

1876

Hostile Indians, 1868-82  
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Shortly after meeting Colonel Wits and learning from him the immediate situation, Colonel Miles, with the entire Fifth Infantry, started after Sitting Bull, overtaking him near Cedar Creek, Montana, north of the Yellowstone. Colonel Miles met Sitting Bull between the lines of the troops and of the Indians, the latter having sent a flag of truce to Miles, desiring to communicate.

Sitting Bull simply desired to hunt buffalo and trade for ammunition; he would agree that the Indians should not fire on the soldiers, if unmolested; <sup>63</sup> in short, he wanted simply "an old-fashioned peace" for the winter. He was informed of the terms of the government, told how he could have peace, and that he must bring in his tribe to near the camp of the troops. The interview closed unsatisfactorily, and Colonel Miles' column, numbering three hundred and ninety-eight rifles, moved and camped on Cedar Creek, so as to intercept more easily the movement of the Indians, which was northward, Sitting Bull being told to come again next day.

Whilst the command was moving north between the Indian camp and the Big Dry River, the Indians again appeared and desired to talk. Another council followed between the lines, October 21, Sitting Bull and a number of principal men being present. Sitting Bull wanted peace, if he could have it upon his own terms. He was told the conditions of the government, which were that he should either camp his people at some point on the Yellowstone River, near to the troops, or go into some agency and place his people under subjection to the government. He said he would come in to trade for ammunition, but wanted no rations or annuities, and desired to live free as an Indian. He gave no assurance of good faith, and, as the council broke up, he was told that a non-acceptance of the terms of the government would