

surrounded by a perfectly clear prairie, slightly undulating. With an Indian enemy disliking to fight in the open, the troopers might readily have repulsed ten times their own number.

Black Hawk had tarried a week at the prophet's town, holding fruitless councils with the wily and vacillating Winnebagoes. He now learned positively for the first time that he had been deceived. But he pushed on to keep his engagement at Sycamore creek, faint at heart, though vaguely hoping better things of the Pottawattomies. He went into camp with his principal men, in a large grove near the mouth of the creek, met the chiefs of the tribe, and soon found that Shaubena's counsels had rendered it impossible to gain over to his cause more than about one hundred of the hot-head element. Black Hawk asserted in after years that he had at this juncture fully resolved to return at once to the west of the Mississippi should he be again summoned to do so by General Atkinson, and never more disturb the peace of the white settlements. As a parting courtesy to his guests, however, he was making arrangements on the evening of May 14 to give them a dog feast, when the summons came in a manner he little anticipated.

The white-hating faction of the Pottawattomies was encamped on the Kishwaukee river some seven miles north of Black Hawk, and with them the majority of his own party. The Hawk says that not more than forty of his braves were with him upon the council ground. Toward sunset, in the midst of his preparations, he was informed that a party of white horsemen were going into camp three miles down the Rock. It was Stillman's corps, but the Sac thought it was a small party headed by Atkinson — being then unaware of the size of the force which had been placed in the field against him — and sent out three of his young men with a white flag, to parley with the new arrivals and convey his offer to meet the White Beaver (Atkinson) in council.¹

The rangers, who had regarded the expedition as a big

¹ *Autobiography*, pp. 117, 118.