

three or four men, two but slightly, and one, Private Donohue, of Company G, Twenty-second Infantry, whom I was compelled to leave at Tongue River, but who will ultimately re-cover.

Upon the morning of the 16th the train pulled out in four strings and we took up the advance, formed as upon the previous day. Many Indians occupied the surrounding hills, and soon a runner approached and left a communication upon a distant hill. It was brought in by the scout Jackson, and read as follows:

"YELLOWSTONE.

"I want to know what you are doing traveling on this road. You scare all the buffalo away. I want to hunt on the place. I want you to turn back from here. If you don't, I will fight you again. I want you to leave what you have got here, and turn back from here.

"I am your friend,

"SITTING BULL."

"I mean all the rations you have got, and some powder. Wish you would write as soon as you can."

I directed the scout Jackson to inform the Indians that I had nothing to say in reply, except that we intended to take the train through to Tongue River, and that we should be pleased to accommodate them at any time with a fight. The train continued to proceed, and about eight o'clock the Indians again began to gather for battle. We passed through the long narrow gorge near Bad Route Creek, exchanging but few shots, and soon reached the creek, when we again watered the stock and took on wood and water, consuming in this labor about an hour's time. When we had pulled up the gentle ascent, the Indians had again surrounded us, but the lesson of the previous day taught them to keep at long range, and there was but little firing by either party. I counted one hundred and fifty Indians in our rear, and from their movements and positions, I judged their numbers to be between three and five hundred.

After proceeding a short distance a flag of truce appeared on the left flank borne by two Indians, whom I directed to be allowed to enter the lines. They proved to be Indian scouts from Standing Rock agency, bearing dispatches from Lieutenant-Colonel Carlin, of the Seventeenth Infantry, stating that they had been sent out to find Sitting Bull, and to endeavor to influence him to proceed to some military post and treat for peace. These scouts informed me that they had that morning reached the camp of Sitting Bull and Man-afraid-of-his-horses, near the mouth of Cabin Creek; that they had talked with Sitting Bull, who wished to see me outside the lines. I declined the invitation, but professed a willingness to see Sitting Bull within my own lines. The scouts left me and soon returned with three principal soldiers of Sitting Bull, the last-named individual being unwilling to trust his person within our reach. The chiefs said that their people were very angry because our trains were driving away the buffalo from their hunting grounds; that they were hungry and without ammunition, and that they especially wished to obtain the latter; that they were tired of the war and desired to conclude a peace. I informed them that I could not give them ammunition; that had they saved the amount already wasted upon the train it would have sufficed them for hunting purposes for a long time; that I had no authority to treat with them upon any terms whatever; but that they were at liberty to visit Tongue River and there make known conditions. They wished to know what assurance I could give them of their safety should they visit that place, and I replied that I could give them nothing but the word of an officer. They then wished rations for their people, promising to proceed to Fort Peck immediately, and from there to Tongue River. I declined to give them the rations, but finally offered them, as a present, one hundred and fifty pounds of hard bread and two sides of bacon, which they gladly accepted. The train moved on, and the Indians fell to the rear. Upon the following day I saw a number of them from Cedar Creek, far away to the right, and after that time they disappeared entirely. Upon the evening of the 16th, I met Colonel Mills, encamped with his entire regiment on Custer Creek. Alarmed for the safety of the train, he had set out from Tongue River upon the previous day. I told him of the situation of affairs, and informed him that he would find the Indian camp either about the mouth of Cabin Creek or far away on his left, traveling in the direction of Fort Peck. He concluded to go on to Cherry Creek and there await my return from Tongue River, but having reached that point he found the Indians engaged in hunting the large bands of buffalo which were roaming between that and Cedar Creek. His future operations I believe he has fully reported, and forwarded his dispatches by couriers. I returned to this station with the train yesterday, the 26th instant, having consumed thirteen days in making the journey. The train was returned richer by two mules and two horses than when it started out, and suffered no loss.

In concluding this report I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of both officers and men. The officers obeyed instructions with alacrity, and executed their orders with great efficiency. They fought the enemy twelve hours and fired during that time upwards of seven thousand rounds of ammunition. They defeated a strong enemy, estimated by many at from seven to eight hundred, which had defiantly placed himself across our trail with the deliberate purpose of capturing the train, and gave him a lesson which he will heed and never forget. I was ably assisted by Lieut. O. M. Smith, my only staff officer. All