

to its post near Missoula.

Col. J. Gibbon, Seventh Infantry, having collected from the posts in Montana, several companies of his regiment, started from Fort Shaw for Missoula, one hundred and fifty miles distant, making the march in seven days. He reached the new post there on the afternoon of August 3, his force consisting of companies A, D, F, G, I, and K, Seventh Infantry, with about thirty-five citizen volunteers, aggregating one hundred and ninety-one officers and men.

With this command Colonel Gibbon started in pursuit of the Indians, who had turned southward up the valley of the Bitter Root, and after five days of terrible climbing over the rugged and broken country intervening, the Nez Perces village was overtaken on the night of the 8th of August, in the "Big Hole Basin," Montana. The troops quietly made their way, in the darkness, through the Indian herd of ponies, and stationed themselves near the village, the command lying down to wait for dawn.

As day began to break, the troops, in perfect silence, moved to their positions for attack, a deep slough, with water waist deep, having to be crossed before reaching the Indian camp. Suddenly a single shot was heard on the extreme left, followed quickly by others, and the line of men sprang forward. A heavy fire was at once opened along the entire length of the Indian "teepees," the startled Nez Perces rushing from their lodges in every direction, many taking refuge in the brush and behind the bank of the creek, along which the village lay. A destructive fire was poured into the troops, as the latter came into the open ground, but in less than twenty minutes they were in full possession of the camp, and orders were given for its destruction.

Whilst part of the men were engaged in burning the lodges the Indians kept up a fire from their sheltered positions, officers and men falling rapidly under these well-directed shots, until orders were given