

them. The heroic and desperate spirit which animated them against their American oppressors; their mysterious and appalling mode of warfare; the native talents, the wild energy and eloquence, and the touching fate of the extraordinary man who started up as a leader among them; all these were points of new and uncommon excitement for the imagination, and gave to the nature of the service on which our troops were engaged with them, something original, and strange, and totally distinct from the ordinary operations of warfare. Opportunities were thus afforded for gaining an insight into the Indian character under some of its most striking forms; where it was thrown into fearful action, and wrought to the utmost intensity of enthusiasm and frenzy.

There certainly had not for many years, if ever, been an example of so numerous an assemblage of various Indian tribes, as were collected on our western Canadian frontier during the campaigns of 1812 and 1813. From the shores of Lakes Superior, and Huron, and Michigan; from the heads of the Mississippi and its tributary streams; from the immense forests and prairies spread over that part of the continent, and bordering on those waters, Indian nations descended to the country about Detroit, to join their hands in the same cause, and to take up the hatchet with their British Father, against the Long Knives, as they termed the Americans. The number of Indian warriors who were assembled in the summer of 1813 about the head-quarters of the right division of the Canadian army exceeded three thousand; and as they brought their squaws and children with them into the Michigan country, (of which it was intended to give them lasting possession, and thus to form a point of support for the western flank of our frontier,) the total number of their people could not be less than twelve thousand.\* The encampment of this large body of warriors, with their women and children, presented a singularly wild and imposing spectacle. The effect was strongest by night, when the blazing watch-fire threw its red glare upon the swarthy figures which danced or grouped in indolence around it; and the sound of the war-song, the shout, the yell, were strangely varied at intervals by the plaintive cadence of the Indian flute, or the hollow tone of the Indian drum; while the dark foliage of the forest slumbering in the calm brilliance of a Canadian night, was half hidden, half revealed, as the light of the fires shot up to heaven, or sunk into gloomy embers.

If any one not occupied by the busy details of that period of

\* Indeed, we know that above 12,000 rations per diem were, for a considerable time, issued to them, and that this number of their people was actually provisioned.

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