

I HOLD STILL.

BY CHARLES S. BROOKS.

[From the German of Julius Strum.]

Pain's furnace heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow,
And all my heart in anguish shivers,
And trembles at the fiery glow;
And yet I whisper—As God will!
And, in his hottest fire, hold still.

He comes and lays my heart, all heated,
On the hard anvil, minded so,
Into his own fair shape to beat it,
With his great hammer, blow on blow;
And yet I whisper—As God will!
And, at his heaviest blows, hold still.

He takes my softened heart and beats it—
The sparks fly off at every blow;
He turns it o'er and o'er and beats it,
And lets it cool, and makes it glow;
And yet I whisper—As God will!
And, in his mighty hand, hold still.

Why should I murmur? for the sorrow
Thus only longer-lived would be;
Its end may come, and will, to-morrow,
When God has done his work in me;
So I say, trusting—As God will!
And, trusting to the end, hold still.

He kindles, for my profit, purely;
Affliction's glowing, fiery brand,
And all its heaviest blows are, surely,
Inflicted by a Master-hand;
So I say, praying—As God will!
And hope in him, and suffer still.

COUNCILS AND FIGHT BETWEEN GEN. MILES AND GENERAL SITTING BULL.

MOUTH OF CABIN CREEK, M.T.,
October, 21, 1876.

An unexpected change has come over the face of the lately desolate state of the Sioux war. Close upon the report that 1,006 lodges of Sioux had left Standing Rock agency came a delay in the regular supply train from Glendive. Nothing was heard from it for several days after the proper time had arrived for it to reach us, and we began to fear for its safety. Scouts sent out could not find it. General Miles, in consequence, gave orders for the Fifth Infantry to take fourteen days supplies and march to the relief of the supposed corralled train. The two companies of the Twenty-second Infantry were left as camp guards. On the morning of the 17th the order was given, and long before daylight the troops were in readiness for a start, with eight pack-mules per company and a few wagons. Every one was alive to the necessity of marching promptly to the relief of the train. The crossing of the Yellowstone river was commenced in the mackinaws and one flat boat and finished by 11 a. m., when the march was promptly taken up and the old Fifth filed out through a long, narrow ravine in slender column, but looking sturdy and solid on this, its first expedition as a regiment, since the Utah campaign.

It numbered about 450 men all told. The march was continued without intermission until about dusk, when fifteen miles had been passed over, and a halt was made and coffee taken. Here we waited for ammunition wagons to come up. They arrived a little after dark, and a night march was made of thirteen miles. Early the next morning the weary men plodded forward after a short sleep and marched ten miles, when another halt for coffee was allowed.

Shortly after starting a cloud of horsemen were observed galloping towards us, and proved to be some of the scouts who had been sent forward. They reported the train coming, and also that they had had a close, sharp fight with about twenty Indians, who had killed one of their number, and they had killed seven Indians while they were in the advance. The train came in sight, and soon Colonel Otis rode up.

It appeared that the train had left with a couple of companies and had been attacked by the Indians, who had captured about forty mules, which compelled it to return to Glendive. Colonel Otis then took five of his companies and brought the train safely through, though having had a sharp running fight with about 300 Indians. During several days the Indians renewed these attacks, charging boldly down on the train and firing on our men, but they were, on every occasion speedily driven away. Two friendly Indians who had been sent from Standing Rock by Gen. Carlin had come in under a white flag to tell Col. Otis that the Sioux wished him to come out and have a talk with them, which he had

declined to do. A letter had also been found put upon a stick, signed Sitting Bull, ordering trains to cease running through that country and frightening the buffalo. The Sioux had found in their three days' experience that their old enemies, the Twenty-second, are no more to be trifled with now than formerly, and in Col. Otis a man they could neither stop nor whip. Three of the Twenty-second were wounded and many Indians were seen to fall from their ponies. That day the two commands camped near each other and rested. The next day each took its line of march—the Twenty-second to Tongue River and the Fifth to find the hostiles, after sending back fifty men to complete the quarters, already well under way.

That day the Fifth marched fifteen miles and camped on Cherry Creek without having seen any evidence of Indians beyond a few carcasses of buffalo.

On the next day, eight miles beyond Cedar Creek, where the Twenty-second had seen the last of the Indians, two Indians were seen coming over the hill with a white flag, which was the prelude to what was the most remarkable scene which has ever taken place in Indian warfare. The Indians, who proved to be those sent from Standing Rock, brought word that Sitting Bull wished to have a talk with General Miles with a view to surrendering the Indians. About 150 soon appeared on the brow of a hill some distance away. They were so suspicious and doubling that it seemed scarcely possible to arrange a meeting, especially as Gen. Miles' interpreter was absent. Finally Lieutenant Bailey, acting adjutant, consented to go over to the hostiles with the two friendly Sioux. There he found a white interpreter of Sitting Bull's, and, after much difficulty, a meeting was arranged to take place between the lines, with a few followers on each side. Everything being conceded to the reds, except the removal of a Rodman gun, which was frowning down from a neighboring height, and which caused the Indians much uneasiness, General Miles rode out, followed by his staff and orderlies, his line being arranged with a company on each flanking hill and under the Rodman gun, his train surrounded by a skirmish line to the rear of the whole.

Having moved out several hundred yards General Miles halted near the centre and awaited what appeared an hour. Lieutenant Bailey having returned and gone back to the reds, at last a motion was observed in the hostiles, and there appeared a line of some dozen warriors, dismounted, marching forward in perfect line, without rifles, accompanied by others mounted and armed. Slowly they moved forward until they arrived about thirty yards from the General's party and halted, desiring him to dismount. General Miles and staff then dismounted and moved up, when the circle was formed. It was a magnificent spectacle from the lines, and one of most painful excruciating interest and uneasiness on both sides—the Sioux to get their wishes and the whites in remembrance of the Canby affair. This became especially so in the Fifth when the mounted and armed warriors came forward by the dozen and completely surrounded the little group of officers.

The council was much as usual, the Indians complaining in their speeches of the trains passing through and frightening away the buffalo, of the occupation of their winter home, of following and fighting them, etc.

Sitting Bull, pre-eminently their chief fighting man, cannot talk or express his thoughts. "We talk, but he is our fighting chief," so spoke their orator, Pretty Bear. Many prominent chiefs were at the council. Long and earnest was the conference, the troops awaiting the issue in the bitter cold. The Indians were extravagant in their demands, asking the withdrawal of the troops at Fort Buford and the cessation of trains going through. But such demands were gradually abandoned. General Miles persisted in demanding simply that they should go to the Tongue River and put themselves under subjection to the government. To this they would not agree, desiring to remain out to hunt the buffalo. Sitting Bull is a man of thoroughly savage and warlike desires, wishing the Sioux to leave the agencies and rations and go out and live on buffalo meat, as in good old times.

Several hours' conference continued in this way. Those in line anxiously wondered how it could break up without bloodshed, when a commotion was observed in the crowd, the parties separating as quietly as though they were civilized belligerents on both sides, and the Indians took their departure, promising to return early on the next morning, while the Fifth Infantry took its way back to Cedar Creek, escorted part of the way by a few fleetly mounted Sioux. If in this council it had been intended to delay General Miles' march, it was a failure. He marched as far as he could in the direction necessary to go in order to reach the Sioux. That night every precaution was taken to prevent surprise, but no disturbance occurred. Early the next morning (October 21) the command moved out northward along Cedar Creek a few miles.

Shortly those significant little moving black spots appeared far in our front, and word soon came back that about 800 Indians were in front of us. Line of battle was formed, the train closed up, and the Rodman gun brought forward, while the whole line steadily advanced. A white flag now appeared from a prominent knoll on the left front, telling that another conference was to come. The ground on which we were now marching was usually rolling prairie, with tracks of broken, jumbled, rocky and ridgy ground near Cedar Creek on the left, gradually descending to a similar track on the right, and rising to a point on a range capped on the left by the high knoll on which the Indians appeared and beyond which nothing could be seen. The line was advanced to this range, the knoll occupied, for which purpose the Sioux retired to one exactly like it 100 yards beyond, and the Rodman and company were placed on it. The train was placed in a hollow in the rear, and the usual skirmish line around.

When we reached the ridge I have described above, a scene of wild, savage pageantry burst upon the vision, such as seldom falls to the lot of men to behold, and which made every Fifth Infantry heart thrill with the feeling expressed in Custer's cry, "Custer's luck." Here was the biggest village I ever saw, and the landscape comported with the rest of the picture. From the ridge on which the line was placed the prairie descended by a series of swells down to a creek a few miles in front.

On the left the knoll mentioned was but the first of a long succession stretching to the left and ending in a high ridge. On the right the ground descended to the creek, having high hills along the sides. This creek bends around in front of the described field, and beyond it rose precipitously the ground in broken knolls to the high divide in the far blue distance. It was on this field the Fifth Infantry gazed, but it was not the field that astonished them, for on every knoll, dispersed through the whole field, and in solid mass on the far seen divide, appeared the savage forms of the Sioux. Hither and thither, to and fro, were riding perturbed horsemen like a nest of ants when routed. The dingy warriors swarmed around and about, filling the knolls and ravines and ridges and pressing around our flanks and rear. Even beyond the heavy mass on the divide appeared another mass, doubly massive and heavy and black, which even a glass could only make out an immense throng, without being able to detect riders. A more magnificent spectacle was never beheld, or a scene more worthy the brush of painter or pencil of artist. On the knoll immediately in front of the first were assembled the bearers of the white flag. One company and most of the officers went forward between the two forces. Indians soon swarmed to that point by the dozen; but no meeting could be arranged here, so General Miles directed that it should take place on a small hillock immediately in front of his line, and that Sitting Bull draw up his line on the other side. This was substantially agreed to, and the two parties met at this point, with the two lines duly formed.

A long, earnest and eager conference began this time, with a little anxiety on the side of the Fifth, by reason of officers and men going back and forth. This conference was even more protracted than on the day before, the Sioux showing their anxiety for the result by constantly riding to the council circle eagerly consulting each other and then returning to their eminence,

the line of warriors that had been formed being almost entirely broken up by these movements. After long, anxious consultation, many of the chiefs were found willing to agree to the terms, one offering to go himself as hostage if his tribe would be allowed to hunt buffalo awhile. At this point, however, Sitting Bull eagerly broke up the conference, preferring to fight to yielding.

Each party retired to its own side. General Miles sent a final word to Sitting Bull to let him have his answer promptly or he would open upon him with his guns. No answer was returned. As General Miles and his party moved slowly back to his lines the Indians on the plain withdrew to the heights, and crowned these and the high ground beyond the rocks in front. From the prudent precautions taken by General Miles against surprise or treachery to his command the Indians seemed to have had an idea he would rather await than make an attack, so they watched with extreme eagerness his first movement. A moment sufficed for preparation, and when the wished for command to move forward was given every officer and soldier joyfully responded and their eagerness could scarcely be restrained. Major Casey, with Company A, was directed to move along and clear the ridge on the left, Captain Carter, with Company K, to clear a high knoll on the right, Captain Snyder, with Company F, to guard the Rodman gun, while the line advanced direct to the front. The advance was not handsomely done, owing to the too great eagerness to get forward. After advancing a few hundred yards line was deployed as skirmishers, opening out like a fan. The deployment was beautifully made in perfect order, sweeping over the ground with its long waving line, climbing the hills and descending the valleys like a long ripple over the billows. Captain Carter's company, which had been ordered to carry the height on the right, crowned by about seventy-five Indians without firing, moved steadily forward, closing upon the Sioux. The latter gave way before the little line without venturing a shot. Meanwhile the main line was rapidly advancing. Company A, moving steadily, swept aside the few Indians on the left ridge. The line had now reached the creek, beyond which was the battle-field.

On the precipitous rise immediately before us, composed of high gravelly knolls, were the main body of the Sioux. The ravine of the stream divided to the right, one portion running far to the right, the other extending to the north and left along the line of the advance. On the left of this branch was a very high ridge, commanding the whole plan of the field, and distant from the ravine a few hundred yards. This was covered by Indians. The prairie beyond the heights, on which the main body of the Sioux had taken up position, was rolling, as usual, each swell rising higher for several miles. The ground on the right of the right branch of the stream was similar to that on the left, but not so high.

The plan of the Indians, it appeared now, was to get the Fifth Regiment to pass the main force and thus become entangled in the ravines and low ground, while by crowning the surrounding heights they would be enabled to pour a concentrated fire on the mass and repeat the Custer butchery. General Miles was not the man to be thus entrapped, and by Captains Carter and Casey's moves defeated the first part of this programme. His plan was as perfect as its execution was complete.

The line was now moving out of the ravine and up the precipitous knolls, the Indians giving way gradually and easily in front, not yet firing a shot, the armistice apparently restraining both forces. The line now moved out of the ravines and up the precipitous gravel buttes in the following order:—Captain Casey, with Company A; Bennett, with B; Lyman, with I; Butler, with C; Carter, with K. In the line Lieutenants Pope and Rosseau, with H; Forbes, with G. in reserve, Captain Snyders, with F, in charge of the Rodman gun, and McDonald, with D, in rear of the train. As the line approached the summit of the heights the Sioux began their wild war dance in our front. This was the first hostile demonstration. Many might have been killed now by the Rodman gun, but that the dislike to be first to break the armistice prevailed with General Miles. The Rodman gun

was pushed forward on the right and all was moving forward in good order, when a shot from the rear passed through Lieut. Pope's company, and was at once returned by the eager men, who were tired of waiting. This company was at once ordered to clear the ravines and knolls whence the shot came from. Lieut. Rosseau, with Company K, was ordered to take the left and Carter the right ravine. At the same time the main line advanced rapidly, the main front when the Sioux dashed in circles along the front delivering a rapid fire and then disappearing behind the swells. Their riding was magnificent, but the fire was quite ineffective. While this was taking place the flank movements advanced apace. Company E soon cleared the ravines, Carter and Lyman doing the same on the right, where they encountered heavy firing in passing through what had been the camp of Sitting Bull's band.

Meanwhile the gallant Rosseau, worthy of his great brother's reputation, moved straight up to the lofty height under a rapid fire until he reached the summit and secured the key of the field. It was handsomely done and without loss of life, aided by the booming of the Rodman. The Sioux, now driven from every important point, flanked and foiled, made wide circles, and many came around to the rear or flank and rear of Company E, which had been ordered to remain with the train until it was out of danger. These Indians in the rear took possession of each height, and dismounting did some close firing. Here Sergeant McPhelan, Company E, was wounded severely from a shot. The Indians now fired the prairies in front, and amid the lurid flames the fight continued until no Sioux remained to oppose the advance. Company E was then directed to clear the ravines on the left rear, where water was to be found, of the few Indians collected there, while the command moved back and camped on the high ridge.

In this action only two men were wounded, this being due to the fact that the fire of the Indians was so well kept down by the new arms and good marksmen. Sergeant McPhelan, shot by a sharpshooter in the rear, and one private of Company I, was the total loss of the Fifth regiment. Of the number actually engaged or the loss incurred on the side of the Indians it is impossible to speak with any certainty. The Fifth had 398 all told, and the Indians certainly greatly outnumbered these. Sitting Bull's forces are estimated at 600 on the field, but many did not take part in the fight.

It has since been heard that there were three bands, in all 1,500 warriors, of which only a few took part. Six dead Indians were seen lying on the field, but as they had full opportunity to carry off their dead before they could be reached by the troops, it is reasonable to believe a great number were killed. Whatever their loss in killed may have been, more severe was the loss of several tons of dried buffalo meat and a large amount of camp equipment. For this they had fought, and by the loss of the fight the prestige of Sitting Bull was diminished. His punishment for the destruction of a gallant band of cavalry was accomplished by infantry alone, not a cavalry soldier or officer being on the field in this engagement. General Miles displayed that superb handling of troops that so distinguished him during the war and on the southern plains. The Indians were so completely baffled by the rapidity of his movements as to be unable to make any formidable opposition. The next morning the sun appeared and a fight occurred with the pickets of Company E, arising from the chasing and nearly capturing one man who was straggling, but the Indians were speedily driven off. The main train was then resumed and pressed rapidly to the Yellowstone. Skirmishing continued most of the day. The prairie is being fired all along the line of march and ponies and lodge poles picked up all the way. The importance of the above engagement and pursuit will finally appear in the fact that this day the whole of the Minneconjous and Sans Arcs have surrendered and given five of their principal chiefs—Red Skirt, Black Eagle, Sunrise, Sitting Eagle, White Bull and Foolish Bull—to General Miles as hostages that they will go at once to the Cheyenne Agency. They give the number of their lodges as 1,300, but this