

that well merits to be recorded. He began by disclaiming the vanity of assuming to himself the possession of the qualities necessary to enable him to discharge with efficiency the high trust which his countrymen were desirous of reposing in him, and stated that, in yielding to the urgent entreaties which had been used to induce him to come forward as a candidate for the important and responsible office of President of the United States, he had done violence to his own inclinations, which had rather led to the continuance of enjoyment of those rural pursuits from which he had been taken, than to the turmoil of public life. He reiterated his conviction that he had been selected by his countrymen, not so much for any fitness to fill the office which had been flatteringly tendered to him, as because his name and political principles were deemed of advantage to their cause.

Among other topics, he naturally reverted to those services which had rendered him so popular with his countrymen. This part of his discourse was of course replete with interest to me, and I listened, fully prepared to hear, from his own lips, a repetition of all that had been been ascribed to him by the previous speakers. But nothing of the kind met my ear, and I must do General Harrison the justice to say that no man could have evinced less egotism on the subject of his military services than he did. In fact, he scarcely alluded to his victory "over the British," but principally referred to the neglect which he, as well as other old officers of the United States army, who had, at an earlier period of American history, fought under General Wayne, had experienced at the hands of the Government; and in deprecating this injustice, he pledged himself that when he should be called to the Presidential chair, as he could not after the present demonstration doubt he should be, to remove the evil. When he had concluded, he shook hands with many of the rough yeomen who pressed forward to obtain the honor, and then descended to his carriage, which was drawn towards the town, followed by the dense mass, ploughing up the hot dust which lay some inches thick on the road in so abominable a manner that, long after they had passed, it hung like an impenetrable veil in the atmosphere, and shut out the town wholly from the view of those who remained in the encampment.

But the most startling feature in this jubilee was enacted on the second night after our arrival. Oppressed with heat, and fatigued with witnessing proceedings which excited in me neither curiosity nor interest, I had, at an early hour, thrown myself upon my buffalo skin in the tent, which had then no tenant but myself, and was meditating on the humbug of the whole "celebration," when I heard several sharp cracks of the rifle, which, momentarily increasing in number, were answered by the independent fire of musketry, occasionally broken in upon by volleys, and by discharges from one or two field-pieces I jumped up, and thrusting my head through the opening of the tent, beheld a sight that did indeed recal to me the scenes of the past. The whole of the side of the camp which bordered on the ravine where we had constructed our light battery, had suddenly assumed an appearance of great brilliancy, as if the largest description of fire-flies were playing in myriads around, while the cries of combatants and the report of fire-arms, reverberating through the woods and multiplied by echo, gave an air of *vraisemblance* to the manner of an Indian night attack, which amply repaid me for what previous disappointment I had experienced. The only thing wanting was the correct delivery of the scalp-cry, which I had often heard in my youth, and had faithfully retained in memory.

It was not difficult to surmise, as proved to be the fact, that this was a sham-fight, intended to commemorate that through which we had, on a former occasion, attempted to draw the enemy from the same defences. A number of young Americans had secretly prepared themselves for the occasion, and disguised in paint and blankets, with handkerchiefs on their heads, had taken their position near the point where we had remained secreted during the movement of the Indians under Tecumseh, and extending themselves generally, under cover of the darkness, had formed a semicircle around the tents. Upon this, they, at a given signal, commenced an attack which was promptly met in the manner I have described. Nothing in the shape of a battle has to me a greater interest than the beautiful effect of small arms, when the gloom of night is invaded by the fitful and larid flashings they send forth, accompanied, as they ever are, by reports, whose multiplied reverberations fall upon the ear with a distinctness, almost with a character, that seems to result from the general slumber and stillness of nature alone.

To the victors themselves this mimic representation of scenes long since enacted, could not have imparted half the interest it produced in me. They had never practised that part they were thus seeking to describe, while I, on the contrary, with an imagination vividly impressed, recurred to it more forcibly as each war-cry was shouted, and each rifle discharged. What contributed to favor the delusion was the gloom of the evening, which while it hid from view the white and staring edifices in the distance, brought the river and adjacent forest dimly under observation. This sham fight lasted for about an hour, when the British and Indians being (by proxy) "considerably well whipped," the Americans ceased firing, and I went to console myself for the defeat by partaking of the hospitality of the Buffalo Guards in whose charge were the field pieces that had just been used.

On the afternoon of the third day, the convention having terminated, tents were everywhere being packed up preparatory to departure, and all the bustle, without much of the regularity of movement of an army about to change its ground, was apparent. Our own was one of the last tents struck, but it was very speedily and correctly done. Our hampers and provision baskets, which were originally filled with good things being now quite empty, and consequently forming a very light portion of the "camp stock," were thrust unceremoniously into the bullock waggon that again had been called into requisition for the transport of our baggage, and that night we again embarked in the small steamer in which we had left Toledo. We did not, however, owing to the intricacy of the navigation by steamer, leave until the following morning. About mid-day we were again on board the steamer that brought us across the lake, and our consorts being ready, we took our leave of General Harrison, who proceeded on a different route, and with our gay colors still flying, and our bands of music fully engaged for the amusement of the party, made the best of our way back to Detroit.

CHAPTER XI.

During the few days I remained in Detroit, after my return from Fort Meigs, an accident happened which had nearly disconcerted my plans of travelling to the centre of the Province.

The fourth regiment of United States Artillery were quartered in the town, and with the officers of this corps I passed nearly as much of my time, as I did with the gentleman at whose house I was an immediate visitor. They were a pleasant hospitable set of fellows, and Colonel Fannin, who commanded them, possessed a soundness of information and conversational powers of a very high order. He had seen a good deal of service; was a captain in command of the artillery, at the capture by the Americans of Fort Erie in 1813, and had passed a great portion of his after life in the inhospitable and unhealthy region of Florida, from which indeed his regiment had only recently been returned. The utmost harmony and unanimity existed among the officers, all of whom were men of good education and manners, and it was particularly gratifying to observe the respect, without adulation, with which they regarded their gallant and estimable colonel while he, on the other hand, ever treated them with a kindness and indulgence which lost none of its value from his scrupulous exactness of the performance of their military duties. There was nothing of that servile cringing and self debasement—that apprehension to express an opinion, contrary to that pronounced by the commanding officer,—which so often is to be found in our own service, and which, when practised to the extent I have sometimes remarked, assimilates the position of an officer of inferior rank more to the condition of a base and fawning slave, than to one placed on a perfect equality, by the commission of the Sovereign, with the proudest dignitaries of the land. And yet, I do not remember a single instance, during my frequent visits to their mess table, where the propriety or decorum of conduct, tacitly exacted by the presence of their commander, was ever lost sight of by an officer of the 4th regiment of United States artillery. I feel a deep pleasure in thus alluding to them, not only by reason of the marked civility I had ever received at their hands, but because I was, at the time, most forcibly impressed with the almost brotherly feeling which subsisted between all ranks from the colonel down to the youngest officer; and had wished that, if I ever had the good fortune to be in permanent command of a regiment, such unanimity might be the model on which our social relations should be based.

Falling into the general habit of the country, the officers of this regiment dined about two o'clock, and thus had full leisure to enjoy the long and beautiful evenings peculiar to an American summer, which, from their comparative coolness, compensate for the previous intense heat of the day. Some walked—some rode—these, more or less, enjoying the society of the very charming and accomplished women with which Detroit in a marked manner abounds; while others, too indolent either to ride, walk, or flirt, preferred adjourning from the mess table to the drawing room, and there with closed verandahs, admitting just enough of light for the purpose, discussing the intricacies of whist, aided by the very acceptable stimulant of a mint julep (such as Wooster of the 4th alone could concoct) a cold and delicious sherry cobbler, or a more exciting cock-tail, as the taste or caprice of the individual might desire.

On the third or fourth afternoon of my return to the city, I had dined with the colonel, and was in the middle of a rubber with him and two other officers—Wooster brewing his exquisite mint julep for the players—when some one entered the room, stating that a fire had broken out at Windsor, on the Canadian shore, and was then raging so furiously, the wind having suddenly risen, as to threaten destruction to the entire village. This was alarming intelligence to me for, since leaving my den at Sandwich, I had taken lodgings at the principal hotel at Windsor, and while my baggage was strewed about the rooms of this, my ponies were left in the stable under no other surveillance than that of my tiger, whose youth and general thoughtlessness prevented me from