

That night was the coldest one I ever experienced in the northern country. It was the night of the 16th of March. Just as quick as it became dark I got off of my horse and gave him to one of the scouts to lead. I had to go afoot in order to follow the Indian tracks. I footed it all night long. It was warm work for me. I came to the Powder river divide some six miles from Powder river about 3 o'clock in the morning, and went on to locate the village, leaving the command six miles to the rear to await my return. One of the men with me was Buckskin Jack, a notorious scout (who is now traveling with Buffalo Bill), then a young man. He might be called the "Midget of the Flains." The other man's name was Phoenix. He was hanged afterwards down on the Yellowstone for horse stealing.

190 When I started out it was sixty degrees below zero; I think they said it was sixty-three. We had a couple of doctors with us. Dr. Hartsoff, now ranking colonel, was one of them. Just at daylight we came up a hill above Powder river. There was an immense fog, so thick I could not see anything. It had raised out of the * river, but I could hear the bells on the Indian ponies. Of course that satisfied me that there was a village there. I sent Buckskin Jack back after the command, telling him to bring them up as soon as possible, while I went down and located the village. I could not tell where it was, on account of the fog. I was up about one thousand feet, and it was straight down to the village. I got about half way down the hill when the fog raised, so that I could look in under it and see the village down below me, about a mile off. I could see the tops of the lodges, and the horses, and could hear the Indians talk. An Indian was haranguing the camp, and it was from this one that I learned that a party of the Indians had gone back the trail to find out who we were, for they had seen us on Otter creek; but instead of going the upper trail, they had gone the lower one, so that we had missed them. I found this out through the crier. I could hear it as plain as could be. I could not tell how large a village it was from where I stood. They had camped in a low bed of a river, or where a river had been perhaps a hundred years ago, right under a big bank. The Indians had camped in the circle of this old river bed. There was timber scattered all through the bottom, and they were camped among this timber. I supposed there were some one hundred lodges, and from seven hundred to a thousand Indians. I came back up on the hill. Just as I reached there, Col. Reynolds and his company came up close to me. Said I:

"Colonel, here are the Indians. Now that I have found them, all you have got to do is to fight them."

He says, "What am I going to do?"

"Fight them Indians," I replied. "I suppose that is what you want."

He says, "What can I do?"

He seemed lost. I says:

191 "Fight them Indians; that is all you have to do."

"How will I place my command?" he asked.

If I had known as much then as I do now, I would have told him terrible quick. I said:

"You wanted me to find the Indians. Now, there they are. Do what you want to do with them."