

Up to this time Custer had seen no signs of Indians, but on the 24th he came upon an Indian campfire still burning, and which with other indications, showed that a small party of Indians had encamped there the previous night and had evidently left that morning in ignorance of his proximity. He therefore sent his head scout, Bloody Knife, a Ree Indian, with a few braves to reconnoiter in the valley. In a few minutes two of the braves returned, reporting that they had found five lodges of the Sioux, when Custer with a company of cavalry hastened forward and very soon found himself in close proximity to the lodges, about which a considerable number of ponies were grazing. He reached a point very close to the lodges without being discovered and even was able to completely surround the camp with his cavalry before the Indians became aware of his presence. He dispatched the guard and interpreter with a flag of truce to acquaint the occupants of the camp that they were friendly and desired to communicate with them. Custer himself entered the village and shook hands with the occupants, and promised them presents of flour, sugar and coffee. The Indians agreed to accept the invitation the next morning. With this understanding Custer left them. The entire party numbered twenty-seven. "Later in the afternoon four of the men, including chief One Stab, visited our camp and desired the promised rations, saying their entire party would move up and join us the following morning, as agreed upon. I ordered presents of sugar, coffee and bacon given them, and to relieve them of their pretended anxiety for the safety of their village during the night, / <sup>411</sup> I ordered a party of fifteen of my command to return with them and protect them, but from their great disinclination to wait a few minutes till the party could saddle up, and from the fact that two of the four had already slipped away, I was of the opinion that they were not acting in good faith. In this I was confirmed when the two remaining ones set off at a gallop in the direction of their village. I sent a party of our scouts to overtake them and request them to return. Not complying with this request I sent a second party with orders to repeat the request, and if not complied with to take hold of the bridles of their ponies and lead them back, but to offer no violence. When overtaken by our scouts

report ed. to make matters distinct Indians-

Why?