

the fort from an incapacity, either from the want of stores or men, to defend it, might they not demolish it, or might they not retire down the river to some distance, and attack it with greater vigour, upon receiving a reinforcement?

If they should not chuse to come to open violence, might they not succeed without going towards that fort, and without committing any act of hostility, by means of the rivers Miamis and Wabache, both which rise within a few miles of the south-west coast of Lake Erie, and very near Detroit, or the Streights which join that with Lake Huron? Would it not then be very easy for the French in Louisiana to make incursions into our settlements there, if not cut off all communication from thence to our colonies? The general method of traffic carried on by the natives and traders in parts to the west of the Lakes, was by navigating from the upper Lake and Lake Michigan into Lake Huron, and so into Lakes Erie and Ontario, after having conveyed their commodities over their portage at Niagara; if to a French market, Frontenac, or Montreal; if to an English one, Oswego, or Albany: the single capture of Detroit would therefore effectually prevent any intercourse of this kind between those Indians and Canada, or any other of our colonies.

Need we doubt, likewise, that they would neglect their old track by the way of the River Illinois, before they found out a more convenient one by the River Ohio? Our settlements at Missilimakinac cannot be considered as a proper barrier, they could make but very little opposition against any enemy, much less against such a one as France at all times provided with all the requisites of war.