

## COL. MILLS' FIGHT WITH THE INDIANS.

CAMP ON OWL CREEK,  
Dakota, Sept. 10, 1876.

Two fights with the hostile Sioux occurred yesterday. A band of about 150 braves was surprised at dawn, their village destroyed and their ponies captured by a detachment of the Third Cavalry under Col. Anson Mills. The main column under General Crook, overtook the troops in advance about noon, and about 3 o'clock it was attacked by Indians belonging to the neighboring villages, numbering about 500.

One soldier and one scout were killed in that engagement, and eight soldiers wounded, one of whom died this morning. About forty Sioux were killed and twenty-one were made captives.

The column marched three days southwards from Heart River, through a constant storm of cold rain, with meagre rations meted out to hungry palates. Several hundred worn-out horses were abandoned on the march, and on this day the famishing soldiers broke from their ranks to kill them, in order to secure the meat.

General Crook despatched 150 men of the Third Cavalry to guard the pack train to Deadwood City and load with supplies to relieve the troops. The service was extremely hazardous, because of the multitude of small trails discovered by the scouts, which all turned towards the Black Hills, and a concentration of the Indian forces upon the detachment was feared. The detail for this service was not made larger, because there were no more horses in command whose strength was equal to the rapid marching it required. Col. Mills was in command, and I accompanied his little force, which was divided into two battalions, under Lieutenants Crawford and Von Lentwitz.

Although wearied with three days' marches of thirty-five miles each, the detachment left camp in the evening in a thick mist, which interfered seriously with its progress. Frank Guard, the scout, guided its course. A storm was raging, and several halts were necessary in order to consult the compass; but the clouds suddenly broke and the north star appeared. We camped at one o'clock. The storm continued the next day. About thirty miles from the main column Guard discovered indications of the proximity of an Indian village, as we were approaching Slim Buttes, and we halted on the table land, concealed behind a knoll. The Indians were watched while they were herding their ponies, of which there were great numbers; but it was doubtful how many braves were in the party. Colonel Mills desired to attack them at once; but after a consideration, fearing the band might be much stronger than it appeared, he determined to wait until daybreak. Every precaution was taken to prevent the enemy from discovering us. We marched back two miles, and bivouacked in a pocket formed by two canyons in the deep mud, and, drenched with battering rain. The plan of attack was fully digested. Lieutenants Crawford and Von Lentwitz were to get positions on two sides of the hollow in which was the village before its inhabitants should awake. Their men were to be dismounted a mile's distance from the village, the horses to be left there in charge of the packers, and the troops were to advance cautiously on foot. Twenty-five mounted men were led by Lieutenant Schwatka. Lieutenant Bubbs was to remain in charge of the mules and horses.

During the night several alarms occurred. At 2 o'clock all was in readiness, and the detachment formed ranks. In profound darkness, fog and rain it advanced slowly to the position of the previous evening, and there halting, the guide went forward to find the way to the village. After waiting half an hour he emerged out of the obscurity again, and we again moved. After a second halt the mules and horses, with about thirty men, of whom I was one, remained behind, while the main body advanced. At the first sound of firing we were to advance rapidly, but cautiously, and if the enemy proved too strong we were to secure and hold some favorable point until relieved. There was in these arrangements an anticipation of another disaster like that which befell Custer and his gallant Seventh. The waiting

in the chill, wet darkness, straining the ear in vain for the sound of the fray, was full of dread, anxious suspense.

The dawn had not begun, when a white soldier, patrolling a hill, espied a horseman coming at full gallop toward us. It at first appeared to be an Indian, but proved to be Captain Jack, the scout, who said the fight had begun, and we were to advance as rapidly as possible. We dashed forward through the mist and reached a round top of bluffs, from whence we saw flashes of guns a mile below, while now and again dull detonations reached us against the breeze. Here we met Guard and a private, who brought an order from Col. Mills to despatch a courier to General Crook immediately, asking reinforcements. Two men volunteered for this service and galloped off to execute the order. We then advanced into the valley under fire. The fusillade was continuous, and bullets came whizzing from nearly every acclivity. A low ridge hid the village from view, and at its foot were herded 200 captured ponies. Gaining the ridge the fire upon us became nearer for a time, but well restrained by our skirmishers commanding the village. The attack had been accidentally precipitated. The troops had advanced in double column for two miles, when they came within sight of the herd of Indian ponies; the animals were frightened, and rushed like a hurricane toward the village. The accident caused a change in the method of attack to be ordered immediately. Lieutenant Schwatka, with his twenty-five men, dashed forward at a thundering gallop, and close upon the heels of the ponies, swept through the crowd of lodges. A strange sound was heard, produced by the cutting of the lodge skins with knives, quickly followed by the reports of guns, and the Indians were seen scrambling up the steep banks and into the gullies, with yells of dismay.

Hardly was Schwatka well out of their range than Crawford and Von Lentwitz's men opened fire, and their balls riddled the teepees before their occupants were fairly awakened. Owing to the precipitate attack Von Lentwitz had not time to secure his assigned position on the further side of the creek, and the effect of a cross fire, therefore, was not gained, and the Indians who escaped in that direction secreted themselves and acted as sharpshooters. Schwatka had captured the main portion of the herd, but many ponies had escaped. A few were caught by the Sioux, who began to ride around on the hills firing at the troops where they happened to be most exposed. Others were seen to canter away over the bluffs in the west. It was surmised they were going to raise the neighboring bands to their assistance, and preparations were strenuously made for a desperate defence of the position commanding the village until General Crook with his column should arrive.

Lieutenants Crawford and Schwatka made repeated charges which drove the Sioux from those points from which their fire was annoying. They both made rapid explorations of the hills to gather up stray ponies so that they should not be secured by the Indians. In these they had many pistol encounters with the Indians, and forced them to retire repeatedly. The gallantry displayed by both of these officers was splendid.

In the action at the village, there had been several casualties among our troops, as follows:—

Private A Midbury, alias "Weasel," was killed by a bullet in the head and an arrow in the body.

Charles Foster, wounded severely.

Sergeant Kirkwood, wounded.

Augustus Dorn, severely wounded.

Lieutenant A. H. Von Lentwitz, severely wounded in the knee, at evening.

Sergeant Edwards Glass, severely wounded in the right arm.

Corporal Edward Mackeman, slightly wounded.

Private William Dubois, slightly wounded.

Colonel Mills took and occupied every point used by the enemy to annoy our troops, and caused rifle pits to be dug with the only shovel which had been brought. I was placed in charge of one, with two men in it, on one of the ridges overlooking the village, while another was advanced to a point beyond, which served as an outpost.

Most of the fighting had ceased when the sun was up.

At four o'clock a second courier was sent back mounted on a strong Indian pony, to hasten General Crook. Two soldiers and myself volunteered to go, and one of the former was selected. The village was occupied by the soldiers, but not until the Indians were driven from a steep hill commanding its approach. The booty was safely inspected and removed.

Lieutenant Crawford was sent with nine cavalymen to charge them, the braves holding the hill-sides, and while he was making a circuit through a hollow to escape observation they opened conversation with our interpreter by shouting overtures to a truce. Stabber, a chief, said, "I am tired of fighting; have had enough of it this Summer; want to go to agency again." He was interrupted by the approach of Crawford's party, who went up the mountain cheering and received a volley. They killed two Indians with their pistols. The wails of the squaws who were hidden in the hill were heard at intervals.

The pack train was led into the village and loaded with 6,000 pounds of dried meats and fruits found there. The lodges were full of splendid robes, bead work, deer and elk skins, guns, ammunition, saddles, &c., &c. But trophies of far more significance were there. Col. Mills took from a lodge the guidon of Custer's cavalry, the overcoat of a slaughtered officer of the Seventh Cavalry was found, and several saddles of troopers killed on the Little Horn, while the horses in the herd bore the mark of the devoted regiment.

## CERTIFICATES OF LOYALTY.

The letters which I quote, found on the bodies, are an ironical commentary on Indian policy:—

SPOTTED TAIL AGENCY,  
Jan. 14, 1876.

The bearer of this, Stabber, belonging to this agency, will travel north to visit his people. He will return to this agency within ninety days, without disturbing any white man. If he need any little thing, you will not lose by giving it to him. This is true.

F. C. BOUCHER.

WHITESTONE AGENCY,  
D. T., Feb., 1876.

TO ANY UNITED STATES INDIAN AGENT:—

This is to certify that Charging Crow, an Indian belonging to Santee's band, is a true man to terms of treaty and uses all his influence with his people to do right. I cheerfully recommend him to favorable consideration of all.

Yours respectfully,

A. A. HOWARD,  
United States Indian Agent.

The couriers sent to Crook met him on his march. He hastened forward as fast as his jaded and hungry troops could come. For two days the flesh of horses had been issued to them for food. At noon the column appeared and gladdened the eyes of Colonel Mills and his detachment, who were instantly expectant of an attack by the Indians in force. Firing had ceased, except occasional shots from the ravine on the west side of the village, where it was supposed a single wounded Indian lay, determined to sell his life dearly.

During the morning soldiers had been killed by shots from the ravine. General Crook determined to catch the Indian alive, and caused the interpreter to make a promise of life to him. Bullets were the only reply. Soldiers posted behind him on the opposite bank had poured their fire into the ravine for hours, but still the Indian's gun was not silenced. Passing from the ridge to the village soldiers were saluted by bullets. Troops were deployed below the mouth of the ravine to make the approach cautiously. They crawled, with loaded guns. Bullet after bullet was sent over their heads from the depth of the ravine and they returned but did not silence the fire. The excitement spread through the camp and the mouth of the ravine became the focus of a crowd. Several officers joined in the siege, the stronghold was approached by hundreds of eager soldiers under the delusion that they were to see an Indian made prisoner.

Hitherto only single shots had come from within; but suddenly there was a volley sent through the approaching troops, which caused an indescribable rush away from the spot, and the wildest confusion

reigned. The ravine was full of Indians, who, after the first charge in the morning, had fled there to hide. The volley wounded Private Kennedy of the Fifth Cavalry. The siege became more tragic and earnest. Captain Munson was foremost peering over the steep bank into the ravine, when he slipped in through a dense bramble and found himself among the Indians. The dry water bed was narrow and deep and hidden with brush. Several warriors lay face downward in this trench, and had built small breast works across it with mud and roots. Behind these were a score of squaws and children. Some of these were wounded, and the mud was drenched and bushes spattered with their blood.

Munson gallantly seized a squaw, and putting her papoose on his back shoved her out. One buck was lying on a dead infant. Munson had barely a glimpse of the interior of this strange stronghold, and then dodged back to escape the muzzles of five guns over his head. Bullets hissed both ways, the soldiers pressing forward to fire. They several times swayed backward before the fire of the Indians, and the roar of musketry was like that at Antietam.

Baptiste, the Pawnee scout, dashed in and caught two other squaws and a young brave. They said the rest would surrender, but when quarter was again proposed they answered with bullets.

John White, known as Buffalo White, a friend and follower of Buffalo Bill, was shot through the heart.

Baptiste just escaped a ball, to kill the savage who fired it, and scalped him in an instant.

A talk was meanwhile held with the women who had been rescued. One of them, who was wounded, said she would go into the ravine and induce the Indians still alive to surrender. She went, and soon after led out a forlorn looking group. There were several squaws and two bucks, one of them named Black Wolf. On entering the stronghold there were found three dead squaws and one dead brave. American Horse or Iron Shields was found horribly wounded in the abdomen. He was brought out and cared for by the surgeons, but died this morning. The captives were twenty-one in number. When they surrendered they seemed to expect immediate death. A squaw discovered her dead papoose in a tepee, and was a picture of intense woe.

Captives said that Crazy Horse's village was on the other side of Slim Buttes, and that some of their people had gone to bring his band to their assistance. About three o'clock mounted Indians began to swarm on the ridges and attacked the camp. They made strong efforts to find a weak point in our skirmish line, which had been thrown across the village, making a circuit of the whole command. Firing was rapid for two hours. An attempt was made to cut off Lieutenant Sibley, who had charge of some led horses in rear of the column, and was just approaching camp, but they failed.

A battalion of infantry of four companies, under Major Burt, gallantly carried several difficult points of the Buttes, charging the mounted Indians on foot and pouring from the crests which they gained a terrible fire upon them. About twenty Indians were killed on this side of the camp. The cavalry did equal execution. Our skirmish line around the camp was about six miles long, and as evening fell the flash of guns was still continued. Major Burt, in a final charge, drove the Sioux over the highest ridge occupied by them with ringing cheers. The casualties on our side in these afternoon fights were four.

Privates Fitz Henry, Ninth Infantry, wounded in the leg.

Sergeant Scribner, Fifth Cavalry, wounded in the thigh.

Private Dorn, Fifth Cavalry, wounded in the hip and arm.

The spoil of the village not useful for subsistence was distributed among the men who captured it. Its provision of meat and fruit will support the troops until we reach the Black Hills. The lodges and debris were then burned. During the night the Indians sent a few shots into camp. This morning the work of destruction was completed. Many fine robes were burned. The Indians indulged in a little sharpshooting with no effect.

The column took up the march, with flanks carefully guarded against any attempt of the Sioux to recapture the prisoners and ponies.

Two companies of the Fifth Cavalry, acting as rear guard, surprised a small body of Indians who ventured from their hiding place, supposing the camp deserted. Seven braves were killed.

Private Wadden was wounded in the leg.

A march of twelve miles was made to-day. Some of the wounded squaws were left among the ruins of the village, where their friends will find them.

Captain Jack killed and scalped an Indian a mile from the column during the engagement of yesterday afternoon.

Captured Indians say Sitting Bull has crossed the Yellowstone, and that the other bands are returning to the agencies. The captured horses have been distributed among persons engaged in the capture of the village. One formerly belonging to Custer's cavalry fell to your correspondent. The wounded are all doing well. They are carried on mule litters furnished with captured furs and blankets.—*New York Herald.*

## By Telegraph.

## AMERICAN.

CHICAGO, 25.—The special postal railway commission, appointed under the act of Congress passed last session, convened here this morning. The commission consists of Gardner J. Hubbard, of Mass., F. W. Palmer, of Ills., and Samuel M. Fox, of Penna. They heard John McArthur, Postmaster at Chicago, John M. Hubbard, General Supt. of letter carriers in Chicago, George S. Bangs, late general superintendent of postal railway transportation, and Hugh Riddle, General Supt. and Vice President of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company.

The *Tribune's* Washington special says: The Republican Congressional committee, to-day, received the following dispatch:—

"Aberdeen, Miss., Sept. 24.

"The Republican meeting in Oktobet, was broken up last night, and four negroes killed and several wounded by the democrats."

District Attorney Walter, of Mississippi, telegraphed Attorney General Taft as follows: As Manning and myself, nominees for Congress, were about giving our nineteenth joint discussion, to-day, a white man cudgelled a negro, and the whites opened fire on a large colored squad in the audience. Five colored and two whites are reported shot. After the shooting I offered to speak, but declared I should as usual denounce the democratic violence. The officers then advised the crowd to disperse and they did so. This affair occurred some time ago, but the details were suppressed, and have just reached here.

District Attorney Walton declares the attack was unprovoked and unpardonable.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., 25.—In the United States Circuit Court, to-day, Judge Knowles delivered the opinion of the court, Judges Clifford and Knowles, in the case of an action at law, United States vs. Rowland G. Hazard. The action is one of debt, to recover the sum of \$17,451 for defendant's income tax in 1868. Defendant pleads in bar to the recovery of the payment by him of the assessment made by the United States assistant assessor, with the added penalty of fifty per cent. United States Attorney Gardner demurred to this and other pleas, and the opinion of the Court, to-day, sustains the demurrer, following the principle of the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of the Dollar Savings Bank vs. the United States. The case is important as it is the first one instituted to recover a tax after the citizen had paid a tax assessed by a United States Assessor, with 50 per cent. penalty. The judgment of the court sustains such action.

NEW ORLEANS, 25.—The Howard Association, in response to a telegram from Dr. Bruras, who left here on Saturday under their auspices with nurses for Brunswick, Ga., sent two additional physicians and eight nurses to-day. The dispatch says the destitution is appalling. More nurses and money are wanted.

ST. LOUIS, 25.—The democrats of the second congressional district of this city had a very stormy and bitter time in their convention this afternoon, between the friends of Erasmus Wells, the present incum-