

A WINTER CAMPAIGN IN THE BIG HORN AND BLACK HILLS.

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The summer of 1876, while celebrated by the people in the "States" as the nation's centennial anniversary, was a peculiarly exciting one and full of peril to the inhabitants of our far West Territories.

Gold had been discovered in the Black Hills the previous year, and as usual in the case of such discoveries magnified reports had been sent out. Consequently, early in the spring of '76, thousands of men began to flock into the hills from all over the country.

The Indians then inhabiting the Black Hills had already taken the alarm and had given warning of their intention to oppose the entry of miners or settlers. To avoid a conflict between the two races, the United States Government had directed the military authorities to interpose, and, while holding the Indians in check, to remove all white intruders from the disputed territory until a treaty could be made with the Indians and peaceable possession obtained.

The Sioux nation—the most powerful on our continent and consisting of many separate tribes, each strong in itself—could at this time, it was estimated, easily place in the field 10,000 warriors. They would be aided by most, if not all, of the Northern Cheyennes, some 2,000 more. Through past successes in their dealings with the Government, and confidence in their own strength, these Indians were now insolent and arbitrary in their demands and soon embraced the opportunity to initiate hostilities by making predatory raids, from their reservations, and attacking small parties of miners and prospectors wherever found. The troops were at once ordered to the scene to preserve the peace and avert, if possible, an open conflict. The Indians, however, refused to return to their reservations, and expeditions were immediately organized, in the Departments of the Platte and Dakota, by Generals Crook and Terry, to proceed against them. Then followed the fight on the Rosebud, in which the camp of the hostiles was surprised, themselves defeated and hundreds of their horses captured. Custer, following up a large body under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, some 2 months later, had, on the contrary, through rashness met his fate—the entire command being, as is well known, totally annihilated on the 25th of June, on the Little Big Horn.

The Indian foe derived increased encouragement from this victory. Those hitherto quiet now joined their friends, already in the field, and during the whole summer

of '76 the entire Northwestern country swarmed with warriors on the war-path, whom it was certain death for the white man to meet, at a disadvantage.

Such was the condition of affairs when, all the forces in the 2 military departments above named being already in the field, orders were issued for the transfer of troops from all the other departments to the scene of conflict, to prevent a general uprising over the entire Western country. Our regiment, the 6th Cavalry, then on duty in the panhandle of Texas and in the Indian Territory, was one of the first called for, and was soon *en route* to the Department of the Platte.

My troop had but recently returned to its post—Fort Elliott—from a summer scout on the Staked Plains and on the occurrence of the outbreak had been first ordered to change station to Fort Dodge, Kansas, 200 miles farther North.

Early the next morning I was on the march for my new station. After crossing the Canadian and while in camp on Commission creek, late one evening, a courier rode into our camp with the news of the Custer massacre and with despatches from department headquarters directing the different troop commanders to proceed as rapidly as possible, and, on reaching the railroad, to ship their commands immediately for the North.

Three or 4 days later I arrived at Fort Dodge, and after drawing supplies for the journey, transferred my troop to the cars and started for the Department of the Platte, *via* Las Animas, Denver and Cheyenne. From the latter point, I took up the march again, by way of Forts Russell and Laramie, for Red Cloud Agency, in Nebraska, some 200 miles farther to the Northward. My troop was one of the first to reach the agency, but soon after, companies and battalions of all arms of the service, from East, West and South, began to arrive at the rendezvous. General Crook had taken the field, in the summer, with Merritt's column of cavalry, and this force, after varied successes and many privations, took up its return march for the agency in October, leaving the hostile Sioux still in large force and in comparative possession of the entire Black Hills country, as well as that lying toward the Big Horn mountains and the Yellowstone. An expedition against them in the dead of winter, when hampered in their movements for want of grazing for their stock, was seen to be the only way to reach the hostiles effectively,

provided we could subsist our own column in the meantime. It was also evident that we should be out the greater portion of the winter, and it was deemed advisable not only to make careful preparations for the safety and proper equipment of the expedition, but also to provide comfortable quarters for the troops, on their return.

The large bodies of recruits now arriving were accordingly drilled 3 times daily; while the entire force was at the same time set to work cutting, hauling and sawing logs and building rude barracks and stables for the command. These preparations continued steadily until the beginning of November, exciting the interest of the thousands of semi-friendly Indians still surrounding the agency. They watched all our movements, noted the arrival of every new body of troops and no doubt continually reported, by runners, every item of news to their friends who were still out from the reservations. Furthermore they furnished these renegades with supplies of provisions and arms. These communications were continued so regularly, notwithstanding several arrests made by us at the agency, that it was determined by Generals Crook and Mackenzie—the latter being in command of the cavalry column of the expedition now organizing—to send, as a preparatory measure, the whole force of cavalry against these Indians, who had established a sort of half-way station between the agency and the hostiles' camps.

Accordingly, on the evening of October 22d, 6 squadrons of picked men and horses—each over 150 strong—started, quietly, about 9 o'clock, for an all night's ride to surround the camps of the Sioux chiefs Red Cloud and Red Leaf, some 40 miles North from the agency. Our orders were to capture and bring both bands back to their reservation, where they could be under the surveillance of the military. Only one day's rations were taken and no baggage of any kind—the whole command being in light marching order. The night was pitch-dark and very cold. The country was intersected by a series of ravines and wash-outs; but the most positive orders having been issued by Mackenzie, who was in command, for the whole column to keep closed up, at all hazards, the trot and gallop were continued throughout the night. Occasionally a troop would be brought down to a walk, at the bottom of some gully or dry creek, and then, on emerging, would be compelled to go at a gallop to overtake the preceding troops, which had already disappeared in the blackness ahead.

The only sounds to be heard were the thunder of the column as it tore along over the frozen ground; the rattle of the harness of the horses (the men's sabres being thrust between their knees and saddles) and the muttered exclamation of some trooper as

his steed stumbled or fell in the darkness. Such riding was of course terribly fatiguing to both horses and riders. The men always regarded a night ride as far worse than a week's ordinary march. Experience, however, had taught us, as well as our gallant commander, that it was the only sure way "to catch the weasel asleep."

By the gray light of the morning, we found ourselves cautiously and slowly approaching the two camps of sleeping Indians. One battalion, under Colonel G—, had been sent to surround Red Leaf's band; the other, under Major M—, that of Red Cloud; the 2 bands being encamped about 2 miles apart. In each case the result was the same. As the different troops swung quickly and successively into their positions, the watchful dogs of the camps gave the alarm. The Indians, completely surprised, sprang to their arms. A rapid fusillade followed. There was a rush and a shout from the troops, and the next moment we were in possession of both camps and all, or nearly all, of their inhabitants were our prisoners, escape being almost impossible.

They were at once ordered to surrender their weapons, pack up their lodges and all their effects and move with their herds—which were afterward to be taken from them—into the agency. This order was only complied with after many of their unpacked possessions had been committed to the flames, accompanied by the chanting of the savage "death-song."

We had little time to eat or rest, as the return march was soon taken up. By dark we had made about one-half the distance to the agency. To prevent escape, the General determined to send the bucks, numbering over 100, on into the post that same night, leaving the rest of the column, with the women and children, to await rations and to slowly make their way in the next day.

Four troops, including my own, were accordingly selected and under the command of Colonel Gordon, started with the captive Indians in the centre of the column—2 being mounted on each pony. The trot was at once taken up and continued the whole remaining distance. By 11 o'clock our destination was reached and the outfit, including Red Cloud and Red Leaf themselves, safely secured in one of the warehouses of the post.

The work of our battalion was over for the time. A ride of 90 miles or more, with the surround and capture of 2 large Indian encampments, in a little over 24 hours, was certainly lively work and gave strong evidence that the comparatively raw recruits, composing full half the command, might be depended on in the approaching winter campaign.

All being in readiness, the Powder river

Expedition—which was so named by reason of its supposed ultimate destination—started, on the first day of November, on its long and dreary march toward that inhospitable region. The force consisted of 6 squadrons of cavalry, under Mackenzie, one battalion of heavy artillery and 3 large battalions of infantry under Colonel Dodge. We had also a pack train of 400 mules, in charge of experienced packers, and a long ambulance and wagon train. There were altogether over 2,500 men. Accompanying the expedition, in the capacity of guides and scouts, and under the command of officers selected from the cavalry, was a body of 100 friendly Indians—Pawnees, Arapahoes, Crows, Bannocks, Shoshones, Snakes, and even Sioux and Cheyennes; for any Indian will betray even those of his own tribe, including all his wife's relations, provided the reward offered be sufficiently tempting.

The march, for a distance of 15 miles, was through the White river canyon—a dangerous pass leading from the agency—thence Northward through the sandhills of Wyoming *via* Forts Laramie and Fetterman (crossing the Platte twice) toward the head of the Powder river in the Big Horn mountains. At the last named post, General Crook, with his staff, overtook and assumed command of the expedition.

A week later, Fort Reno, an old abandoned post on the Powder river, was reached, and while here intelligence was brought by one of our Indian scouts of the proximity of a small party of hostile Cheyennes—some 4 or 5 lodges—encamped but a few miles to the West of us. Our scouts were sent out a second time and captured one of the band. He had ridden into the camp of our allies, in the evening, supposing them to be friends, and only discovered his mistake after he had informed them of the location of the main body of the Cheyennes, in the canyon at the head of one branch of the Powder river and on the opposite or Western side of the Big Horn mountains. He also told of the encampment of the Sioux, under Crazy Horse, still farther to the North on the Rosebud.

Then, suddenly, he found himself in the midst of foes and a prisoner, as the party covered him with carbines and revolvers and compelled him to surrender his arms. He was immediately brought in to headquarters, closely guarded; and though now obstinate and sullen, enough was elicited from him to corroborate his previous unwary confession.

Orders were at once issued by Crook to prepare for a 10 days' rapid march, with the pack train only, toward Crazy Horse's camp, to strike a decisive blow at the main body of hostile Sioux encamped there. The expedition proceeded as rapidly as the snow would allow—for it had been storm-

ing heavily for the past week or more, with the thermometer falling far below the freezing point. The character of the country had likewise become not only much rougher but more bleak and desolate. There was no timber save in the creek bottoms, while the prairie, like the steppes of Tartary, was but a vast desert of sand hills, covered with the despised sage brush and dwarf cactus. Not a sign of game was seen, save an occasional sage hen, as the long column kept on its way, day after day, still Northward toward Cloud Peak, now clearly seen, though 80 miles away, rising majestically upward like a huge mass of white clouds in the clear sky.

On reaching Crazy Woman's Fork of the North branch of the Powder river, after a long day's march, Sitting Bear, one of our scouts, who had been far ahead of the column and near Crazy Horse's camp, brought back word that the small band of Cheyennes, already missing their comrade, had been likewise scouting the country, and observing our column, as well as the direction it was taking, had immediately divined its destination. Hastily decamping, they had hurried in advance, passing Sitting Bear on their way, toward the encampment of Crazy Horse, to give the alarm, and most likely to cause the retreat of the whole tribe.

The course of their trail indicated this and perceiving that our expedition, in that direction, was defeated, but that they had probably not sent any warning to the large Cheyenne camp on the opposite side of the Big Horn, which was now in our rear, Crook immediately countermanded his orders and quietly reversed the march of the expedition.

On the evening of November 23d the infantry and artillery were left in charge of the wagon trains and the whole body of cavalry—12 troops, each nearly 100 strong—started, under Mackenzie, for a rapid ride across the mountains, to strike the Cheyennes under Dull Knife. A number of our Indian allies were, as usual, sent ahead, through the passes, to locate the hostile camp, while the others remained to guide the column. The march was resumed at sunrise. By noon the scouts reached a grassy vale, completely sheltered from observation in front, by a semicircular range of hills. Here they halted to allow the cavalry to come up.

On its arrival, and just as the pack train was going into camp here, the Indian outposts were suddenly seen to commence circling around, with their ponies at a full gallop, in a wild and excited manner. The next moment a shrill yell went up from the scout stationed farthest to the front. Supposing we were about to be attacked, the whole command, in less time than it takes to tell it, was in line and rushing for-

ward to the brow of the range of hills, with skirmishers thrown out in advance. The cause of the alarm was now ascertained to be the return of some of the Indian scouts sent out the preceding evening to locate the exact position of the hostile camp. They had communicated their discovery of us by signals, on seeing our outposts, while the howling of our allies, stationed as sentries, was but a shout of triumph at the return of the others. When these arrived at our headquarters—so worn out that their ponies fell exhausted and the riders were in almost as bad a plight—we ascertained that the village was still some distance ahead; though how far was difficult to say; as an Indian's ideas of time and distance are rather indefinite. Mackenzie, however, thought it possible, by making an all night ride, to strike the hostile village by day-break in the morning.

After a few hours' rest and a cheerless meal of hard-tack and cold bacon—no fires being now allowed—the command again started, with the pack train to follow under escort of a detachment 2 hours later. Emerging from the basin in which we had halted, we entered a wild pass, through the red sandstone cliffs, and then clambered up and over a second hill, which commanded a full view of the entire column stretched out far behind. The next instant the scene vanished at the head of the column, as it began the descent in front.

All through the cold, dark night was the march persistently continued; with little or no halting, but with our scouts always thrown far in advance; over jagged hills, then cautiously winding around their sides, on narrow ledges and overlooking deep, yawning chasms below; then crawling down, in single file and dismounted, into dark ravines, across rapid or miry mountain streams and then up and out over the hills again.

Once we passed through a beautiful level valley, about 3 miles long by half a mile wide, which the men nicknamed the "race-course," and where the gallop was quickly taken up and continued throughout its whole length. By the gray dawn of the coming morning, 25 miles had been covered. Had it been possible for us to proceed in a straight line, less than one-half that distance would have been necessary.

As we approached the mouth of the canyon in which lay the hostile encampment, the country became constantly rougher, being more and more intersected with ravines running in every direction, and several of the horses of the column fell exhausted and dying. The beating of war drums and the yelling of the Cheyennes were now distinctly heard. Familiar sounds they were, to most of us; but our scouts soon returned from a reconnaissance of the camp to assure us that this demonstration had not

been occasioned by our coming, but was probably a celebration of the massacre of some venturesome miners, or of a band of Indians belonging to a hostile tribe.

Orders were at once given to prepare for a charge. The long column was closed up as compactly as possible, while our Indian allies commenced casting off all superfluous clothing and all extra weight from their ponies. Then, gayly decked out for the occasion, they pressed eagerly to the front, like race horses coming to the score. The battalion under Colonel Gordon led the advance, while Major Mauck's followed directly after. The Indians swarmed in front, and on either flank, surrounding the general and his staff, at the head of the leading battalion.

Replying to the clear notes of the bugle, as it rang out the charge—echoed and re-echoed from the walls of the canyon—was the music furnished by one of the Pawnees, who sounded a wild humming tune on a pipe that rose above all other sounds and somewhat resembled the prolonged shriek of a steam whistle. Added to this were now the shouts and cries of our foremost line of scouts, who dashed into the herds of ponies to stampede them. Then quickly followed a few sharp flashes from rifle, carbine and pistol, in the dim morning light, the loud cheer of our troopers and the thundering roar of more than 1,200 horsemen of the rushing column resounding from the sides of the narrow canyon.

This canyon, it should here be stated, is about 4 miles long and from a quarter of a mile to a mile in width, with the clear headwaters of the North Fork of Powder river flowing through it, from West to East. The lodges of the village were on both sides of the stream and numbered over 200; so that, allowing 5 persons (the average) to a tepee, the total population was close to 1,000. A little plateau ran parallel to the stream and lodges, for nearly a mile on the North side of the canyon, and terminated, at the Western end, in a high red sandstone butte that commanded the whole village. Beyond this huge mound the canyon closed in a series of low, flat topped hills, much cut up with ravines, to which many of the Cheyennes fled as they saw us entering at the opposite end.

As the leading troops came dashing up the canyon, the remainder of the tribe, alarmed by the noise of the rapidly advancing column and cut short in their war song and dance, by the stern reality of war, started at first to defend their encampment; but the next moment, realizing the hopelessness of such an effort, retreated rapidly to the foot hills beyond. Our column, after charging through the village, seized a commanding position on the red butte, as well as on the tops of several other bluffs 400 to 500 feet high, on the sides of and

overlooking the canyon. Then they started forward to dislodge the hostiles from the ravines in front.

Lieutenant McKinney, dashing fearlessly forward at the head of his troop, was met at the end of the canyon with a volley from the concealed foe ahead. Rider and horse both fell, mortally wounded by half a dozen bullets, while the leading fours of the troop were shot down at the same time. The men, thrown into confusion and unable to advance across the ravines, hesitated for a moment; but quickly reforming, under their remaining officer, as another troop swept by them to the front, again charged forward against these formidable natural intrenchments. The enemy in their front was now speedily dislodged and destroyed; but as the troops continued to crowd into the canyon, they were placed at a great disadvantage, being exposed to the fire of the hostiles who were comparatively secure from observation.

Many of the men and horses fell, from the hidden fire poured in on them from the hills at the West end of the canyon as they endeavored to cross the little plateau overlooking the village. I was twice afterward, as I rode rapidly across the plain, honored with special volleys; but in both cases I escaped unharmed.

Broad daylight now succeeding the gray dawn which had prevailed when the attack commenced, the troops were dismounted, the horses led back behind the butte and the enemy quickly driven out, in succession, from one ravine after another, till completely beyond the range of our carbines.

They now resorted to strategy, endeavoring to draw our men out from their shelter by springing boldly up in view, confident of their own safety in being supplied with weapons superior in range to our own. Then they would suddenly pour in a volley with deadly effect. Their fire, however, slackened toward noon, and we soon understood the reason; large quantities of ammunition being discovered in the tepees, from which we had driven the hostiles.

Our Indian allies, who had in the meantime fought, recklessly, beside the soldiers, against their own race, now taking advantage of the lull in the fight, returned to the village and, having already secured the main herds, commenced to plunder the encampment from one end to another. One or two squaws were found secreted in the lodges, unable to escape, and now refusing to come out and surrender were, in spite of the remonstrances of the soldiers, quickly shot and scalped. The tepees were filled with large quantities of dried meat and skins, blankets and cooking utensils. The kettles all had water in them and the fires were burning, as if in preparation for the morning meal. All regrets, if any ex-

isted, for the destruction of the encampment vanished, as many relics of the ill-fated Custer expedition now came to view. Silk guidons, officers' blouses and overcoats, a jaunty buckskin coat with a bullet-hole in the shoulder (supposed to be the one worn by Tom Custer—the brother of the general—in the Little Big Horn fight), hats, caps, gauntlets, sabres, watches, pocketbooks (with money in them), target-practice and memorandum books, rosters of the different troops of the Seventh Cavalry, curry-combs, bridles, saddles, canteens, etc., all in the greatest profusion, were found everywhere. In the herds were also several horses branded with the troop letter and the regimental number; while, among the Indian trophies were found several fresh scalps, which were identified by our Bannocks and Shoshones as evidence of the massacre of members of their tribes across the mountains. These accounted for the war song and dance we had so rudely interrupted that morning. Several beaded necklaces, decorated with dried human fingers—one having 10, others 5, 6, or 8 of these horrible mementoes—were likewise found and identified by our furious allies.

Many of the troops were now withdrawn behind the butte, to get a few moments' rest and a bite to eat, having been fasting for nearly 24 hours. The pack train, which had come up during the fight, in the morning, and had been parked in the willows, during the day, was unloaded for the first time since the preceding afternoon. The horses were already gathered here, as also were the wounded men, who were being carefully cared for by the surgeons accompanying the expedition.

Throughout the afternoon the fight was kept up. Mackenzie endeavored to dislodge the hostiles from their last stronghold with as little loss as possible from their sharpshooters. A direct charge on their position would not have compensated us for the loss we should have necessarily sustained. Finally, toward sundown, they withdrew from our front some 5 or 6 miles, completely beaten. All our dead were now brought in, while our allies secured many scalps from their fallen foes whom the Cheyennes had been unable to carry off with them. They paraded these trophies about our camp fires, in the evening, with the greatest glee.

Our loss we ascertained to be one officer killed (Lieutenant McK—) in whose honor a military post was afterward named, by order of the War Department. Two other officers were struck with spent balls, while between 30 and 40 enlisted men and 2 of our Indian scouts were killed or wounded, besides a number of our horses.

Nearly 100 of the enemy had been killed or wounded, 3 of Dull Knife's sons being among the dead. That night both sides

slept upon their arms, in anticipation of an attack, but none was made. The Cheyennes were compelled to kill several of their remaining ponies for food, but they refused all suggestions of surrender, being now desperate.

Preparations were accordingly made for renewing the fight early the next morning; but our foes, taking advantage of a heavy snow storm that had set in, secretly de-camped and started across the mountains to make their way to the encampment of the Sioux under Crazy Horse. It was impossible for us to follow with our horses, and as we were encumbered with our wounded, Mackenzie determined to return to the supply camp, where we had left the artillery and infantry with the wagon train.

All our dead and wounded were placed on *travois*—litters made out of lodge poles having one end hitched to a mule, while the other dragged on the ground—and the column started on its return march. Before leaving, however, the hostile village—or what was left of it—with its contents was given to the flames. Over 600 head of ponies had been captured and after the distribution among our Indian scouts had been made, all those remaining, and not worth keeping, were shot, to prevent their recapture.

The return march occupied about twice the time of the advance. The whole route over which the command had passed during the night preceding the fight, was found strewn with all kinds of clothing and horse equipments; proof of the hard ride we had made to accomplish our purpose.

In just one week after our departure from our supply camp we returned to it, completely successful; though had a smaller force attacked this same Indian encampment, situated as it was, not one of the command, it is believed, would have returned to tell of it, and the Custer massacre would have been duplicated.

The next day the last sad rites were held over the dead—numbering now a dozen, as several of the wounded had since died. All were committed to one large grave; a rude monument of rocks being raised above their resting place. Lieutenant McK—'s remains were sent, under escort, over our former route, toward the railroad, for shipment to his family in the States. All the wounded, as well as those officers and men who had already succumbed to the hardships of the campaign and severe weather, were at the same time sent into Fort Fetterman, while the remainder of the column soon after started across to the Black Hills country, in order to head off Crazy Horse, who it was supposed had retreated Eastward across the Powder river toward that region.

Following down the Belle Fourche or North Fork of the Cheyenne river, which

encircles the Black Hills, we found the country, after leaving old Fort Reno, more desolate and destitute of grazing than ever. Bare buttes rose here and there over the bleak plains, the only timber being the young cotton woods and willows fringing the river banks. The former we used, when possible, for firewood; feeding our animals on the bark and twigs. Often no fuel was to be found but the miserable sage brush, the roots of which were used to make a smoky fire that lasted only a few minutes. Still, such fires were kept up, by reliefs, all through the night, replenishing them constantly, to keep us from freezing in our beds of snow. Three or 4 of us, combining robes and blankets, generally "turned in" together for the night, equipped in overcoats, hats and boots—disrobing being out of the question, as we were frequently destitute of both fire and tents during our winter campaign. The former were often forbidden or impossible, while we were unable to transport the latter, by packs, when separated from the trains.

The thermometer, on Christmas morning, stood at 40° below zero. How much lower the temperature fell the surgeons were unable to report, as the mercury froze in the bulb. Frozen noses, fingers and feet were general. The old buffalo robes which we had taken from the Cheyenne village, were cut up and made into shoes, leggings and caps, to afford protection from this truly Arctic weather. "Sun-dogs," which occur only in an extremely low temperature, were frequently visible. Iron tent pins, or picket pins, were abandoned in the frozen ground, where driven, and water was only to be had by cutting holes in the ice. Our horses soon learned to kneel, in line, and thrust their noses through these openings to drink. The only use we had for water was for making coffee, which, with hard-tack and raw, frozen bacon often constituted, for days, our sole subsistence.

The horses and mules commenced to give way, even more rapidly than the men, under this exposure and the loss of their forage, though the cavalry relieved their animals, as far as possible, by dismounting and walking more or less. A dozen or more horses gave out each day of our journey. These were shot, by the guard stationed at the rear of the column, to prevent their falling into the hands of the hostile Indians, who in small bands hovered around us. This fact we were made unpleasantly aware of by the stampeding of the horses of several of the troops, at night. These were fortunately recovered, having run into other portions of the camp. These marauders also killed and scalped several destitute miners and prospectors, who incautiously strayed a mile or 2 from our column which they had joined and followed for some time, for safety. It would have been a useless

wearing out of our already weak horses to have pursued these small bands, over this bleak and snow-covered desert. Additional orders were therefore issued to prevent straggling—many of the cavalry being now afoot and frequently falling out to rest and rejoin other portions of the command.

As we now finally neared Deadwood, without finding indications of any large body of hostile Sioux—Crazy Horse having retreated still farther Northward, across the Yellowstone—General Crook resolved to proceed to Red Cloud Agency again, in order to recuperate men and animals during the remainder of the winter and to prepare for the spring campaign, as well as to be ready for any emergency that might arise.

The return march was accordingly taken up and, proceeding Southward, the entire column recrossed the Platte river on the ice. By the end of January the whole command had arrived at the termination of its winter's journey, of over 1,000 miles.

The Powder river expedition was disbanded in general orders and the troops were soon comfortably settled in their quarters. Rumors, however, still prevailing, among the alarmed settlers in the Black Hills, of the inroads of prowling Indian bands, a battalion of cavalry was soon detached and sent back to the vicinity of Deadwood and Custer City for their protection.

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Early in the following spring, Crazy Horse and Dull Knife's bands—the former having been also recently struck and defeated, in the North, by General Miles—came into the agency and surrendered, with the greater portion of their arms and ponies. Then it was that we first learned the full extent of the destruction and suffering we had inflicted on the latter band, in the preceding November. We found that many of the warriors had afterward died of wounds received in the fight, and that others, with their women and children, had perished from starvation, or had been frozen to death, as they made their long and weary way, on foot, across the rugged

country to the camp of Crazy Horse. The narration of their calamity, to the latter, corroborated by their destitute appearance, had been one of the main causes of his surrender.

Crazy Horse was soon after assassinated, by one of his own tribe, in the office and presence of the commanding officer of the post.

Sitting Bull had fled, with his band of irreconcilables, across the national boundary line and had taken refuge in British America. This now practically ended all probability of hostilities on a large scale, with the Sioux nation, during the coming spring.

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In the month of May news arrived of threatened international troubles, on the Mexican border, and orders were soon issued for our regiment to take up, once again, its long journey of 2,000 miles to enter on a new and different, though equally stirring theatre of events in that remote quarter.

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Our service in the Department of the Platte was ended, but often do I now look back to that trying period and think what changes have occurred since then. Within 6 years both of the battalion commanders, in the cavalry column, and fully one-half of all the troop officers of the entire 6 squadrons, were either dead or disabled and retired, having been completely worn out in the service; while the effect of that terrible winter's work is still more marked to-day. The same is nearly equally true of all the other portions of that command. Many of the officers and men, who served throughout the whole of our civil war, have told me that never, during those 4 eventful years, did they participate in campaigns so arduous as those on the frontier, against both a savage foe and a relentless climate.

Who then will say that our small and hard-worked army has always received the credit due it for the service it has faithfully performed in wresting the great West from the dominion of the savage?



BY THE CAMPFIRE.

CARCAJOU.

When Autumn winds begin to blow,
And rustling leaves drift to and fro,
Then shadowy forms of bygone days
Flit by, warm sunshine's golden rays
Light up old morning's faded page,
And I—returned to youth—forget my age.

Old Friends and I, we live again
The days we spent in field and pen.
The campfire's ruddy, cheerful glow,
Bring back the friends of long ago;
E'en Death is robbed as friendship's page
But fuller grows with lengthened Age.