

killed one of the party in charge. Joseph could no longer restrain his warriors, and on June 13, 1877—one day before the date that had been appointed for going on the reservation—the enraged Nez Percés attacked the neighboring settlement on White Bird creek, Idaho, and killed 21 persons.<sup>1</sup> The war was begun. The troops under Howard were ordered out. The first fight occurred on June 17 at Hangman's creek and resulted in the loss of 34 soldiers. Then came another on July 4 with a loss of 13 more. Then on July 12 another encounter by troops under General Howard himself, in which 11 soldiers were killed and 26 wounded. (Comr., 24.)

Then began one of the most remarkable exhibitions of generalship in the history of our Indian wars, a retreat worthy to be remembered with that of the storied ten thousand. With hardly a hundred warriors, and impeded by more than 350 helpless women and children—with General Howard behind, with Colonel (General) Miles in front, and with Colonel Sturgis and the Crow scouts coming down upon his flank—Chief Joseph led his little band up the Clearwater and across the mountains into Montana, turning at Big Hole pass long enough to beat back his pursuers with a loss of 60 men; then on by devious mountain trails southeast into Yellowstone park, where he again turned on Howard and drove him back with additional loss of men and horses; then out of Wyoming and north into Montana again, hoping to find safety on Canadian soil, until intercepted in the neighborhood of the Yellowstone by Colonel Sturgis in front with fresh troops and a detachment of Crow scouts, with whom they sustained two more encounters, this time with heavy loss of men and horses to themselves; then again eluding their pursuers, this handful of starving and worn-out warriors, now reduced to scarcely fifty able men, carrying their wounded and their helpless families, crossed the Missouri and entered the Bearpaw mountains. But new enemies were on their trail, and at last, when within 50 miles of the land of refuge, Miles, with a fresh army, cut off their retreat by a decisive blow, capturing more than half their horses, killing a number of the band, including Joseph's brother and the noted chief Looking Glass, and wounding 40 others. (Comr., 25.)

Forced either to surrender or to abandon the helpless wounded, the women, and children, Joseph chose to surrender to Colonel Miles, on October 5, 1877, after a masterly retreat of more than a thousand miles. He claimed that this was "a conditional surrender, with a distinct promise that he should go back to Idaho in the spring." (Comr., 26.) The statement of General Howard's aid-de-camp is explicit on this point:

It was promised Joseph that he would be taken to Tongue river and kept there till spring, and then be returned to Idaho. General Sheridan, ignoring the promises made

<sup>1</sup> The details of the attack on the cattle guards is given by Helen Hunt Jackson (Century of Dishonor, page 131). The Indian Commissioner, in his official report, says: "Open hostilities by these Indians began by the murder of 21 white men and women on White Bird creek, near Mount Idaho, in revenge for the murder of one of their tribe." (Comr. Rept., 1877, page 12.)

He was a  
 Crow  
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