Sunday, June 25. At 4 A.M. in compliance with orders I sent six Crows up Tullock's Fork, and half an hour later followed with the remainder of the Crows and my detachment. At 5:30 A.M. the command broke camp and marched two miles up Tullock's Fork and then turned off to the right into the hills expecting to find a comparatively level table-land leading to the Little Big Horn. Meantime I had ascended the stream nine miles, when I halted to await some indication that I was being followed by the command, and after a long delay was overtaken by a squad of cavalry sent to notify me of the change of route. I soon rejoined, taking a short cut across the hills, and found the command involved in a labyrinth of bald hills and deep, precipitous ravines completely destitute of water. The men had emptied their canteens of the wretched alkali water they started with and were parched with thirst as well as greatly fatigued with clambering over such ground. A worse route could not have been chosen, but destitute of a guide as we are it is not to be wondered that we entangled ourselves in such a mesh of obstacles. While the command struggled on toward the Big Horn as the nearest point of escape, I executed an order given me by General Terry to scout to a distant ridge on the left of our line of march, from which it was thought the Little Big Horn might be seen and possibly an Indian camp. Reaching the ridge after an exceedingly toilsome march of eight miles over a very rough country, I found myself confronted by another ridge a few miles farther on that completely obstructed the view. Having been ordered not to pass the first ridge, I turned back and overtook the infantry battalion at 8:50 P.M., just as they were going into camp in the valley of the Big Horn. There I learned that some of the Crows who had gone up Tullock's Fork in the morning had discovered a smoke in the direction of the Little Big Horn, which was thought to indicate the presence of the Sioux village, and the cavalry and Gatling battery, accompanied by General Terry, were pushing on with a view of getting as near it as possible that night. The infantry, which had already marched twenty-three miles, were to remain in camp for the night and follow in the morning. I joined the cavalry with my detachment, orders having been left for me to that effect. A brisk rain set in toward evening, and continued to fall in successive showers through the first half of the night. Darkness overtook us still pushing on up the Big Horn, and though the march had been difficult by day it was doubly so in the darkness of the night. The cavalry officers who scouted up the Big Horn last April were acting as guides, for want of better, and, as their knowledge of the country was far from profound, we were continually encountering serious obstacles to our march - now a precipitous hillside, now a deep ravine. Occasionally as the head of the column was checked we would find ourselves closed up in a dense mass, and again where the path grew narrow we would stretch out in an attenuated thread, the men in the rear racing desperately after those in front not to lose sight of them in the gloom and be left without a clue to the direction they had taken. Every now and then a long halt was made, as an avenue of escape was sought from some topographical net in which we had become involved. There was great danger at times, when the column stretched out to unusual length, that it would become broken and leave us scattered over in a dozen bewildering fragments, and once the cry did go up: "The battery is missing!" A halt was made, and after some racing and hallooing the missing guns were set right again, having lost the human thread and wandered a mile or so out of the way. At another time some of the cavalry went astray, and lost half an hour getting back to us. At length after hours of such toil, getting out of one difficulty only to plunge at once into another, the head of the column came plump on the brink of a precipice at whose foot swept the roaring waters of the Big Horn. The water gleamed in front a hundred and fifty feet below, and to the right hand and to the left the ground broke off into a steep declivity down which nothing could be seen but forbidding gloom. Out cavalry guides were wholly bewildered, and everybody was tired out, and dripping with wet, and impatient to get somewhere and rest. When General Terry saw the walls of Fort Fisher before
him he knew what to do. He threw his battalions against them, carried them by storm, and gained a glorious victory and won a star; but when he saw to what a pass we had now come and reflected that every step we took seemed only to render our situation more perplexing, he appeared uncertain and irresolute. For several minutes we sat our horses looking by turn at the water and into the black ravines, when I ventured to suggest to the general that we trust ourselves to the guidance of Little Face, one of my crow scouts who had roamed this country as a boy fifty years ago and had previously assured me that he knew every foot of it. Little Face was called up, said he could guide us to a good camping ground, was accepted as a guide, and led off in the dark with as much confidence as though he was in the full light of day. The aimless, profitless scrambling was over; he conducted us by an easy route a mile or two to the left, where we found ourselves in a commodious valley with water enough in its little channel to suffice for drinking purposes. There was not much grass for the animals, but it was the best we could do without going several miles farther and so about midnight we halted, unsaddled, and threw our weary forms down on the ground for a little rest, the cavalry having marched about thirty-five miles and my detachment, in consequence of its diversions from the main column, about fifty-five. (Lieut. Varnum was detached from Custer's command, located on the east slope of the Wolf Mountains, near their summit, and went forward in the night to a place on the summit of the Wolf Mountains with a number of Indian scouts to observe the Little Big Horn valley which lay below the western slope. The Indian scouts observed at dawn a large Indian camp along the west bank of the Little Big Horn, and Custer was summoned to the observation post, but could see nothing. The whole command then crossed the summit of the Wolf Mountains, and started to descend their western slope toward the Little Big Horn by way of the valley of Sun Dance Creek. The Wolf Mountains, a high and broken ridge separating the Little Big Horn from the Rosebud River on the east, descend abruptly to the Little Big Horn which washes their base, and to the west of the Little Big Horn, at this point, spreads the valley of the Little Big Horn. The river of that name flows north east, to the point where it touched the Indian camp, from which point it flows north west, until it enters the Big Horn to the north. Its normal depth is from three to four feet; it has a gravel bottom, and steep, scrambling banks, four to five feet high. It is estimated that the Indian camp contained on the morning of June 25, from 2,500 to 3,000 Sioux warriors, at the minimum. Crock's chief scout, estimated it contained 2,000 Sioux fighting men. The Sioux camp is three miles long. Custer's command numbers: 31 officers; 535 men; 31 Indian scouts, Crows and Peans; and 8 civilians, or 555 in all. Custer's soldiers consisted of 12 troops of the 7th cavalry, 30 to 40 per cent of whom were raw recruits. Each soldier carried 100 rounds of carbine and 25 rounds of pistol ammunition, and forage. The pack train of 180 miles was driven by a detail of 7 men drawn from each of the 12 troops, or 84 men in all, under Lieut. Mathey, escorted by Troop B. Lieut. Strong, 45 men, total strength of pack train and escort, 129 officers and men. The train carried in addition to salt and forage, 24,000 rounds of reserve ammunition, and on June 25, 12 days rations of sugar, coffee and hardtack, and 9 days rations of bacon. The 12 troops of cavalry under Custer, consisted of Troops A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, and M. It was a little before noon when the command crossed the dividing ridge, and began their descent into the valley of the Little Big Horn, by way of Sun Dance Creek. Custer detached twenty with Troops H, D and K, about 137 officers and men, and some Indian scouts, to turn off the left flank, that is about southwest, and drive all Sioux Indians he encountered before him. Penteen departs with his 3 troops. Custer, with 5 troops, namely, C, E, F, I and L, and 4 civilians and 11 Indian scouts swung to the right flank, and proceeded north skirting the heads of the deep ravines which went down into the Little Big Horn. His Troops numbered 13 officers and 137 soldiers; his total strength was 235. His 11
Indian scouts left him before he went into action with the Sioux, and he sent back 8 of his men as couriers on sight of the enemy, to hurry up the rest of his forces. Thus he went into action with 13 officers, 195 men and 4 civilians, total strength 212, against a force of Sioux whose number cannot be determined. Reno, with about about 138 officers and men, and in addition Indian scouts and guides, proceeded down Sun Dance Creek to its junction with the Little Big Horn. McDougall with escort, and Mathey with mule drivers, numbering in all 182 men and 160 mules, were left unsupported on the upper end of Sun Dance Creek, while Custer rode north with his men, Reno rode northwest, and Benteen south west. Reno crossed the Little Big Horn to its went bank, near the mouth of and deployed his men, with his Indian scouts on his left flank, and proceeded north against the south end of the Sioux village. The Sioux came out against him in great force. He dismounted his men, and deployed them in open order. His new recruits fired wildly at the Indians, wasting ammunition. Breaches of the carbines became overheated, and the shells stuck as a result, slowing down his volume of fire. The Indian auxiliaries on his left flank abandoned their position, and the Sioux turned his left and enflamed his line. Sioux crossed to the east bank of the Little Big Horn and opened fire on his right flank. Reno ordered his command to retire by the right flank to the river, but not all heard the command, and Lieut. de Rudio and some men were left behind, but were brought within Reno's lines on June 26, by Blackfoot Man, a Piegan scout. Reno's men stood their ground for a short time in a grove of trees on the west bank of the Little Big Horn, under heavy fire from the Sioux from all sides. They then crossed to the east bank of the river, in some disorder, and suffered their heaviest losses at this point and during their retreat to higher ground up the western slope of the Wolf Mountains. On reaching higher ground, some 300 yards above the river, they made a stand. Here they were shortly joined by McDougall and Mathey and the pack train and its escort, and by Benteen, who had marched his men some distance to the southwest, without encountering Sioux in that quarter. Two couriers came up from Custer requesting re-inforcement, and announcing that he was advancing on the enemy. No one seemed to know where Custer was. An advance was attempted in the direction which Custer had taken, to the north, but was checked by the advance of a large body of Sioux. Reno, Benteen, McDougall and their men were forced to dig in, and were closely invested by the Sioux through the night of June 25, and during June 26. The Sioux kept them under heavy fire, made several charges against their lines, which had to be met by counter attacks, and kept the soldiers from obtaining water. The late afternoon and evening of June 26 the Sioux began to retire, their main force leaving the ground about 7 P.M. This was due to the advance of Terry from the north. Terry arrived on the 27th, and relieved Reno. Custer and his men were found dead on the hills above the Little Big Horn, east of the river, and near the north end of the Sioux camp. They had never crossed the river, but the Sioux had crossed the river past them. Custer and all the men with him were killed, namely, 13 officers, 125 men and 4 civilians, a total of 212. Reno lost 58 killed in action, 2 died of wounds received in action and had 51 wounded. Total killed of the entire force of 655 was 372, and wounded numbered 51. Cause of defeat seems to have been: Insufficient knowledge of the ground, and of the numbers, dispositions and morale of the enemy, and their equipment, overconfidence, and this, together with the fixed belief that the Sioux would run rather than fight, led to the attempt to surround about 3,000 fighting Indians with a force of about 800 men.)

Monday, June 26. Major Brisbin, who in General Gibbon's absence commands the column, roused me up this morning at daylight and ordered me out on a
scout at once, not allowing my men to get breakfast. As I had traveled some twenty miles yesterday than anybody else, so that my horses were tired and my men hungry, it struck me as rather rough treatment. I was too much vexed to hurry much, and did not get off till 4 A.M., having sent six Crows ahead half an hour earlier. My orders were to scout to the Little Big Horn, looking out for Sioux sign and sending back word of any important discoveries. Having advanced about three miles we entered a valley cut by a dry creek, and here came upon the fresh tracks of four ponies. As we entered the ravine we had seen a heavy smoke rising in our front, apparently fifteen or twenty miles away, and I at once concluded we were approaching the Sioux village and that the trail had been made by a party of scouts therefrom. Sending back a written report of the discovery, I took the trail of the four supposed Sioux in the hope of catching them in the Big Horn valley toward which the trail led and where we thought they might have camped, as there was no convenient way of leaving the valley into which they had gone except that by which they had entered it. At the distance of less than two miles the trail struck the river, and we found they had there crossed leaving behind a horse and several articles of personal equipment, indicating that they had fled in great haste. An examination of the articles disclosed to our great surprise that they belonged to some of the Crows whom I had furnished to General Custer at the mouth of the Rosebud, which rendered it probable that the supposed Sioux were some of our own scouts who had for some reason left Custer's command and were returning to the Crow agency. While speculating upon the circumstance three men were discovered on the opposite side of the Big Horn about two miles away, apparently watching our movements. We at once signaled to them with blankets that we were friends, for a long time to no purpose, but when we were about to give up and seek some other method of communicating with them, they responded by kindling a fire that sent up a small column of smoke, indicating that they had seen our signals and trusted our assurances. We gathered wet sage-brush and assured them with a similar smoke, and soon afterwards they came down to the river and talked across the stream with Yellow Face and one or two more of the scouts who went down to meet them. While the interview went on I kept the remainder of the detachment on the bluffs. Presently our Indians turned back and, as they came, shouted out at the top of their voices a doleful series of cries and wails that the interpreter, Bravo, explained was a song of mourning for the dead. That it boded some misfortune there was no doubt; and when they came up, shedding copious tears and appearing pictures of misery, it was evident that the occasion was of no common sort. Little Face in particular wept with a bitterness of anguish such as I have rarely seen. For awhile he could not speak, but at last composed himself and told his story in a choking voice, broken with frequent sobs. As he proceeded, the Crows one by one broke off from the group of listeners and going aside a little distance sat down alone, weeping and chanting that dreadful mourning song, and rocking their bodies to and fro. They were the first listeners to the horrid story of the Custer massacre, and, outside of the relatives and personal friends of the fallen, there were none in this whole horrified nation of forty millions of people to whom the tidings brought greater grief. The three men over the river were in truth a portion of the six scouts furnished to General Custer from my detachment; and this is the story they had told to Little Face. After Custer left the mouth of the Rosebud he had followed the Indian trail and yesterday struck the village on the Little Big Horn, the Sioux warriors letting him get close to the village and then sallying forth in overwhelming numbers to meet him, defeating his command, and destroying all but a small portion who had
been driven into the hills and surrounded by the Sioux, where the Crows had left them fighting desperately. The corpses of Custer's men were strewn all over the country, and it was probable before this that the last one was killed as it was impossible for the party who had taken refuge in the hills to hold out long, for the Sioux immensely outnumbered them and were attacking them in dense masses on all sides. Of the six Crows who had gone with Custer, two - White Swan and Half Yellow Face - were killed, and another - Curly was missing and probably also killed. (Report received by General Sheridan July 12, 1876, giving list of killed, wounded and missing in the battle with the Sioux, June 25-27, 1876, gives the names of three Indians, killed with Reno's command, viz., Bloody Knife, Bob-tailed Bull and Stab. Names given by Bradley, above, are not listed in this report as killed, wounded or missing.) The fighting had occurred at the point where the smoke was then rising in our front. It was a terrible, terrible story, so different from the outcome we had hoped for this campaign, and I no longer wondered at the demonstrative sorrow of the Crows. My men listened to it with eager interest, betraying none of the emotion of the Crows, but looking at each other with white faces in pained silence too full of the dreadful recital to utter a word. Did we doubt the tale? I could not: there was an undefined vague something about it, unlocked for though it was, that commanded assent, and the most I could do was to hope that in the terror of the three fugitives from the fatal field their account of the disaster was somewhat overdrawn. But that there had been a disaster - a terrible disaster, I felt assured. It was my duty to report it to General Terry, and being a matter of such importance I resolved to make the report in person, as I now saw the head of the column appearing over the ridge a couple of miles away. I therefore rode back until I met the command, which was halted just before I came up, and narrated to the General the ghastly details as I had received them from Little Face. He was surrounded by his staff and accompanied by General Gibbon, who had that morning joined, and for a moment there were blank faces and silent tongues and no doubt heavy hearts in that group, just as there had been among the auditors of Little Face at its rehearsal by him. But presently the voice of doubt and scorn was raised, the story was sneered at, such a catastrophe it was asserted was wholly improbable, nay impossible; if a battle had been fought, which was condescendingly admitted might have happened, then Custer was victorious, and these three Crows were dastards who had fled without awaiting the result and told this story to excise their cowardice. General Terry took no part in these criticisms, but sat on his horse silent and thoughtful, biting his lower lip and looking to me as though he by no means shared in the wholesale skepticism of the flippancy members of his staff. My imagination was busy supplying to my mind his train of thought, and it ran like this: "The story may not be true, when we have only to push on according to the original plan. It may be true, and it then becomes our duty to hasten to the rescue of the miserable remnant of Custer's command surrounded on the hills. If the savages have been able to destroy Custer's noble six hundred, what can we hope to accomplish without our paltry four? But we will do the best we can and rescue the wretched survivors or ourselves perish in the attempt." And as though it were the seal of authenticity to this bold attempt to divine the workings of his mind, he cried "Forward!" and once more the column was in motion toward the foe. My duty there was done and taking a rapid gait I soon gained my proper distance in front as advance guard. The infantry had remained in camp last night twelve miles back and at 5 A.M. resumed the march, coming up with the cavalry toward noon, having been greatly delayed by the pack-train. The whole column then advanced together and having crossed the dry creek, where I now found the trail, and the rugged divide separating it from the Little Big Horn, entered the valley of that stream. The heavy smoke was now continually in view, and notwithstanding the stiffened limbs
of the infantry, in consequence of their hard march yesterday, the prospect of an early arrival at the village and a brush with the Indians imparted an wonderful animation to their movements and urged them on at a rapid gait. After passing up the valley a few miles the column crossed to the left bank and soon afterward halted to allow the men to rest and make coffee. The three Crows who had escaped from Custer's battle-field promised to recross the Big Horn and rejoin the command, provided some of their comrades waited for them, and partly on this account and partly to allow them time to recover from their grief I permitted all the Crows to remain behind when the column passed the point where we had received news of Custer's overthrow. Bravo, the interpreter, stayed with them, and as he was frightened nearly out of his wits by the unfortunate tidings, and anxious to avoid going on, he no sooner saw us fairly out of the way than he exerted himself to induce the Crows to abandon the expedition, representing to them that some of our officers had said we no longer wanted their services. Several of the best Crows were opposed to such a measure, but Bravo aided by some of the malcontents among them carried the point against such, and the whole body were seen by some of the officers at the rear of the column to mount and gallop away together. They recrossed the river and proceeded straight to the Crow agency. During our afternoon rest, citizens Bostwick and Taylor were sent forward by different routes toward the village to reconnoiter and communicate with Custer should he prove to be in possession. (Unpublished Diary of Captain W. Clifford, Co. E., 7th Infantry, starts at this point — a copy of his Diary follows this copy of the Bradley Diary.) While they were still absent and after we had rested about two hours, the column was again, at 5 P.M., put in march up the valley, my detachment in advance. After advancing about two miles I discovered several ponies on my left front, toward the river, and taking Corporal Abbott with me moved over to investigate. They proved to be five in number, evidently strays from the village, and taking possession of them, I sent them back to the column. Not long afterward I discovered three or four mounted men about two miles in advance, and at once deployed my detachment as skirmishers; and soon afterward Bostwick came into view down the valley galloping at full speed. As soon as he came up he paused long enough to say that he had proceeded cautiously up the valley for several miles until all at once he came plump on a considerable body of Indians. Not caring to cultivate their acquaintance nearer he turned short about and retreated at the best speed of his horse. It was now sufficiently evident that we had Indians in our front, and the column advanced slowly in fighting order, the Gatling battery and three companies of cavalry in column on the right, four companies of infantry in column on the left, and one company of infantry and the pack-mules in the center - a part of the infantry company at the head and part at the rear of the pack. Generals Terry and Cibbion with their staffs rode at the head of the column. Lieutenant Roe with his company of cavalry being advanced half a mile or so on the bluffs to the right while I moved abreast of him on the left up the valley, passing through the timber that grew in occasional clumps along the stream. As we advanced I continually saw Indians up the valley and on the bluffs to the right, riding about singly and in groups of two, three, half a dozen, and more. Once they appeared to the number of seventy-five or a hundred on a distant hill, and not long afterwards several rifle shots rang out from the bluffs where Roe was advancing, and a few shots were exchanged by the Indians and a few of our eager men who pushed through the timber. One circumstance caused me a good deal of disquietude, and that was that the Indians were evidently massing in the timber at a narrow place in the valley, with the apparent intention of resisting at that point our further advance. Squad after squad of mounted savages galloped down the slope of the hills into this grove until I estimated that not less than a hundred had entered it after we came into view, and how many other hundreds
might already have been there or entered by some other way could only be conjectured. As I had this timber to go through with my detachment, it was not pleasant to think of the storm of bullets that would undoubtedly be hurled into our faces as we rode up to its dark border or of the painted hundreds that would rise suddenly on all sides of us, as we got fairly entangled within its recesses, and cut off the whole of us in a moment. I have been in several engagements and participated in several charges upon intrenched positions, but in my whole career as a soldier never did anything call for so much nerve as the riding slowly up with eleven men, half a mile from the rest of the column, on this body of abashed warriors. My men sat their saddles with pale faces but closed lips with stern determination, expecting in a few minutes more to be shot down, but resolved not to flinch though the cost were death. Meantime Lieutenant Roe was advancing on the bluffs and from his elevated position could see a long line of moving dark objects defiling across the prairie from the Little Big Horn toward the Big Horn, as if the village were in motion, retreating before us. But between him and them was a numerous body of warriors estimated by some observers as high as three hundred men. Those nearest him appeared to be clothed in blue uniforms, and carried guidons, forming in line, breaking into column and otherwise maneuvering like a body of cavalry. Under the impression that they might be members of Custer's command a sergeant and three men were sent forward several hundred yards, and when well advanced the sergeant left his men and approached them alone to within hailing distance; but upon calling out to them was quickly undeceived as to their character by receiving a volley in response that caused him to retire hastily. About this time Taylor returned from his attempt to reach the village (besieged cavalrymen), having, like Bostwick, encountered Indians but not escaping without being fired upon. My detachment was now drawing near to the vicinity in which the Indians were ambushed, and we were nervings ourselves for the expected annihilation when the column halted, and I too halted, something like a quarter of a mile from the timber. At this moment several horses emerged from the timber and came directly toward us, some of the men asserting that they bore riders, but it was now twilight and I could not tell with certainty. Bostwick and Will Logan saw these horses from the bluff and resolved to attempt their capture. (Will Logan, or William R. Logan, was the son of Captain William Logan, U.S.A., who was killed in the battle of the Big Hole, August 9, 1877, in which fight Lieutenant James Bradley, author of this Diary, was also killed. Will Logan was later Superintendent of the Fort Belknap Indian Agency, Montana, and for a short time was Superintendent of the Blackfoot Agency in Montana; he was the first Superintendent of Glacier National Park, and Logan Pass in that Park is named after him.) The horses had stopped about half way between my line and the timber, but Bostwick and Will boldly passed in the rear and drove them toward my line, having been close under the guns of the ambushed Sioux who could easily have picked them off had they chosen to fire. But probably expecting soon to get my detachment in range they forebore to do so, and the venturesome fellows got off safe and conducted their booty to the camp - four good Indian ponies. Lieutenant Burnett soon rode up to inform me that camp was forming, and that I was to remain where I was until the cavalry companies ceased watering and then join the command. This was very welcome intelligence, indeed, as it saved us from riding into the dreaded ambush and seemed like a gift to us of our lives. The cavalry companies were watering a few hundred yards in our rear and finished soon after dark, and we then returned, finding the command bivouacked in the valley midway between the stream and the bluffs and about half a mile from each. No fires were allowed and we lay upon our arms, arranged in a square, but with a very weak face indeed down the river, that side, I believe, and
being occupied by only a guard of twenty-odd men. The animals were secured within the square. The halt was made at 9 P.M., the infantry having marched thirty miles, the remainder of the command about eighteen. The steamer is working its way up the Big Horn, having touched this morning at the point where the infantry camped last night. General Custer remained with it up to that time and then came on and joined the command early in the morning. Before retiring the officers assembled in groups and talked over the events of the day. I found that a majority of the infantry officers placed confidence in the report brought by the Crow of Custer's overthrow, and were prepared for unpleasant disclosures upon the morrow. Some of the cavalry officers shared this conviction, but the majority of them and about all of the staff were wholly skeptical and still had faith that Custer had been victorious if he had fought at all. So obstinate is human nature in some of its manifestations that there were actually men in the command who lay down to sleep that night in the firm conviction, notwithstanding the disclosures of the day, that there was not an Indian in our front and that the men seen were members of Custer's command. They could explain ingenuously every circumstance that had a contrary look, and to argue with them was worse than useless. Some of the cavalry officers had a theory that a great mistake was committed in not sending them forward with a dash when the Indians were first discovered to attack the enemy in infinite numbers and use the enemy to pieces and driven them back in ruinous disorder. From subsequent examination of the ground I am convinced that there were not less than a thousand of these ambushed savages, with plenty more to co-operate with them, and not only would they have easily defeated the cavalry, but they would have given our whole command a desperate fight had we advanced that evening another mile. Their village was retreating, and they were there to cover it, and it was only for lack of an hour or two of daylight that we did not come upon them in force and prove once more the terrific gallantry with which they can fight under such an incitement as the salvation of their all.

Tuesday, June 37th. — (Lieutenant Bradley had written his diary up to this point when he set forth on the Nez Perce Campaign of 1877. Both Lieutenant Bradley, and Captain Logan, whose name, with that of his son Will Logan are mentioned in the above Diary, were killed in action with the Nez Perce at the Battle of the Big Hole, August 9, 1877, where General Custer received a severe check at the hands of Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce. The Diary of Captain W. Clifford, Co. E, 7th Infantry, who also served under Generals in the campaign of 1878 against the Sioux, commences with a fragment describing the sending out of civilians Taylor and Bostwick to contact Custer on June 25, 1878, and continues up to, and including, August 10, 1878, on which day the commands of Generals Terry and Custer united with the command of General Crook on the Rosebud River. Before taking up the Diary of Captain Clifford, the account of General Godfrey, who served as Lieutenant under Reno, is inserted. This account is contained in 9 Contributions, Montana Historical Society, pages 290-295, describing the relief of Reno's command by Terry, and the discovery of Custer's dead.)

Custer's Last Battle, by Brigadier General Edward S. Godfrey, U.S.A.

Godfrey's entry here given, opens with Reno's command still in the position they had occupied since June 25, since which time they were surrounded and attacked in force by the Sioux. The Sioux had drawn off, and departed the evening of the 26th. — with Reno.

Tuesday morning, June 27th, we had reveille without the "morning guns," enjoyed the pleasure of a square meal, and had our stock properly cared for.
Our commanding officer seemed to think the Indians had some "trap" set for us and required our men to hold themselves in readiness to occupy the pits at a moment's notice. Nothing seemed determined except to stay where we were. Not an Indian was in sight, but a few ponies were seen grazing down in the valley. At 9:30 a.m. a cloud of dust was observed several miles down the river. The assembly was sounded, the horses were placed in a protected situation, and camp kettles and canteens were filled with water. An hour of suspense followed, but from the slow advance we concluded that they were our own troops. "But whose command is it?" We looked in vain for a gray horse troop. (Custer's) It could not be Custer; it must then be Crook, for if it were Terry, Custer would be with him. Cheer after cheer was given for Crook. A white scout, Muggins Taylor, came up with a note from General Terry, addressed to General Custer, dated June 28th, stating that two of our Crow scouts had given information that our column had been whipped and nearly all had been killed; that he did not believe their story but was coming with medical assistance. The scout said that he could not get to our lines the night before as the Indians were on the alert. Very soon after this, Lieutenant Bradley, 7th Infantry, came into our lines and asked where I was. Greeting most cordially my old friend, I immediately asked, "Where is Custer?" He replied, "I don't know, but I suppose he was killed, as we counted 187 dead bodies. I don't suppose he escaped." We were simply dumbfounded. This was the first intimation we had of his fate. It was hard to realize — it did seem impossible. Then I took him to Major Reno and there introduced him to the officers. General Terry and staff and officers of General Gibbon's column soon after approached and their coming was greeted with prolonged hearty cheers. The grave countenance of the general awed the men to silence. The officers assembled to meet their guests. There was scarcely a dry eye; hardly a word was spoken, but quivering lips and hearty graspings of hands gave token of thankfulness for the relief and grief for the dead. During the rest of the day we were busy collecting our effects and destroying surplus property. The wounded were cared for and taken to the camp of our new friends of the Montana column. Amongst the wounded was Saddler "Mike" Madden of my troop, whom I promoted to be sergeant, on the field, for gallantry. Madden was very fond of his grog. His long abstinence gave him a famous thirst. It was necessary to amputate his leg, which was done without administering any anaesthetic, but after the amputation the surgeon gave him a good, stiff drink of brandy. Madden eagerly gulped it down and his eyes fairly danced as he thanked him and said, "Mebbe, doctor, cut off my other leg." On the morning of the 29th we left our entrenchments to bury the dead of Custer's command. The morning was bright, and from the high bluffs we had a clear view of Custer's battlefield. We saw a large number of objects that looked like white boulders scattered over the field. Classes were brought into requisition and it was announced that these objects were the dead bodies. Captain Weir exclaimed, "Oh, how white they look!" All the bodies, except a few, were stripped of their clothing; according to my recollection, nearly all were scalped or mutilated, but there was one notable exception, that of General Custer, whose face and expression were natural; he had been shot in the temple and in the left side. Many faces had a gaunt, almost terrified expression. It is said that "Rain-in-the-Face," a Sioux warrior, has gloried that he had cut out and eaten the heart and liver of Captain Tom Custer, other bodies were mutilated in a disgusting manner.

(1807 I heard Will Logan describe these mutilations to Captain Ryan, R.N. Naval Attaché of the British Embassy at the luncheon table. The Captain lost his appetite. J.C.C.) Much has been said and many times I have been asked about the mutilations of General and Tom Custer's bodies. When we got to the battlefield to bury the dead, the regiment was deployed by troop so as to cover the whole front embracing the battle ground, and each troop was apportioned a part of this front with orders to bury the dead on its
tumitory. The ground covered by my troop took me two or three hundred yards below the monument. (The present site of the monument marking Custer's battlefield.) I had just identified and was supervising the burial of Boston Custer, when Major Reno sent for me to help identify the dead on Custer Hill. When I arrived there General Custer's body had been laid out. He had been shot in the left temple and the left breast. There were no powder marks or signs of mutilation. Mr. F.F. Girard, the interpreter, informed me that he preceded the troops there. He found the naked bodies of two soldiers, one across the other, and Custer's naked body in a sitting posture between and leaning against them, his upper right arm along and on the uppermost body, his right forearm and hand supporting his head in an inclining posture like one resting or asleep. There was no sign for the justification of the theory, insinuation or assertion that he committed suicide.

PART OF THE DIARY OF CAPTAIN W. CLIFFORD, COMPANY E., 7th INFANTRY, U.S.A.
This Diary covers the period from a part of June 26, 1876 to August 10, 1876. A part of the Diary is in manuscript form, and the rest in the form of clippings from the Rocky Mountain Husbandman, a newspaper printed in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. Clippings and manuscript are very old, and in parts illegible. Both clippings and notes were loaned to the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., by the grandson of Captain Clifford, and copies made by the Bureau for their permanent files. Captain Clifford was with General Gibbon's column in the campaign against the Sioux in 1876. Other manuscript, not here included, consists of one entry on the 1876 campaign under date of April 1, and entries relating to the Ute campaign of 1876.

Written for the Rocky Mountain Husbandman, The Indian Campaign of 1876, by Capt. W. Clifford, U.S.A.

Undated. (June 26, 1876, Monday.) About four hours ago Bostwick and Taylor, (white scouts), started to find General Custer. They have just returned and report a large body of Indians moving across the Little Big Horn valley from the direction of Tullock's Fork, and now the supposition is that these fellows were lying in wait for us in the pass between Tullock's Fork and the Little Big Horn, and failing to catch us in that trap, have concluded to scatter. We lie down full of anxiety for Custer. Many believe that he has been defeated and is now hemmed in not far from us, but all are loth to take this view of the situation.

June 27 - (Tuesday). Resumed the march at 7 a.m. Quite a number of Indian ponies
- next page -

(see Logan's account "The Battle of the Little Big Horn" by Wallace D. Coburn.)

The Logan's account in the Battle of the Little Big Horn by Wallace D. Coburn 1876.
Logan evidently went forward at this time.
were picked up, and upon reaching a low hill, could plainly see two skin lodges and a number of horses among the bottom timber. Capt. Ball, 2nd cavalry, had gone ahead and could be seen charging on a run, but at what we could not determine.

Nearing the two lodges, we found the ground strewn with Indian camp equipage, bunches of lodge poles tied together, ready for transporting, buffalo robes, saddles, cooking utensils, coffee-mills, china dishes, new kettles, axes, guns, pistols, horn spoons, wooden soup bowls, all lying in the utmost confusion, as though this were a prelude to a hurried stampede. Numbers of Indian dogs were about. They fled like wolves at our approach. Every one was possessed with a burning curiosity to examine the numerous articles lying scattered about, and often was the caution to the men to "remain in the ranks" repeated. Double barreled shot-guns, rifles, knives and pistols of unique patterns were picked up by the men only to be thrown away after being carried a short distance. In spite of the order of "silence, men," a low continuous hum of voices could be heard.

Arriving at the lodges, we found a number of dead horses lying around them in a circle, shot. Inside the lodges were the bodies of eight warriors, lying in state - five in one lodge, three in the other. Soon I picked up a cavalry officer's pantaloons, stained with blood. Dr. Paulding called me and showed a coat with "Lieut. Porter, 7th cavalry" marked on the lining, a bullet hole through the right breast and deeply stained with blood. Now we begin to find cavalry saddles, and to realize that there must be truth in the report of the Crow scouts that Custer's force had been defeated.

Soon, like a clap of thunder, causing the bravest among us to bлечн, came a report from the opposite side of the river that Lieut. Bradley had found one hundred and ninety-six dead cavalrymen on the hills, and the question arose on all sides, "Where's Custer? Where's Custer?" Every one was wrought up to the most intense pitch of excitement.

Our advance guard, about five miles ahead, was in plain sight, and we suddenly saw them dash, on a run, into a body of timber, and looking to the hill top on the other side of the river, could see a party of horsemen, and soon Lieut. Jacobs, 7th infantry, who had gone with the advance, came on a run with the intelligence that the men in the hills were Major Reno and his command of 250 men, all that were left of four companies.

He knew nothing of Custer, but stated that he, himself, with three companies, had charged the village and had met with such a hot reception that he was obliged to take to the hills, from whence, but for our timely arrival, not one of them would have escaped, as they were surrounded on all sides by splendidly armed and mounted Indians, and could only obtain water at the imminent risk of their lives.

From the scene of Reno's fight I rode up the side of the hill, about three hundred yards, to obtain a better view of the field than could be had from where we were camped.

Their hospital was in a slight depression, surrounded by a number of dead horses placed head to tail in a circle. After a good look, I was about to descend when I saw, just over the brow of a ridge, the whisk of a horse's tail. Thinking I had found a prize, I rode over the ridge and found an Indian pony. A bullet had broken one of his hind legs just
below the hip, and with his every motion the leg swung back and forth. As soon as he saw my horse he began to whinny. Hearing him, he hobbled up and rested his head against the flank of my horse. Riding off and looking back, I saw the poor creature striving to follow. He could only obtain water by crossing the steep bluffs that stood between him and the river. The wounded leg was badly swollen. The tormenting flies were about him in swarms. Knowing that he must die there a lingering death, I rode back and again he came up, this time laying his head on my horse's rump, looking straight at me, as if pleading for help. Drawing my revolver, I held it within a few inches of his forehead and pulled the trigger. Lightning could not have finished him sooner. Better thus than the days of lingering agony that must follow if left to himself.

On my return, I marked more carefully the embankment from which Reno's horsemen jumped into the river as they retreated. The vertical bank was not less than ten feet high. From there they jumped into water about four or five feet deep, then crossing the stream, climbed the hills which were too steep for a direct ascent. The marvel is that with such a multitude of Indians around them so many escaped. The retreat was a mad race to a place of safety. While winding up the steep hillslope, the fugitives were exposed to a murderous fire. Had the pursuers been white men, hardly one of the fleeing party could have reached the summit unhurt.

The Custer battlefield has been described too often to need further mention here.

The sorrowful burial was over at last.

By Captain W. Clifford, U.S.A. Company E, 7th Infantry. (II Mont. Hist. 157)

Undated. The red scouts who are still with us think that there were not less than twelve hundred lodges here besides a great number of wicky-ups. They, (the scouts), as well as old frontiersmen, think that there could not have been less than from four to five thousand warriors, and even that they consider a low estimate.

The Sioux have disappeared like a scene in a magic lantern—triumphant.

Some of Custer's command are missing. Have they fallen alive into the hands of their pitiless enemies? Woe to them if they have. Better to have fallen, far better, in their tracks beside their dauntless chief.

A Crow scout, Curley, is also missing, and hopes are entertained that he may have escaped.

We go into camp on Reno's battlefield, just at the point where the Indians had him surrounded in the timber.

For years the Sioux have been in the habit of making here a winter camp, and when the ground was covered with snow as to render it difficult for their animals to graze, they made a practice of cutting down the cottonwood trees, the bark of which furnishes the horses with a very nutritious food. The dry wood the next year supplied the savages with an abundance of dry fuel. The grass grows to an unusual height among this dead timber. Dry brush is abundant. In such a place as this was Reno and his men surrounded by the Indians. They, (the Indians), set fire to the grass and though the flames did not reach Reno, they bade fair to do so. The smoke was very dense, and at best they could not have long remained in such a trap. Their only safety lay in flight. Had they
remained not a man of the party would have escaped. I obtained my
information on all concerning this part of the affair from scout George
Herendeen, who was with Reno, and who is a cool, determined frontier
man of an extended experience of the plains. He tells me that about five
miles above where we are now camped they left the high ground on the
right of the Little Big Horn, and followed along down the bottom. They
found two or three deserted lodges. Custer, with his part of the command,
had followed along the high ridge, and the pack train, under charge of
penteen, was some distance behind. When near this point of timber, the
tables were turned on them, by the Sioux charging them, instead of they
the Sioux. They were driven into the timber and halted to re-form. Here
Reno must have taken in the gravity of the situation, and arrived at the
conclusion to make for the hill-tops, and fortunate indeed that he did so.
Reaching the hills, they made a most desperate fight, the Sioux charging
to within twenty feet of the hastily thrown up earth works. They had
finished Custer by this time, and now turned the entire attention to
Reno, contenting themselves, after the first effort, with merely drawing
around him a line too strong for him to get through, and at a range too
great for his carbines. His position was almost eight hundred yards from
water, and surrounded as he was on all sides, there was almost certain death
to attempt to reach the river for water they must have, and while some
of his forces charged in one direction others made a break for a deep
ravine that led to the river. The line of communication was thenceforth
kept open.

The soil of the hill-tops is a close packed gravel and clay. To entrench
themselves here, they used tin plates, caps, case-knives, sheath-knives,
anything, in fact, that would dig.

As twilight failed the careful Sioux would draw their lines more
closely around their seemingly doomed victims, and as daylight approached,
would retire beyond the reach of the carbines, and then sharp shooting
became the order of the day. Certain death to remain where they were;
torture and death to surrender, their hopes, as they gratefully
acknowledged to us, were faint indeed. Such trained and experienced
scouts as Girard and Henderson would perhaps have stolen away as a last
resort, but then they must bring into play all their skill and cunning,
and then mayhap lose at the last moment.

Our camp is surrounded with ghostly remains of the recent butcher.
The days are scorching hot and still, and the air is thick with the stench
of the festering bodies. We miss the laughing gaiety that usually attends
a body of soldiers even on the battlefield. A brooding sorrow hangs like
a pall over our every thought. It seems too horrible for belief- that we
MUST awake and find it only a shuddering dream. Every sound comes to us
in a muffled monotone, and a dull, dogged feeling of revenge seems to be
the prevailing sentiment. The repulsive looking green flies that have been
feeding on the swollen bodies of the dead, are attracted to the camp fires
by the smell of cooking meat. They come in such swarms that a perservering
swing of a tree branch is necessary to keep them from settling on the food.
An instant's cessation of the motion of the branch and they pounce down
upon the morsel that is being conveyed to the mouth. They crawl over the
neck and face, into the eyes and ears, under the sleeves with a greedy
eagerness and such clammy, sticky feet as to drive taste and inclination
for food away.

Let us bury our dead and flee from this rotting atmosphere.

(To be continued)

Undated. (June 27?) As the sun sinks from sight the listless breeze that has been lazily stirring dies away. The great round moon, bright as burnished silver, rolls slowly over our sorrowing heads. By its uncertain light a motionless black object can be seen at no great distance, which upon nearer approach, proves to be a dead cavalry horse, and beside it the body of the rider, naked. Both are swollen almost to bursting. The legs of the horse are sticking straight out from the body, while the skin of the sleeping rider gleams in the moonlight like polished white marble. A hush has fallen upon the sleeping camp. The silence is death-like. Half fearfully I hasten to the river bank and listen to the sobbing gurgle of its waters as they hasten toward the busy east with their heart-breaking story. Even this mournful music is better than the stillness out yonder. But the polluted air is here also and one is forced to lie with face close to the water to be rid of the deadly poison that is permeating the clothing and filling the lungs with every respiration. A little delay on this death-stricken ground and we will remain forever. Let us hide our slain comrades from sight and resume, with quickened footsteps, our pursuit of their butchers.

All of June 28th was consumed in bringing Reno's wounded from the hill tops to the river bottom, burying the dead here and on Custer's field, four and three-fourths miles below, and in the construction of litters for the transportation of the wounded to the steamer reported to be lying at the mouth of the Little Big Horn, distant twenty miles. There are only twenty-one so severely wounded as to require moving on litters; the others, twelve in number, being able to ride.

An examination of the ground where Custer's five companies perished shows that skirmishers fell on the line, the most of them shot dead. Inside the skirmish line they fell in groups of fours, and finally Custer and a number of officers inside a circle of forty men, surrounded by slain horses, placed head to tail. Curly, the Crow scout, who escaped by wrapping himself in a blanket, Indian fashion, and who afterwards joined us, says that here the fight was the bitterest; that the continuous discharge of the rifles he can liken to nothing so much as the sound of the tearing of strong cloth, and only when their ammunition was gone did the Sioux swarm upon him like a host of howling wolves. Then he jumped on a horse and made his escape, swimming the Big Horn, and going direct to the Crow camp, which was turned into a community of mourners by the terrible intelligence of which he was the bearer.

The Crows, fearing that the victorious Sioux would follow up their success by an attack on them at once, hastened to leave their camp ground on Pryor's Fork and seek the protection of their agency. They believed that all of the 7th Cavalry had been killed, and were fully convinced that our little force would share the same fate. Their demoralization was complete when the deserting scouts arrived in a body and corroborated Curly's story. How these scouts managed to obtain such accurate information as they imparted to us on the 26th, is a puzzle.

All the bodies save those of Custer and Keogh are more or less mutilated. Hands, heads, feet and legs are cut off and scattered here and there. The squaws finished the wounded by knocking them in the head with axes furnished by the United States government. Custer was shot through the temple, evidently while lying on the ground. His face was as placid as if he were sleeping. Keogh was probably saved from mutilation by the discovery, when the squaws stripped him, of an "agnus dei" suspended from his neck. All the
bodies except Custer's were stripped.

The preparations for moving the wounded were completed, and in haste to get away from the pestilence-laden atmosphere, at 7 o'clock p.m. we started, carrying the wounded. Eight men were detailed to each litter, but the difference in the height of the bearers and the unevenness of the ground made of this duty terribly hard work. As darkness came on the cries of pain from the wounded, as one of the bearers would stumble or step into a hole, were frequent. By half past twelve o'clock we had made only four and a half miles— the wounded worried and feverish and the bearers completely exhausted. (June 29) Some other plan for moving these helpless ones must be devised. Gen. Gibbon favored the construction of rafts which, as there was an abundance of dry cottonwood along the river bank, could easily have been carried into effect, and the sufferers thus be floated to the boat with but little trouble. The timber for the rafts had in fact been selected, when the order was changed. Strong litters, to be carried by mules—one in the lead, another in the rear, working as a horse does in the shafts of a buggy—were made of good-sized poles, twenty feet long. The wounded horses, so plentifully scattered about, were shot, skinned, and the hides cut into strips. Two cross pieces six and a half feet apart were lashed to these poles, and between these was woven a lattice-work of horse hide. On this was spread a number of robes or blankets, and thus the wounded were moved quite comfortably. Among them was an Indian. His friends, the Cowans, took care of him. Their style of litter was a number of springy lodge poles lashed to the side of a pony and trailed along the ground. The poles were of different lengths, so that when one of them struck an uneven place on the ground the others acted as a support to break the shock.

The greater part of the day was consumed in the work of litter-making. At 5:10 p.m. a start was made, and some time after midnight the boat was reached. The litters worked nicely, though on one of them the fastenings gave way, spilling its occupant on the ground, fortunately without injury.

The moon went down about midnight, just before we reached the boat, leaving us in darkness and a great deal of confusion, cavalry, infantry and litters being at times all jumbled up together in a mass. The wounded were helpless, the attendants tired, and everybody out of sorts and ill-tempered.

One could hear such expressions as, "Look out there, damn you, Where are you going?" "Keep off these litters." "Move those pack mules away from here." "Now, see that damned fool of a cavalryman. I wish I had my bayonet, blast you; I'd make you keep your distance."

"Thank God!" is the general expression when we have finished putting the wounded on the boat.

"Now what is the next move?" is the query.

(To be continued)


June 30 - The command laid down on the river bank, some with blankets, others with overcoats, and many with nothing at all to wrap themselves in. The majority were soon soundly sleeping. Happy oblivion, that shut out for a time the sickening picture that has been ever present since the 37th.
When we awoke the steamer had vanished. We were marched across the Little Big Horn and camped in a beautiful grove of handsome cottonwood; grass and dry wood abundant. Here we remained all day, and the next morning, thoroughly rested, and spirits already recovering from the shock to which they had been subjected, started on the return march. Gen. Gibbon is very careful of his regiment, and no one need ask for a better leader.

On the evening of July 1st we reached the site of our old camp of June 25th. Only to think that while we were wearily toiling over the heat-oppressed hills on that day, the men fainting from thirst, Gen. Terry, eager to fulfill his part of the understanding with the impetuous Custer to meet him and jointly attack the confident Sioux, that fearless rider was already in the toils. The motives that swayed him may never be known. Whatever his faults, his bright record hides them all.

Lieut. Doan, 2nd cavalry, reports a column of smoke, very black and broad, in the direction of the retreating Sioux, and the general hope is that Crook may have struck them, and, as the men phrase it, "is peddling lead to them, an ounce at a time."

An early start was made on the morning of the 2nd July. The dry hills were crossed to Tullock's Fork. The day being quite cool, the men did not suffer at all. Reaching Tullock's Fork, halted for two hours and made coffee. The water stands in pools and is somewhat alkaline. At 3:15 resumed the march, arriving at a point opposite our permanent camp on the Yellowstone. The steamer was waiting to put us across the river. This was completed before sundown. Distance marched since yesterday morning, 48 miles, over a very broken, hilly country, with cactus so plentiful that a place to sit down during the hourly ten minutes' halt was hard to find.

On the 3rd of July the steamer (Far West) left for Fort Lincoln, taking the wounded and a mail.

We expect to remain here until reinforced or something is heard from the east. We are camped three miles above the site of our old ground at Fort Pease, and the country really looks home-like, lonesome as it is.

This 4th of July has not been a remarkably gay one, though the despondency that has been our invisible companion for a few days past has in a great degree been thrown off.

Late in the evening I learned that an old trapper who is known by the sobriquet of "Sandy", had crossed the river to carry dispatches to Gen. Crook, supposed to be in the vicinity of Cloud Peak. Sandy is to receive a reward of $500 if he gets through. It is a very perilous journey, and I do not think Sandy is the man to make it. The one man on whom I would most fully rely in such an undertaking - George Herendeen, says that he would not go for less than $1,500, and most of the old mountaineers declare that they would not make the attempt at any price, as all the country through which the messenger must pass swarms with hostiles from whom no mercy need be expected.

On the 5th, Gen. Gibbon sent for and directed me to cross the river with as many picked men as I chose to take, and drive over from there, a number of horses and mules that had been abandoned on the return from the Little Big Horn, and which were now reported in the bottom on the other side. Crossing with ten good men, they were deployed on the river bank. Passing through the timber, we reached the plain under the bluffs.
A covey of young sage hens were flushed and a number of shots fired at them. Starting for Tullock's Fork, distant four miles, we saw a man emerge from the brush on our right. It proved to be Sandy who, aroused by the noise of firing, came out of his hiding place. He stated that he had started the night before on his journey, but after riding about fifteen miles he had been fired at, by whom he could not see. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed into a ravine, thence into a body of timber, and as his horse was shot, he feared pursuit if he went further that night, and so returned to this point and hid himself in the brush, intending to resume his journey tonight. Knowing that if his story was true we would find no horses, we yet went up Tullock's Fork, but saw no signs save one track, that of Sandy's horse. He did not appear to be disheartened or afraid.

On the 6th, a vidette on the bluffs overlooking our camp reported a white horse on the opposite side of the river. Lieut. Booth, 7th Infantry, crossed with a number of men and secured the animal. It was the one Sandy had ridden, but the rider was missing, and the supposition is that he has been either killed or drowned.

A party of Crows came in on the 7th from their agency, and say that some thirty miles above here, and near the river, they heard a number of shots on the opposite side. Presently they saw a horseman pursued by another. The fleeing party was making for the timber by the river. Just as he was about to reach it and a place of safety, they heard quite a number of shots, almost a volley, still lower down. The fugitive turned and sped away, disappearing over the hills, neither horse nor rider seeming to have been hit. Just here the Crows became alarmed for their own safety, and hastened away with all possible dispatch, reaching camp much excited. It is surmised that the fleeing horseman was a courier from Crock.

Late this evening a party of Crows came in from Crock's command. They report that on June 14th he struck a Sioux camp and was obliged to fall back. His loss was nine killed and thirteen wounded. The Sioux left thirteen of their number on the field. They also say that all of the Crow scouts have abandoned Crock, as he does not fight to suit them. Engaged in the fight with Crock were two hundred Indian allies - Crows, Pawnees, and Snakes - and five companies of soldiers, (about 140 men). It looks as though Crock will have to call for reinforcements. We are not feeling very jubilant.

Sandy returned on July 8, having lost his rifle, and thoroughly cured of any desire he may have had for carrying dispatches. He says that he went up to the Little Big Horn, and at its mouth he made a raft on which to cross. The current swept him out into the Big Horn where his horse pulled away from him. The rapidly running water carried his raft under an overhanging tree, and scraped him off into the river. His rifle went to the bottom, and he reached the shore hatless and barefooted, in a country covered with cactus. Pulling off his clothes he wrung them out, and sat drying himself on the river bank when he was discovered by a party of Sioux. The country is so broken, so cut up by deep ravines near the river, that they could not reach him on their horses and he was fortunately enabled to get away. Following down the stream, picking his way among the thickly strewn cactus, he concealed himself as night approached in a cluster of small pines. The party of Sioux, to his dismay, camped within two hundred yards of him, luckily unaware of his presence. He finally made his way to the mouth of the Big Horn and called for assistance. His story is doubted somewhat.

The same day that Sandy returned a notice was posted on a tree calling
for volunteers to carry dispatches to Crook. Bell, Evans and Stewart, Co. E., 7th infantry, offered themselves, and are to start tonight. Stewart and Evans went down the river early in June from the mouth of the Rosebud without any hope of reward. This is a much more dangerous undertaking, and it will be a "scratch" if they get through. They are all three cool, determined men, and good shots.

On the 9th a courier came in from Powder River with a dispatch from Gen. Sheridan to the effect that Crook, though claiming a victory, had in reality been defeated. Col. Guy V. Henry had been shot in the head, the ball entering near the ear on one side and passing out near the ear on the other.

So the matter stands just this way: Custer, with five companies of the 7th cavalry, blotted out of existence; Crook has met with a defeat, been forced back to his train, and is calling for help, and we can thank our good fortune that we had, in the person of Gen. Gibbon, a leader too wise to be caught in the trap set for us in May by our wily enemies. Our little army of 350 men would have been destroyed or penned up as were Custer and Reno, and, if failing to finish us at once, they had surrounded us on the 9th of May, there could have been no rescue for us, and the grief that now darkens Fort Lincoln would have hung like a cement over Forts Shaw, Ellis and Camp Baker.

(To be continued.)


The assertion of last March that the strength of the Sioux had been greatly exaggerated has not proven correct, but the contrary.

The steamer set Bill Evans and Stewart, together with a company of cavalry, across the river this evening. The company is to escort the dispatch bearers about ten miles on their journey. I furnished each of them with a strong butcher knife, with which to dig in case of an attack.

A mail came in at noon and brought intelligence that the miners in the Black Hills are being raided upon by the Sioux, and no day passes without the sacrifice of life. It is a repetition of the ever changeless story, the precious metal is bought with blood. (Finerty, Col: July 14, Sgt. Bell, and pvt. Evans and Stewart arrived at Crook's camp on Tongue river.)

A report is current that another campaign is to be undertaken with the force now here and at Powder River. At that point are ninety dismounted cavalrmen and 150 infantry. That force and the one here combined would muster about 1,000 men.

Rumor also says that we are to cross the river and effect a junction with Crook by marching up the Rosebud. The river is falling rapidly and whatever is done must be undertaken at once. Our supplies, though of a poor quality; and old, at that, are the best that can be obtained. A quantity of butter in the commissary, though very rank, yet finds ready sale. One of the company commanders refused to allow any of it in his camp, saying that he was afraid it would cut rank and deprive him of the command of his company.

On July 16th Herendeen who had gone up the river to the Crow camp came to the river bank on the opposite side. He was accompanied by sixty of that tribe. They came to join the column as scouts. The steamer ferried them
across next day. They say that the Sioux are stealing their horses continually. They furnished the sequel to the story told by the forty crows on the 7th. The Sioux emboldened by their recent success, a small party of them made an attempt to steal horses from the Crows. Two of them were discovered and a hot pursuit followed, resulting in the defeat of both the marauders. It was this race that the watchers witnessed from their hiding place on the river bank.

About midnight on the 14th a dense black cloud slowly floated over our camp, bringing with it a current of damp, icy air that made one shiver. As it drifted lazily along one could imagine it peopled by gruff-voiced monsters all talking at once. The muffled rumbling of their voices caused the air to tremble. This was varied occasionally by what appeared, as compared with the deeper tones, to be a sharp scream, preceded by a bolt shot across the mass with many an angle, lighting up the scene with a blinding bluish glare that forced the beholder to shade the eyes. The storm is from the Southwest, which may account for the absence of hail. The horses are very much frightened at the unusual scene, stamping and striving to break loose from their fastenings. The rain is coming down in waves, and my tent is leaking disagreeably. Just as I lie down to sleep, a sharp peal of thunder sounded so close as to create the impression that it must have struck in camp. The next morning after going to reveille went back to bed, and was shortly afterwards awakened by Prince — my dog — paddling about in the water under my bed, which, fortunately was up on stakes. It was rather rough on those who had not built their beds up off the ground, but funny to see them coming to the front with the water dripping off their finger tips, and faces as long as boarding-house pie-crust. The water was running through camp in a broad stream about a foot deep. It came down over the bluffs in a cascade, the roar of which could be heard quite a distance. That was one body of water; another came through a narrow valley that debouched on the river bottom above our camp and ran all through it. I think Gen. Gibbon was the only one who escaped a wetting, though he had a very narrow escape from the lightning. The peal of thunder that was heard about midnight, was preceded by a bolt that struck a tree only a few feet from where he was lying. The opinion is that the cloud must have struck the high ground north of us, and, bursting, gave us rather more than our share of its burden. The tents of companies A and E have to be moved to higher ground. Everyone seemed to take the matter very philosophically, laughing at the woe-be-dragged appearance of each other. Breakfast was gotten under difficulties, and to reach the steamer we had to walk through water for over a hundred yards. A mail came in this afternoon, making some amends for the wetting of this morning. It was immediately announced that the steamer Josephine would start for Bismarck at noon tomorrow, and every one at once began to write. The steamer went up to the peninsula above the Big Horn and brought to camp 45 Crows, who came to join in the fight against the Sioux, who are even now making war upon them. Another party of 150 are expected down, though they may not come.

The steamer (Josephine) left at noon on the 16th for Powder river and Bismarck. Gen. Terry, Capt. Moynihan, 7th cavalry, and a number of enlisted men whose terms of service have nearly expired, took passage on her. These last were allowed to take advantage of this opportunity for reaching the states. The probability is that we shall be cut all winter, and unless a large supply of clothing reaches us before the boats stop running, we will be but poorly prepared for a winter campaign. There is even now evidence of scurvy among the men, but we find here an excellent antiscorbutic in the abundance of the black and yellow wild currant. The men are gathering them in quantities. The river is falling quite rapidly, and fears are entertained that the steamer may not be able to return.
A strange oversight on my part was omitting to mention the loss in Custer's battle of three of the most noted guides and scouts in this country. Michael Boyer, Chas. Reynolds and Bloody Knife. The first and last of these were themselves Sioux. There is another scout that the Sioux would very well like to get hold of, Fred Girard. He had sent a number of them to the happy hunting ground, and those who remain want him to go over and settle with those whom he has placed in his debt.

(To be continued.)

The Indian Campaign of 1876, by Capt. W. Clifford, Co. E, 7th infantry, U.S.A.

On the morning of July 19th the camp was shocked to learn that Captain Thompson, 3rd cavalry, had committed suicide by shooting himself through the breast with a revolver. He had for years been a sufferer from consumption, a disease contracted while he was an inmate of Libby prison; and to use his own very forcible language, he "suffered the torments of the damned."

His funeral took place at 6 o'clock p.m. this afternoon. He lies buried on the hills west of our camp, opposite the mouth of the Big Horn. poor fellow-"the heart knoweth its own bitterness." May he rest in peace. Gen. Gibbon delivered a short but touching eulogy over his grave.

This is Lieut. Collidge's birthday, and he has "done himself proud." Started by setting out two bottles of ale - then sent to the steamer a leather bucket, which was brought back filled with beer. This was followed by a new tin coffee pot full of the same refreshing beverage. Then a sharp discussion on the Indian policy, after which each one went to his tent to hunt for something to eat.

At 12:30 o'clock on the morning of the 20th, two shots in quick succession were heard, immediately followed by a scattering volley. The men at once turned out and for a while all was still. Then we heard two more shots. All this firing was in the 7th cavalry camp, which is nearly a mile below us. Soon the sergeant of the guard came around to tell us to go to bed again. To bed we went, no wiser than when we turned out, though of course, very curious to learn what it was all about. After reveille quite a number of stories were flying about, and we finally learned that two Sioux had been inside the 7th cavalry camp trying to steal horses. The guard discovered and fired at them, but not until the thieves had passed beyond the line of horses, and then they were too far away. At daylight the Crow scouts started out and discovered the trail of seven, then twenty three more. The trails joined and went off in the direction of Fort Peck, where they were no doubt bound. The small party of five Crows said that they had but ten rounds of ammunition each. So they wisely returned. Acourier coming up from Powder river day before yesterday reports passing a broad trail leading toward Fort Peck. The opinion is daily gaining ground that the army of Sioux that fought Crook and Custer is being gradually depleted by desertions, and for the sole reason that they cannot hang together through lack of food.

Our Crow interpreter, La Forge, who is married to a crow woman, told me tonight that when the panic stricken scouts who deserted us went back to their camp they reported all of Custer's men killed; that they left us going down into the same place from whence there could not possibly be any escape for us, La Forge's Indian wife and relatives, supposing him to be killed, went into mourning. His wife, who had very long hair, at once cut it off - cut off one of her fingers, slashed her legs with a knife, destroyed her lodge, and gave his horses, twelve in number, away. All of his female relatives cut off their hair, and cut themselves according to the degree of their grief. His male friends killed horses, and painted themselves for mourning.