

6--Hunting Sitting Bull

of fatigue, and the greatest deprivations in the way of clothing and food. A piece of buffalo-meat strung to his saddle, and the lightest possible amount of clothing, suffices him day or night for weeks and even months together. With eyes, ears, and even nose always on the alert, like any wild animal, he will discover signs of an approaching enemy more quickly and more certainly than can any white man, and will read the signs he meets with, as a scholar will read the page of an open book. He scents the smoke of a fire from a distance, and at early dawn will patiently watch from some prominent peak, as motionless as a bronze statue, the columns of smoke which at that time of day rise like pillars in the still clear air, and tell him whether a large force is preparing its breakfast, or some small scouting party is out looking for his village. If his quick eye encounters horse-tracks, he can tell with unerring certainty how many are in the party, whether the horses are rideen by white men or Indians; whether they are proceeding at a walk, a trot, a gallop, or a run; whether they are acting cautiously or carelessly; how many of the horses are rideen, and how many are without riders. He can tell whether the horses are tired or fresh, and whether they have travelled but a short distance or a very long one.¹ The system of espionage of the Indians is probably

¹This is done by an examination of the ordure.

the best in the world, and when time presses, and even the fleet-footed pony is not quick enough to convey information to their chiefs, they have a system of signals by using the smoke of fires, or the reflected light of the sun with mirrors, by which the necessary intelligence is given at great distances.

Whilst troops entering the hostile country are watched by such a system,