

THE DEATH OF SITTING BULL

A Reminiscence.

The 14th of December, 1890, fell on a Sunday. Darkness had settled down upon the valley of the Missouri and the officers at old Fort Yates were, most of them, in the midst of their dinners when the stillness of the evening was suddenly broken by the sharp notes of an infantry bugle. It was sounding "officers' call", that signal which makes every officer of the garrison spring to his feet and start for the commandant's office.

"That means we shall be out tonight," I remarked as Lieutenant Baker (Lieutenant David J. Baker, 12th Infantry) and I rose from the table. Mrs. Steele and I were taking Sunday dinner with the Bakers, and Baker and I hurried away leaving our wives to have their dessert and coffee by themselves.

We had been in a state of tense expectation in the garrison for several weeks. An Indian Messiah had risen somewhere in one of the tribes farther west and old Sitting Bull and his following had taken up the cult and were acting in a rebellious and defiant manner toward the authority of the agent.

Standing Rock Agency, where this tribe of the Sioux nation drew their supplies, was adjacent to Fort Yates and the agent, Major McLaughlin, was one of the ablest, most efficient Indian agents in the country. His wife was part Sioux, a fine Christian woman who devoted her whole time and labor to the betterment of her people. She was truly a help-meet for McLaughlin in his duties of agent.

Up to this time all the Indians of the agency had used to come to Standing Rock every second week to draw their beef and other supplies