

German concentration in the wooded country close to their front. It is very difficult to unravel the thread of artillery action from the tangled web of battle, because artillery plays a double part in the great game—1st, divisional, or merely supporting and acting with the other arms; 2nd, concentrating and striking terrible and decisive blows as a separate arm. Moreover, the first accounts of battles reach us from the pens of journalists, generally men of great energy and ability; but tall talk is their *metier*, and they are obliged to supply public demand for blood-and-thunder at so much a line. Even soldiers, themselves engaged, are the poorest narrators of the outline of an action, being so entirely engrossed with what passes in their immediate front. Waterloo veterans still wrangle as to whether the final repulse of the last French column was due to the advance of the 52nd or the Guards. Comparing small things with great, I have been unable to recognize the official accounts of actions in which I had the honor to be engaged.

The first great battle of the last great war was at Wissenburg. We cannot linger over the historic reminiscences of the old fortress that once rolled back the tide of war under Marlborough.

In the same locality the Crown Prince of Prussia, with more than forty thousand men, surprised and destroyed the corps of General Douay, only 8,000 strong. While the French were cooking their morning soup, the mass of Prussian guns, having gained the heights of Schweigen, suddenly opened a heavy fire on the enemy's camp and the village of Wissenburg. With the old impetuosity of their race, the French sprang to arms, but were ordered by General Douay to remain as much as possible behind Wissenburg. The precaution was useless: the Prussian guns, from their commanding position, rained death upon them, whether they advanced or sought shelter. The French artillery, consisting only of three light field-batteries and one of mitrailleurs, was soon overwhelmed; and, according to the German official account, "the mitrailleurs fired only a few rounds, and were easily silenced by the Prussian guns." The overwhelming numbers of the Crown Prince outflanked and took the hill of Geisburg; the outnumbered French, still pursued by the deadly Prussian shells, and harassed by the cavalry, turned retreat to rout. Wissenburg was quickly followed by Wörth. The French position was salient, almost semicircular; thus offering to the Prussians the opportunity ever coveted by artillerists,