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Among the Sioux there exists a superstition concerning those who suicide. They will not touch the body of a man or woman who meets death at his or her own election. Custer's body was not disturbed. Had it not been for the fact that all the bodies of the Custer command lay in the scorching sun four days before they were recovered, the tell-tale powder marks on Custer's temple would have put at rest the question of Custer's taking off without recourse to the evidence of savages.

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Curley, a Crow scout, who accompanied the Custer command, and is the only survivor of the battle of the Little Big Horn, claims to have saved himself by hiding in a gulch while the fight was going on, and afterwards escaping by drawing his blanket about him and passing through the ranks of the hostiles, being taken for one of their own number in the excitement which prevailed. Curley's account of the battle is meagre, as his time was pretty well occupied in looking to his own safety. His statement that the fight commenced at 2:30 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon (his calculation of time being based* upon the position of the sun) and continued until nearly sunset, is entirely overcome by the statements of parties in the Reno command that clothing and guidons belonging to the Custer battalion were seen and recognized in possession of the Indians who besieged Reno's position early in the afternoon of the 25th of June.

Scores of the Indians who were engaged in the attack upon Custer have told Grouard that the fight with the ill-fated command did not last over an hour, at the end of which time every man in it had been killed. "Officers in Reno's battalion," says Finerty, "who, late in the afternoon, from high points surveyed the country in anxious expectation of Custer's appearance, and who commanded a view of the field where he had fought, say that no fighting was going on at that time—between five and six o'clock. It is evident therefore, that the last of Custer's command was destroyed at an hour earlier in the day than Curley relates." Some of Curley's statements are borne out by facts related by the Indians, while some are not; therefore his story gives rise to many perplexing doubts.

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The battle between Reno and the Indians may be said to have been almost continuous from the time of the attack on the morning of June 25th until the forenoon of the 27th, when, upon the approach of Gibbon's column, the hostiles drew off. As positive proof that the engagement between Custer and the Indians lasted but a very short time may be mentioned the startling fact that but seven of the hostiles were killed during the three days' fighting on the Little Big Horn, and but few* were wounded. This statement is made by Grouard after a full knowledge of all the facts, and demonstrates, without further argument, that Custer's battalion was literally swept from the face of the earth by the storm of bullets which savage hatred hurled against it.

On the side of the soldiers, some two hundred and seventy officers, privates, scouts and civilians were killed outright, and many received wounds from which they never entirely recovered. The dead belonging to the Reno command were collected and buried by Gibbon's battalion on the 27th of June, and on the following day the same office was performed by the same command for the Custer battalion. The bodies of the soldiers were, in most cases, horribly mutilated, accounts of which have been published many times. General Custer's remains were not disturbed by the Indians. They were eventually transferred to the military cemetery at West Point, where they rest.