

when I speak good words to them." And so things turned out; we left them to care for themselves.

I had now about five thousand Indians at my command, and the least expensive troops known, for they fed and clothed themselves. I had now to look around, determine upon the means for defense, and drill the volunteers to the exercise of small arms. I had not the means, nor under existing circumstances would it be of any use, beyond guard-mounting, etc. If a force should be sent against us, it must be by water, and our dependence would rest on our artillery. I, therefore, selected the best men for the purpose. I, myself, at the head, and directing my bombardier to select two iron three-pound field pieces, and placing myself under his command, the drilling began. Our hearts were in the work. The words of command were few, the manœuvering for our purpose was simple. Twice a day, and four hours each time, under a broiling sun, was no boy's play. At the end of a week, half of the garrison were well able to manage the guns, but needed full practice, which I could not allow, as our stores were small. To keep up the excitement, we had sham fights twice a week, scampering over the prairie like so many real combatants.

In September, a Sauk Indian courier arrived, by a short cut across the country from Rock River, informing me that eleven gun-boats had been seen some distance below that stream making slow progress up the Mississippi, supposed to be designed for the recapture of Prairie du Chien. I immediately got ready Captain Graham and six sturdy volunteers, in two large wooden canoes, with a one-pound swivel, and some ammunition for the famous Black Hawk, who, with his warriors, was at the place of rendezvous, at the confluence of the Rock and Mississippi rivers. There for about four miles, is a very strong current—the navigable channel is narrow and very serpentine.

The obstruction at this point causes the water to flow about two feet deep, over a gravel beach; and if the boatmen are not very careful, the current will force the boat upon this treacherous gravel bank, and give no small trouble to get it again into the proper channel. My orders, therefore, to Captain Graham were, to remove the Indians out of sight, and leave nothing that could