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Stanley Vestal, Esq.,  
c/o Adventure Magazine,  
Butterick Building, 161 Sixth Avenue,  
New York City.

Dear Sir:

I have read with enjoyment your contributions to North American Indian lore, tho' I haven't much enthusiasm for the redskins, generally.

Your recent write-up of the Fetterman massacre brings back my early acquaintance with General Carrington, who came to our home (Philadelphia) many times, when I was young. Right here, now, I have his "Absaraka". The General looked as much like a warrior as I do. He was basically an educator. To put a man of that type as head of a relatively small force to face a gang of ambush fighters,--awful! He was Adj. General of Ohio when the Civil War broke loose, and named my father (the late Thomas Donaldson) as military aide. My father was Superintendent of the 1890 Indian Census and I toured some of the reservations in 1890. I had one of the first Kodaks; in fact the first ever seen in Texas.

"George Catlin's Indian Gallery" was compiled by my father, and the famous relics and portraits saved by him. My father and mother were in Boise, Idaho from 1869 to 1874. I heard "plenty" of Indians from the time I could listen-in. We had a fine collection of Indian relics, now in the University of Pennsylvania Museum, at Philadelphia, Pa.

Bill Cody had his Wild West Show in the East about 1888 and Sitting Bull was a feature. I saw "Old Sitt" near Philadelphia, who was "window dressing" staff. I was 14 years of age at the time. Bull always struck me as a first class faker; and my opinion of Custer is the same. Now that Mrs. Custer is dead, I'm disposed to publish a letter from one of the sane heads who was with one of the three commands on the Little Big Horn. I do not think there was an officer or private at the Court of Inquiry who would not have testified--if he'd dared--that Custer was a heedless damned fool. (He was primarily an egotist). In '68, when the punitive expedition kicked Black Kettle's camp to tatters, Custer suddenly discovered that Major Elliot and his men were missing. So were their heads, ears and feet.

Whatever became of the "last dispatch" from the Custer command?  
If brought to light, would it not be worth considerable money as a relic?

Thanksgiving Day, 1890, I was at the Ross Fork, Idaho agency (Bannack-Shoshone). Several quiet looking bucks lolling about camp afterwards got chesty and got fresh at Wounded Knee--with dire results to them.

Yours truly,

*Thomas B. Donaldson*