

In the fall of 1872 Sitting Bull formed the idea of entering into a treaty with the Red river half-breeds for the purpose of trading for ammunition and other necessaries. At this time Sitting Bull was not trading with anybody. He would not trade with the whites, and had no place to get his supplies from, so he formed the idea of making this treaty for the purpose of getting supplies. He went up into the half-breed camp to make this treaty, being gone pretty near a month, and he was very well pleased on his return with the treaty he had made. They had promised to bring him what articles he had mentioned, such as he would want to trade for, into camp that winter, and they came to the village about two months afterwards; but instead of bringing the articles the Indians were in need of, they brought liquor. They came in with five sleigh-loads of whisky. The appearance of these loads of whisky in camp caused a terrible disturbance. It was just nothing but drinking. The Indians were camped on the divide at the head of Dry Fork on the Missouri when they commended drinking.* This Dry Fork has some time been the Missouri proper. I forget what what month it was, but it was in the winter. The half-breeds came to the village in sleighs.

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When they came I did not go into the council. They held a kind of council and what was said or done in this council I don't know; but before the half-breeds' visit was over you could hear the noise and singing from the council lodge. The orgies continued for about a week. It was the most horrible thing I ever saw. I got on my horse as soon as they commenced drinking. When they were drunk they would cut down lodges. The women were drunk as well as the men. The majority in the village were drunk. Some places it was kill 'em sight, either friend or foe. There were two factions in the village--one for and one against Sitting Bull. They were divided about half and half.

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Those who opposed Sitting Bull turned on him. I simply got on my horse and went to the hills, and stayed there. There were several of us who did it. Sitting Bull stayed in the camp and had his Indians protecting him (some of his own faction), and he didn't get shot; but there were several Indians killed, lodges cut up, horses shot and topics pulled down. It was a horrible sight. I didn't come down to camp for three days. The French half-breeds left after they saw what they had started. They pulled stakes and quit in the night, and took what whisky was left with them. An Indian will pay anything for whisky, and there was a good deal of money in camp; also mules and horses. It was a large village, some two or three hundred lodges. * There were not seen four thousand and five thousand Indians in the village.

All I could hear as I returned to the village was the crying of the Indians for the ones that had been killed. It was some four or five days after that before they could get everything gathered up. Then they did they split up in small bands, each party going in whichever direction it fancied. The immediate relatives collected together in small bands; and when they had got together, these bands moved off in different directions to get away from the site of the village, so there would be no more trouble. After they had gathered up they would have to take notice of those Indians who had been killed; their relations would have to avenge them. Sooner than have this trouble on top of the other, they moved in different directions. It had the effect of scattering the whole village like a flock of blackbirds.