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Black Hawk

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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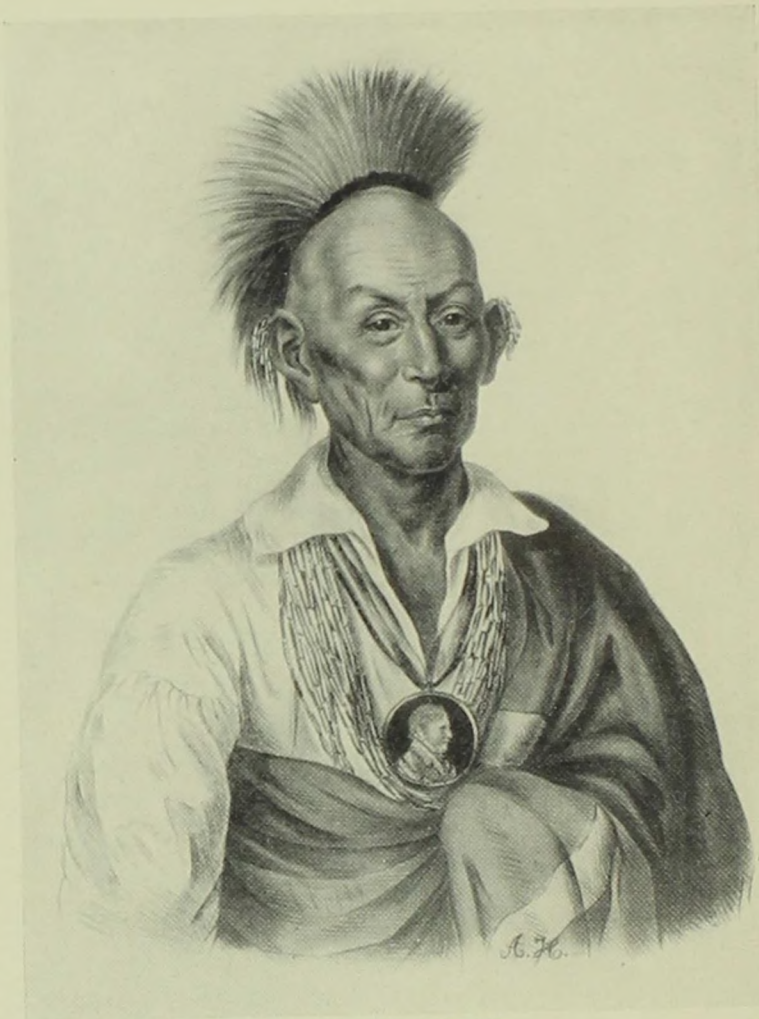

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BLACK HAWK

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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Chief of the Sauks

Black Hawk, the old Sauk chieftain, was more than a maker of war. Unlike Miles Standish, he was a maker of phrases as well. A few brief sentences in his speech at the war council on the Iowa River in 1832 present the story of his people, expressing the hopes and aspirations, the hardships and disappointments of Indian life. "Headmen, Chiefs, Braves, and Warriors of the Sauks: For more than a hundred winters our nation was a powerful, happy, and united people", he declared. "Our children were never known to cry of hunger, and no stranger, red or white, was permitted to enter our lodges without finding food and rest. Our nation was respected by all who came in contact with it, for we had the ability as well as the courage to defend and maintain our rights of territory, person and property against the world. Then, indeed, was it an honor to be

called a Sauk, for that name was a passport to our people traveling in other territories and among other nations. But an evil day befell us when we became a divided nation, and with that division our glory deserted us, leaving us with the hearts and heels of the rabbit in place of the courage and strength of the bear."

The patriotism of this speech pervaded Black Hawk's nature. He had witnessed events apparently beyond the control of mankind, red or white. Once the Sauks had been a "powerful, happy, and united people" under Black Hawk's leadership. But the advent of "an evil day", brought with it an avalanche of misfortune, hardship, and disappointment. Black Hawk was even then wrestling with an invincible foe, a power mightier than himself. Caught by the irresistible advance of the great "white tide", his defeat was inevitable. Yet nearly all his life was spent in struggling against such a fate.

Black Hawk was born in 1767 at the village of Saukenuk on the east bank of the Father of Waters, not far from Rock Island. One among many boys in the village, he indulged in the same recreations and enjoyed the same sports as the others. At the age of fifteen, by taking the scalps of some Osage braves, he won the right to paint and wear feathers and to be counted a brave himself. Only

a little later, upon the death of his father, Pyesa, he came into possession of the "medicine bag" — a symbol of the good fortunes and omens of his tribe, which had long been intrusted to his father and to his grandfathers before him.

The Sauk tribe was divided into a dozen groups including the Bear, Wolf, Fox, Deer, Elk, Eagle, and Thunder gentes. While the name Black Hawk appears in the Eagle gens, it is also found among the Thunderers — the Thunder gens being closely associated with the mythology of the thunder bird which was the symbol of storms and was represented by the mighty eagle. In this connection it is significant to note that Black Hawk claimed to have been a lineal descendant of Nanamakee or Thunder, who had been a head chief — a position which Pyesa "willingly resigned". Consequently, though Black Hawk came of distinguished lineage, he was not an hereditary chief. Indeed, he never attained the office of civil chief, but through his bravery and leadership he came to be widely recognized as a war chief.

As a young warrior he was in numerous engagements against the Osage and Cherokee Indians. During the War of 1812 he aided the British, leading two hundred of his braves who came to be known as the "British Band". Always

stoutly resisting the advance of the settlers in the valley of the Mississippi, he opposed the erection of stockades at Fort Madison and Fort Armstrong, and repeatedly urged his people not to recede. Indeed, it was his insistent determination to hold his ground that ultimately precipitated the disastrous Black Hawk War.

In the first engagement of that war — the battle of Stillman's Run — he won merited recognition as a skillful commander when, with a few Indian braves, he routed a regiment of frightened white men. At the battle of Bad Axe, however, after a masterly retreat of two or three hundred miles that occupied the entire summer, his ultimate defeat seemed as humiliating to him as his early victory had been glorious. The evil day had befallen him. It was the beginning of the end. Captured at the close of the war and imprisoned in Jefferson Barracks, he became forlorn and despondent. Having been taken East to see the multitudes of white people and the power of their government, he was eventually released and returned to spend his declining years in Iowa, west of the Mississippi. On the bank of a little stream known as Devil Creek, not far from Fort Madison, he lived for a while under the guardianship of his old rival, Keokuk. Later he moved up the Des Moines River and settled near the village

of Iowaville where, in the fall of 1838, he responded to the quiet call of the Great Spirit.

Most prominent among the characteristics of the old war chief were his courage and bravery. As a youth, Black Hawk had joined in an attack upon the Osage. He volunteered his services, he explained, "proud to have an opportunity to prove" to his father that he was "not an unworthy son", and that he "had courage and bravery". Nor was this an idle boast. In the midst of a hand-to-hand combat, he rushed furiously upon one of the enemy and struck him with a tomahawk. Then, running a lance through the body of the fallen warrior, Black Hawk took his first scalp and with it returned in triumph to his father. In a similar conflict with the Osage a little later, Black Hawk is said to have killed five of the enemy single handed.

In the spring of 1831, when the advance of settlement was clearly apparent, and the Indians were ordered to move or be driven out of Saukenuk by American troops, Black Hawk faced the situation with his customary courage. When Governor John Reynolds called out seven hundred militia commanded by Brigadier General Edmund P. Gaines and instructed them to remove the Indians across the river "dead or alive", Black Hawk still stood firm. When the bitter end of

the ensuing conflict was at hand, even then he was not without courage. "The sun rose clear on us in the morning", he said, "and at night it sunk in a dark cloud, and looked like a ball of fire. This was the last sun that shone upon Black Hawk. He is now a prisoner of the white man, but he can stand the torture. He is not afraid of death. He is no coward — Black Hawk is an Indian."

But if Black Hawk was brave, he was also proud, haughty, and imperious. When hostilities broke out between the British and the Americans in 1812, Colonel Robert Dickson sent for Black Hawk, greeted him "with a hearty shake of the hand", addressed him as "General Black Hawk", presented him with a silk flag and said, "You are to command all the braves that will leave here the day after tomorrow, to join our braves near Detroit." Thus, in an appeal to personal pride — diplomacy carried to the point of flattery — the British secured the aid of Black Hawk and two hundred of his warriors.

At the close of the war in 1832, Black Hawk was taken to Washington where he met Andrew Jackson. In the presence of the President of the United States, the old chief was not the least overawed. Gazing steadily into the eyes of the veteran Indian fighter, he simply remarked, "I am a man and you are another." He had not ex-

pected to conquer the whites, he said. They were too numerous — as many as the leaves on the trees. He told the President he had taken up the hatchet to revenge injuries which his people could no longer endure. "Had I borne these longer without striking, my people would have said, 'Black Hawk is a woman; he is too old to be a chief; he is no Sauk'." The pride of an Indian chief was a prominent factor in precipitating the Black Hawk War.

Later, when Black Hawk had been removed from power, the pride of the old warrior was still apparent. In an assembly at Fort Armstrong, Major John Garland announced that the Great Father in Washington would henceforth acknowledge Keokuk as chief and that Black Hawk must conform to his counsels. This bold stroke on the part of the Major was too much for the proud spirit of Black Hawk to endure. Springing to his feet and trembling with rage he spoke with all the fervor and imperious dignity of former days, regardless of consequences.

"I am a man — an old man. I will not conform to the counsels of any one. I will act for myself; no one shall govern me. I am old; my hair is gray. I once gave counsel to my young men. Am I to conform to others? I shall soon go to the Great Spirit where I shall be at rest. What I said to

our great father at Washington, I say again. I will always listen to him. I am done."

On another occasion, late in life, Black Hawk is reputed to have been invited to dine at the home of an Iowa pioneer. As the dinner hour approached, the host called the old chief aside to say that a party of United States dragoons had arrived. The captain of the dragoons — "the white man's chief" — was to dine with him, and Black Hawk must wait until they had finished. The old chief's eyes flashed with anger as he answered, raising the forefinger of one hand to his breast to represent the officer, "I know the white man is a chief, but I", elevating the finger of the other hand far above his head, "was a chief, and led my warriors to the fight, long before his mother knew him. *Your meat! — my dogs should not eat it!*" Saying this, he folded his blanket about him and stalked off, as haughty as if he trod the soil he could still call his own.

Another trait which was deep-seated in the nature of the old warrior was that of loyalty. He was loyal to an ideal, loyal to a cause, loyal to his family, and loyal to his friends and followers. In 1804 some emissaries from Saukenuk were sent to St. Louis to intercede for a member of their tribe. While there, members of the delegation were regaled with plenty of whisky, and unlimited credit

was extended to them. At an opportune time the treaty of 1804 was signed, by which the Indians disposed of a large tract of land including the site of Saukenuk. This treaty, Black Hawk stoutly maintained, was not binding or just, and many years of his life and much of his energy were spent in defense of this position.

When the settlers encroached upon his native territory, no one was more loyal than he in defending the cause of his people and his country. When the enemy advanced and demanded possession of the land, Keokuk played the wiser part — the role of the diplomat — and withdrew his band peaceably across the river. But not so with Black Hawk. He remained firm in his resistance to the white aggression.

To his family before all others he was loyal. Indeed, he possessed in unusual degree a commendable trait not particularly common among Indians — kindness and affection for his wife. Unlike other Indian chiefs, he never had but one wife, and with her he lived for more than forty years. When he was a prisoner at Jefferson Barracks his wife and daughter visited him. He was "rejoiced", he said, at their coming, and spent his time "very agreeably with them" as long as they remained.

Black Hawk never forgot a friend nor forsook

his followers. In 1832 he was forced to cross the river into Iowa and agree not to return. But this promise, made under duress, was broken. Critics maintain that this was not only evidence of bad faith but also the result of a treacherous scheme to again "establish himself upon his ancient hunting-grounds and in the principal village of his nation". On the other hand, Black Hawk himself declares that he had no evil design, but that he and his followers recrossed "to steal roasting-ears from their own fields". Perhaps he was trying to regain the land of his fathers. Perchance he was seeking food for his women and children. Whatever his motives may have been, his action was prompted by deep concern for the welfare of his people, a loyalty which required consummate courage and self-sacrifice in the face of overwhelming odds.

But Black Hawk was more loyal than he was diplomatic, more courageous than he was discreet. Fearless in war, his actions were frequently ill-advised. He was willing to accept responsibility without counting the cost. Not infrequently he hastened into enterprises without the support of sound reason and against the dictates of wise judgment. During the War of 1812 he was apparently influenced by pride and loyalty, but gave little heed to conditions or consequences. When the white tide came in 1830 and 1831, a

man of discretion and vision might have discerned the inevitable result. Keokuk, "watchful fox" that he was, realized the situation and took advantage of it. But brave, loyal old Black Hawk viewed the advance with fatalistic determination. If he must fight and, fighting, lose, then be it so. At all events he would not retreat ignominiously.

Frederick Webb Hodge in his *Handbook of American Indians* refers to Black Hawk as "deeply religious, and thoroughly patriotic", which may seem to be a strange characterization of an Indian. Yet the red men had a deep sense of spiritual values and profound reverence for things unseen. Nor was their faith unrelated to ethical standards. In the words of Black Hawk during one of his serener moments, "For my part I am of the opinion that, so far as we have reason we have a right to use it, determining what is right or wrong, and we should always pursue that path which we believe to be right. We can only judge of what is proper and right by our own standard of what is right and wrong, which differs widely from the whites, if I am correctly informed. The whites may do wrong all of their lives, and then if they are sorry for it when they die, all is well; but with us it is different. We must continue to do good throughout our lives. If we have corn and meat, and know of a family that have none, we divide with

them. If we have more blankets than we absolutely need, and others have not enough, we must give to those who are in want."

Had Black Hawk ever heard of the Golden Rule? Indeed, it might even appear that he was trying to answer for himself the question presented by the old prophet Micah, himself, when he said: "O man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

It is not surprising that Black Hawk, believing these things, was an admirer of the beautiful and a lover of nature. The site of the village of Saukenuk was beautiful and picturesque. North and west of the Indian town flowed the stately Mississippi. Rock Island, abounding in fruits and birds and guarded by a protecting spirit, was only a little way up the river. Just east of the village was a bold promontory known as Black Hawk's Watch-tower. High on this picturesque spot the old chief now and again on a summer evening would sit smoking his pipe and looking with pleasure and contentment at the last rays of the setting sun. These tranquil scenes were indelibly impressed upon the mind of Black Hawk, not to be forgotten in the days when he could visit them no more.

In his last public address at Fort Madison on

the Fourth of July, 1838, Black Hawk gave expression to his love of the beautiful and paid tribute to the scenes of his childhood. "The earth is our mother", he said, "we are now on it — with the Great Spirit above us — it is good. . . . Rock river was a beautiful country — I liked my towns, my cornfields, and the home of my people. I fought for it. It is now yours — keep it as we did — it will produce you good crops." And then, remembering his childhood days along the great river, he said, "I have looked upon the Mississippi since I have been a child. I love the Great river. I have dwelt upon its banks from the time I was an infant. I look upon it now."

Born in the beautiful region on the banks of the Father of Waters, his homeland was to him a paradise. There was the mighty river, the sacred island, and the favorite watch-tower. There was the village of Saukenuk, familiar as the scene of his childhood. There were the graves of his loved ones appealing to him for protection. Black Hawk was a warrior, but his heart was not of stone. He could not but respond to the appeal of the sacred and the beautiful. "I would rather have laid my bones with those of my forefathers", he said, "than remove for any consideration."

All in all, the life of Black Hawk presents a striking paradox. At once savage and cruel, he

was also faithful and brave. Always a fierce warrior, he was nevertheless loyal, sympathetic, and just. Fearless in battle, he was still an admirer of beautiful things, a lover of peace and quiet, and always grateful for the good conferred by the Great Spirit. "I never take a drink of water from a spring", he said, "without being mindful of His goodness." Not infrequently, during the closing years of his life, Black Hawk expressed regret that the tomahawk had been raised. "While the Great Spirit above keeps my heart as it now is, I will be the white man's friend."

J. A. SWISHER

Futile Defiance

The final explanation of the Black Hawk War is to be found not in any chronicle of the events leading up to the struggle nor in the immediate precipitating circumstances, but rather in an abstract principle — the concept of historical inevitability. Just as the bloody heaps of hacked bodies of the men who defended their homes in Gaul from Caesar's legions were gruesome monuments erected in the dark and savage forests of northern Europe to the climbing flame of civilization, so the conquest of the American Indian, even though often accomplished by injustice and intolerance, is largely justified. The Sauk Indians offered a dangerous and sometimes bloody opposition to the ingress of settlers to a fertile land destined to become the granary of the nation. To have permitted a few hundred breech-clouted primitives to restrain a process that was as much a movement of the world as of a single nation would have been as foolish as it was impossible.

The Indian mode of living was based more on the roving occupation of the hunt for meat and furs than on the stabilizing factor of agriculture. Manifestly it was uneconomical to permit a tribe

of two thousand red men to possess a vast area capable of supporting many times that number of white men, solely because the means of existence of the former were so primitive as to require such an area.

The source of much of the trouble between the Rock River Sauks and the white settlers was the treaty of 1804, signed at St. Louis by William Henry Harrison and five Sauk and Fox chiefs. The Indians had been sent down to intercede for the life of a tribesman held for the death of a white man who had insulted the murderer's daughter. Fifty million acres of land between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers were obtained for an annuity of $1000 and the payment of $2,234.50 in goods purchased by the Indian delegation, most of whom were drunk practically all the time they were in St. Louis.

Black Hawk always asserted that he did not know that the treaty deprived him of his lands and village, and Thomas Forsyth, the Indian agent for the Sauks and Foxes, himself testified that the sale was not known to the Hawk. However, Black Hawk signed treaties in 1816, 1822, and 1825 reaffirming the treaty of 1804. Harrison was popular among westerners for the large number of land cessions he secured, but that his methods were sometimes dubious is suggested by President

Jefferson's disapproval of his actions in 1805, and his order to Harrison to make explanations to certain chiefs and to "counteract the effect of his own questionable methods". Further, it was the custom for all land purchases to be made from the Indians in council, as the consent of the entire tribe was deemed necessary for the disposal of land. This principle of Indian government had been recognized as far back as the British proclamation of 1763 in regard to Indian lands and incorporated in the American policy.

Black Hawk was hostile to the Americans. In his autobiography he records his grief at the murder of an adopted son by settlers. He served under Tecumseh in the War of 1812, and led attacks against Fort Madison, compelling its abandonment. He was amenable to British influence, and it is probable that the anti-American intrigue of British traders moved him strongly. Black Hawk made annual pilgrimages to Malden in Canada, where he was given presents by the British. It is recorded that when the warrior heard of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent between England and America he wept like a child.

Intertribal wars kept the Sauks constantly embroiled with the Osage, the Ioway, the Sioux, and the Menominee Indians, and attempts of the United States to adjust these troubles led only to

greater disharmony. The Sauks almost destroyed the Ioway at their village on the Des Moines River in 1824, and in 1831 killed twenty-five Menominee near Prairie du Chien. Retaliations for such outbreaks usually followed, and in the strife between tribes it is difficult to distribute the blame equitably.

One of the clauses in the Treaty of 1804 provided that the Indians were to live on their Illinois lands until they were surveyed and sold. In 1823 settlers moved in near Saukenuk. At that time the line of settlement was still fifty miles to the east, the lands had not been surveyed and offered for sale, and of all the vast area of the treaty land this was the only part constantly used by the Indians. Manifestly, the settlers were violating the law and should have been ejected by the government, as the squatters at the Dubuque lead mines were later ejected by United States troops. Instead, they continued to encroach upon the Indian village. Not only were the Indian corn fields plowed up, but the cemetery, the most sacred earthly place to an Indian, was also invaded.

The forbearance of the Indians during this period is remarkable, and rather disproves the popular belief that Black Hawk was a blood-thirsty savage, quick to seize a pretext for murder. Black Hawk claimed the Sauks and Foxes had

killed not one white man since the treaty of 1814. Meanwhile, however, Indian women and children were frequently whipped by the settlers, and Black Hawk himself was once severely beaten. It is not difficult to imagine the effect of such ignominy upon a man of his great personal pride.

Settlers continued to move in, and finally in 1829 took out pre-emption rights over a few quarter sections of land, including the Indian village, the corn fields, and the revered graveyard. Thus the spirit of the Treaty of 1804 was cleverly evaded. The settlers ordered the Indians to evacuate, but Black Hawk refused. Petitions and memorials were sent to Governor Reynolds, who declared Illinois in a state of actual invasion, and in June a force of six hundred volunteers and ten companies of regulars under Brigadier General Edmund P. Gaines marched on Saukenuk. The Indians slipped across the Mississippi on the night of the twenty-fifth in a terrific storm and the volunteer troops vented their spleen by destroying the village. A treaty was concluded at Fort Armstrong whereby Black Hawk agreed never to cross to the eastern side of the Mississippi, except by government permission. Keokuk, who had become the principal Sauk chief while Black Hawk was fighting with Tecumseh in 1812, had previously established a large village in Iowa.

In 1831 one of Black Hawk's lieutenants, Neapope, had gone to Canada, and returned with a persuasive fabrication of aid from the British and from the Winnebago, Pottawattamie, and Chippewa tribes in regaining Saukenuk. The prophet Wabokieshiek, in the manner of the prophets who had given supposedly divine sanction for the wars of Pontiac and Tecumseh, assured Neapope and Black Hawk that in visions he had seen the success of any predatory move they might make against the white people.

The attitude of the settlers readily predisposed them to take arms against their savage neighbors. American frontiersmen had always looked on the Indians disdainfully, either ignoring their rights and presence entirely, or blaming them for the mere fact of their existence on the coveted land. Contrary to the earlier policy of the French and English in the fur trade, which was calculated to conciliate and flatter the Indians and, whether just or not, was at least ingratiating, the policy of the Americans was thoughtless and peremptory, tending to incite rather than placate the worst qualities of the savage. Characteristic of the American attitude was an act of the Illinois Territorial legislature offering a bounty of fifty dollars for an Indian and two dollars for a wolf. The discrimination, while it may possibly have flat-

tered the Indians, could hardly have been expected to foster self-restraint on the part of the whites.

The character of Black Hawk was the real cause of the war. In the face of repeated insults to the women and children of his tribe and to his own person, of depredations on his fields and village by white men whose very presence on the Rock River was a violation of national law, he refused to retaliate, suppressing the motive of revenge which is such an integral part of Indian character. But the Hawk had a full share of three qualities that are deep in the Indian nature — pride, courage, and love of the ancestral home. It was injury to all these that drove him to his last and final folly.

He was proud of being an Indian and a Sauk. In a council at Fort Armstrong, General Gaines asked disparagingly, "Who is this Black Hawk? Is he a chief? By what right does he appear in council?" Black Hawk was so aroused that he rose and left the council, not daring to let himself speak. The next day he returned and said, "My father, you inquired yesterday, 'Who is Black Hawk? — why does he sit among the chief men?' I will tell you who I am. I am a Sauk. My father was a Sauk — I am a warrior, so was my father. Ask these young men who have followed me to

battle, and they will tell you who Black Hawk is! Provoke our people to war, and you will learn who Black Hawk is!" He had attained the rank of brave at fifteen, and at sixteen killed and scalped an Osage. His life had been a succession of military exploits. For a man so warlike in spirit to sit idly by and watch his home being burned and his tribesmen beaten is inconceivable.

Black Hawk was a deeply reverent man. The depths of his heart were outraged when he saw the bones of his ancestors turned up by the plow, and hills of corn rising amid the graves of relatives and friends who had gone to the spirit land. His brooding mind must have been troubled by the bitterness of his position. To retreat across the Mississippi would have been to abandon these familiar hills and valleys to people he hated, and to acquiesce in the illegal white settlement would have been cowardice. Old and probably a little weary, for he was sixty-five, he must have moved more slowly than in his youth. But the time came when patience was no more, when the adamant heart grew too bitter to be restrained, and the gathering forces of resentment and wrath and violated piety broke the restraints of age and common sense. In the tragic events that followed, Black Hawk was striving to retain not alone his lands and rights, but what Emerson has called the

most essential thing in a man's living — the preservation of the integrity of his own mind.

The winter of 1831-1832 was rigorous for the Black Hawk band of Sauks at their new village in Iowa. Their corn crop of the previous year had been destroyed and they could get only the barest subsistence. By spring Black Hawk had had enough of famine. At the invitation of the Winnebago prophet, he moved up the Mississippi from his camp on the site of old Fort Madison to go to the prophet's village on Rock River "to make corn", as he said in his autobiography.

Before leaving he tried to enlist Keokuk's band in his cause at a war dance. The two men, both orators of high ability, addressed the gathered savages. Black Hawk had converted a great number to his side when Keokuk stepped forward, saying that he would lead his men across the river on one condition — that all the women and children and old men be put to death first. This destroyed the fervor of the council, and Black Hawk was forced to go up the river and across in full sight of Fort Armstrong with only his original braves, including their women and children. News of his move early reached Jefferson Barracks at St. Louis and Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, and troops were despatched on the trail of the Hawk before he reached Rock River.

Rumors were so thick as almost to darken the skies. Not only was Illinois in a state of abject terror, but the entire nation was aroused. Newspapers printed gory accounts of pillage and murder. For so small a fire as actually was burning, there was a terrific amount of smoke.

Black Hawk was warned to return to his Iowa village almost as soon as he left it, but he steadfastly refused to turn back, reiterating the peaceful nature of his trip. That he did not contemplate immediate warfare is apparent from the presence of the women and children of his four hundred warriors. But that he had some vague plan of future attack on the settlers, after he had enlisted the aid of other tribes, is probable. Messages were sent to him, but he refused to listen to any demands to return.

On the seventh of May, sixteen hundred volunteers under Brigadier General Samuel Whiteside were sworn into United States service by Brigadier General Henry Atkinson at Fort Armstrong. On the ninth an expedition took up the trail along Rock River, General Whiteside in command of one force moving by land while General Atkinson followed with a second force in boats with supplies and cannon and four hundred regular infantry as well as three hundred volunteers.

Almost constant rain, with swollen streams and

treacherous swamps, made progress extremely difficult and slow. Whiteside outdistanced Atkinson and arrived at Dixon's Ferry on the twelfth. Two independent battalions constituting a force of three hundred and forty-one men under Major Isaiah Stillman and Major David Bailey were waiting for him. The volunteers, having been there several days, were restless and impatient, so Whiteside permitted them to go forward as a scouting party under the command of Stillman. On the fourteenth they encamped in a grove three miles below the mouth of Sycamore Creek.

Meanwhile Black Hawk had found that the Winnebago would give him no aid, so he left the prophet's town and pushed on to Chief Shaubena's Pottawattamie village on Sycamore Creek. There he finally realized that he had been deceived, for he could enlist only a few braves. After the war Black Hawk said that if General Atkinson had again requested him to return to the west side of the Mississippi he would have done so gladly.

While preparing to give a dog feast on the night of the fourteenth, he was apprised of Stillman's encampment only eight miles away. Disheartened as he was, Black Hawk sent three men with a flag of truce to arrange for a council with Stillman with a view to surrender. When the

rangers saw the Indians approaching they ran out and brought them into camp with great noise and shouting. They had enlisted on a frolic to hunt and shoot Indians, and the game was already coming to them. While the envoys of peace were explaining their mission, five other Indians, sent to watch proceedings, appeared on a hill a quarter of a mile away. At sight of more fun the excited volunteers became uncontrollable and dashed out after their quarry. The braves turned to flee and the white men fired, killing two. At the sound of the shooting one of the truce-bearers was shot down in cold blood. The entire camp rushed off after those who had first pursued the Indians, and in the bedlam which followed the two remaining envoys escaped to carry the news to Black Hawk who, though he had only forty men with him, the rest being encamped on the Kishwaukee River seven miles to the north, placed his men for defense. Stillman's troops advanced through the woods in disorderly and undisciplined array, riding gaily into the ambush after thè sport for which they had enlisted.

Suddenly the little band of warriors charged — shooting, yelling, and leaping upon the foremost of the enemy. The raw volunteers had not bargained for this sort of an end to their foray, and the entire body turned and fled, not even stopping

at the camp, which could easily have been defended against a large force. On they rushed pell-mell to Dixon's Ferry where they told Atkinson that some fifteen hundred to two thousand Indians were swarming the woods, and that a great number of their comrades had been killed. Actually, the militia lost only eleven men.

The conduct of Stillman's men was doubly disgraceful. Their cowardly shooting of the envoy of peace in cold blood was the actual precipitation of the war. It is probable that if the truce had been respected and a council arranged between Black Hawk and Stillman, and later Atkinson, the war might have been averted. The craven retreat of the troops from so small a force was equally discreditable.

Black Hawk took all that he could use of the supplies abandoned by Stillman, and led his band into the deep and swampy fastnesses around Lake Koshkonong in Wisconsin. There he left his women and children and turned back to fight the white people.

Isolated attacks followed, small groups of warriors stealing up on some lonely cabin, murdering and scalping, and slipping away to fall on some equally helpless settlement miles distant. Many of the ravages were perpetrated by roving bands of ostensibly neutral Winnebago and Pottawat-

tamie Indians, though Black Hawk's band was blamed for most of the atrocities.

On the twenty-second of May, a group of Pottawattamie surprised a cabin on Indian Creek in which were gathered three families, slaughtered fifteen men, women, and children, and took captive two daughters of William Hall. The girls were taken to Lake Koshkonong and ransomed for two thousand dollars in horses and trinkets by White Crow, a Winnebago chief, who had been sent for that purpose by Henry Gratiot, sub-agent for the Winnebago. They were delivered to Gratiot at Blue Mounds on June third.

Most of the principal engagements occurred in southern Wisconsin. Five white men were killed at Spafford's farm on the Pecatonica River on June fourteenth. The eleven Indians who perpetrated this murder were pursued by Colonel Henry Dodge with a company of twenty-nine men and overtaken in a swamp. Giving one of the finest exhibitions of courage during the war, Dodge and his men charged the marauders and killed all of them, with a loss of three killed and one wounded. It is significant that the white soldiers scalped the slain braves.

Apple River Fort, fourteen miles east of Galena, Illinois, was attacked on the fourteenth, but successfully resisted a desperate siege, the women

and children molding bullets and loading rifles. The next day the same band attacked a spy battalion of Posey's brigade at Kellogg's Grove, sixteen miles to the east, but was routed by reinforcements under Brigadier General Alexander Posey.

The white forces plunged straight on to Lake Koshkonong, but upon arriving there on July second found the Indian camp deserted, trophies of recent massacres still hanging from abandoned tepee poles. With Winnebago guides the troops started west to find Black Hawk and his band, but the guides misled them through swamps and morasses until the men were worn out and disgusted with wading through mud and water all day and sleeping on their rifles all night. Governor Reynolds and his staff had had enough of Indian warfare and left for home, as did half of the volunteers, many saying that their enlistment did not require them to serve beyond the borders of Illinois.

By July 20th, the actual trail of Black Hawk had been found, strewn with hastily abandoned mats and kettles. Several old Sauk stragglers, too weak and starving to keep up, were overtaken and shot. On the twenty-first the Indians were discovered trying to cross the Wisconsin River. A party of fifty braves directed by Black Hawk fought from the bluffs and grass to protect the main body crossing the river.

A large party of old men, women, and children secured rafts and canoes from the Winnebago and set out down the Wisconsin to deliver themselves to the garrison at Fort Crawford. When they had almost reached their destination, they were brutally fired upon by troops from the fort and thirty-two women and children and four men were ruthlessly killed. About as many more were drowned, while nearly all who escaped were cruelly massacred by a party of Menominee under white officers.

An hour and a half before dawn, on the morning after the battle of Wisconsin Heights, in which Black Hawk skillfully covered the retreat of his band, a loud voice was heard calling outside the camp of the troops. It was thought to be part of an Indian attack and the men stood ready, but later it was learned that the speaker had been Black Hawk's aide Neapope, who, thinking that the Winnebago guides were still in camp and would understand him, had appealed in Winnebago for peace, saying that the Indians were starving, that they had been forced into war unwillingly, and would be glad to go back across the Mississippi. No one could reply, and the pursuit began again the next day. Constantly the soldiers gained upon the exhausted red men. As they fled the Indians ate the bark from trees, and devoured the flesh from their dead ponies.

On the first of August the troops found the Indian trail leading to the Mississippi near the mouth of Bad Axe River, but by a clever ruse the Indians threw them off, giving the main body a chance to begin crossing over to Iowa, though they had only three weak canoes for transporting the entire band. The steamboat *Warrior* came up in the afternoon with a detachment of regular soldiers from Fort Crawford, and Black Hawk raised a white flag, calling out in Winnebago that he wanted to surrender. The message was translated, but the commanding officer feared an ambush, and, after several minutes of parleying, opened fire upon the Indians, with deadly results. Before dark the steamboat returned to Prairie du Chien.

On August 2nd the entire body of troops charged the Indians as they were trying to cross the Mississippi. Major James D. Henry's men, being the first to engage the warriors, held them for some time until the main division came up. The slaughter was appalling. The braves, exhausted with starvation and the long retreat, fought desperately, but were driven from tree to tree back into the river. Women and children and a few men threw themselves into the water in a vain attempt to swim across; some finally reached a small willow island, but the steamboat

Warrior came up and raked the island with canister, after which a bayonet charge through the water to the island made a shambles of its sandy shore.

One hundred and fifty Indians were killed and an equal number were drowned. Women and children were indiscriminately massacred, many being picked off by sharpshooters as they struggled in the water. The river ran red with the blood of those who were cut to pieces by the heavy charges of grape and canister from the steamboat. Nawase, a young Indian mother, seized the skin along the back of her baby's neck in her teeth and swam, weak and exhausted though she was, across the river through a rain of bullets. The child lived, but carried the scars of his mother's teeth all his life.

Lieutenant Robert Anderson, later the defender of Fort Sumter, found a young woman dead in the grass with her four year old daughter still alive in her arms. A bullet had shattered the left arm of the child and pierced her mother's heart. Anderson took the little girl to a surgeon, who amputated the arm. Through the entire operation the starved child gnawed at an army biscuit, not one moan escaping from her lips during all her suffering. About three hundred Sauks reached the Iowa shore safely, only to be set upon by a band

of Sioux sent out by General Atkinson, who had enlisted all the Indians that he could in his cause. Half were slain outright, helpless as they were, and only a few of the survivors ever reached Keokuk's village. Out of the entire band of over a thousand who had entered Illinois in April, only one hundred and fifty survived in August.

So ended the Black Hawk War. It cost two million dollars to wage the struggle, with terrific suffering and loss to the Indians and settlers, great credit to Black Hawk for his generalship all through the campaign and especially for his masterly retreat from Lake Koshkonong, and with discredit to the volunteer troops for their unmilitary conduct. If the war proved anything, it was the depth and determination of the cry of the whites for land, the futility of Indian resistance to the great westward movement, and the essential nobility of the character of Black Hawk.

PAUL ENGLE

The Terms of Peace

A paroxysm of fear gripped the Upper Mississippi Valley. Rumors of a general Indian uprising spread like wild fire. Stillman's ignominious defeat, the constantly recurring stories of Indian atrocities, together with the brilliant strategy exhibited by Black Hawk in his retreat up the Rock River, left the entire frontier in a turmoil. News despatches contained accounts of further reverses which served only to heighten the general alarm.

Impatient at the failure of Brigadier General Henry Atkinson to crush Black Hawk, President Andrew Jackson ordered Major General Winfield Scott to "proceed to the seat of war and put an end to it." While crossing the Great Lakes from Buffalo to Chicago, cholera broke out among Scott's troops. The only surgeon aboard the commander's steamboat became panic-stricken and, according to Scott, "gulped down half a bottle of wine; went to bed, sick, and ought to have died." Undaunted by the horrors of death, Scott ministered to the suffering soldiers whose "brows he smoothed as they died in agony, trying with a last gasp to bless him" for his tender care.

"Sentinels were of no use in warning of the enemy's approach", Scott related afterwards. "He could not storm his works, fortify against him, nor cut his way out, nor make terms of capitulation. There was no respect for a flag of truce and his men were falling upon all sides from an enemy in his very midst." His losses from cholera were greater than the casualties suffered by the regulars and militia throughout the Black Hawk War.

General Scott reached Prairie du Chien shortly after the massacre at Bad Axe. Having mustered out the volunteer militia, he proceeded down the Mississippi on the steamboat *Warrior* to Fort Armstrong where the Indians were gathering to make a treaty. Cholera broke out on Rock Island about August 26th, and drastic measures were posted demanding "sobriety, cleanliness of person, cleanliness of camp and quarters, together with care in the preparation of the men's messes". Swift punishment was meted out to the intemperate — "every soldier or Ranger who shall be found drunk or sensibly intoxicated after the publication of this order, [shall] be compelled, as soon as his strength will permit, to dig a grave at a suitable burying place large enough for his own reception, as such grave cannot fail soon to be wanted for the drunken man himself or some drunken companion."

This order was given, the commandant explained, "as well to serve for the punishment of drunkenness as to spare good and temperate men the labor of digging graves for their worthless companions."

Meanwhile so many Indians became affected with the plague that Scott directed them not to assemble at Rock Island until they received a new summons. With unusual faith in the red men, "not yet taught by his white brethren to lie, to cheat and steal", Scott permitted three Sauk prisoners, guilty of murder, to leave Fort Armstrong on their promise to return when a signal was displayed on a dead tree at an elevated point of the island. "The cholera having passed away," the intrepid commander relates, "the signal was given, when, in a day or two, the three *murderers* presented themselves!" Scott's appeal for their parole was granted and the Indians were set free.

When the cholera had subsided on Rock Island, preparations were made for the holding of the treaty. A motley array of tribesmen soon assembled — Sioux, Menominee, and Winnebago, intermingled with the confederated tribes of Sauk and Fox. Often warring against one another, these savage Indians were for the time being restrained by the "presence of well-disciplined battalions — mingling together in the wild and mar-

tial costume of their race." Governor John Reynolds of Illinois was selected by the government to serve with Scott as a commissioner in the negotiations. Captain Richard Bache acted as secretary.

After some preliminary conferences with the Sioux and Menominee, the commissioners turned their attention to the Winnebago. Since the "wearer of the sword" was the "effective orator" before the Indians, General Scott conducted the discussions. The Winnebago were informed that for their "secret encouragement and preparations to join in highly criminal hostilities" they must forfeit all land they claimed "lying to the south and east of the Wisconsin river, and the Fox river of Green Bay", which included southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. In return they were to be granted a new home in the Neutral Ground in Iowa, ten thousand dollars in specie and sundry annuities for a period of twenty-seven years, and a school and blacksmith shop. Such a treaty was signed at Fort Armstrong on September 15, 1832.

On the following day, General Scott hastily forwarded the Winnebago treaty on a steamboat which had unexpectedly arrived, bound for St. Louis. "We trust it will be satisfactory to the government", he concluded. "The cholera having

entirely disappeared from this Island and the immediate vicinity", he expected to enter upon "important conferences and negotiations with the Sacs and Foxes to-morrow."

A delicate situation existed which required the highest degree of diplomacy and statesmanship. "We await with anxiety," declared the *Galenian* of September 19, 1832, "the result of the Treaty with the Sacs and Foxes. We have the utmost confidence in our commissioners — but the very critical situation in which they are placed (requiring the *majority* to cede a part of their territory for the acts of the *minority*) may prevent their obtaining all that we could desire. We are satisfied however, that equal justice will be meted out to both parties."

The entire confederation of Sauks and Foxes — braves, squaws, and papooses — had gathered on the west bank of the Mississippi. Since the consent of the entire nation was necessary in any cession of land, a large open tent or "marquee" was erected on the present site of Davenport in which to hold the preliminary negotiations.

Resplendent in his heavily brocaded uniform and plumed hat, Major General Scott stood tall and erect before the Indians while Governor John Reynolds sat close beside him. The uniformed ranks of the regulars standing in martial array

with light trousers, blue coats, and jaunty feathered cockades, were in sharp contrast to the dusky Indians squatting in every conceivable posture in their bright blankets and feathered headdresses. Richard Bache, acting as Secretary to the Commissioners, was busily engaged in taking notes of the speeches of the Commissioners while Antoine Le Claire translated the speeches of the Indians. It was a shifting scene of color and confusion in which the attire and demeanor of natives and soldiers represented the nature of the conflict between the two races — the one free, unorderly, primitive; the other restrained, disciplined, civilized.

Although governed by a spirit of forbearance and liberality, Scott opened each council with "stern reproach — reminding the confederate tribes that, by their failure to restrain one of their chiefs, Black Hawk, from making an unjust war upon the unoffending white settlers, near them, the whole confederacy had forfeited as much of their territory as the conquerors might choose to claim as an indemnity". These denunciations having been made clear by Antoine Le Claire, the interpreter, and their justice shown to be indisputable, Scott proceeded: "Such is justice, between nation and nation, against which none can rightfully complain; but as God in his dealings

with human creatures tempers justice with mercy — or else the whole race of man would soon have perished — so shall we, commissioners, in humble imitation of divine example, now treat you, my red brethren! who have offended both against God and your great human father, at Washington." He concluded by demanding from the Sauk and Fox Indians a strip of land west of the Mississippi.

Grateful replies were returned in each council, that of Keokuk being full of "sound sentiment, power, and pathos." Keokuk appeared to be in the "prime of life, tall, robust, manly". The eloquent orator so impressed General Scott that he "solemnly invested [him] with the rank and broad silver medal of a chief, with the consent of the tribe, and on an equal footing with the proudest who had inherited the title through long generations." Not until his death did Keokuk relinquish this chieftaincy of which he was justly proud.

When the Sauk and Fox chiefs and warriors approached headquarters for formal conferences, it was "always with the loud tramp and shout, which seemed to be rather the clangor of war than the forms of ceremony. When a council was to meet, they came at a furious charge; suddenly dismounted, arranged themselves in order, and then, between lines of soldiers, entered the pavilion

with the firmness of victors, but with all the deep solemnity of a funeral. Arrayed in scarlet hues, their national color, sometimes on foot and sometimes mounted, nothing could be more striking than the fine figures, arms, and costumes" of these brilliant warriors.

Favorite Indian songs and dances were interspersed between the long and often exceedingly dull speeches. The war dance, the buffalo dance, and the corn dance frequently enlivened the afternoon activities before headquarters as the young men exhibited the "achievements, events, and history of the individual or the tribe" in descriptive pantomime. Sometimes these dances were followed by cotillions, reels, and quadrilles in which the young army officers danced with the braves who, according to Scott, proved themselves exceedingly "quick in step and imitation, as well as in loud laughter, at every turn. A band furnished the music and heightened the joy of all."

When the entire confederation of Sauks and Foxes had given their assent to the provisions of the treaty as explained by Antoine Le Claire, the chiefs, headmen, and warriors crossed the Mississippi with Keokuk and signed their marks to the articles of the treaty of peace, friendship and cession, which was "concluded at Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Illinois", between the United States

of America and the confederated tribes of Sauks and Foxes. It consisted of a preamble and twelve articles and was dated September 21, 1832.

The treaty opened with a stern rebuke: "Whereas, under certain lawless and desperate leaders, a formidable band, constituting a large portion of the Sac and Fox nation, left their country in April last, and, in violation of treaties, commenced an unprovoked war upon unsuspecting and defenceless citizens of the United States, sparing neither age nor sex; and whereas, the United States, at a great expense of treasure, have subdued the said hostile band, killing or capturing all its principal Chiefs and Warriors — the said States, partly as indemnity for the expense incurred, and partly to secure the future safety and tranquility of the invaded frontier, demand of the said tribes" the cession of a tract of land west of the Mississippi.

The first article bounded the cession. Beginning on the Mississippi at the southern boundary of the Neutral Ground, the line ran fifty miles up that boundary to a point near the present site of Westgate in Fayette County; thence, in a straight line running south east to the "nearest point on the Red Cedar of the Ioway, forty miles from the Mississippi" (near Cedar Bluff in Cedar County); thence, in a straight line to a point on the

northern boundary of the State of Missouri, fifty miles from the Mississippi River measured on said boundary (a point between the North and South Wyaconda rivers and directly south of Pulaski in Davis County); thence, along that boundary line to the Mississippi River (just below Fort Madison); and thence by the western shore of the Mississippi to the place of beginning. The Indians agreed to remove from this land by June 1, 1833, and never "reside, plant, fish, or hunt" on any portion of it again.

Included in this large tract is all of the present-day counties of Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson, Jones, Clinton, Scott, Muscatine, Louisa, Des Moines, Henry, and Lee; most of Clayton, Cedar, and Van Buren; and a portion of the counties of Allamakee, Fayette, Buchanan, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Jefferson, and Davis.

Out of the Black Hawk cession the United States agreed to reserve four hundred square miles along the "Ioway" River in such a manner that "nearly an equal portion of the reservation may be on both sides of said river, and extending downward, so as to include Ke-o-kuck's principal village on its right bank, which village is about twelve miles from the Mississippi". This tract is generally known as the Keokuk Reserve and included portions of Johnson, Muscatine, Louisa,

Washington, and Des Moines counties. Granted to Keokuk as a reward for his loyalty, this reservation was ceded to the United States four years later.

The third article provided for an annual annuity of $20,000 in specie for thirty years. The government agreed in article four to establish and maintain "one additional black and gun smith shop, with the necessary tools, iron and steel" for three decades. A yearly allowance for the same period of time of "forty kegs of tobacco, and forty barrels of salt, to be delivered at the mouth of the Ioway river" was also granted.

At the earnest request of both tribes the United States next agreed to pay $40,000 without interest to Russell Farnham and George Davenport in full satisfaction of the claims "acknowledged to be justly due, for articles of necessity" provided the Indians during the preceding seven years. Then followed a special request whereby the government was to grant Antoine Le Claire, Indian interpreter, one section of land on the present site of Davenport and another at the head of the rapids where Le Claire is now located.

Black Hawk and his band were the concern of the next two articles. Having already delivered most of the Indian prisoners of war to Keokuk, the United States promised to use its influence to

secure the delivery of those who were still prisoners of the Sioux. But Black Hawk himself and his two sons, together with the Prophet, Neapope, and six others were to be held as hostages for the future good conduct of the late hostile tribes. As a further guarantee of peace, it was next stipulated that there should "never be allowed in the confederated Sac and Fox nation, any separate band, or village, under any chief or warrior of the late hostile bands" but that these should be divided among the neutral bands according to blood relationship.

Article nine contained a declaration of perpetual peace and friendship between the contracting parties. As a token of good faith and a "striking evidence of their mercy and liberality", the United States caused to be issued immediately to the "confederated tribes, principally for the use of the Sac and Fox women and children, whose husbands, fathers and brothers, have been killed in the late war, and generally for the use of the whole confederated tribes, articles of subsistence as follows: — thirty-five beef cattle; twelve bushels of salt; thirty barrels of pork; and fifty barrels of flour, and cause to be delivered for the same purposes, in the month of April next, at the mouth of the lower Ioway, six thousand bushels of maize or Indian corn."

The last two articles were brief. Eleven provided that a "suitable present" should be made to the confederated tribes if they would point out to a United States agent one or more mines of metal more valuable than lead or iron. The concluding article provided that the treaty should be binding when ratified by the President of the United States.

Originally called the Scott Purchase but more generally known as the Black Hawk Purchase, the treaty was signed on September 21, 1832, by Winfield Scott and John Reynolds for the United States. Nine Sauks, including Keokuk and Pashepaho, and twenty-four Foxes of whom Wapello and Poweshiek were most prominent, signed the treaty for the Indians. Among the forty-four witnesses to sign the treaty were Major Henry Dodge, later Governor of the Territory of Wisconsin; George Davenport, influential trader at Rock Island; Addison Philleo, editor of the *Galenian*; and Antoine Le Claire.

A "contented and cheerful" note marked the closing scene of the Black Hawk War which for six months had held the country in suspense. Major General Scott gave a "grand dinner" for the principal chiefs on the evening following the signing of the treaty. Refreshments were "handed round nearly in the manner of our cities" while a

band blared martial music. To cap it all a "brilliant display of pyrotechnics" sent up a red light which "gleamed against the evening sky, shells and rockets burst in the air" as the soldiers discharged "fire balls from mortars" and fired batteries of rockets. Amid the echo of bursting fireworks reverberating among the distant bluffs, General Scott heard "much shouting of delight from the Indians encamped on the mainland — Rock Island being in the centre of an amphitheatre of high hills".

The colorful Keokuk contributed no small part to the entertainment by a pantomime of one of his successful expeditions against a hostile party. In General Scott's opinion it required no interpretation to note first "the tedious march; streams to swim; next the rapid run, and now the stealthy step — beckoning to his followers the discovery of the unsuspecting enemy at camp fires with rifles laid aside, waiting a moment longer for the cooked venison they were destined never to eat; — then the rush upon the unarmed, and the slaying. In a moment all was over, but the shouting." So successfully was this executed and so warmly was it applauded that this "accomplished hero in peace as in war" responded graciously with a war dance.

General Scott returned to his post in the East with the good wishes of all ringing in his ears.

In congratulating the Commissioners for their prompt method of treating with the Indians, the *Galenian* for October 10, 1832, observed that General Scott had talked to the Indians in such a way as to make a "deep impression on their minds. The Sacs and Foxes were glad to treat with us; and perfectly willing to sell their country." A week later, on October 17, 1832, the Washington *Globe* declared: "The Commissioners, who have concluded these arrangements, by which a valuable country is obtained, the peace and security of the frontiers secured, and a new field of enterprise opened to emigrants, are entitled to public approbation, not only for these results, but for having maintained the national character, and carried into effect the intentions of the President, in granting liberal terms to the Indians, and in having inspired them with confidence and good will, by treating them individually with great kindness."

The Indians, too, were impressed with the character and ability of General Scott, declaring him to be the "greatest brave" they had ever seen. "Our braves speak more highly of him than of any chief who has been among us", declared Black Hawk. "Whatever he says may be depended upon. If he had been our great father, we never would have been compelled to join the British in

the late war with America. And I have thought as our great father is changed every few years, his children would do well to put this great war-chief in his place, as they cannot find a better chief for a great father anywhere." Twenty years later the Whigs nominated Winfield Scott for the Presidency, but the Americans failed to heed Black Hawk's advice to elect him their "great father".

Nor was it merely the press and the Indians who offered such unstinted praise. The government at Washington was equally pleased. "Allow me to congratulate you, sir," wrote the Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, "upon this fortunate consummation of your arduous duties, and to express my entire approbation of the whole course of your proceedings, during a series of difficulties requiring higher moral courage than the operations of an active campaign, under ordinary circumstances."

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Comment by the Editor

THE PATH OF GLORY

Black Hawk was free. He was no longer a captive of the white men, confined in military prisons. The sky was clear. He could breathe the fresh air of the prairie. The birds sang, children laughed, and the full kettle bubbled merrily over the fire.

But Black Hawk was not happy. He had much to think about. The sun of his life had often been obscured by clouds. Famine, disease, and bereavement had cast dark shadows upon his path. He had survived the storms of many wars when death stalked near. But after the thunder and lightning of his last battle had ceased, the sun shone dim and red as through a haze of smoke. It would never be bright again — and it was sinking low in the west.

Twice the moon grew big and round after Black Hawk returned to his family on the Iowa River. The once bold chief of the Sauks, bereft of leadership and ignored by his own tribe, resented the plight of a vanquished warrior. His tour of the great cities in the East had taught him the futility of his struggle against the white peo-

ple, but his defeat was none the less humiliating. "The path of glory is rough," he observed, "and many gloomy hours obscure it."

As he brooded over the thwarted hopes of other days, the old man yearned to vindicate his character and conduct. Having determined to explain the causes of his hostility to the settlers, he went to Rock Island and there, in October, 1833, told the story of his life, which was transcribed by J. B. Patterson from the interpretation of Antoine Le Claire.

As a revelation of Indian temperament, the narrative of the exploits and motives of Makataimeshekiakiak, "dictated by himself", is unique among the records of the red men. Most of the history of the native Americans has been written by their white successors, with unavoidable prejudice and distortion. But Black Hawk, equally biased perhaps, gave the Indian version of events as he saw them and incidentally portrayed the nature of his race. His memoir possesses the quality of an original source of information.

The autobiography of Black Hawk is a tragedy. Prompted by a pathetic desire to win the respect of the white people, the proud old Indian recited his deeds of valor, mentioned incidents to demonstrate his honor and morality, described the abuse and injustice of the settlers which had provoked

his rebellion, and praised the magnanimity of many white men whom he had known. But the ostensible purpose of gaining approval only served to accentuate the poignancy of his tragic life. Endowed only with the virtues of a wilderness savage, and guided by prejudice, ambition, and patriotism, Black Hawk fought hopelessly against insuperable odds straight through to the catastrophe of inevitable failure. Back of every act of his turbulent career appeared the hand of inexorable fate pointing toward ultimate doom.

And yet, on several occasions, the final disaster might have been averted.

J. E. B.

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