

(Grouard, when the battle with Crazy Horse occurred, knew nothing of the stories concerning himself that were being circulated in the command, nor did he find out anything about them until Gen. Crook explained matters on the way to Fort Fetterman at the close of the campaign.

He says the indecision of Reynolds nonplussed and worried him. He did not then even dream that Reynolds and some other officers of the command suspected or doubted his loyalty; but after his talk with Gen. Crook everything was made plain. Fear of an ambush--a vision hatched in the jealous brain of some "carpet warrior"--prompted, so Grouard says, Reynolds in ordering a retreat, when every principle of war and manhood demanded the exact reverse. It was, as Capt. Bourke so tersely expresses it, "one of those things that no man can explain." General Crook divined the motive, however, and in his soldierly way placed the responsibility where it belonged. The facts related by Grouard are admirably borne out by the narrative of Captain Bourke, who, in speaking of the battle says, that "both Mills and Egan were doing excellent work in the village (destroying it), while the pony herd was held by Noyes." He does not try to find any excuse for the failure of Reynolds to fortify his position and send word to Crook (who was at no great distance with four companies) to come at once to the assistance of the rest of the command. He must have known that the captured pony herd consisted of over one thousand head; that the number of saddles run up to nearly two hundred; that a thousand robes and furs were in the captured tipis; that a great amount of ammunition had fallen into the hands of his soldiers, and that "tons upon tons of meat" had been left by the fleeing savages; yet, in the face of all this, Reynolds not only abandoned the camp of Crazy Horse, but did it so precipitately that the dead and wounded were left for mutilation and butchery. And Captain Bourke says with considerable feeling, that it was shivered among the men "that one of our poor soldiers fell alive into the enemies hands and was cut limb from limb." The captain does not make this statement from his "own knowledge," but adds, "I can only say I believe it to be true."

Referring to the bivouac at the mouth of Lodge Pole creek on the night succeeding the battle with Crazy Horse, Captain Bourke says there was neither feed for the animals nor rations for the men.--"not even for the wounded men of whom we had six." The men, after two days' hard riding, marching and fighting, were completely tired out, and no attempt was made to place a guard over the captured pony herd; and "even when the loss was discovered"--when the report was carried to Reynolds the following morning, as detailed by Grouard, that the Indians were driving off the ponies--"no attention was paid and no attempt made," concluded Bourke, "to pursue and regain the mainstay of Indian hostility."

When Crook reached camp about noon on the day after the battle, says this same authority, he was very much gratified to learn that the attempt to find the village of Crazy Horse had been successful; but he could not hide his chagrin and disappointment upon discovering that the dead and wounded had been left in the hostile camp, and that his soldiers were suffering from cold and hunger when a great abundance of furs and provisions had been lost to the command through the hasty withdrawal from the Indian village of the victorious troopers. There was no other alternative for General Crook but to abandon the campaign and return to Fetterman, which meant a long, suffering journey of over one hundred and eighty miles, with the thermometer thirty degrees below zero. From Fetterman the troops were distributed to various forts pending the organizing of the spring campaign.

"We had no beef," says Bourke, "as our herd had been run off on account of the failure to guard it; we were out of supplies, although we had destroyed enough * to last a regiment for a couple of months; we were encumbered with sick, wounded and cripples with frozen limbs, because we had not had sense enough to save the furs and robes in the village."

There is the story from the stand point of as brave a soldier