

perfectly perpendicular, leaving miniature chasms between. Such, magnified by a hundred, are the "bad lands" of the Northwest. They are patches of clay soil, baked by the long and intense droughts of that climate into chasms four or five feet wide, and, perhaps, twenty feet deep, absolutely impassable for wagons where they occur,--quagmires in the early spring freshets, a labyrinth of ravines in the summer. These bad lands surrounded the country of the hostiles in 1873, and surround them now.

So much for the natural advantage of Sitting Bull's position, considered in a defensive point of view; but a greater advantage accrues to him from the strategic lines of the country and/p.378/ the existence of the Indian agencies. The Missouri River describes nearly a perfect circle around the country of the "hostiles," and all the Indian agencies are on this river. If you will get a map of this region and examine it, you will begin to realize what is meant by the "strategic advantages" of Sitting Bull. Beginning at the mouth of the Cheyenne River, there are Cheyenne Agency, Brule Agency, Grand River Agency, Standing Rock Agency, Fort Berthold and Fort Peck, and several other places, all full of friendly Indians, supported by government and ready to join the hostiles in the summer, bringing arms and ammunition with them. To give an idea of the supplies of the latter, let us take what went through in the spring of 1876 alone for distribution to Indians. Our evidence is contained in the private letter of an officer on the spot. This officer has investigated the matter, and finds that the following shipments were made by river steamer to these agencies, and to Forts Benton, McCloud and Claggert (also agencies), on the 21st of May, 20th of June, 6th and 30th of July, 1876, while the war was actually raging:--

No less than fifty-six cases of arms, or 1,120 Winchester and Remington rifles, and 413,000 rounds of patent ammunition, went there on these steamers, besides large quantities of loose powder, lead and primers. These shipments were all for issue to Indians, through the Indian agents, or for sale through