

October 19, 1929.

Colonel Wm. H. C. Bowen,
1020 Fairview Boulevard,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

I wish to thank you very much for your kind letter of October 10. I find it very helpful.

Your account of his appearance at Fort Buford is very interesting. His fall from the leadership of what he regarded as the greatest nation in the world must have been a terrible shock- enough to break his health and spirits.

You say you saw him in October, 1876. I take it you were with General Miles at that time. I have read his memoirs and understand that he had a council or two with Sitting Bull about that time. Were you within earshot of these councils? I would be glad to have you tell me more of this first sight of Sitting Bull, and of the movements of his people and the Army. The Indians' story of that meeting is somewhat at variance with that of his book, and I am anxious to get things straightened out. Very often, I find that, if I can get all the details together, what seemed like contradiction is simply elaboration. So I shall be grateful if you will give me your recollections of that meeting.

Did the Indians stand off the troops, or attempt to? Can you say what part Sitting Bull took in this action. I find that white men generally take a slighting view of his abilities as a warrior. But the Indians hold a very different opinion, I find. The fact seems to be that the history of the Indians at that time was largely written in war time, and has never been re-written. I am not trying to make a case for Sitting Bull. But if the balance has been loaded against him, I want to straighten it. So far, the Indians have not had much to say in print about their side of the affair. I have questioned many of them- half a dozen- who were present there and could give the words of the council verbatim. I used different interpreters and talked to them separately on different occasions. They all say that Miles made peace, talked of putting them on reservations, and then- after the started home to camp- began to fire at them. Evidence so taken from eye-witnesses would stand in a court of law, I think. That is why I wish to get this straight. For from all I can learn Miles was extremely fair to the Indians- at least in his writings. In his memoirs, however, he gives a very sketchy account of these councils, much less elaborate than that of the Indians. If you can help me, please do.