

Indian traders. The country to which they were sent contains only Indians, soldiers, and Indian traders or agents. These shipments, moreover, were as nothing to those of previous years, and especially those of the summer of 1875, when more than a million rounds of ammunition and several thousand stands of arms were sent through.

Now, perhaps, Sitting Bull's chief advantage can be seen, as first shown in the Yellowstone expedition of 1873. This expedition started from Fort Rice in the summer of 1873, and moved off at leisurely pace, due west. Indian runners at the same time started off and up and down the Missouri to carry the news. Many of them travelled luxuriously by the steamers the government was kind enough to supply, to carry stores to the agencies, for the use of the Indians. By the time Stanley had reached the Little Missouri, every agency all along the line of the river was informed of his movements, and parties of warriors on their war ponies, with no burdens save arms, ammunition, and food, were/page 380/ from the circumference of the quarter circle to find Sitting Bull and have a little fun.

All those from the upper agencies had a shorter distance to travel than Stanley and knew the county better. No wonder they arrived before him. The trail which Stanley struck on the Yellowstone was in all probability that of the real acknowledged "hostiles," the village of Sitting Bull, with a force of some eight hundred braves, but the reinforcements which afterwards swelled his numbers to fifteen hundred in the fight near Pompey's Pillar, must have come from the northern agencies, and Stanley says so in his report, specifying Fort Peck as "the centre of all villainy of the Indian Department."

Thus, in carrying on war with the United States War Department, Sitting Bull had great and peculiar advantages from the nature of his position, and these advantages it was which had made him constantly triumphant. It may have seemed strange to many that Custer should have been able, alone, to have beaten

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