

such a blow they would be able to strike terror into the heart of the white man, and that all the discontented tribes of the northwest, to the number of nearly a hundred thousand, would rise and join them in the greatest Indian war of history. Whether the leaders were sincere in their professed/p.587/ Messianic belief, or merely used it as a means of controlling their followers, can never be determined; of the sincerity of the rank and file there can be little doubt.

On receipt of the news of the Wounded Knee fight, Gen. Miles went at once to the scene of action. Hitherto he had remained at his headquarters, in Chicago, and directed the disposition of the troops by telegraph. He now assumed command in person.

While the desperate zealots of Big Foot's band were putting to such disastrous test the virtue of the Messiah medicine, an allied band were putting to another test the skill and discipline of a band of army adjuncts in the shape of teamsters and a force of "cow-boy" guards. A supply train was waylaid. The men in charge were not men inured to methods of Indian warfare and attack. It has been more than a dozen years since the employees of the government have had practical experience in it, and it was feared that the new men might fail if put to severe test. But the wonderful American adaptability displayed itself. Promptly, as though they were drilled veterans, they drew their wagons into the corral form, the horses within, and shielding their bodies behind a fortress extemporized from bales and boxes, they poured a murderous fire on their circling enemies. Chagrined by their failure, the Indians withdrew, carrying away their dead, as is their custom.

These two conflicts comprise all the real fighting in that which has passed into history as the great Sioux outbreak. It has been seldom in the history of the conflict of the red man with his white "brother" that an uprising of the Indian tribes has in its beginning exhibited such portentous promise. Stung by the oft-repeated breaches of treaty on the part of the government, driven by the prospect of hunger and suffering, and welded together by a religious