

DeB tribes to resist. No candid person can investigate existing conditions and inform himself of the motives and the actions of the Indians without reaching the conviction that they were moved in their hostility to the whites by impulses of the highest patriotism. Their methods were those to which they were prompted by tradition and familiar usage, and were not more inhuman than those to which they had Themselves been subjected by Harney, Sheridan and Sully. During the summer season the camp of the hostiles was kept at various points far down on the Powder, and the depredations about Fort Kearney were made by picked bands of warriors, but when winter came on the camps were moved to the base of the Big Horn range on the head waters of the Tongue River, but a short distance from the Montana trail, and not more than fifty miles from the fort.

In the story which follows, of the affair of December 21st in which Fetterman and his command were totally annihilated, we have in the main followed the graphic stories told by Dr. Brady and General R. I. Dodge, both of whose accounts are strictly based upon the official reports. "On the 21st of December, the ground being free from snow, the air clear and cold, the lookout on Sullivant hill signaled about 11 o'clock in the morning that the wood train had been corraled and was attacked in force about a mile and a half from the fort. A relief party of forty-nine troopers from the Eighteenth infantry with twenty-seven troopers from the Twenty-seventh cavalry - a detachment of which nearly all were recruits and armed chiefly with muskets, had joined the post some months before - was at once ordered out. The command was first given to Captain Powell with Lieutenant Grummond in charge of the cavalry. Grummond had a wife in delicate health at the post and he was cautioned by the officers not to be led into a trap, although/ ³⁶³ it would seem that his experience on December 6th, when he had so narrowly escaped death, was the best warning he could have had. This body of men were the best armed at the post, a few of the cavalry carrying the Spencer repeating carbine. Each company had