

were not warriors, but talkers. After some parley, the hostiles agreed to escort the band into the Bad Lands camp. So, as soon as the ponies were caught and saddled up, the entire outfit moved toward Short Bull's great fort,

The country through which they rode presents a similar appearance to a volcanic region, Great fissures yawn on all sides, peaks of gray-colored earth, or a dirty whitish limestone bluff towers here a precipice extends there. The trees become stunted as one advances, and the grass disappears. Finally all vegetation vanishes, and there remains naught but a series of peaks, of deep valleys, of horrible pits suggestive of the road to the infernal regions! Truly, a more fitting place for an Indian massacre could not be found in the United States. Occasional broader valleys afford a stunted growth of grass for ponies, but these fertile spots are great distances apart and of limited extent./page 572.

In prehistoric times eruptions of the submerged volcanoes, or shrinkages in the earth's crust, have caused the irregularities which everywhere exist. The scout says that the country affords splendid places for ambuscades—little amphitheatres, as it were, with but one entrance, the sides of which are so irregular as to form good hiding-places for lurking savages. The hostiles' fort cannot be approached except through about five miles of such land. May God have mercy on any army that attempts to enter such a place without two or three hundred good scouts in advance to thoroughly investigate every nook and corner!

One mile from the fort the entire party was halted, and Short Bull himself advanced for a few words regarding Shangraux's mission. The scout says nothing of importance transpired until all were within the fort; then he had time to look about, and note particularly the inside and outside of the stronghold.