

5--Hunting Sitting Bull

triumphs as the Fetterman and Custer massacres postpone the fatal day, but ultimately the result will surely come, and as day by day and year by year the white settlements close in around his hunting-grounds, he is gradually becoming aware of his approaching doom. In the meantime he occupies a vast territory of comparatively unexplored country, into which the troops are obliged to seek him when active hostilities open. Of the geography of this region the troops are almost completely ignorant, and are not unfrequently entirely at the mercy of incompetent guides, not only in their movements, but for the discovery of what is absolutely necessary to the success of such movements--water. Civilized warfare is conducted upon certain well-established principles, in which good maps of the country operated in constitute a very important element. In addition to which there is always a stable "objective point" to every campaign which the commander knows cannot be suddenly changed to some other place, and elude his combinations, as an Indian village does. To the Indian, every foot of the country he is operating in is as familiar as are the paths of our flower gardens to us. He has travelled and hunted over it from childhood, knows every path, every pass in the mountains, and every water-hole, as thoroughly as the antelope or other wild animals which range through it. He knows exactly where he can go and where he cannot, where troops can come and will come, and where they cannot, and he knows the points from which he can safely watch the whole country, and give timely notice of the movements of troops, and direct those of his own camps so as to avoid an encounter, or concentrate to meet one. The best horseman in the world, he can, on his fleet little pony, the speed of which is a matter of wonder to the white man, pass over incredible distances in the shortest time, his mode of life accustoming him to any amount