

escape. For I was very sure that any such an attempt would have been the signal of their immediate death. Indeed, if they had escaped, it would have been fortunate for the purposes of those who were anxious for the expulsion of the Mormon population. For the great body of that people would most assuredly have followed their prophet and principal leaders, as they did in their flight from Missouri.\*

The force assembled at Carthage amounted to about twelve or thirteen hundred men, and it was calculated that four or five hundred more were assembled at Warsaw. Nearly all that portion resident in Hancock were anxious to be marched into Nauvoo. This measure was supposed to be necessary to search for counterfeit money and the apparatus to make it, and also to strike a salutary terror into the Mormon people by an exhibition of the force of the State, and thereby prevent future outrages, murders, robberies, burnings, and the like, apprehended as the effect of Mormon vengeance, on those who had taken a part against them. On my part, at one time, this arrangement was agreed to. The morning of the 27th day of June was appoint-

\* I learned afterwards that the leaders of the anti-Mormons did much to stimulate their followers to the murder of the Smiths in jail, by alleging that the governor intended to favor their escape. If this had been true, and could have been well carried out, it would have been the best way of getting rid of the Mormons. These leaders of the Mormons would never have dared to return, and they would have been followed in their flight by all their church. I had such a plan in my mind, but I had never breathed it to a living soul, and was thus thwarted in ridding the State of the Mormons two years before they actually left, by the insane frenzy of the anti-Mormons. Joe Smith, when he escaped from Missouri, had no difficulty in again collecting his sect about him at Nauvoo; and so the twelve apostles, after they had been at the head of affairs long enough to establish their authority and influence as leaders, had no difficulty in getting nearly the whole body of Mormons to follow them into the wilderness two years after the death of their pretended prophet.

ed for the march; and Golden's Point, near the Mississippi river, and about equi-distant from Nauvoo and Warsaw, was selected as the place of rendezvous. I had determined to prevail on the justice to bring out his prisoners, and take them along. A council of officers, however, determined that this would be highly inexpedient and dangerous, and offered such substantial reasons for their opinions as induced me to change my resolution.

Two or three days' preparations had been made for this expedition. I observed that some of the people became more and more excited and inflammatory the further the preparations were advanced. Occasional threats came to my ears of destroying the city and murdering or expelling the inhabitants.

I had no objection to ease the terrors of the people by such a display of force, and was most anxious also to search for the alleged apparatus for making counterfeit money; and, in fact, to inquire into all the charges against that people, if I could have been assured of my command against mutiny and insubordination. But I gradually learned, to my entire satisfaction, that there was a plan to get the troops into Nauvoo, and there to begin the war, probably by some of our own party, or some of the seceding Mormons, taking advantage of the night, to fire on our own force, and then laying it on the Mormons. I was satisfied that there were those amongst us fully capable of such an act, hoping that in the alarm, bustle, and confusion of a militia camp, the truth could not be discovered, and that it might lead to the desired collision.

I had many objections to be made the dupe of any such or similar artifice. I was openly and boldly opposed to any attack on the city, unless it should become necessary, to arrest prisoners legally charged and demanded. Indeed, if any one will reflect upon the number of women, inoffensive and young persons, and innocent children, which must be contained in such a city of twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants, it would seem to me

his heart would relent and rebel against such violent resolutions. Nothing but the most blinded and obdurate fury could incite a person, even if he had the power, to the willingness of driving such persons, bare and houseless, on to the prairies, to starve, suffer, and even steal, as they must have done, for subsistence. No one who has children of his own would think of it for a moment.

Besides this, if we had been ever so much disposed to commit such an act of wickedness, we evidently had not the power to do it. I was well assured that the Mormons, at a short notice, could muster as many as two or three thousand well-armed men. We had not more than seventeen hundred, with three pieces of cannon, and about twelve hundred stand of small arms. We had provisions for two days only, and would be compelled to disband at the end of that time. To think of beginning a war under such circumstances was a plain absurdity. If the Mormons had succeeded in repulsing our attack, as most likely would have been the case, the country must necessarily be given up to their ravages until a new force could be assembled, and provisions made for its subsistence. Or if we should have succeeded in driving them from their city, they would have scattered; and, being justly incensed at our barbarity, and suffering with privation and hunger, would have spread desolation all over the country, without any possibility, on our part, with the force we then had, of preventing it. Again: they would have had the advantage of being able to subsist their force in the field by plundering their enemies.

All these considerations were duly urged by me upon the attention of a council of officers, convened on the morning of 27th of June. I also urged upon the council, that such wanton and unprovoked barbarity on their part would turn the sympathy of the people in the surrounding counties in favor of the Mormons, and therefore it would be impossible to raise a volunteer militia force to protect such a people against them.

Many of the officers admitted that there might be danger of collision. But such was the blind fury prevailing at the time, though not showing itself by much visible excitement, that a small majority of the council adhered to the first resolution of marching into Nauvoo; most of the officers of the Schuyler and McDonough militia voting against it, and most of those of the county of Hancock voting in its favor.

A very responsible duty now devolved upon me, to determine whether I would, as commander-in-chief, be governed by the advice of this majority. I had no hesitation in deciding that I would not; but on the contrary, I ordered the troops to be disbanded, both at Carthage and Warsaw, with the exception of three companies, two of which were retained as a guard to the jail, and the other was retained to accompany me to Nauvoo.

The officers insisted much in council upon the necessity of marching to that place to search for apparatus to make counterfeit money, and more particularly to terrify the Mormons from attempting any open or secret measures of vengeance against the citizens of the county, who had taken a part against them or their leaders. To ease their terrors on this head, I proposed to them that I would myself proceed to the city, accompanied by a small force, make the proposed search, and deliver an address to the Mormons, and tell them plainly what degree of excitement and hatred prevailed against them in the minds of the whole people, and that if any open or secret violence should be committed on the persons or property of those who had taken part against them, that no one would doubt but that it had been perpetrated by them, and that it would be the sure and certain means of the destruction of their city and the extermination of their people.

I ordered two companies under the command of Capt. R. F. Smith, of the Carthage Grays, to guard the jail. In selecting these companies, and particularly the company of the Carthage Grays for this service, I have been subjected to some censure.