

the Indians of the Southern Plains, while the Sioux of the north had overcome all successive combinations against them, compelling the government to pacify them by giving them up all they asked for, in the treaty of 1868.

The War Department had made a gallant struggle to hold this country, but Sitting Bull and the hostiles had beaten them. Look again on the map at the sites of old Fort Reno and old Fort Phil Kearney. The last is right at the edge of Sitting Bull's stronghold. It was the scene of the fearful massacre of 1868, when almost the whole garrison was annihilated. It was difficult to keep this fort supplied. Everything had to come by wagon train from Fort Fetterman on the south, while Sitting Bull drew all his supplies of ammunition from Fort Peck and a dozen other places, and lived on the buffalo by which he was surrounded. The white men could not starve him, but he could harass them constantly, and he did so. Finally the Department was compelled to abandon Forts Reno and Kearney, and gave up the country to Sitting Bull, by the treaty of 1868.

Five years later, in 1873, it was judged expedient to break that treaty and try a new line of operation, this time up the valley of the Yellowstone. This line possessed one and only one advantage; while the Yellowstone was navigable, supplies, and even an expedition, could be sent up by steamer comparatively safe from the Indians. By land, as Stanley went, the/page 282 Yellowstone route was as bad as the rest, except for provisions. It was very long, and did not stop the supplies of Sitting Bull. The only reason Stanley escaped serious disaster, was that he kept near the river and was able to use his artillery, while Sitting Bull was not as yet joined by any very formidable force of agency Indians. In the war of 1876 all this was to be changed, and Sitting Bull was to find himself in a perfect position, occupying interior lines, able to strike at his enemies wherever he pleased and beat them in details, and all the while able to draw his supplies and reinforcements from a number of concentrating lines, none of which his