

rather exceeds the fort in height, and entirely covers the approach of troops till the extremity of the hill is attained. The Mississippi at this place is about ten or twelve hundred yards wide, and clear from islands. From the expeditious manner in which they have forwarded their work in so short a time, I am led to believe they must be about five hundred strong. What their real plan is, I cannot say; but I conceive their object is to assemble a strong force, with a large supply of provisions, and either to attempt to come up here this Fall late, or make a grand attack in the Spring, and use every means to destroy the Indian tribes on the borders of the Mississippi.

A Pottawotamie Indian, having been taken prisoner some time ago by the Americans, made his escape about the time the eight gun-boats left St. Louis for this place, and reported to the Sauks, that an expedition of five hundred men left St. Louis at the same time, with the eight gun-boats, to proceed up the Missouri¹ under a pretence of friendship with our Indians on that river, offer them terms of accommodation, give them a few goods, and at the moment the Indians would be distributing the goods among themselves, the Americans were to fall upon them, and cut them to pieces. This was also the plan they were to have adopted at the Rock River, when they hoisted their white flag. This news, coming by an Indian to the other nations, has a good effect, because it is firmly believed; and convinces them what dastardly enemies they have to contend with; and did the Americans really wish or intend to come to terms with them, the Indians will be too apprehensive of treachery, to admit them to come to a parley.

There is not the smallest doubt but the enemy aim at this place, and their first object will be (as they have now no hopes of making peace or destroying the Indians by their vile stratagems) to drive them, if possible, off the borders of the Mississippi, to insure for themselves a free passage or communication with their boats to this place. This object obtained, they would with ease overcome our Indians, and in a short time make themselves very formidable here. To obviate this, I take the liberty to observe that our Indians ought to be amply supplied with ammunition; and some troops with a heavy gun would be indispensably necessary to destroy their gun-boats, and make a breach in their forts.

The forts they build are constructed in such a manner, that three or four hundred men knock up one in the course of three weeks, composed of wood, earth and stone, so strong as to bid defiance to the small guns that are here; and without regular troops to cover the guns, and to show the example in scaling or making a breach, no attacking party can hope for success. For this purpose, in my opinion, a twenty-four pound carronade, being light, would be the most proper gun.

Our troops here are now on rations of corn one day, and flour and pork the next; but the latter will, in a few days, be at an end. There are still a few

¹ Lieut. Col. Henry Dodge's expedition up the Missouri, against a band of hostile Miamies, September, 1814, capturing 152.