

open. Still no sound of the welcome rattle in the distance of Reno or Benteen's carbines. The brave Keogh and his noble men followed the example set by Calhoun. No panic; no group of tangled up mob. There they knelt in open order and fired at what they could see of the unmerciful foe that returned their fire from behind every crevice in the many ravines around them.

Keogh's company gone, and over them passed the exultant band of Big Cheyennes, side by side with Iron Horn's band of Sioux, led by the most desperate Indian of the whole Northwest (Rain-in-the-Face), who had sent Custer word a year before that he would take his scalp.

Custer gained the highest defensible point on the hill, and surveyed the valley down the stream, in the hopes of seeing Reno charge in the rear of his enemies. He glanced at the bluffs across the valley, from whence he expected Benteen hours ago. He heard no bugle notes of the charge rending the sulphurous battle air. Colonel Tom Custer (as gallant an officer as ever drew a sword, who had won his position from the ranks for personal bravery in action, and who wore upon his breast what no other officer in the service could boast of, two medals from Congress /p.388/ for battle-flags taken from the enemy in the charge), Captain Yates, Captain Cook, his youngest brother, "Boston;" his nephew, "Antie" Reed, and Lieutenant Riley, and about thirty-five men were around the General.

The men had killed what few horses were left, and used their dead bodies for protection against the leaden rain that poured around them. They were out of ammunition. A prolonged yell rended the air, such as might have proceeded from the choir of hell. On rushed the now thickly crowded mass of savages, each intent upon the fiendish desire to bathe his hand in the blood of their defenceless victims. Fiercely rushed the leaders of the Cheyennes, with tomahawk and knife in hand. Rain-in-the-Face was well up with his rival braves, anxious not to be