

839.) Commissioner Morgan in his official report says that "Most of the men, including Big Foot, were killed around his tent, where he lay sick. The bodies of the women and children were scattered along a distance of two miles from the scene of the encounter." (*Comr.*, 35.)

This is no reflection on the humanity of the officer in charge. On the contrary, Colonel Forsyth had taken measures to guard against such an occurrence by separating the women and children, as already stated, and had also endeavored to make the sick chief, Big Foot, as comfortable as possible, even to the extent of sending his own surgeon, Dr Glennan, to wait on him on the night of the surrender. Strict orders had also been issued to the troops that women and children were not to be hurt. The butchery was the work of infuriated soldiers whose comrades had just been shot down without cause or warning. In justice to a brave regiment it must be said that a number of the men were new recruits fresh from eastern recruiting stations, who had never before been under fire, were not yet imbued with military discipline, and were probably unable in the confusion to distinguish between men and women by their dress.

After examining all the official papers bearing on the subject in the files of the War Department and the Indian Office, together with the official reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and of the Secretary of War and the several officers engaged; after gathering all that might be obtained from unofficial printed sources and from conversation with survivors and participants in the engagement on both sides, and after going over the battle-ground in company with the interpreter of the scouts engaged, the author arrives at the conclusion that when the sun rose on Wounded Knee on the fatal morning of December 29, 1890, no trouble was anticipated or premeditated by either Indians or troops; that the Indians in good faith desired to surrender and be at peace, and that the officers in the same good faith had made preparations to receive their surrender and escort them quietly to the reservation; that in spite of the pacific intent of Big Foot and his band, the medicine-man, Yellow Bird, at the critical moment urged the warriors to resistance and gave the signal for the attack; that the first shot was fired by an Indian, and that the Indians were responsible for the engagement; that the answering volley and attack by the troops was right and justifiable, but that the wholesale slaughter of women and children was unnecessary and inexcusable.

Authorities differ as to the number of Indians present and killed at Wounded Knee. General Ruger states that the band numbered about 340, including about 100 warriors, but Major Whitside, to whom they surrendered, reported them officially as numbering 120 men and 250 women and children, a total of 370. (*War*, 15; *G. D.*, 38.) This agrees almost exactly with the statement made to the author by Mr Asay, a trader who was present at the surrender. General Miles says that there were present 106 warriors, a few others being absent at the time in