

explained upon the principle laid down by Mr. S. W. Pond in his "Indian Warfare in Minnesota," in which he says, "Indians consider it foolhardiness to make an attack where it is certain that some of them will be killed. Bloody battles are seldom fought by them except when the party attacked rallied and made an unexpected resistance. They occasionally performed exploits which none but brave men would undertake and often fought with desperate valor . * * * Indian wars are prosecuted with the utmost caution on both sides. Even war parties are very careful to keep out of danger." With Crook out of commission it was already becoming manifest that General Sheridan's scheme for crushing the savages between the three columns was likely to miscarry. On the 17th of May General Terry with the Seventh cavalry, under General Custer, containing 600 men and horses, and about 400 infantry, started from Fort Abraham Lincoln, following the course of the Northern Pacific railroad, and reached the mouth of the Powder River on the 9th of June, where he met steamboats with supplies which had been sent around by way of the river. On the 21st of June he had moved up to the mouth of the Rosebud, accompanied by the steamboats. At this point he was met by scouts from Gibbon who had come down from Fort Ellis with his column of 450 men, and who encamped on the north side of the Yellowstone opposite the mouth of the Big Horn. Terry, therefore, determined to detach Custer at this point to go upon a scout up the Rosebud and across to the Little Horn and down that stream to its confluence with the Big Horn, while Terry himself would go on with the steamboats to the mouth of the Big Horn and ferry Gibbon and his column across the river, whence they were to march up the Big Horn and make junction with Custer on the 26th.

General Sheridan says, "Now up to this moment (the 21st of June), there was nothing official or private to justify an officer to expect that any detachment could encounter more than 500 or at the maximum 800 hostile warriors."

How the military authorities could have kept themselves so persistently ignorant of the real situation in the Indian / country year after year surpasses comprehension. Manifestly, at no time after Red Cloud took the war path in 1866,