

Mr. Horn, went forward for a parley. While it was in progress, suddenly, and without warning, the Mexicans opened fire, wounding Captain Crawford mortally and the interpreter in the arm. The Mexicans continued to fire for an hour and a half, and only consented to reply to our officers after it was evident they could not capture our position. Captain Crawford and his officers all wore uniforms, but without insignia of rank. The general opinion of the white men with Crawford's command was that they must have known that Crawford was a white man and soldier of the United States. The Mexicans were irregular and not national troops, and asserted that they were following the trail of the hostiles, and seeing the Indian scouts thought they were the Indians they were pursuing.

The matter was referred at the request of this Department to the Mexican Government by the Department of State, and many communications on the subject have passed between the two Governments. The Mexicans deny all the statements made by our officers, say that they were the attacked and not the attacking party, and that they had no knowledge who Crawford was or of his command. They also assert that they were in sight of Crawford's camp, and that no fight with the hostiles took place as stated by our officers. They declare that all the depredations in Mexico were committed by Crawford's scouts and not by the hostiles, and that the animals lent them by Lieutenant Maus after Crawford was shot, on which to carry away their wounded, were animals stolen from them by Crawford's command.

It may be stated here that the Mexican Government demands indemnity for depredations alleged to have been committed by Crawford's command—the stealing and killing of cattle, marauding upon inoffensive inhabitants, breaking down and burning fences, &c. The only claim thus far made on the part of the United States is based upon the proceedings of a board of survey, which found that on the day following the engagement in which Crawford was killed Lieutenant Maus was "compelled by these irregular Mexican troops to turn over to them a number of mules and their equipments under circumstances which rendered it quite impracticable for him to have done otherwise." The report of Lieutenant Maus is published with the reports of General Crook.

The proceedings of this board, approved by the Secretary of War, were furnished to the State Department on October 25 for such action as the Secretary of State might deem proper. The negotiations are now pending between the Department of State and the Mexican Government, and the matter is therefore no longer in the hands of the War Department. The subject of the correspondence with the Mexican Government has been in reference to the killing of Captain Crawford, and the return of the horses and mules loaned to the Mexican troops or payment of their value. No definite result has yet been announced.

The whole region over which these Apaches have for years carried on their murderous raids, and over which we have the right by convention with Mexico to pursue them, has been demoralized to such an extent, and the arm of authority is so powerless, that lawlessness is rather the rule than the exception. That the conduct of the Mexican irregulars was utterly unjustifiable in bringing on this engagement seems to admit of no question. It is difficult to ascertain precisely what motive prompted them; and how far the Mexican Government is responsible for their misconduct, and its sad results are questions upon which we possess at present no reliable evidence upon which to decide.

After the skirmish Lieutenant Maus took command and had the appointed meeting, which resulted, not in the surrender of the Indians, but in the promise on the part of Geronimo that he would meet General Crook near the boundary line in about two moons. More than seventy days elapsed before Geronimo appeared at the appointed place. General Crook and he met on March 25, at El Cañon, in Mexico, 25 miles south of the line. The understanding was that he should not be accompanied by troops. The Indians were encamped on a rocky hill, in a strong and almost inaccessible position. They were fierce and independent, well armed with the best guns and ammunition, and had blankets and supplies which they had obtained in Mexico. General Crook demanded their unconditional surrender. The only propositions they would entertain were three, which General Crook states:

- (1) That they should be sent East for not exceeding two years, taking with them such of their families as they desired.
- (2) That they should all return to the reservation on the old status.
- (3) To the war-path with all its attending horrors.

He was obliged to decide quickly, and accepted their surrender on the first proposal, and the whole party started, escorted by the Apache scouts under Lieutenant Maus, for Fort Bowie.

The terms of the surrender were received here March 30. The response of the President was that their imprisonment in the East for two years and their return to the reservation could not be approved. Certain instructions were given, but before General Crook received the dispatch, Geronimo and Natchez with twenty men and thirteen women left Lieutenant Maus's camp on the night of the 29th and escaped to the mountains. The remainder of the band, numbering sixty under Chihuahua, were sent to Fort Marion, Florida, where they are now held as prisoners. The children have been sent to the Indian school at Carlisle. Lieutenant Maus followed Geronimo's trail until he was satisfied that further pursuit at that time was useless. This unfortunate escape was attended by the usual sad results. The route of the Indians to the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico was marked by atrocities similar to those that had usually attended their course.

After these events the Lieutenant-General became satisfied that the Apache scouts could not be absolutely depended upon to fight and kill