

of the village, Benteen to charge the center on the opposite side, and he intended to strike the enemy on the upper end of the valley. He never dreamed that officers under his command would fail to obey him; but before he had reached the ford where he had intended to make his crossing and attack the Indians, Reno had retired out of danger, and with Benteen's wagon-train and packs, barricaded themselves on the top of a prominent hill. Custer, all unconscious of having been deserted by his subordinates, charged the Indians at the ford, and partly succeeded in crossing; but that portion of the Indians that Reno should have engaged, turned and massed themselves around Custer, mustering over two thousand warriors. /p.387/ Custer's gallant little band was driven back across the stream, hotly pressed by the still gathering myriad of yelling savages, who, being dismounted, poured a steady hail of death from behind every obstacle which could conceal their supple bodies. Custer's mounted troops on the side of a ruggedly terraced hill, stood very little chance of lasting long in this uneven battle. We suppose, from the position of the dead bodies of Captain Calhoun's company, that they were deployed to check the advance of the Indians, while Custer and the rest of the command took the next higher terrace, in hopes that the General might see how fared the fight under his subalterns. Judge what must have been his thoughts when he heard nor saw nothing beyond the sea of savages which were gradually closing around him. Calhoun's company all dead, every man and officer's dead body found in line, shows that they fought kneeling--without hope--but not one flinched from his position among his dead and dying and dying comrades.

On the next higher terrace Captain Keogh's company was ordered to dismount and hold the savages in check, while the General and the rest of the command took still higher ground and kept their flanks