

encouragement, as if getting his army through the drowned lands of the Wabash."¹

The capture of Vincennes determined the fate of the Northwest. Frontier warfare nevertheless went steadily on. In 1779 Spain entered the contest as an ally of France, and it became the object of the British commanders on the Lakes not only to recover the posts lost to the Americans but to seize St. Louis and other Spanish strongholds on the west bank of the Mississippi. In 1780 Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Sinclair, a bustling, garrulous old soldier stationed at Michilimackinac, sent a force of some nine hundred traders, servants, and Indians down the Mississippi to capture both the American and Spanish settlements. An attack on St. Louis failed, as did likewise a series of efforts against Cahokia and Kaskaskia, and the survivors were glad to reach their northern headquarters again, with nothing to show for their pains except a dozen prisoners.

Not to be outdone, the Spanish commandant at St. Louis sent an expedition to capture British posts in the Lake country. An arduous winter march brought the avengers and their Indian allies to Fort St. Joseph, a mile or two west of the

¹ Hosmer, *Short History of the Mississippi Valley*, p. 94.