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 257 where he and Reno separated, and the latter having invested the woods on the southeast side of the camp, people can not but wonder why he failed to hold this point of vantage until he could satisfy himself that Custer made his proposed attack below. Instead of doing this, however, Reno withdrew from the woods, retreated across the Little Big Horn, and took up a position infinitely less desirable than the one he had first held on the west of the stream, where he was protected by a heavy growth of timber. This retreat is said to have been so precipitous that many of the fleeing soldiers were actually dragged from their horses by the pursuing savages and hacked to death at leisure.

There must have been a respite given the Reno command to gain its second position, for it was then that Benteen, came upon the scene from the west, and he was followed somewhat later by McDougal's troop and the pack train. There is no account of the packs having been attacked while on their way south-east over the main trail to reach Reno's position, so it necessarily follows that the Indians at that particular time had withdrawn from Reno to repel the charge of the Custer battalion three miles down the stream. "Indecision" on the part of Reno may have led to the force under himself and Benteen being kept at a standstill while Custer's command was undergoing destruction; but military men used a very mild term when they called it such.

On the afternoon of the massacre the soldiers of Reno's command distinctly heard a "charge" sounded on a bugle, and they arose with a yell of ~~charito~~ welcome Custer, only to be met with a yell of derision from the savages. This circumstance would not have escaped the notice or knowledge of Reno, and yet he claims he had no suspicion that annihilation had overtaken Custer's command. A little later on in the day the white hats and blue coats of soldiers were noticed in the possession of the Indians who swarmed about Reno's entrenched position,* but this circumstance does not appear to have made any deep impression on Maj. Reno. His indecision may have saved his command but it will never write the name of "hero" on his monument.

258 Grouard, as stated in his narrative, reached the Custer battlefield about 11 o'clock on the night of June 25th. He had struck the trail of the Custer command where the commands separated, and followed it down to the bluffs on which the bodies of the killed were strewn. On his way to his spot he must, as he says, have passed close to the entrenched position held by Reno, but he did not know it. When he crossed the Little Big Horn he heard (but did not see) the Indians passing backward and forward over the travoi trails, but the camp at that time had been moved to a point fully twenty miles southwest of the battlefield. The scout heard no shooting while in the vicinity of the Little Big Horn, and saw nothing which led him to suppose that Reno's command was besieged. He was in the Indian camp at sun-up on the morning of the 26th of June, and left that place with hundreds of the savages in hot pursuit, reaching the Crook command on Goose creek two days afterwards.

259 In their haste to get their families out of the way of danger, the Indians undoubtedly left many tipis and much rubbish, and which was, later on, destroyed by the savages themselves, as they had no means to convey it from the spot, the travois having been taken to a point twenty miles to the southwest. The only view Reno's command obtained of the Indian camp was at the * command was first thrown against the savages. Its subsequent retreat across the river cut off the view of the camp entirely, and Reno could not know when the hostile village was moved. Grouard states positively that it was moved on the night of the 25th, and as he visited it on the morning of the 26th when it was located twenty miles southwest of the battlefield, it could not