

and efficiency were largely in excess of all the troops, so that in case of trouble they were our best dependence. Strategically the arrangement was excellent. The mounted rifles averaged about sixty men to each troop, "B" Troop about seventy-five and "G" Company, Sixth Infantry, about seventy-five - 270 soldiers. Considering that there were within fifteen miles of our headquarters more than 60,000 Indians, of whom probably 10,000 were fighting men, ours seemed a slim array of troops. In fact, if there was any disposition on the part of the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes to destroy us they could have done so in an hour if given a chance to camp around us. But this was not done. Our camp was formed with great care. The Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes were allowed to camp anywhere on the south side of the Platte not occupied by troops above the mouth of Horse Creek and anywhere on the north side of the Platte or on streams coming in from the north. Horse Creek and the south side of the Platte below it was reserved for troops, transportation, parade and treaty grounds, Snake Indians and such other visiting tribes as might come in. Lines of sentinels were placed, inside of which no one might come without permission.

We remained a month in this camp, awaiting the arrival of the ox train that brought the presents from the Missouri, they having been first brought from St. Louis by steamboat to Fort Leavenworth. During the time we were waiting the Commissioner was having made a list of all the head men and the number of each band, and ranking them according to their power and influence, judging by the number of followers; then taking an invoice of the goods to be distributed parceling them off to each band, turning them over to the chief or subchief for distribution.

The listing of the bands was an immense job, and the distribution must be made with as little partiality as possible. The chiefs having been given rank according to influence and following, they all sat in an immense circle, smoking with great dignity and passing the pipe, meanwhile some orator entertaining them with a bombastic account of some of his or his tribe's adventures. This part of the entertainment was equal to a political convention waiting for the committee on resolutions to report. Amidst the grunts of approval as the oratory went on a chief was called in to headquarters and soon returned decked off in full major-general's uniform from head to foot. There the line was drawn by the Indian; he still wears his moccasins - he could not walk in boots - wearing a saber, medal with the head of the President on one side and clasped hands on the other, he carries a document with an immense seal and ribbon thereon - enclosed in a large envelope, that he may show all comers what the Great Father thinks of him - what rank and power he wields among his fellowmen. This and his medal he values more than all else. They give him the entree to the camp of the emigrant, who must, perforce, have confidence in and feed him since he comes with these proofs of the love the aforesaid Great Father has for him. Then follows another major-general with decorations substantially the same. Having exhausted the list of Major-generals, then followed the brigadiers, then numerous colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors, captains and lieutenants - as Bill Anderson said - "Till yer can't rest," all with medals of some kind and all with a paper - "Certificate of Character," Corporal Ferguson called it. These papers had been prepared, probably, in the Indian office in Washington, with a blank space left to fill in the name. Then there were great numbers of braves - a multitude who were entitled to and received some distinguishing mark in the way of medal or other decorations or paper.

Several days were given to this "dignity business," as McDonald called it, and then followed the distribution of goods. In this the roll was called as before, and the pile turned over to the head man, who shouted out his instructions and parceled out the goods, and strange to say there seemed to be little wrangling or dissatisfaction. In each case the goods were packed on ponies and taken to the camp where they belonged. The provisions were given out last and in great quantities, and the feasting and good humor was general. The daily scenes and incidents of our stay there were of the greatest interest, often very exciting; sham battles were a daily feature, and they showed their prowess to the white men,