Reynolds fight with Crazy Horse, March 17, 1876.

While in camp the General came over amongst the scouts and tried to find out the different opinions held by them as to where the Indians were most likely to be found. The off-hand opinion amongst the scouts was that the Indians were camped on Tongue river or the Little Big Horn; but I knew better than that from my intimate knowledge of the Indians, but didn't care to express an opinion different from the majority, so I kept my mouth shut.

When we left Powder river the General asked me where I thought the Indians were, and I said on Powder river, and he asked me what made me think so, and I told him from my knowledge of the Indians and their mode of living in the winter time. I knew where they ranged during the winter months. They had a certain range where they went, just like animals. The next morning the General wanted us scouts to go ahead of the command and find whether there were any Indians camped on Tongue river. It was the same scouting party that started from Powder river - the same men with two additions.

We crossed along the forks where the Big Red is at present, and went on to the head of Dutch creek, following it down to its mouth; from there down to the mouth of Prairie Dog, down to Tongue river. We found a spot where the Indians had been camped about a month before. We waited there until the command came down and overtook us. It was to follow up our trail. It took the command two days to reach that point from Clear creek over to upper Prairie Dog. From there all the scouts except Stagner (there were thirty-four of us started out) followed Tongue river down and scouted in the vicinity of Tongue river to its mouth on the Yellowstone, where we rested. The command was to go as far as Otter creek and wait there until our return. Gen Crock asked me how he would know the creek when he got to it. I told him there were three pine trees in a row, tight in the forks, all by themselves, and were standing right on the banks of Tongue river just above where Otter creek empties in, and I said "when you see those pine trees, you go into camp there." He asked me if I knew every rock and tree in the country, and I told him I came pretty near it. He was surprised at my knowledge of the country. The other scouts could travel along the road, but after they got a little distance from the highway they didn't know a thing about the country.

We got back to the command two days afterwards, and I said where we found another old camp ground of the Indians. We found where they had killed a crow Indian, quartered him and hung him up. It was on Tongue river just below the mouth of Hanging Woman. His arms, legs, head and everything were hung up in different places on the trees down where the village had been, and it had occurred before the command started. I heard the Indians had killed a man there in camp. He was stealing horses. It must have been done a month before. There is nothing left of a horse thief after the Indians catch him.

The General came over to the camp and called another council of the scouts. He asked their advice as to which way he would have to go to find the Indians. That is where I got the enmity of Reshaw. He claimed the Indians were on the Little Big Horn. I was positive that I knew where they were, and asked the General if he wanted to find the Indians. He told me it was either a fight with the Indians or starvation, and he says:

"We can't starve; we have too many mules, but only two or three days' rations left."
I said that if that was the case and they did as I told them, I would take them to the Indian village inside of three days.

"That is what we want," remarked the General.

I said, "I will start out at 12 o'clock, and want the best horses there are in the command, or as good."

"All right, you shall have them," said he, and he asked how many men I wanted.

I said I would go by myself.

"All right," he said, "I will give the orders. Do you know of any horses with the command you would like to have?"

(185) "I said there were two good animals in the command. I would like one or the other of them. He told me to name them and he would have them fed for me. One was his lead horse - a French Canadian horse. I told him, and he said:

"All right, I will have him fed."

I told him to follow my trail. The snow was very deep, so the command could follow my tracks, but, said, "I want you to keep these scouts all with the command, and don't let them go away from you."

He said he would do as requested. Of course, there were several instructions that I gave him: To keep as close on my trail as he could, and I told him also that I should, probably, when I struck Otter Creek, follow up the creek; that he wanted to watch my trail very close from there on. There were only three trails going to Powder river, and I didn't know which I would take. They were all Indian trails. They were the only ones we could travel on very well. I left the command at about 12 o'clock that night, and traveled until about 7 o'clock the next morning, when I reached Otter creek.

Just as I came on to the hills leading to Otter creek, or just before, I got off my horse and crept up to the hills to look up and down the creek with my glass. Up the creek about five miles from where I was I saw two Indians trailing a buffalo, or some animal track. They were tracking down the creek towards where I was. I watched them very close, all their movements, and was sure just as quick as I watched them awhile that they were out hunting, and that they had come from their (188) village. It was quite a ride to the command, and I didn't suppose it would come to where I was until between 1 and 2 o'clock. I thought the Indians would have plenty of time to get out of sight of the command before it reached there. Well, I must have been watching them for about three hours. I did not dare to move or show myself, but I was looking at the Indians through my glass at this time, watching every move. When they had got almost opposite me, they stopped their horses all at a sudden and looked towards me. I was not over a mile and a half from them, and could almost see their features through the glass. All of a sudden they commenced whipping their horses. There were some pines right ahead of them, and they ran in behind them and got off their horses, crept on to the brow of the hill and looked towards me. I could just see the top of their heads. I thought to myself, "What if they should see me?"

Well, I soon found out what it was that attracted their attention. Pretty soon here comes all those scouts, running their horses across the hills. They were scattered for two miles along the hill in plain view of the Indians, who stopped, and pretty soon started for the timber; but instead of going back the way they came they went in a northeasterly direction towards Powder river, and I knew they were going on to the main trail to Powder river. In fact, when I saw that the scouts had scared the Indians, I waited until they had got up to me. Then I took four of them and started after the Indians to keep them out of sight of the command. The Indians (187) didn't wait for us, but just kept going. But they were out of the way of the command. They didn't see it. I was satisfied that they
couldn't recognize whether we were Indians or whites. Probably they would think we were a war party of Crows, and go for camp as fast as they could. We went across Otter creek for convenience. The command had got there, and I told the General about it. It made me mad, because the scouts had got away from the command. I told him, that if he had kept the scouts away the Indians would not have known of our coming, and it would have been no trouble getting into their camp.

The General said he gave them orders but they escaped the command. He said he didn't think the command so close to me as it was. I explained that they were getting close to the Indians, and I could not tell how near we were, and that was the reason I had asked him to keep the scouts with the command. He asked me what I intended to do. I replied that I intended to jump the village tomorrow morning if he would give me four companies of cavalry. There were ten companies in the command. The General asked:

"Do you think you can find the village?"

I said, "I don't think anything about it; I know it."

"All right," he says; "I will give you six companies, and will keep four with the pack train. When do you want to start?"

"I want to start about an hour by sun, so I can reach the forks of Otter creek before dark," I replied.

I was going to follow the back tracks of the Indians, or that was my intention. The General said he would have the horses fed what grain there was left - there was only one day's forage left - and that the cavalry would be ready to start by the time I wanted them, with Col. Reynolds in command.

Reynolds was Colonel of the Third cavalry. Gen. Crook gave the necessary orders, and then called the Colonel over to headquarters and gave him his orders in my presence, no other person being present. His orders were very strict - that we should jump the village and capture the horses, take all the dried meat we could get, and keep the Indian saddles and burn the village, and to hold the village until we could get a courier back to him. We were to capture the Indians if possible. That was the purport of Gen. Crook's verbal orders to Col. Reynolds.

Everything being ready, we started and reached the forks of Otter creek about sundown. Finding that the Indians we had seen had come down the left hand fork, I was almost satisfied where the village lay.

(189) THE BATTLE WITH CRAZY HORSE.

That night was the coldest one I ever experienced in the northern country. It was the night of the 16th of March. Just as quick as it became dark I got off my horse and gave him to one of the scouts to lead. I had to go afoot in order to follow the Indian tracks. I footed it all night long. It was warm work for me. I came to the Powder river divide some six miles from Powder river, about 3 o'clock in the morning, and went on to locate the village, leaving the command six miles to the rear to await my return. One of the men with me was Buckskin Jack, a notorious scout (who is now traveling with Buffalo Bill), then a young man. He might be called the "Midget of the Plains." The other man's name was Phoenix. He was hanged afterwards down on the Yellowstone for horse stealing.

When I started out it was sixty degrees below zero; I think they said it was sixty-three. We had a couple of doctors with us. Dr. Hartsoff, now a ranking colonel, was one of them. Just at daylight we came up a hill above Powder river. There was an immense fog, so thick I could not see anything. It had raised out of the river, but I could hear the bells on the Indian ponies. Of course that satisfied me that there was a village there. I sent Buckskin Jack back after the command, telling him to bring them up as soon as possible,
while I went down and located the village. I could not tell where it was, on account of the fog. I was up about one thousand feet, and it was straight down to the village. I got about half way down the hill when the fog raised, so that I could look in under it and see the village down below me, about a mile off. I could see the tops of the lodges, and the horses, and could hear the Indians talk. An Indian was haranguing the camp, and it was from this one that I learned that a party of the Indians had gone back the trail to find out who we were, for they had seen us on Otter creek; but instead of going the upper trail, they had gone the lower one, so that we had missed them. I found this out through the vrier, I could hear it as plain as could be. I could not tell how large a village it was from where I stood. They had camped in a low bed of a river, or where a river had been perhaps a hundred years ago, right under a big bank. The Indians had camped in the circle of this old river bed. There was timber scattered all through the bottom, and they were camped amongst this timber. I supposed there were some one hundred lodges, and from seven hundred to one thousand Indians. I came back up on the hill. Just as I reached there, Col Reynolds and his company came up close to me. Said I:

"Colonel, here are the Indians. Now, that I have found them, all that you have got to do is to fight them."

He says, "What am I going to do?"

(191) "Fight them Indians," I replied. "I suppose that is what you want."

He says, "What can I do?"

He seemed lost. I says:

"Fight them Indians; that is all you have to do."

"How will I place my command?" he asked.

If I had known as much then as I do now, I would have told him terrible quick. I said:

"You wanted me to find the Indians. Now, there they are. Do what you want with them."

He asked: "Can you place the command? Tell me how to place it?"

I said: "Yes, I can do that. Send some down this way, and some down the other way, and keep the Indians from going into the hills."

"Will you place them?" he asked.

I replied: "Yes, I will place one party, and send another man with the other."

He gave the orders. Captain Egan of the Second Cavalry was to make the charge down the river into the village. Captain Mills of the Third Cavalry was to support him. Captain Moore of the Third was to keep the Indians from going into the hills. Captain Noyes of the Third Cavalry, with the scouts, was to help run the ponies off. I sent Buckskin Jack with Captain Noyes, Little Bat and Charlie Jenneres with Captain Egan's company. I went with Captain Moore's battalion to put it into position. It was 7 o'clock when we started to take our positions. It was 9 o'clock before we got into position. It was 10:30 when Captain Egan charged the village.

(192) After I put Moore's battalion into position I started down across the flat towards the village. I suppose it was about half a mile from there right down across the flat. The horses and everything were right in sight, and we had been in sight ourselves ever since seven o'clock, and the Indians had not seen us. We had been just where, if they had looked up the hill, they would have seen us, and they had not caught sight of us. I went right down across this flat and walked up to within twenty yards of the village and commenced talking to the Indians before they knew there was anybody around. By this time Capt. Egan had come up in sight.

This was the 17th of March, 1876, fight. When I got within twenty yards of the camp I yelled to Crazy Horse. I recalled what he had told
me during my endeavors to secure the Black Hills treaty - that he would rather fight than make a treaty - and told him that now was the time to come out and get all the fighting he wanted, as the troops were all around his camp!

He did not have time to answer. The charge had begun. Egan's command came right up by the side of them. The battalion that I had stationed to keep the Indians from going into the hills, instead of going to the position assigned it, commenced firing from the position it held. I don't know whether they thought they were firing at the Indians or not, but they were firing into Egan's company. I suppose they imagined they were fighting the Indians. I had to go in with Egan's troops to keep from being shot. We charged right down into the center of the village. As Capt. Egan entered (193) the village, Hospital Steward Will Bryant was riding alongside of him. As he dashed in among the lodges an Indian came from one of the tepees (sic) aiming to kill the Captain. Bryant, seeing that Egan was in danger, ran in front of him, his horse receiving the bullet in its head, killing it instantly. Bryant took in after the Indian on foot. He was a foot-racer, but he didn't catch him, though he ran the Indian in amongst the lodges.

The horses and soldiers charged right through the village. They fought, I guess, for thirty minutes, when Capt. Mill's command came to their relief. When Mills came to their relief the Indians went right into the hills, as there was nobody to stop them or head them off. They went right into the rocks. We had no chance to kill or capture many of them, but secured the village and horses and one Indian. I forget how many soldiers there were killed. Everything belonging to the village was destroyed by fire, even the saddles and meat. The Indians escaped to the hills with the loss of but one buck and one old squaw, and she was not lost, as she was captured after being shot; and as nobody in the command wanted her, she was left there.

She told me that Sitting Bull's village was situated down the river about sixty miles. The village we had destroyed was Crazy Horse's village. I knew this village by the horses. Knew every horse there was there. The old squaw told me Sitting Bull's village was at the mouth of Beaver creek, but I had suspected this all the time.

It was about an hour after the fight commenced that Col. Reynolds sent for me, and told me to be ready to (194) move at one o'clock, as he wanted to go to the mouth of Clear creek that night. That was the first I knew of the orders he had given. I asked him if he was going to keep the dried meat and saddles, and he said he had given orders for everything to be burned; that he would not let any of the soldiers take anything; they had positive orders for everything to be burned up. We captured between twelve and fifteen hundred head of ponies. I asked the Colonel then to give me some soldiers to drive the ponies up with, as I only had twelve men to drive the herd. He said:

"No; the scouts will have to drive them."

"If they can't drive them," he replied, "shoot them."

I said, "They have not got ammunition enough to shoot them."

And he answered, "What the can't kill, let go."

Captain Egan then came up and said, "I am the rear guard, and I will see that the ponies get into camp tonight."

Soon after this we left there. I put a scout with each battalion. I put two men in two battalions, and I took a battalion myself, so as to guide them during our night's travel and keep them from getting lost. I
was not very long going that twenty miles with one battalion. We got there just at dusk; was expecting to meet Gen. Crook there. Not finding him in camp at that point, we went into camp there ourselves. It was about nine o'clock before the other battalions came in. It was about twelve o'clock before the ponies came in with Captain Egan as rear guard. (185) I asked the Colonel then if he would give me a guard for the ponies during the night; but he said the men were too tired and he didn't think the ponies were in any danger; that they would be perfectly safe turned loose, or that the scouts could guard them until morning. I caught up my horse and mule, tied them up and told the scouts to do the same with theirs, together with the horses they wanted to ride, and turn the rest loose; made down a bed and went to sleep. I didn't think I had been asleep ten minutes before somebody came and woke me up, and told me the Indians were driving off the ponies. I jumped up, and it was just break of day. Off about one half mile from camp were the Indians driving off the ponies. I went to the Colonel and woke him up, asking him for a company of soldiers to go out and capture the ponies. He told me the men not having anything to eat, were both hungry and tired, and he could not send them out. He told me I had better take the scouts and go out and see what I could do with them. There were probably twenty-five or thirty Indians driving off the ponies.

I didn't send the scouts out. I just asked if there was anybody wanted to go, but there were only four men volunteered - Little Bat, John Shangreau, Buckakin Jack and another scout. We saddled our horses and started after the Indians. They were going in the way that Gen. Crook was coming from, and I thought most probably that I could meet him; and as the General had four companies of soldiers it would have been a sure thing that we could have taken the horses away (186) from the Indians. I overtook the Indians about two miles from camp, and had a kind of running fight with them until about 1 o'clock. We recaptured the horses and they got them back again. They did this two or three times. There were too many of them for us, and the last time we tried to recapture the ponies we charged on them, and they shot Little Bat's horse out from under him, and left him afoot, and he had to get on behind me.

It was not very pleasant, fighting the Indians in that fashion. They saw that one of us was afoot and came right down for us. I kept them at bay as much as I could, and finally they left us alone. We were about twenty miles from the river on the head of Otter creek when this occurred, and not meeting the General I turned around and started back. It was dark when we reached where the camp had been in the morning, but it had moved. We followed the trail right up Powder river. We went up about ten miles and saw the camp seven or eight miles above us. We could see the reflection from the camp fires.

On our way we ran into another lot of Indians. It was perfectly dark and cloudy and I heard something coming along the trail and waited for them to come up, and who should it be but some Indians driving horses. I sent one of the boys ahead of the horses the Indians were driving, and one of the scouts and myself went to head the horses off, and the other two scouts fired into the Indians. Not knowing how many there were of us, the Indians just dropped everything (187) and ran. We captured the horses, and Little Bat got an animal to ride from there to camp, and we drove the other animals in with us.

There were eleven head of horses. The horses had been stolen from George Harris, who lived on the Platte river. The Indians had been to Harris' place, driven off the horses, and were taking them down to Crazy Horse's camp, not knowing of the battle that had been fought there. So from there we were fixed comfortably until we got into camp. We got within about half a mile of camp, when who should we meet but Gen. Crook,
who had been watching for us. He came down and met us, saying that he had been watching there ever since dark, about one-half mile from the command. The first thing I knew he asked me if that was me, and I said it was, and he came up and shook hands with me. He told me he had just caught up with the ranks, and had got into camp a little before sundown. I was plumb played out. I had been three nights without any sleep to amount to anything. The General didn't say much to me that night. When I got to camp, Captain Egan came over to where I was, and says:

"Frank, I have something warm for you."

He took me over to his quarters and gave me a cup of coffee and some hot biscuits and butter, and I think that was the finest meal I ever ate in my life. After I got through eating, the General told me to go to bed, and I don't believe it was over five seconds before I was asleep. The Indians and soldiers were fighting all night, but I never heard it. The General woke me the next (193) morning, and the camp was about ready to move. I never knew anything about the fight. He asked me about everything that had occurred at the Crazy Horse battle, and why the orders were not obeyed. I didn't spare them a bit in the world. I told him just how the whole thing had been run. He didn't say anything to them, but said that as Col. Reynolds was in charge of the command, he didn't want to take the charge away from him. He never said he was going to put him under arrest. He just simply went to work and put him under arrest, and never told anybody. Reynolds was not relieved of his command until we got to Cheyenne.

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(Grouard, when the battle with Crazy Horse occurred, knew nothing of the stories concerning himself that were being circulated in the command, nor did he find out anything about them until Gen. Crook explained matters on the way to Fort Petterson at the close of the campaign. He says the indecision of Reynolds nonplussed and worried him. He did not then even dream that Reynolds and some other officers of the command suspected or doubted his loyalty; but after his talk with Gen. Crook everything was made plain. Fear of an ambush - a vision hatched in the jealous brain of some "carpet warrior" - prompted, so Grouard says, Reynolds in ordering a retreat, when every principle of war and manhood demanded the exact reverse. It was, as captain Bourke so tersely expresses it, "one of those things that no man can explain." General Crook divined the motive, how-(193) ever, and in his soldierly way placed the responsibility where it belonged. The facts related by Grouard are admirably borne out by the narrative of Captain Bourke, who, in speaking of the battle says, that "both Mills and Egan were doing excellent work in the village (destroying it), while the pony herd was held by Noyes." He does not try to find any excuse for the failure of Reynolds to fortify his position and send word to Crook (who was at no great distance with four companies) to come at once to the assistance of the rest of the command. He must have known that the captured pony herd consisted of over one thousand head; that the number of saddles run up to nearly two hundred; that a thousand robes and furs were in the captured tepis (sic); that a great amount of ammunition had fallen into the hands of his soldiers, and that "tons upon tons of meat" had been left by the fleeing savages; yet, in the face of all this, Reynolds not only abandoned the camp of Crazy Horse, but did it so precipitately that the dead and wounded were left for mutilation and butchery. And Captain Bourke says, with considerable feeling, that it was whispered among the men "that one of our poor soldiers fell alive into the enemies hands and was cut limb from limb." The captain does not make this statement from his "own knowledge," but adds, "I can only say I believe it to be true."

Referring to the bivouac at the mouth of Lodge Pole creek on the night
succeeding the battle with Crazy Horse, Captain Bourke says there was neither feed for the animals nor rations for the men - "not even for the (300) wounded men, of whom we had six." The men, after two days' hard riding, marching and fighting, were completely tired out, and no attempt was made to place a guard over the captured pony herd; and "even when the loss was discovered" - when the report was carried to Reynolds the following morning, as detailed by Grouard, that the Indians were driving off the ponies - "no attention was paid and no attempt made," concludes Bourke, "to pursue and regain the mainstay of Indian hostility."

When Crook reached camp about noon on the day after the battle, says this same authority, he was very much gratified to learn that the attempt to find the village of Crazy Horse had been successful; but he could not hide his chagrin and disappointment upon discovering that the dead and wounded had been left in the hostile camp, and that his soldiers were suffering from cold and hunger when a great abundance of furs and provisions had been lost to the command through the hasty withdrawal from the Indian village of the victorious troopers. There was no other alternative for General Crook but to abandon the campaign and return to Fetterman, which meant a long, suffering journey of over one hundred and eighty miles, with the thermometer thirty degrees below zero. From Fetterman the troops were distributed to various forts pending the organization of the spring campaign.

"We had no beef," says Bourke, "as our herd had been run off on account of the failure to guard it; we were out of supplies, although we had destroyed enough (201) to last a regiment for a couple of months; we were encumbered with sick, wounded, and cripples with frozen limbs, because we had not sense enough to save the furs and robes in the village."

There is the story from the standpoint of a brave a soldier as ever carried weapon in defense of country; and yet there was a monstrous waste of sentiment over the fact that the battle with Crazy Horse led to a court martial and other unpleasant recollections for General Reynolds.

Grouard maintains that the key to the immediate settlement of all the Indian's troubles was lost in failing to follow up the advantage gained through the capture of the Crazy Horse village. The village of Sitting Bull, situated but sixty miles below where Crazy Horse was found, would have fallen into the hands of the troops also had proper precaution been taken to capture the fleeing savages under Crazy Horse. But somebody blundered, and the year 1876 was destined to bear awful fruit from this terrible error. With Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull conquered, the world would never have received the shocks it felt successively when news of the battle of the Rosebud, the Little Big Horn, the War Bonnett and Slim Buttes electrified and horrified the people. - AUTHOR.)

(223) BATTLE OF THE ROSEBUD.

The General asked me, upon my arrival in camp, from my trip to the village of the friendly Crows, if I had any idea where the Sioux camp was. From all signs I had seen I supposed they were on the Rosebud, and I so informed him. He told me that he wanted to start as soon as he could get ready. Two days afterward the infantry was mounted on mules, and the command started for the Rosebud, leaving the wagon train upon the Big Goose, about a mile from the forks. We traveled in light marching order, taking as little with us as possible - much less than we needed. The first night out we camped on Tongue river, near the mouth of Big Goose, the next morning starting off through the hills over to Badger creek, sending out two parties of scouts from there to try and discover the Sioux village.

There being plenty of buffaloes along the line of march, the Indians killed hundreds of them. Camping on the Rosebud, we ran onto a scouting party of Sioux just before reaching the river, but from the direction they
took I was satisfied the camp was on the Rosebud, (234) down the stream. The next morning we moved down toward the Big Bend of the Rosebud and went into temporary camp there to await the report of the scouts who had been sent out to discover the hostile village. We had not reached the Big Bend before we went into camp.

It was the morning after the scouts had been sent out that the Sioux were reported to be coming in large numbers. Then we moved down to the Big Bend. There we layed down our arms and rested without unsaddling. Our Indian allies had caught up their horses ready for anything that happened to turn up. The scouts commenced to come in then, telling us that the Indians were coming. Not having had much experience with the troops I could not tell whether they were ready to meet the enemy or not; but I supposed they were always ready for a fight, and did not pay much attention to them. It was not long before an Indian they called Humpy, a little hunch-backed Sioux, came riding down over the hills as fast as his horse could carry him, hallooning "Sioux." As he came into camp he said the Sioux were charging on us, and almost at the same time you could hear the Sioux war-cry.

The Indians and the scouts jumped on their horses, and just then the Sioux came charging down over the hills. But the troops were not ready to meet the attack, so the Crows met the first charge of the Indians, and I believe if it had not been for the Crows, the Sioux would have killed half of our command before the soldiers were in a position to meet the attack. It was a (235) hand-to-hand fight for quite a while between the Crows and Sioux. It was on a kind of plateau where they were fighting, and the troops were down under the hills. I charged up the hill when the Shoshones and Crows started out, so that I could see everything that occurred. It was all of twenty minutes, I think, before the soldiers appeared over the hill. As soon as the soldiers came up and commenced fighting, the Sioux fell back. The coming together of the Sioux, Crows, and Shoshones I think was the prettiest sight in the way of a fight that I have ever seen. They were all mixed up and I could hardly distinguish our allies from the hostiles.

After the fight became general with the troops, our Indians drew back. I passed where one Crow Indian was sitting on the ground, and he didn't act as if he was one bit hurt. He was watching the fight between the Indians, and every once in awhile he would yell like a madman. He was unable to get on his feet, having been shot just above the knee, and the bone was terribly shattered. His horse was lying dead by his side. He seemed to be so interested in the fight that he had entirely forgotten his wound. The soldiers could not tell one Indian from another, but the redskins knew each other all right, and if a man was familiar with them he would know; but it was very hard to keep the soldiers from firing into our allies after the troops became engaged with the Sioux, mistaking the Crows and Shoshones for the enemy.

After the troops came up they formed into line and commenced driving the Sioux back. Then the Shoshones, Crows and Sioux commenced separating. The friendly (236) Indians came back, and the Sioux went on the hills. The soldiers kept driving the hostiles back until they got them on the big flat beyond the first line of hills. Col. Guy V. Henry, with his battalion, was stationed on the left, and he was ordered up the river. Mills' battalion was down below on the right, and the other battalions were in the center of the fight. The Crow and Snake (Shoshoni) Indians got scattered out, but would keep in behind the troops out of harm's reach as much as possible. I was close to the position held by General Crook, and he was in about the center of the field. The General ordered a battalion to charge the Indians
and drive them back.

In the charge that followed, one poor fellow's horse ran away with him, and the animal went right for the Indians, just as the order had been given to retreat. The horse kept straight ahead after the command had driven the Indians away and turned back, and ran up to within forty or fifty yards of the hostiles before they turned. Of course, they began shooting at the horseman, and as the horse began to turn, both of his hands were shot off at the wrists. When he came past me both of his hands were dangling. The Indians had turned the horse by firing at it. I rode up on the hill, and the poor fellow was calling for some one to check his horse. I rode very rapidly and tried to get in ahead of the frightened animal, and then I could see his hands dangling from his wrists.

I tried to head off the horse, but the animal got in ahead of me, started down the divide and went right through the troops, never stopping for anything. The (237) Indians were on that side of the flat fighting, and he went through the line of troops towards them, and I went after him. I got up as close as I could to him. My horse was a fast one, but I could not reach the runaway animal's bridle, and, whip as much as I would, I was unable to grasp it. If he had been a man of any nerve or had not lost his head, he might have helped turn the horse by grasping the reins with his wrists. I hit the horse over the head as hard as I could in an effort to turn it, but the horse was stubborn and frightened and was not very easily turned. I told the wounded man to throw himself off when I hit the horse the second time. He gave me one look that I will never forget. I got up as close as I could to the horse and hit it on the side of the head. The blow turned the horse some, but not clear around, and the wounded man threw himself off. The horse went right in among the Indians and was lost to view. The wounded man picked himself up and ran down over the hill out of sight. The Indians were shooting at us all of this time.

When I got back to the command the Indians were going down below us, and the General had sent all of his aids out with orders to the different commanders. It was right after this runaway horse incident occurred that the Indians got Col. Henry's battalion in a tight place, and seriously wounded that gallant officer. The Indians were pressing down pretty close. Henry's battalion received an order to retreat, but I do not know who gave the order. I suppose while standing there Col. Henry was shot. As quick as they commenced to (238) retreat the Indians rushed down. Yute (Ute) John made a dash to the place where the Colonel fell, and got off his horse and turned it loose just as the Indians got to Col. Henry. Single-handed he stood them off until the soldiers commenced shooting and drove the Indians away. In the meantime, Yuta (Ute) John, as quick as the Indians were driven away, put Col. Henry on his back and carried him over to where Henry's battalion was. If it had not been for this Indian (Yute John) Col. Henry would have been killed and scalped where he fell. The battalion that was on the other side of Henry had retired at the same time that Henry's battalion retreated.

I saw an Indian run right in among the soldiers as they were retreating. I don't know whether it was done purposely, but I saw a soldier hold up a gun as though he were giving it to this Indian; but I think the gun was held up to protect his head from a blow aimed at it by the Sioux. There were several soldiers killed. It was right after Henry was shot that I went over to where Gen. Crook was. There were no aids there with him, so he told me to go down and tell Capt. Mills to drive the Indians out of the Rosebud canyon. I went down and carried the order to Mills. It was but a short time afterwards that
one of the aids came to me and said the General wanted to see me. When I got to Crook, he said:

"I am going to move down the Rosebud canyon, and want you to go with two battalions as far as you can down the defile and find out whether the village is at the other end of the canyon or not."

(329) It went down the canyon with the two battalions. After getting down into the rocky pass, and seeing what was going on amongst the Indians, I became convinced they would not attack us; would not pay any attention to my detachment when they wanted the entire command. I was aware of this as quick as I got in there. They wanted to draw the entire command down into this canyon and massacre every soul in it. I had not been in the canyon twenty minutes before I knew what was going on. The canyon rose to a height of one thousand feet on both sides of us. The Indians had all of this fortified. I had not almost through the canyon with the two companies when an aide-de-camp (Col. Nickerson) overtook us. The Indians had tried so hard to draw the command down into the canyon that the General thought it was a fresh attack made, and wanted the two battalions to come back to the field and take the Indians in the rear — wanted us to come up behind them. So, going up into the right of the canyon on the north side, we attempted to come in behind the redskins. But the Indians were watching all our movements, and before we could get in behind them they had drawn off.

"Subsequent investigation shows what an awful fate we escaped by obeying Crook's order to file out of the trap by our left flank. Innumerable piles of felled trees in our path and on the sides of that savage ravine showed where the Sioux had lain in ambush for our approach. Half a mile further on, and not a man of our battalion would have come out alive. The five companies on the second, following to support us (the Third Cavalry) would have been massacred without fail, for there was no room to deploy or rally. The Indians held the timber barricades in front and flank. They would have closed upon our unguarded rear, and another horror would have been added to the long and ghastly catalogue of Indian-American warfare. However, a miss is as good as a mile, and we felt duly thankful that we escaped being the awful example of that unfortunate campaign." — Finerty's Warpath and Bivouac.

"In one word," says Capt. Bourke in his "On the Border with Crook," "the battle of the Rosebud was a trap, and Crazy Horse, the leader in command here, as at the Custer massacre a week later, was satisfied he was going to have everything his own way. He stated afterwards, when he had surrendered to General Crook at the agency (Red Cloud) that he had no less than six thousand five hundred men in the fight, and that the first attack was made with fifteen hundred, the others being concealed behind the bluffs and hills. His plan of battle was either to lead detachments in pursuit of his people, and turning quickly cut them to pieces in detail, or draw the whole of Crook's force down into the canyon of the Rosebud, whence escape would have been impossible, as it formed a veritable cul-de-sac, the vertical walls hemming in the sides, the front being closed by a dam and abatis of broken timber which gave a depth of ten feet of water and mud, the rear, of course, to be shut off by thousands of yelling, murderous Sioux and Cheyennes. That was the Sioux programme, as learned, that day, or afterwards at the agencies from the surrendering hostiles in the spring of the following year."

(331) It will be seen from what both Finerty and Bourke say of the Rosebud canyon that Grouard had noted things very accurately, and divined the purpose of the Sioux to a nicety as he passed down the "cul-de-sac" in advance of Mill's courageous battalion. He knew, because his six years' experience with these same Indians had been a practical lesson to him, that death awaited the entire command at the lower end of the canyon. One of the great wonders now is why Crazy Horse, when it was discovered that Mill's battalion turned to
leave the death trap, did not fall upon and annihilate it. The explanation
seems to be found in the words of Crazy Horse himself. He wanted the entire
command, and even then had hopes of getting it. Failing, he repeated the
tactics then attempted at the Custer battle, and, with the same force he had
thrown against Crook, caught the five troops of the Seventh Cavalry (rank
and file) to the very last soul. - AUTHOR.)
I had seen all I wanted to see to convince me of what was going on; and
when I got back the General was just ready to start down the canyon. In fact,
the whole command had started when I met it. I asked General Crook where they
were going. He said:
"Down to take the village."
"You can't go through the canyon," I told him.
He asked why.
I said, "You can't go through. They will kill your whole command if you
attempt to go through there."
He could not believe that; laughed quietly about it. I did everything I
could to dissuade him, and the only
(333) way I could prevail on him to abandon the undertaking was by telling
him there was no ammunition in the command. The scouts didn't have any, and
a great many of the companies didn't have any, and when the general gave
orders to find out how much ammunition there was, it didn't average ten
cartridges to the man; and that was the only thing that stopped him. In fact
it was the only thing that saved his command, because he would have made the
attempt to go through the canyon under any other circumstances. (Gen. Chase,
who served as a Lieutenant under Gen. Crook in this campaign informed me that
it was the firm belief of every staff and line officer at that time that a
small number of disciplined troops could whip a very superior number of the
Indians, if only the Indians could be forced to stand their ground and fight.
The fighting ability of the Sioux was greatly underestimated by the U.S. Army
in 1876, prior to June 25, as were their numbers. Gen. Custer was certain that
his seventh Cavalry could take care of the Sioux single handed, a belief not
shared by Gen. Dodge, who believed the Army would have its hands full. J.C.C.)
When Crook made up his mind to do anything, it was generally done. The only
way I could convince him not to go was by satisfying him of there being no
ammunition in the command. I had seen all day how the Indians and troops were
firing, and especially the scouts, so I asked the General to find out the
amount of ammunition each company had. He found he would have to wait until
he got more ammunition from the wagons before taking the offensive. We went
into camp at the lower end of the battle-field. As far as the fight was
concerned, I don't think that either side could claim a complete victory,
although the troops held the ground. The Indians had tried to lead the troops
down through the canyon where they had fortified on each side; and if the
troops had ever gone down through there, there would not have been one of them
left to tell the tale, for the Indians were fixed in such a way that they would
have cross-fired them without getting hurt themselves, or could even have
rolled rocks down in amongst them and crushed them.
(333) Seeing this while I was going down through the canyon is the reason I
tried so hard to stop the command from going through. To sum up the whole
battle, there were twenty-eight soldiers killed and fifty-six wounded. One of
the Indian scouts was killed and three of them wounded. On the Indian side
there were thirteen of them killed, that I know of, and I could not tell the
number that were wounded, but there were a good many of them. The next morning
we started back to the wagon train. Starting up the Rosebud, we camped at the
head of the water. After we had been in camp sometime the Crow allies got stampeded
for some cause, drove in their ponies, saddled them up and left us, starting
back for their village, taking their wounded along with them, and nothing we
could say or do would stop them. Breaking camp next morning, we reached the
wagon train the same evening, and the wagon train and a large escort of troops were sent back to Fetterman for supplies.

(Finerty, the Chicago Times war correspondent, who in common with the soldiers shared all the dangers of the campaign, entered into the battles with all the spirit of a free lance and had many narrow escapes from capture and death, still "kept one eye open" as a newspaper correspondent. He missed little of detail and lost nothing of the horrors or humor of battle. I here quote (with his permission) from his wonderful volume (War-path and Bivouac) some portions of his account of the battle of the Rosebud: (354) Gen Crook divined that the Indian force before him was a strong body — not less perhaps than 3,500 warriors — sent out to make a rear guard fight, so as to cover the retreat of their village, which was situated at the other end of the canyon. He detached Troop I of the Third Cavalry, Capt. Andrews and Lieut. Foster, from Mills to Henry, after the former had taken the first line of heights, he reinforced our line with the friendly Indians, who seemed to be partially stampeded, and brought up the whole of the Second Cavalry within supporting distance. The Sioux, having rallied on the second line of heights, became bold and impudent again. They rode up and down rapidly, sometimes wheeling in circles, slapping an indecorous portion of their persons at us, and beckoning us to come on.

One chief, probably the late lamented Crazy Horse, directed their movements by signals made with a pocket mirror or some other reflector. Under Crook's orders our whole line remounted, and, after another rapid charge, we became masters of the second crest. When we got there, another just like it rose on the other side of the valley. There, too, were the savages, as fresh, apparently, as ever. We dismounted accordingly, and the firing began again. It was evident that the weight of the firing was shifted from our front, of which Maj. Evans had general command, to our left where Royall and Henry cheered on their men. Still the enemy were thick enough on the third crest, and Colonel Mills, who had active charge of our operations, wished to dislodge them. The volume of fire, rapid and ever increasing, came from our (355) left. The wind freshened from the west, and we could hear the uproar distinctly.

Soon, however, the restless foe came back upon us, apparently reinforced. He made a vigorous push down our center down some rocky ravines, which gave him good cover. Just then a tremendous yell arose behind us, and along through the intervals of our battalions, came the tumultuous array of the crow and shoshone Indians, rallied and led back to action by Maj. George M. Randall and Lieutenant John G. Bourke, of General Crook's staff. Orderly Sergeant John Van Moll, of Troop A, Mills' battalion, a brave and gigantic soldier, who was subsequently basely murdered by a drunken mutineer of his company, dashed forward on foot with them. The two bodies of savages, all stripped to the breech-clout, mocasins and war bonnet, came together in the trough of the valley, the Sioux having descended to meet our allies with right good will. All, except Sergeant Van Moll, were mounted. Then began a most exciting encounter. The wild foemen, covering themselves with their horses, while going at full speed, blazed away rapidly. Our regulars did not fire, because it would have been sure death to the friendly Indians, who were barely distinguishable by a red badge which they carried. Horses fell dead by the score — they were heaped there when the fight closed — but, strange to relate, the casualties among the warriors, including both sides, did not certainly exceed five and twenty.

The whooping was persistent, but the Indian voice is less hoarse than the Caucasian, and has a sort of wolfish (358) bark to it, doubtless the result of heredity, because the Indians, for untold ages, have been imitators of the vocal characteristics of the prairie wolf. The absence of very heavy losses in this combat goes far to prove the wisdom of the Indian method of fighting.
Finally the Sioux on the right, hearing the yelping and firing of the rival tribes, came up in great numbers, and our Indians, carefully picking up their wounded, and making their unwounded horses carry double, began to draw off in good order. Sergeant Van Moll was left alone on foot. A dozen Sioux dashed at him. Major Randall and Lieutenant Bourke, who had probably not noticed him in the general melee, but who, in the crisis, recognized his stature and danger, turned their horses to rush to his rescue. They called on the Indians to follow them. One small, misshapen Crow warrior, mounted on a fleet pony, outstripped all others. He dashed boldly in among the Sioux, against whom Van Moll was dauntlessly defending himself, seized the big Sergeant by the shoulder, and motioned him to jump up behind. The Sioux were too astonished to realize what had been done until they saw the long-legged Sergeant, mounted behind the little Crow, known as "Humpy," dash towards our lines like the wind. Then they opened fire, but we opened also, and compelled them to seek higher ground. The whole line of our battalion cheered "Humpy" and Van Moll as they passed us on the home-stretch. There were no insects on them, either.

In order to check the insolence of the Sioux, we were compelled to drive them from the third ridge. Our ground was more favorable for quick movements than that occupied by Royall, who found much difficulty in forcing the savages on his front — mostly the flower of the brave Cheyenne tribe — to retire. One portion of his line, under Captain Vroom, pushed it beyond its supports, deceived by the rugged character of the ground, and suffered quite severely. In fact, the Indians got between it and the main body, and nothing but the coolness of its commander and the skillful management of Colonels Royall and Henry saved Troop L of the Third Cavalry from annihilation on that day. Lieutenant Morton, one of Colonel Royall's aids, Captain Andrews and Lieutenant Foster of Troop I, since dead, particularly distinguished themselves in extricating Vroom from his perilous position.

In repelling the audacious charge of the Cheyennes upon his battalion, the undaunted Col. Henry, one of the most accomplished officers in the army, was struck by a bullet, which passed through both cheek bones, broke the bridge of his nose and destroyed the optic nerve of one eye. His orderly, in attempting to assist him, was also wounded, but, temporarily blinded as he was, and throwing blood from the mouth by the handful, Henry sat his horse for several minutes in front of the enemy. He finally fell to the ground, and, as that portion of our line, discouraged by the fall of so brave a chief, gave ground a little, the Sioux charged over his prostrate body, but were speedily repulsed, and he was happily rescued by some soldiers of his command.

Several hours later, when returning from the pursuit of the hostiles, I saw Col. Henry lying on a blanket, his face covered with a bloody cloth, around which the summer flies were buzzing fiercely, and a soldier keeping the wounded man's horse standing in such a position as to throw the animal's shadow upon the gallant sufferer. There was absolutely no other shadow in that neighborhood. When I ventured to condole with the Colonel he merely said, in a low burr firm voice, "It is nothing. For this we are soldiers!" and forthwith he did me the honor of advising me to join the army. Col. Henry's sufferings, when our retrograde movement began, and, in fact, until after a jolting journey of several hundred miles, by mule litter and wagon — he reached Fort Russell, were horrible, as were, indeed, those of all the wounded.

As the day advanced, Gen. Crook became tired at the indecisiveness of the action, and resolved to bring matters to a crisis. He rode up to where the officers of Mill's battalion were standing, or sitting, behind their men, who were prone on the skirmish line, and said, in effect, "It is time to stop this skirmishing, Colonel. You must take your battalions and go for their village way down the canyon." "All right, sir," replied Mills, and the order to retire and remount was given.
Troops A, E and M of Mill's battalion, having remounted, guided by the scout Grouard, plunged immediately into what is called, on what authority I know not, the Dead Canyon of the Rosebud valley. It is a dark, narrow and winding defile, over a dozen miles in length, and (239) the main Indian village was supposed to be situated in the north end of it. Lieut. Bourke, of Crook's staff, accompanied the column. A body of Sioux, posted on a bluff which commanded the west side of the canyon, was brilliantly dislodged by a bold charge of Troop E, under Capt. Suttorius and Lieut. Von Leuttewitz. After this our march began in earnest.

The bluffs, on both sides of the ravine, were thickly covered with rocks and fir trees, thus affording ample protection to an enemy, and making it impossible for our cavalry to act as flankers. Col. Mills ordered the section of the battalion moving on the east side of the canyon to cover their comrades on the west side, if fired upon, and vice versa. This was good advice, and good strategy in the position in which we were placed. We began to think our force rather weak for so venturesome an enterprise, but Lieut. Bourke informed the Colonel that the five troops of the Third Cavalry, under Maj. Noyes, were marching behind us. A slight rise in the valley enabled us to see the dust stirred up by the supporting column some distance in the rear.

The day had become absolutely perfect, and we all felt elated, exhilarated as we were by our morning's experience. Nevertheless, some of the more thoughtful officers had their misgivings, because the canyon was certainly a most dangerous defile, where all the advantage would be on the side of the savages. Gen. Custer, although not marching in a position so dangerous, and with a force nearly equal to ours, suffered annihilation at the hands of the same enemy, about eighteen miles further westward, only eight days afterward. (Warpath and Bivouac was published in April, 1890.)

(240) Noyes, marching his battalion rapidly, soon overtook our rear guard, and the whole column increased its pace. Fresh signs of Indians began to appear in all directions, and we began to feel that the sighting of their village must be only a question of a few miles further on. We came to a halt in a kind of cross canyon, which had an opening toward the west, and there tightened up our horse's girths, and got ready for what we believed must be a desperate fight. The keen-eared Grouard pointed toward the occident and said to Col. Mills, "I hear firing in that direction, sir." Just then there was a sound of fierce galloping behind us, and a horseman, dressed in buckskin, and wearing a long beard, originally black, but turned temporarily gray by the dust, shot at by the halted command, and dashed up where Col. Mills and the other officers were standing.

It was Maj. A.H. Nickerson, of the General's staff. He has been unfortunate since, but he showed himself a hero on that day at least. He had ridden, with a single orderly, through the canyon to overtake us, at the imminent peril of his life.

"Mills," he said, "Royall is hard pressed, and must be relieved. Henry is badly wounded, and Vroom's troop is all cut up. The General orders that you and Noyes defile by your left flank out of this canyon and fall on the rear of the Indians who are pressing Royall." This, then, was the firing that Grouard had heard.

Crook's order was instantly obeyed, and we were fortunate enough to find a comparatively easy way out of the elongated trap into which duty had led us. We de-

(241) filed, as nearly as possible, by the heads of companies, in parallel columns, so as to carry out the order with greater celerity. We were soon clear of Dead Canyon, although we had to lead our horses over and among the boulders and fallen timber. The crest of the side of the ravine proved to be a sort of plateau, and there we could hear quite plainly the noise of the attack on Royall's front. We got out from among the loose rocks and scraggy trees that fringed the rim of the gulf, and
found ourselves in quite open country. "Prepare to mount - mount!" shouted the officers, and we were again in the saddle.

Then we urged our animals to their best pace, and speedily came in view of the contending parties. The Indians had their ponies, guarded mostly by mere boys, the the rear of the low, rocky crest which they occupied. The position held by Royall rose somewhat higher, and both lines could be seen at a glance. There was very heavy firing, and the Sioux were evidently preparing to make an attack in force, as they were riding in by the score, especially from the point abandoned by Mills' battalion in its movement down the canyon, and which was partially held thereafter by the friendly Indians, a few infantry and a body of sturdy mule packers, commanded by the brave Tom Moore, who fought on that day as if he had been a private soldier. Suddenly the Sioux lookouts observed our unexpected approach, and gave the alarm to their friends. We dashed forward at a wild gallop, cheering as we went, and I am sure we were all anxious at that moment to avenge our comrades of Henry's battalion. (243)

But the cunning savages did not wait for us. They picked up their wounded, all but thirteen of their dead, and broke away to the northwest on their fleet ponies, leaving us only the thirteen "scalps," one hundred and fifty dead horses and ponies and a few blankets and war bonnets as trophies of the fray. Our losses, including the friendly Indians, amounted to about fifty, most of the casualties being in the Third cavalry, which bore the brunt of the fight on the Rosebud. Thus ended the engagement which was the prelude to the great tragedy that occurred eight days later in the neighboring valley of the Little Big Horn. (End of Finerty account) (243)

THE CUSTER MASSACRE. (Grouard)

A short time after the battle of the Rosebud, Gen. Crook got dispatches ordering him to wait the arrival of reinforcements (the fifth cavalry). In the meantime the command moved up the Little Goose creek close to the Big Horn range. Our Snake or Shoshone Indians had left us, so that we were without any Indian allies whatever. There was not much going on for awhile. Gen. Crook spent most of his time in the mountains hunting. While the general was up in the mountains hunting, I was out riding around the country trying to find some traces of hostile Indians; and one day, happening to be up on the mountains, I saw some Indian signals down on the divide between the Rosebud and Little Big Horn. These signals were to the effect that the Indians and troops were fighting, and the Indians had the best of it. This was between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning. Getting on my horse and going down into camp, I told the officers that the Indians were having a fight - I supposed with the troops - and had got way the best of them. The officers had never heard of Indian signals, and didn't suppose such things were in existence. (244)

They laughed at the idea of Indians having smoke signals, hardly crediting my statement. It made me a little bit out of temper the way they talked about it, and I told them that I would prove to them that I was right.

I saddled my horse and started for where the signals had been given, reaching what at first seemed to be the trail of troops on the divide between the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn just about dark on the night of June 25th, and soon found that troops had been along there. I started to follow up the trail, which led down a creek. In following up the trail, it led me almost to the mouth of the creek where it emptied into the Little Big Horn, then turning off to the right, traveling along parallel to the creek and back into the bluffs. I found out afterwards that Custer and Reno had separated there where the trail left this creek, but not knowing this at the time, I could only follow the plainest trail I could find. I followed the trail out where the Custer command had tried to cross the Little Big Horn, out again, and went still further down the creek, but away from it. It was just 11 o'clock at night when I got to
this place. I must have passed close to where Reno's command was entrenched, but did not know it. It was very dark and I could not see things plainly. It was cloudy and trying to rain; in fact, a few big drops of rain did fall.

The first intimation I had of getting onto the battlefield was when my horse got scared of something lying on the trail ahead of me, and I could not get him to pass it. I was riding an animal that did not usually scare at anything - a jet black beauty that Gen. Crook had given (245) me. Getting off the horse and stooping down, so that I could feel along with my hands, I came in contact with some object. I did not know what it was, so I commenced examining it, when I found that I had my hand on the head of a man who had been scalped. Well, of course, I cannot exactly tell the feelings I did have; but I got onto my horse pretty quickly after I found out what it had frightened at. I was going on to a kind of divide - on the main divide. It seemed as though the soldiers had tried to reach a main divide from there, and I thought by taking down the ridge I would avoid any more such horrible objects, such as I had found on the lower ridge; but instead of that I got right into the midst of the dead, and was forced to follow the ridge all the way down. It seemed to me for a long time - I could not see them, but could tell by the way my horse acted - that I was traveling amongst dead people all the way down the ridge. I don't think I was over ten minutes riding down the ridge, but it seemed quite awhile before I could get away.

Finally I did get up through them, and went down and crossed the Little Big Horn to the other side onto the highlands, then turned and followed up the river, but keeping away in order to find the Indian trail, if possible. It was along toward morning before I found the trail leading up the Little Big Horn towards the mountains. Following that up and keeping off the main trail, I could hear the Indians traveling backwards and forwards, but could not see them. I heard no firing of guns. Reaching the outskirts of the Indian camp on (246) Pass creek at the mouth of Twin creek on the Big Flat, I arrived at their main camp close to daybreak. Riding around from the lower end to the upper end, and keeping away from the lodges, I found an old Indian driving up his ponies, or herding them, rather.

I rode up to him for the purpose of finding out, if I could, what had been the result of the battle I knew had recently occurred. I was dressed up as an Indian, and had a blanket over me, so the old fellow could not see who I was. As soon as I commenced talking to him in the Sioux tongue, he asked me who I was. (Grouard, a native of the Island of Tahiti, came to the United States as a boy, was captured by the Sioux on Milk River, Montana, and lived six years with Sitting Bull's band.) I told him that I was Sitting Bull's brother; that I was looking for my horse; that I had been out on a scout and had not seen the fight, as I had just got back that evening. He suspicions me of not being what I was, and tried to find out who I was by getting up close to me, and I saw I could not get any information out of him. It was then daybreak, and on his asking me again who I was, I told him that they had always called me the "Grabber." That was the nickname the Indians had for me when I was among them.

Quick as he heard who I was, the old man gave one yell and about two jumps, and was across on the other side of the creek hallooing that the troops were on them. Well, by this time the whole camp was in commotion. I started back toward Tongue river on a pretty good gallop. I got quite a distance - five or six miles, I guess - before any of them came in sight, and by that time it was broad daylight. I had such a start of them that they could not catch me. They ran me (247) clear back to Tongue river - a distance of forty miles. Not being able to overtake me, they gave up the chase. After they left me I was so
tired out that when I got over on Soldier creek I went into the bursh, unsaddled my horse and went to sleep. I must have slept there all that night until the next morning between 10 and 11 o'clock.

When I woke up I could hear Indians talking. Crawling out so I could see what was going on, I discovered that quite a large scouting party had camped right below me - not over five hundred yards from where I was resting. For fear they might run across me or see me I led my horse into the brush, threw him down, tied his feet so that he could not get up and went off to the best hiding place I could find and stayed there until after dark. Then, everything being safe, I untied my horse, saddled him up and started to get out of there as quietly as I could. I reached the command about 4 o'clock the next day. The command had received rumors of the Custer massacre just before I got back. (War-path and Bivouac, Finerty, p. 151: "Some half-breeds came into camp on June 30th, and reported that Indian runners had told them of a fight between the hostilies and 'pony soldiers' (cavalry), in which the latter had been wiped out. We imagined that the story had reference to our fight on the Rosebud, and our officers, long familiar with the Indian habit of exaggeration, paid little or no attention to the second-hand intelligence.")

(The Custer massacre will always be a prolific theme for speculative minds. The story today is an oft-told tale, and writers will never tire of relating it. The responsibility for the awful catastrophe will forever remain in doubt, and mayhap it is as well that it should. Custer had every confidence in himself, and his men shared that confidence. When the junction had been formed at the mouth of the Rosebud on the 15th of (248) June, 1876, between the different battalions of Gibbons' command, Indian scouts were sent out to discover the whereabouts of the hostilies, and secure, as near as possible, the numbers of the enemy. Upon the return of these scouts, who located the Indian village in the vicinity of the Little Big Horn, they reported the strength of the hostilies to be between three and five thousand fighting warriors. But the agents at the different agencies had previously given it as their opinion that the hostile force did not amount to over one thousand fighting men; and, strange as it may appear, both Gibbon and Terry seemed to have placed greater reliance on the estimates of the agents than in the actual observation of the friendly Indian scouts. Custer, from all accounts, shared the opinion of his superiors, and expressed himself as able to whip the allied forces of Sioux and Cheyennes with his own regiment if he were only permitted the opportunity.

Camp at the mouth of the Rosebud was broken on the morning of June 22d, Custer, with his regiment (the Seventh Cavalry) and pack train, moving up the Rosebud, and Terry and Gibbon with their forces, going up the Yellowstone. At the council of war held before the commands separated, what was determined upon as the line of action is now shrouded in doubt, some holding that Custer was not to attack the hostilies until the different commands were close enough together to form a junction, while others maintain that Custer himself said he was authorized to attack the enemy whenever and wherever he found him.

(249) But there is documentary evidence in existence which goes far toward proving that Custer received "definite" instructions, and that he permitted his enthusiasm to take advantage of the loophole left in them. He was to have moved up the Rosebud in pursuit of the Indians whose trail Reno had discovered some days previous. "It is of course impossible to give any definite instructions," reads this interesting memento, "in regard to this movement, and, were it not impossible to do so, the department commander places too much confidence in your zeal, energy and ability to wish to impose upon you precise orders which might hamper your action when nearly in contact with the enemy. He will, however, indicate to you his own view..."
of what your action should be, and he desires that you should conform to
them, unless you shall see sufficient reason for departing from them.
Here's a case of "close the door, please, unless you desire to leave
it open."

If Custer found that the Indian trail (discovered previously by Reno)
turned toward the Little Big Horn, he was to have kept to the left toward
the headwaters of the Tongue river, in order that no band or bands of
hostiles should be permitted to escape to the south or southeast by passing
around his left flank. He was to feel his way cautiously from the Tongue
river westward to the valley of the Little Big Horn, where he was to
carefully examine Tullock creek (a tributary of the Big Horn) at its upper
end, and report to Gen. Gibbon, whose command would be located at the forks
of the Little and
(250) Big Horn rivers. With Custer's command on the head-waters of the
Little Big Horn (east), Crook's in the Goose creek valley (south), and
Gibbon's at the head of the Little Big Horn valley (north), the Indians
(if located in the latter valley, and it was almost impossible to suppose
they were anywhere else, as the trail led in that direction and the scouts
had located their village or in the vicinity of the Little Big Horn),
would find it impossible to escape the cordon of troops unless they
penetrated the mountains and crossed the range to the west, a move which
was highly improbable because next to impossible.

But Custer did not allow instructions to "hamper his actions" when he
found himself upon the hot trail of the Indians on the Rosebud. The head-
waters of the Tongue were permitted to take care of themselves. Custer saw
sufficient reason for departing from his orders, and pressed on in pursuit
of the savages. By the time the valley of the Little Big Horn was reached,
he had other plans than the one mapped out by the commanding General to
examine the upper part of Tullock creek. His scouts had reported the
Indian village but a short distance ahead, but whether they also reported
on the strength of the hostiles will never be known.

It is enough to know, however, that the hostiles' trail was discovered
when the Custer command reached a point twenty miles up the Rosebud, after
leaving the Gibbon command. It lead up that stream for many miles, and
finally turned off to a tributary of the Little Big Horn. When Custer
reached a point eighteen miles from the Indian village, he called Reno,
benteen, McDougal and his other
(351) officers together and divided his command into three battalions,
taking troops C, E, F, I and L himself. Troops A, M and G were assigned
to Reno, while Benteen was given charge of troops H, D and E. B troop,
under Captain McDougal, was made an escort to the pack train. From the
scouts the exact location of the Indian village had been obtained. Some
authorities claim that Benteen was to cross the Little Big Horn and attack
the village at its upper end; Reno was to keep on the east side of the
stream until he came to about the center of the village and then begin the
attack, and Custer was to follow down stream to the extreme lower end of
the camp and attack it there, so that the three forces would begin the
fight at different points almost simultaneously. When the three battalions
had reached a point five miles from the village, Benteen crossed the river
and followed down under the shadows of the mountains, while the Custer and
Reno commands marched side by side yet a little further. Then Custer bore
of to the east, into the hills, while Reno passed down to the river and
soon after engaged the Indians. He met a force that he could not drive—a
host that he had not looked for. Demoralization took possession of his
battalion, and in the retreat which ensued his men were mowed down like grass.

Benteen, in a statement made to Mr. Finerty, says there was to have been
no connection between Reno, McDougal and himself in Custer's order. He
was sent off to the left several miles from where Custer was killed to "actually hunt up more Indians." When he set off on his mission, he left the remainder of the regi-
ment at a halt and dismounted. He soon saw, he says, after carrying out Custer's order, and two other orders which were sent to him by the General, that "the Indians had too much horse sense to travel over the kind of country I had been sent to explore, unless forced to," and concluding that his battalion would have plenty of work ahead with the others, obliged to the right to strike the trail of the main column, and got into it just ahead of McDougal and his pack train. After watering the horses of his battalion at a morass near the side of the road, he went briskly on, "having a presentiment that I'd find hot work very soon." On the way he met two orderlies with messages - one for the commanding officer of the pack train and one for himself, written and signed by the regimental adjutant, Lieut. Cook. They read: "Come on, be quick," and "Bring packs." Benteen did not return for the pack train, but pushed on at a trot, and (to use his own words) "got there in time to save Reno's outfit." McDougal came up later, and a junction was then formed, from that time on until the morning of the 27th they were kept busy repelling the attacks of the hostiles.

From this statement of Benteen's it does not seem that he received any orders from Custer to attack any portion of the Indian village, and this view is further borne out by the statement of Benteen that he carried out the orders that Custer had given him. But both he and Reno must have known that Custer was battling with the hostiles at some point not far distant; and yet no effort was made to reach the Custer command the day of the 25th of June. (I asked the late gen. H.L. Scott for the cause of Custer's defeat, and he said, "I believe it is all summed up in Reno's reply to the Court Martial, which asked him the same question you have asked. Reno's reply to the Court Martial was:

'There were too many Indians.'"

(353) There is little if any doubt but what Reno's command would have been annihilated had it not been for the timelt arrival of Gibbon. The Indians claimed that they had Reno just where they wanted him, but were not given time enough to move their camp far enough from the scene of battle before making their final cleanup of the soldiers. Nevertheless this claim of the Indians, and admitting that Reno would have taken desperate chances in attempting to go to the assistance of Custer, the people of the United States will always think he should have taken the chances, and believe and know Custer would not have hesitated a second in making such a move had matters been reversed. Custer would have fought his way to Reno, under such circumstances, or died on the bluffs in making the attempt. (Both Reno and Benteen knew of Custer's abandonment of Major Elliott, his sergeant Major and 18 troopers at the battle of the Washita, November 26-27, 1868; and that, on the Platte in 1867, he had on July 15, disobeyed orders and deserted his command; neither pursued Indians who attacked his escort, nor had he paused to recover the bodies of soldiers killed; and that on July 7, 1867 he had ordered his officers to pursue deserting soldiers, and to shoot them down, bringing none back alive.) Under these circumstances what Custer would have done in endeavoring to rescue Reno or Benteen, had he known they required rescuing, is no matter of conjecture. Custer had "let his men down" on previous occasions, as they well knew.

Grouard, whose acquaintance with the Indians was more extended than that of any other man who had ventured to speak on the subject, and who was on the battlefield at 11 o'clock on the night succeeding the day of the butchery, says the Indians told him Custer made an attempt to cross the Little Big Horn where the trail of the command was afterward