

companies (the grenadier and light) of the only regular regiment employed in the expedition, had been detached, with two guns of light calibre, to the right bank of the river with instructions to take possession of, and entrench themselves in, a ravine, about half way from our encampment and the American fort, and thus distract them by a cross fire. This party, supported by a few militia and Indians, it was the intention of General Harrison, as intimated to General Clay, to attack, while the latter executed the important duty assigned to him, on the opposite shore. Now this plan was, beyond all question, an admirable one, and as far as General Harrison was concerned, reflected great credit upon his military judgment; but it will be presently seen with whom the merit of victory, in reality, rested. No sooner was the American commander made aware, by the report of the first desultory firing, of General Clay's approach to the batteries, when he directed a sortie upon the light battery thrown up on the brow of the ravine which sheltered the little detachment, on his own side of the river. This was instantly carried, five and thirty men and two officers—all of the light company—falling into his hands; and the remainder of the party being hotly pursued, and crossing, not without difficulty, in the boats which were ready to receive them. On the right bank of the river, therefore, everything was decidedly in favor of the besieged. But how stood matters of the opposite shore? General Clay had surprised the batteries so completely, that the first intimation in our camp of the proximity of the enemy was given to us by the artillerymen, who had naturally abandoned their guns at the approach of a force against which resistance was utterly hopeless. General Clay had, in my opinion, badly chosen his moment of attack. I could have wished him to have deferred his movement at least an hour. We had only just seated ourselves in our tent of boughs to partake of a very scanty breakfast, and this, consisting of a tough steak of lean and half cooked beef, and a piece of dry bread, moistened with an apology for tea made of the root of the sassafras, and sweetened with sugar from the maple tree, it was hardly fair to compel us to abandon untasted. I had ever been of the opinion of much older soldiers than myself, that in order to do duty properly in the field, it was indispensable that the cravings of the animal man should not be suffered to interpose themselves between his sublimer aspirations after glory; and as mine was an appetite that was seldom gratified to its full extent, when sharing the bivouac of those who were older, and less diffident than myself, and who always assigned me any other than Benjamin's portion, I was scarcely ever exempt from the gnawings of hunger. I recollect well, that, during our forced march on this occasion to the batteries, I thought a great deal more of the untouched breakfast, and its probable fate, than of the enemy we were about to encounter. I was a confirmed *Oliver Twist* in those days, and "always asking for more."

But another direction was given to my reflections. As we advanced along the road I have already described, at a pace as rapid as its heavy nature would permit, and flanked on the forest side by a body of Indians, we could distinctly hear the firing going on on our left, and see the enemy advancing rapidly upon the small battery of six-pounders. Instead of discouraging, this however animated our own immediate leaders the more, and they urged their men to the re-capture of the heavy guns. In a few minutes we were on the spot, and saw the enemy in possession of and determined to retain them. We had not three complete companies on the ground, or engaged in the affair at all; and yet when the order was given to charge, we advanced and drove from the batteries the masses that occupied them, in a manner that, on subsequent reflection on the fewness of our numbers, astonished ourselves quite as much as it must have disconcerted the enemy. They retreated into the woods, and being there met by the destructive fire of the warriors under Tecumseh, were speedily broken, and, as a force, literally annihilated. Of thirteen hundred men whom General Clay had brought with him to the attack of the batteries, not two hundred effected their escape; and independently of the many who fell, we took no less than four hundred and fifty prisoners. The moment the firing had ceased, and these latter had been marched off under as strong an escort as could be spared, we again returned to the batteries, whither the artillerymen had again promptly repaired, and assisted them in undoing the injury which had been done to the guns. Owing to some confusion in the advance of the assailants, the man charged with the spikes could not be found, or had not come up; and, too impatient for delay, the Americans had only partially effected their purpose by thrusting ramrods into the touchholes and breaking them off short. These were now removed without much difficulty, and the fire of small arms had not been discontinued an hour when our batteries re-opened on the fort. Before half a dozen rounds had been discharged, however, the enemy hoisted a white flag, which we at the batteries supposed was a signal for a surrender. The firing consequently ceased, and it was not until we saw a few boats of General Clay's division (the greater number had been captured and plundered by the Indians) moving down the river, and anchoring as close beneath the fort as they could, that we suspected a ruse, and renewed our fire. But this again was instantly stayed, as we saw a party issue from the fort dressed in scarlet, and evidently prisoners who had been cap-

tured that morning on the right bank. The movement of these under an escort toward the river, where we saw them embark, announced to us at the batteries that the white flag had been hoisted only with a view to an exchange of prisoners; and our disappointment became extreme as we perceived another important movement on the part of the enemy, which the momentary truce was intended to cover. No sooner had we for the second time ceased our firing, when, availing themselves of the exchange of prisoners which was being then effected, several hundred unarmed men issued from an angle of the fort, under the cover of a detachment, and rushing hurriedly to the boats, loaded themselves with what they could bear away. This was principally shot and shells and stores of various kinds, for the supply of the garrison, which the Indians had neglected to destroy; contenting themselves with the handsomely ornamented swords, rifles, and pistols, as well as the linen and rich epaulettes and uniforms of the officers, with which many of the warriors afterwards decked themselves, not a little to the amusement of the camp. Nor was it until after the prisoners had been landed, and the supplies introduced into the fort, that we were again at liberty to open our fire.

I have been diffuse in the historical detail of these proceedings, because I am aware that the Americans are generally impressed with the belief that the affair of the Miami was, to General Harrison, one of unqualified victory; and as this book will, of course, be republished in the United States, I am desirous of correcting the error into which they have fallen. Of General Harrison's merit as an officer, and of his very able dispositions on that day, there can be no question, but victory is not always to those leaders whose combinations and enterprise are best calculated to ensure it. Had General Clay obeyed the order so emphatically given to him, and, after spiking the guns, retired across the river without further loss of time, there would have been every fair claim to complete victory; but surely it will not be pretended that the capture of a weak battery, supported merely by two companies of troops, with a few militia and Indians, can as a military feat, be placed in comparison with the utter destruction of a force of thirteen hundred men by one-third of their number. Then let us look at the results. The Americans issuing in force from the fort, succeeded in capturing thirty-five men and two officers, while four hundred and thirty-five men and thirty-two officers fell into our hands. Nor can it be said that General Harrison's success on the right bank of the river has nothing to do with, or can be affected by the defeat of General Clay on the left, which was only the result of unlooked-for disobedience of orders. As well might it be said, if we compare small things with great, that Napoleon's was not a defeat at Waterloo, because Grouchy is stated to have disobeyed his instructions, and by his absence, mainly contributed to the loss of the battle. Had the Duke of Wellington, on the contrary, failed in any of his numerous engagements, solely through the fault of one of his commanders or divisions, victory would not the more have been ascribed to him, because his dispositions had been proved by results to have been good, and that the fullest success should have crowned those operations which he immediately superintended. It is true that the siege was subsequently abandoned, but this was because it was found impracticable to effect a breach for an assault. Had the enemy been surrounded by stone walls, they would have crumbled about their ears, but as it was, the shot merely passed through, without levelling or even seriously wounding the strong loop-holed pickets which formed the stockade, and the capture of the place could only have been effected by the expenditure upon it of more time and ammunition than the necessity for its reduction demanded. Furthermore the Indians, laden with the spoils they had secured from the captured boats of General Clay's division, were in conformity with their usual practice on such occasions, and in defiance of the noble yet severe Tecumseh (who, with a small band of chosen warriors—chiefly of his own tribe—remained with us to the close), deserting us hourly for a brief season; and without their united support, the force was much too weak to effect any important object. But although we retired, it was without the slightest show of precipitation. The batteries were regularly dismantled, and the heavy guns removed and placed on board the boats prepared for their reception, precisely in the order in which they had first been landed from them, nor was anything left behind which could at all advantage the enemy. Neither, when the battering train, stores, camp equipage, &c., had been all re-embarked, and the troops followed in their open boats, was the slightest obstruction offered by the Americans during any part of our descent of the river. No attempt was ever made at a sortie, which, in our exposed position, must have greatly annoyed us.

I should be induced to apprehend that I had dwelt too long on so apparently unimportant a subject, were it not that I am desirous to shew with how little foundation the Americans so frequently claim advantages over the troops of Great Britain. Where they are fairly entitled to victory, let their claim be allowed; but it is unjust to assume that to themselves which is not warranted by facts. While their whole Union has rung from one end to the other with rejoicings at the asserted triumph of their arms over those of Great Britain at the Miami, the gallant regiment—a small but daring portion of whom drove, at the point of the bayonet, a vastly superior number of the enemy from the batteries on the left bank—were