

7--Hunting for Sitting Bull

they move along almost without eyes, nothing beyond a very short distance from the moving column being seen or known, and the game of war is carried on very much on the principle of "Blindman's Bluff." The Indians can always, in summer, avoid a single column, or select their own time and place for meeting it. And they never do meet it unless they are prepared and have all the advantages on their side. The campaign of last year fully exemplified this. Hence there are but two alternatives by which success can be attained. Operate against them in the winter-time, when their movements are restricted, their watchfulness less efficient, and any "signs" left in the snow as plainly read by a white man as by an Indian; or else have in the field a number of columns, so that the moving Indian villages cannot avoid all of them, and have these columns cooperate under some common head. Each of them being strong enough to take care of itself, the Indians, if successful in eluding one, will in all probability be encountered by one of the others. The two posts to be established in the Yellowstone country will serve as starting-points for two of these columns, and as depots of supplies and rest for all.

One other important element enters into this system of warfare, for which, as yet, no adequate provision has been made. This is the care of the wounded, who cannot, as in civilized warfare, be left in hospitals on the field of battle. An Indian is rarely defeated until he is dead, and he not only kills every one of his enemies he can find, but wreaks his vengeance on his dead body. Hence, a very small number of wounded men is sufficient to temporarily paralyze the offensive operations of a considerable body of troops. The Indians are better prepared in every way than our troops to carry off their wounded, and, as they invariably do it, we might very profitably take some lessons from them on the subject.