

Wing, and a few rods above Allan Morrison's present¹ establishment, or trading post, on the east side of the Mississippi, the river makes a curve, and the whole force of the current is thrown against the banks in the bend, which rise almost perpendicular from the water's edge, fifty feet high, and on the brow of which stands a few pine trees. Boats or canoes passing down the river are naturally drawn by the current immediately under this bank; and, with an eye to these advantages, the Ojibway warriors determined to post themselves here in ambuscade. They dug several holes along this bank, for two or three hundred feet, capable of holding eight or ten men each, in rows, from which, perfectly invisible to their passing enemy, and sheltered from their missiles, they intended to commence the attack.

Satisfied at the immense odds they would have to contend with, they made every preparation. Hunters were sent out to kill and dry meat sufficient to sustain the whole party for several days, and scouts were sent some distance above the river, to watch the first coming of their enemies.

One morning after their preparations had all been completed, one of their scouts, who had been sent about a mile up the Mississippi, and who was watching on the bank for the first appearance of the Dakotas, descended carelessly to the water's edge to drink. While lapping the water with his hand to his lips, looking up the river, he perceived a canoe suddenly turn a point of land above him. Instinctively he threw himself flat on the ground, and gradually crawled unperceived up the bank. When out of sight, on looking back, he saw the whole bosom of the river covered with the war canoes of those for whose coming he had been sent to watch. Seeing that he had not been noticed, he flew back to his comrades, who now prepared fully for the approaching conflict, by putting on their war paints and ornaments of battle.

¹ A. D. 1852.