

As to Indian customs of burial. Of course Indians always carried their dead if they could. But a war party of men, several days or weeks from the home camp, never attempted to take their dead home. All they wished to do was to keep the enemy from scalping and mutilating their former dead friends. And so, if they won the battle, they let the dead lie; if they lost it, they laid them out in some ravine nearby. At the Custer battle, where all the relatives were nearby and there were plenty of horses, the dead would naturally be taken along and buried at the end of four days' mourning, and it was four days to the Big Horn Mountains. Even so, not every dead man could be so taken care of. Some dead Sioux were left in the camp; read the Indian accounts of what they found when they entered the abandoned camp after the Custer fight; you will find them in that interesting book, The Arikara Narrative of the Campaign against Hostile Sioux, June 1876, in the Historical Collections of North Dakota. Therefore, the Sioux had that proverb- it is better to lie naked than to rot on a scaffold. It meant that it was better to die in a victorious fight than to die in a defeat and be carried away and put on a scaffold, or die in the camp of sickness. Once in a blue moon some warrior would return to a battle-field and bring home the bones of a pal. But that was considered a most unusual instance of devotion. Of course, whenever possible, the man's horse was killed beside him, wherever he fell. My book contains instances of all these customs, and the stories of the fights in which they happened.

If I make Sitting Bull out a great man, it is because I think he was one. When I started out on this job, I rather hoped he would be as bad as Mr. Wells believes, for a book on such a subject sells more copies. But, hang it all, the old chief won me over. Maybe he can do the same with Mr. Wells next September.

Yours truly,

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