, a private soldier at Mackinaw, from whom a friend procured it, and in the autumn of 1861 sent me a tracing of it. The sketch is a fac-simile on a reduced scale.

George Winter, Esq., an artist of Lafayette, Indiana, painted a portrait of Mr. Barron in 1837. He kindly furnished me the copy from which the above engraving was made; also with the information concerning the famous interpreter contained in this note. Mr. Winter was the painter of the portrait of Frances Slocum, the lost child of Wyoming.—See *Lossing's Field-book of the Revolution*, i., 369.

Brouillette and Dubois, mentioned above, with Francis Vigo, Pierre La Plante, John Conner, and William Prince, were influential men, and were frequently employed by Harrison as messengers to the Indians.



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