

the Snakes, though not one to five of the Sioux, would have defended themselves successfully, and the battle would have been the most bloody ever known amongst the wild tribes. They had come prepared for treachery, and with their splendid equipments felt full confidence in their ability to cope with any band upon the plains. Having quickly mounted the troop, Hastings took a position where he could overlook the actions of the tribe.

Here I met Bridger the first time. He spoke on behalf of the Snakes, and told Lieutenant Hastings what he already knew, that the Snakes had been assigned a position near his troop and asked where they could camp without interfering with the dragoons. Hastings told him that I knew the ground all about there, and turning to me said: "Corporal Lowe show Captain Bridger the limits of our camp and give him all the assistance you can." That order was license for me to stay on Bridger's staff until a camp was made. Then and there Lowe became a Snake, and the other tribes were not in it.

I galloped off with the great mountaineer, whose fort I had seen dotted on my atlas at school a few years before, I showed him the finest camp imaginable, and he was pleased. I asked him if he had any objections to my staying with him until the camp was formed. "No, young man, these are the finest Indians on earth; stay with me and I'll show 'um to you." Soon the column was in motion and they went into camp in their own peculiar way. Every prominent point was dotted by a sentinel, quietly wrapped in his blanket, gun ready for use. Bridger said: "Well, you see that fool Sioux, etc....."

I returned to the dragoon camp, in a couple of hours just as Major Chilton, with the Indian commissioner, Colonel Mitchel, and some other came in, and I was sent back with Colonel Mitchel's compliments to request Captain Bridger, as he was then called to come over. I delivered the message, and returned with Bridger, who spent some hours with the Commissioner's party. Somehow, I had conceived a great liking for and felt great confidence in Bridger. The acquaintance had been short, but he impressed me as a master in his line, and when I related to Sergeant Hooper and others what he had said to me, all seemed to partake of the same feeling, and whatever anxiety was stirred up by the incidents of the day quieted down. While conceding his courage, no one admired the judgment nor the treachery of the Sioux, who fully expected to arouse his tribe to battle, and but for the brave interpreter he might have done so, though sure death awaited him. The attitude of the Snakes, the cool, deliberate action of the chief, the staunch firmness of his warriors and the quiet demeanor of women and children, who were perfectly self-possessed - not a single outcry from that vast parade save the one cry of defiance that went up spontaneously as the chief raised his gun to take aim at the Sioux. The scene was impressive, as showing the faith that band of warriors had in each other; the entire confidence of their families in them; the self-reliance all through. It was a lesson for soldiers who might never again see such a grand display of soldierly manhood, and the lesson was not lost. Every dragoon felt an interest in that tribe.

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In about a week after the incidents above related we moved thirty-four miles east of Laramie to where Horse Creek flows into the North Platte. It was a better camping ground for this great mass of Indians because of more room, grass and water. Horse Creek came in from the southwest, and on the north side of the Platte was another creek coming in from the northwest, so that the camps could spread out.

Being in command, the Major placed his own troop and Captain Ketchum's company below the mouth of Horse Creek. This remained headquarters. Two troops of mounted rifles, now Third Cavalry, were a short distance above. One troop remained to garrison Fort Laramie. The Snakes followed us on the march down, and camped near us. One thing was plain: if there was any trouble between troops and Indians, it would not be between troops and Snakes, and the Snakes in numbers