

the ground but a few moments before Reno's retreat. He gave directions to Inkpaduta to keep Reno on the retreat, while he returned in all haste where it was evident that Custer was about to attack. After the retreat of Reno the great body of warriors were concentrated in the lower villages. The warriors of the Uncpapas, Oglalas and Minneconjous were ambushed under the banks and in the grass along the along the east side of the stream, while the women and children were sent scurrying off across the bottom toward the Big Horn. After leaving Reno, Custer had proceeded back of the brow of the hill, out of sight of the villages, down the east side of the creek until opposite the lower villages, Here he turned toward the creek and from the brow of the hill saw the women and children hastening away toward the northwest, and evidently convinced that the camp was in full retreat, started in hot pursuit. With waving sabers and loud cheers, the column dashed down the hillside toward the stream, to find themselves almost instantly surrounded by several thousand well armed, howling, desperate savages. The weather was dry and windy, the air soon full of dust and smoke, so that the darkness was almost blinding. The general direction of the Indian camp was in the hands of Black Moon, chief of the Uncpapas, but he was killed almost at the beginning of the engagement. What actually occurred there except the sorrowful fact that no one of the 261 men who rode down that hill with Custer survived, may never be known. Much has been written which undertakes to relate the actual proceedings there, some of it assuming to be upon the authority of Gall, Sitting Bull and other prominent Indians. From an abundance of Indian testimony, taken at different times and places, all in substantial agreement, this writer is prepared to assert that after the first moment every warrior fought for himself. It was almost as dark as night- Custer was evidently wholly taken by surprise, and his column did not last to exceed a half hour at the / very utmost. The strong probability is that there was not a man alive ten minutes after they rode into the ambush. That there were more than ten warriors for every soldier in Custer's column, concentrated directly in his path, and who instantly surrounded him, is beyond question. All accounts that the fighting was continued until late in the afternoon are purely speculative and without

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