

during the ten years following, was there less than 1,500 hostile warriors in the unceded country, which during various periods was swelled by from 3,000 to 5,000 additional fighting men. In the report of General Stanley, previously quoted, detailing the numbers of agency and hostile Indians of each band, he seemed to have a clear comprehension of the situation and showed conclusively that about 60 per cent of all of the Tetons were hostile. That Custer, Terry, Crook and Gibbon, who had been constantly in the hostile regions for from three to six years, could have continued in ignorance of the hostile strength seems from the present view point to have been not less than culpable carelessness.

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CHAPTER XLII

Custer's Fatal Scout - Moves Up the Rosebud - Strikes the Hostile Trail Passes Over to the Little Horn - Divides His Force in Three Columns - Reno's Advance - Charges the Villages - Meets Overwhelming Numbers - Compelled to Retreat - Custer Charges Lower Villages - Rides Into an Ambush - His Column Annihilated - Reno Entrenched - Besieged Two Days - Terry Arrives - Indians Retire - Indian Army Dissolves - Agency Indians Go Home - Remnant of Hostiles Go to Canada.

With about 850 men, mounted, and with a large baggage train, Custer got away from the mouth of the Rosebud at noon on June 22d. In addition to the soldiers he had a strong detachment of Indian scouts and guides. About twenty miles up river he struck a heavy Indian trail and found that it led across the divide to the Little Horn. On the afternoon of the 22d they had proceeded twelve miles from the Yellowstone, on the 23d thirty-three miles and on the 24th twenty-eight miles, making seventy-three miles up the Rosebud before the trail turned off toward the Little Horn. By this time the scouts reported that the village was located on the Little Horn and Custer decided that it would be impossible to approach it in the day time. He therefore decided to cross the divide during that night of the 24th, and surprise and attack the village at daylight. At 11 o'clock p. m., therefore, he moved out from his last camp on the Rosebud, moving in a northwesterly direction along the well defined trail which the Indians had left. At 2 o'clock in the