

followers as a "medicine man."

The outcome of the situation was that Sitting Bull proclaimed war upon the United States Government, and in the spring of 1877 a considerable body of troops was dispatched against him. One of the three columns placed in the field was under the command of General Terry. Under this leader was General Custer, who had won distinction for himself in the late Civil War. Custer, moreover, was an Indian fighter of no mean reputation, and it was hardly to be expected that he, of all men, should court disaster. Yet /⁷³ such was the case. Making a march in advance of the main body, General Custer came unexpectedly upon the Sioux camp in the Valley of the Little Big Horn, and at a moment when he was scarcely in a position to attack.

With reckless contempt for his enemy, Custer moved directly upon the Indians. His force of about 1200 men was divided into three sections, one, under Major Reno, being ordered to make a frontal attack, while another, under himself, made a detour to the back of the position. The third section, comprising four companies, were detached a mile or so in the rear. In a little while Major Reno found himself compelled to draw off to a high bluff, so fierce was the fighting, but disregarding this, Custer hurled himself into the thick of the battle. The result is a matter of history. The hapless General and every man of his command were slain; not a single one escaped the fury of the Sioux. For the rest, it is enough to say that Major Reno and the companies with him managed to hold their own until relief came.

That is the story of the Custer Massacre. Sated with their victory, but wishful to avoid further conflict, Sitting Bull and his warriors lost little time in pushing northwards, evading the American troops who were in hot pursuit. In May of 1877, the Canadian Government was apprised of the fact that the Sioux Chief had crossed the border and joined his compatriots who were already in the Territories.

This invasion in itself was alarming enough, but the danger was increased considerably when in due time other large bands of Sioux, fearing reprisals on the part of the United States authorities, trooped over the international line to throw in their lot with the rebels. To be thus suddenly burdened with the care of over five thousand /⁷⁴ hostile Indians was more than the Canadian Government had bargained for.