

"Having matured a plan, Red Cloud determined to make his attack on Fort Phil Kearney by annihilating the little detachment guarding the train. Parties of Indians had been observed in the neighborhood for several days but no attack had been made until on the 2d of August, at about 9 o'clock in the morning, a party of about 200 Indians attempted to stampede the mule herd. The herders, who were all armed, stood their ground and succeeded for the time being in beating back the attack. But while they were hotly engaged with this dismounted force, sixty mounted Indians succeeded in getting into the herd and running it off, At the same time 500 Indians attacked the wood train at the other camp. The affair was not quite a surprise, for the approach of the Indians had been detected and signaled from the corral on the island a few moments before. In the face of so overwhelming a force the soldiers at the wood train immediately retreated, abandoning the train and the camp. The retreat, however, was an orderly one and they kept back the Indians by a well directed fire. Meanwhile the herders, seeing the stampede of the mules, made an attempt to join the party retreating from the wood train. The Indians endeavored to intercept them and cut them off. Powell, however, with a portion of his force, leaving the post on the island in the command of Lieutenant Jennes,, dashed across the prairie and attacked the savages in the rear. They turned at once, abandoning the pursuit of the herders and fell upon Powell, who in his turn retreated without loss to the corral. His prompt and bold sortie had saved the herders, for they were enabled to effect a junction with the retreating wood train men and their guard, and the soldiers and civilians, and eventually gained the fort, although not without hard fighting and severe loss. One thing that helped them to get away from the Indians was that the savages stopped to pillage the camp and burn it and the train; another thing was the presence of powell's command, which the Indians could not leave in their rear. After driving away the soldiers and completing the destruction of the camp, the Sioux turned their attention to Powell's corral. Powell's men lay down in the wagon beds before the loop holes. Blankets were thrown over the tops of the beds to screen the defenders from observation and in the hope, perhaps, of saving them from the ill