

SURRENDER OF SITTING BULL

CHAPTER I.

Down the Milk River Trail; Meeting with Hostile Sioux; Interview with Chief Call, and conception of a plan for the Surrender of Sitting Bull.

In the summer of 1880, Cox & Flowerree, owners of the "Circle F" brand on the Sun River Range, in Montana, determined to drive a large herd of cattle down the Milk River Trail for shipment at Bismark, Dak. It was a dangerous undertaking, for the Milk River Valley was known to be the hunting ground of the hostile Sioux, who after the battle of the Little Big Horn, had taken refuge in the North-West Territory. On the other hand, the excellent grazing, together with an abundance of wood and water, were considerations that outweighed any apprehensions of danger from savages. Accordingly a bunch of twelve¹⁰ hundred head of steers were rounded up, and started down the Milk River Trail, handled by twelve cow-boys, in charge of J. R. Cox, one of the owners, and Will Flowerree, son of the other member of the firm, with Bill Norris as guide, and a colored man, who was cook and teamster, in charge of the solitary mess wagon.

When the outfit reached Fort Belknap, and were about to enter territory of uncertain hospitality, I was engaged to accompany them as Interpreter. Before accepting the position, however, I exacted from every member of the party, a promise of strict obedience to my orders in the event of meeting, or having any trouble with Indians. The extent ~~to~~ of what was considered hostile country was more than three hundred miles in length, embracing the entire valley of the Milk River to its confluence with the Missouri, and about one hundred miles of the Missouri Valley, from the mouth of Milk River to the Military Post of Camp Poplar¹¹ River, which at that time was garrisoned by two companies of the 11th U. S. Infantry, with Captain C. B. Reed in command.

Leaving Fort Belknap, we proceeded down the Milk River, which at that time