

ther your situation will be an agreeable one or not, depends upon the extent of the hostile confederacy whom you are to watch, and the competency of the force allowed you for that purpose—for I know you well enough to believe, that the loss of any lives dependant on your protection, would afford you as much regret as any man in the world—indeed sir, the very responsible situation in which I have been placed for some time past, enables me to appreciate fully the feelings that I know you will have to experience.

I do, however, hope that this mere *watching* business will soon be superseded by more efficient measures. While the hostility of the Indians was at all doubtful, or while any rational prospect remained of their return to a friendly disposition towards us, measures merely precautionary and defensive were probably most proper. But with such evidences as they have recently given of a confirmed hostility, all hopes of peace will prove illusory, and unless vigorous offensive operations be resorted to, I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion, that your force is totally inadequate to the object contemplated. The influence of fear alone has restrained the Indians—this will diminish as they become more and more familiarised with our present movements, and proportionably to the diminution of their fears, will their hostilities increase. The necessity of augmenting the guard for our frontiers will soon become manifest, and as soon as its operations are known to be confined to mere defence, it will take more men to defend the frontiers effectually, than to vanquish the Indians in a general engagement.

As you very justly remark, there is no means so well calculated to produce peace, or insure protection to the lives of our fellow citizens, as by carrying the war into the Indian country. This plan vigorously pursued, I yet think would soon dissolve the hostile confederacy—but if it shall be much longer delayed, I am well persuaded, the Indians will all be united against us, and it will call a government twenty times as much to subdue them as it would now do.

My own deliberate opinion is, that two expeditions should be promptly prepared & marched simultaneously to attack the Illinois Indians and the Prophet's party.

It was necessary for me to say this much to justify the suggestions which I am bound to make to you in consequence of your having stated that you were directed to confer with governors Meigs, Harrison and myself. Knowing the force under your command to be insufficient to oppose successfully the bands of Indians now embodied near Peoria, (a single point of our frontier) and understanding that it is to be employed on the frontiers of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois—I cannot consider it an efficient force, and therefore as all parts of the frontier have equal claims to all the good it can effect. My opinion is, that it should be so divided as to constitute a line from one end of the frontier to the other—that stations should be fixed and constant communications kept up between them throughout the whole extent of the line, that they may thus act as spies or sentinels to watch the motions of the Indians, and give us timely notice to shift for ourselves.

But if you do not consider yourself bound to occupy the whole frontier, but only such points as appear to you to be in most danger, there can be no hesitation in the proper course to be pursued—your force should be divided in equal parts, one of which should be ready to oppose the Indians now about Peoria, and the other to oppose the Prophet's party.

Certain I am, that this territory has a right to claim its full share of the force provided by law—whether we consider its defenceless situation, its thin and dispersed population, the facility with which it can be invaded, the difficulty of procuring timely assistance from the neighboring states—Its proximity to the hostile Indians, their numbers, the Widenas that have demonstrated their hostility, or the effects that may be produced collaterally by the movements of the army in Michigan territory.

The whole number of militia in this territory, dispersed throughout the whole extent of it, does not, I am well convinced, exceed 1,700, and we have no aid from any regular troops.

The Indians about lake Michigan have a direct passage into the Illinois river—those on the St. Josephs have a portage of seven miles into the Kankakee (or Kankakee)—those about Milwaukee have a portage of

12 miles to Fox river, which empties into the Illinois—those of Rock river can descend it to the Mississippi, or can come in two days from any part of it to Peoria.—On these rivers reside a great number of Indians, all of which can approach our frontier by water, without any garrison to watch or check them—and thus have a facility of invading us that they at all times highly appreciate, and decidedly prefer to any other.

All the murders that were committed in Louisiana and in this territory, during the two last years, and fourteen at least in the present year have been perpetrated by Indians from some one of the places I have mentioned—eleven of the murderers are now residing near Peoria, their guilt is not only unquestionable, but fully admitted by the whole of the chiefs & tribes now assembled at that place—satisfaction has been demanded according to treaty—it has been solemnly promised—but they have failed to fulfil their promises, refused to deliver up a single murderer, and have embodied to the amount of upwards of 600 warriors, as I learnt a week ago from a very intelligent public agent, at that place, and from a communication I received last night, it appears their number is not less than 700. The agent above alluded to, stated, that their disposition appeared to be hostile, and added, that if they were for war, they could raise in 8 or 10 days 600 more, without any assistance from the Prophet's party.

With the boats of the traders now in the Illinois, and the canoes in their possession, those Indians could transport themselves to Kaskaskia in about four days,—and thus is demonstrated our proximity to as great a number of hostile Indians as threatens any other frontier belonging to the U. States.

I should not be surprised if the Prophet's party should apprehend some danger from our troops in Michigan—and if you will cast your eye upon a map of this country, you will find that if he should be induced to retreat either by a defeat, or by the apprehension of it, that he must go to the Illinois river, or passing it into the country between lake Michigan and the Mississippi, where reside the greatest number of his adherents, and where also will be found the principal point of communication between those Indians and the British. They will not retreat to Michigan territory, occupied by our troops, and almost encircled by lakes, impervious by them without great difficulty. Indeed I have long since given it as my opinion, that if the Illinois Indians should be decidedly hostile, that the prophet and his followers would unite with them on the Illinois as a matter of choice, and already it appears that from 120 to 150 warriors of the Miamies have gone there, and thus will be thrown upon us the whole weight of the hostile confederacy.

But independent of all these considerations we are equally as exposed to danger from the Prophet's party as even Indiana territory itself, and probably more so, taking into view our weakness, and want of preparation to resist them.

Hitherto I apprehended most danger from predatory parties, and knowing the effects which the movements of troops have upon the Indians, I have kept my small force in constant motion, ranging generally from the Mississippi to the Kaskaskia, and sometimes between the Kaskaskia and the Wabash.—This plan has been very successful so far—till very lately I have had no apprehension of a general attack upon our towns, &c.—But from the measures that have been pursued, I clearly see that small parties will be deterred from coming in, and I can hardly believe the Indians can much longer remain embodied in such extraordinary numbers without attempting something—a general attack is therefore rendered a probable event—nothing can prevent it, unless they are waiting for a declaration of war with England, or an assurance that it will take place.

I have at present three companies of mounted riflemen in service—but my measures having been wholly precautionary, and adopted from the necessity of the case, till those of the government could be got into operation, will be superseded by the latter, and from the notification which your letter gives me, I shall feel myself immediately bound to disband all the force I have in service. I shall however make the best disposition in my power of the rangers till I hear from you, and I shall at all times be extremely happy to afford you all the aid in my power to give.

FOURTH OF JULY,  
To celebrate the anniversary of that au-

spicious day, a small company met on the bank of the Wabash, composed of a few gentlemen from Vincennes and its neighborhood, the commanding officer of fort Knox, the officers of the land office, col. Vigo, gen. John Gibson, secretary of the territory, col. Russell, and the Revd. Samuel T. Scott.—To enjoy the conviviality of the day without alloy, to regulate freedom by decorum, to abandon themselves, without any painful retrospection, to the feelings the day was calculated to excite—to discard every jarring thought & breathe in harmony the ejaculations of gratitude to the sages who planned, to the heroes who achieved the liberation of our country, and to the supreme disposer of events who stretched forth his hands in its defence, seemed to be the unanimous wish of the party.

Before the company sat down to a dinner prepared by mr. Peter Jones, mr. Armstrong, an interesting young man lately arrived in the territory, was prevailed upon to deliver the subjoined small oration prepared in haste on the occasion.

It was no uninteresting circumstance to see presiding at the head of the table, the venerable gen. Gibson, himself an actor in the awful scenes of the revolution, and one of the few whom death has not consigned to the grave, enlivening the whole group by the cheerfulness that animated him, and the happiness he appeared to enjoy. The day was spent and concluded in hilarity and concord. The following toasts were drank with appropriate numbers of cheers.

#### ORATION.

Fellow Citizens,

I THIS day rise to address you with a diffidence natural to youth; let me not appear presumptuous while I endeavor to fix your attention upon a subject which has engrossed that of more than one half of the globe. We have this day met for the celebration of the 4th of July—it was upon this day that one of the most solemn and interesting meetings took place.

They met to deliberate upon no less a subject than whether they would be, or cease to be as a nation, whether they would live free, or basely submit to the tyranny and oppression of G. Britain—the result of their meeting was, they boldly determined to support the cause of liberty, or bravely die in its defence. It must make the breast of every true friend of liberty glow with patriotic ardour when they recall to mind the heroic deeds of their venerable ancestors, the noble patriots of '76—we cannot too often recall to mind their manly exertions in defence of liberty, for all they suffered, all they taught, is there not due this day, one tender thought, one fond recollection?—To see a handful of men as it were, withstanding the thunders of a powerful nation was an astonishment to the world, but they were fighting in the cause of liberty, & it is also nothing to see what men united and fighting for liberty are capable of performing—but besides all this, the Lord of Hosts was upon our side, the God of the armies of Israel—this is an era in the history of the world that ought to be transmitted to posterity pure and unfulfilled; tell your children, and let them tell their children, and their children's children, that while you are relating your fatigues, your toils and your hardships, their youthful minds may catch the flame of liberty, and transmit it to millions yet unborn, Shall it be said of us sons of America, that we have degenerated from the virtues of our forefathers? No, I would fondly hope not—the flame of '76 is still seen to blaze upon our continent, for an example of this, witness the 7th November, there was heroism displayed worthy the name of Americans, and which will be preserved as long as history shall last.

Americans what blessings do we enjoy, blessings which the other parts of the world have never yet heard of—here the honest husbandman is permitted to cultivate his little farm unmolested—whereas, had Britain succeeded in her diabolical schemes, where, alas, would have been no encouragement to cultivate our little portion, or what pleasure could arise from an improved spot, if both the one and the other lay every moment at the mercy of lawless power; this imbitting circumstance would tend to spoil their relish, and by rendering them a precarious, would render them a joyless acquisition—in vain might the vine spread her purple clusters, in vain be lavish of her generous juices,

—tyranny, like a ravenous harpy, would be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of industry, or to wrest it from the hand of liberty. Yes, had

Britain succeeded in her detestable designs, instead of being regaled with the music of the woods, we might have been alarmed by the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war—instead of rallying around our liberty, we might this day be groaning under the yoke of despotism and oppression—instead of being entertained with this beautiful landscape, we might have beheld our houses ransacked & our villages plundered; we might have beheld our fine cities encompassed with armies, & our fruitful fields clothed with desolation, or have been shocked with the more frightful image of garments robed in blood, and of ruffians blades wreaking from a brother's breast—instead of peace with her charming olive sheltering our abodes—instead of justice with her impartial scale securing our goods, persecution had brandished his sword, and slavery clanked her chains.—Fellow citizens, these are not imaginary miseries only or the creatures of a groundless panic—but there are kingdoms where they have been experienced in all their horror.

But I have transgressed long enough upon the patience of this polite assembly—I shall therefore solicit your attention but for a few moments longer, and for one whose mind is filled with a love of liberty, I hope they will make some allowance.

I cannot pass over in silence the heroes of the 7th of November, those who survived the contest, may they ever possess the highest esteem of their country—but the unfortunate dead, whose bones are now bleaching upon the green fields of the forest, I would fondly hope the greater part of them are now reaping the fruits of their toils and their hardships in the fields of the blessed—in revolving such thoughts in our minds are we not often led to exclaim, what a pity it is that we can die but once to save our country—in order to preserve our liberty, the education of youth ought particularly to be attended to, because education is the broad basis upon which the fair fabric of liberty is forever to rest.

#### TOASTS.

1. The day—it burst the shackles of an injured people—their energies may have flattered, but will reappear with new vigor, may the enemies of our independence soon learn, that a nation who can long forgive, will at last be roused to avenge unmerited insults.

2. The president of the United States.

3. The Congress of the United States.

4. Gen. Washington—let us drop a tear upon departed worth, the soldier and the patriot—may his talents, fortitude and virtues be living in our memory, and be the constant object of our emulation.

5. The heroes of the revolution—they have secured to us the invaluable boon, with their patriotism before our eyes, we will know how to preserve it. Health, content and respect to their precious survivors.

6. Agriculture, that nurse of mankind, parent of commerce, source of health, moderation and content, may the sons of Columbia ever delight in its pursuits.

7. Home manufactures—let fashion invest imported goods with imaginary perfections and beauties, reason must teach us that reliance on ourselves is true independence.—The works of our wives and daughters must ever obtain interest in our eyes.

8. The militia of the U. States—hardy and brave, ere long will they equal their foes in military science, led by a new *Miltiades*, they will soon disperse the bands of all modern Xerxes.

9. The army of the United States—the citizen and the soldier happily blended together, they will soon teach our enemies the difference between their venal mirmidons, and patriotic warriors obeying not the mandates of despots, but the solemn call of an injured country.

10. Union—all jarrings and contentions of the American family merged in the love of our country—all hearts and hands joined in protecting its right, and avenging its wrong.

11. The people of the United States—well acquainted with their rights, may they progress in the noblest necessary knowledge of their duties.

12. Education—may we be once convinced that the cultivation of the mind is the surest means of securing our dearly bought rights, and that without the diffusion of useful knowledge, our institutions can have neither solidity nor permanence.

13. Clinton—ruthless death has made another of the revolutionary worthies his victim, he cannot obliterate the memory of