

to that found growing wild in this hitherto unknown region. I know of no portion of our country where nature has done so much to prepare homes for husbandment and left so little for the latter to do as here. The open and timber spaces are so divided that a partly prepared farm of almost any dimensions can be found here. Not only is the land cleared, and timber, both for fuel and building, conveniently located, with streams of pure water flowing through it, length and breadth, but nature oftentimes seems to have gone farther and placed beautiful shrubbery and evergreens in the most desirable locations for building sites. * * * Everything indicates an abundance of moisture within the space enclosed by the Black Hills. The soil is that of a rich garden and composed of a dark mold of exceedingly fine grain. We have found the country in many places covered with wild raspberries, both the black and red varieties. Yesterday and today I have feasted on the latter. It is no unusual sight to see hundreds of soldiers gathering wild berries. Nowhere in the states have I tasted cultivated berries of equal flavor to those found growing wild here, nor have I ever seen them as large or in as great profusion, as I have seen hundreds of acres of them here. Wild strawberries, wild currants, gooseberries, two varieties of blueberries and wild cherries are also found in great profusion, and of exceedingly pure quality. Cattle could winter in these valleys without other food or shelter than that to be obtained from running at large." I have quoted very largely from General Custer's report because it has been frequently alleged by writers/⁴¹³ upon this topic that he said nothing which justified the wild rush to the Black Hills which immediately ensued after the publication of his report. I leave it to the reader to determine from the foregoing whether or not he made representations which would induce land-hungry men to make great sacrifices to reach so favored a spot. But, continuing, Custer had other things to say:

"gold has been found at several places and it is the belief of those who are giving their attention to this subject that it will be found in paying quantities. I have upon my table forty or fifty particles of pure gold in size averaging that of