

the tribe the Ojibwa gathered in great numbers, to dance the dances and sing the songs of the new ritual, until a message was received from the prophet inviting them to come to him at Detroit, where he would explain in person the will of the Master of Life. This was in 1808. The excitement was now at fever heat, and it was determined to go in a body to Detroit. It is said that 150 canoe loads of Ojibwa actually started on this pilgrimage, and one family even brought with them a dead child to be restored to life by the prophet. They had proceeded a considerable distance when they were met by an influential French trader, who reported, on the word of some who had already visited the prophet's camp and returned, that the devotees there were on the brink of starvation—which was true, as the great multitude had consumed their entire supply of provisions, and had been so occupied with religious ceremonies that they had neglected to plant their corn. It was also asserted that during the prophet's frequent periods of absence from the camp, when he would disappear for several days, claiming on his return that he had been to the spirit world in converse with the Master of Life, that he was really concealed in a hollow log in the woods. This is quite probable, and entirely consistent with the Indian theory of trances and soul pilgrimages while the body remains unconscious in one spot. These reports, however, put such a damper on the ardor of the Ojibwa that they returned to their homes and gradually ceased to think about the new revelation. As time went on a reaction set in, and those who had been most active evangelists of the doctrine among the tribe became most anxious to efface the remembrance of it. One good, however, resulted to the Ojibwa from the throwing away of the poisonous compounds formerly in common use by the lower order of doctors, and secret poisoning became almost unknown. (Warren, 2.)

When the celebrated traveler Catlin went among the prairie tribes some thirty years later, he found that the prophet's emissaries—he says the prophet himself, which is certainly a mistake—had carried the living fire, the sacred image, and the mystic strings (see portrait and description) even to the Blackfeet on the plains of the Saskatchewan, going without hindrance among warring tribes where the name of the Shawano had never been spoken, protected only by the reverence that attached to their priestly character. There seems no doubt that by this time they had developed the plan of a confederacy for driving back the whites, and Catlin asserts that thousands of warriors among those remote tribes had pledged themselves to fight under the lead of Tecumtha at the proper time. His account of the prophet's methods in the extreme northwest agrees with what Tanner has reported from the Ojibwa country. (Catlin, 1.) But disaster followed him like a shadow. Rivals, jealous of his success, came after him to denounce his plans as visionary and himself as an impostor. The ambassadors were obliged to turn back to save their lives and retrace their way in haste to the far distant Wabash, where the fatal battle of Tippecanoe and the death of his great brother, Tecumtha, put an end to all his splendid dreams.