

THE DEATH OF SITTING BULL

STORY OF THE OLD MEDICINE MAN'S LAST FIGHT.

THE DESPERATE STRUGGLE TO RESIST ARREST THAT ENDED IN THE KILLING OF THE WILY OLD PLOTTER AND HIS SON, WITH OTHER INDIANS.

FORT YATES, N. D., Dec. 16.—It is evident that there was, cruel as it may seem, a complete understanding, from commanding officer to the Indian police, that the slightest attempt to rescue Sitting Bull should be a signal to send the old medicine man to the happy hunting grounds.

Major McLaughlin and Capt. Fecchet had been informed by Gen. Miles on Saturday that the time to strike had come, and on Sunday Troops F and G, Eighth Cavalry, and a company of infantry, preceded by about twenty of the Indian police, started to the southwest to capture the chief of the recalcitrants. The distance was forty-three miles, and the United States troops stopped and consulted with the police about five miles from the tepees on the Grand River. It was agreed that the troops should move up to within two or three miles of the Indian camp, and station themselves where they could be easily signaled. The Indian police then moved quietly down to the tepees and proceeded immediately to that of Sitting Bull, arriving there just at dawn.

The camp was already astir; at least 100 of the savages were stripped and in battle array and their ponies painted and bridled. The police were immediately surrounded by a jabbering, threatening band of reds, and the outlook for a massacre was excellent. The leader of the police, however, quieted the Sioux warriors to some extent by insisting that they had merely come down to camp to parley with Sitting Bull and fix up a general settlement of all difficulties. After talking with the old medicine man a few minutes, the police suddenly formed a cordon around Bull, gave a signal to the troops, leveled their Winchesters at the savages, and started on a run. They succeeded in getting him on a horse and moved off northward toward the cavalry.

The Indians were at first confused, and did not open fire on the police at the outset, else every one of the officers would have been killed. Very quickly, however, under the leadership of Blackbird, the son of Sitting Bull, the Sioux, with a hideous yell, charged on the police. Three of the police fell dead, and several others were so badly wounded that they have since died.

About this time a detachment of cavalry rode up at a gallop and opened a furious fusillade upon the charging savages, who were quickly stampeded and ran westward to the Grand River. Sitting Bull fell at the first volley, the shot having been fired by one of the police. As soon as he saw the Indians moving toward him Bull made a desperate attempt to join them, but the police, obeying their instructions to the letter, made a good Indian of him without delay. The police then ran to cover, and the cavalry began firing at the reds with a Hotchkiss and a Gatling gun, the savages having retreated out of reach of the small arms. There were seven Sioux killed, among them Blackbird and Crowfoot, sons of Sitting Bull, the latter being a boy of but twelve years. The number of Indians who departed hastily for the Bad Lands is about 120. They are being followed cautiously by the troops, who do not fancy getting pocketed in the hills, where there are from 300 to 500 Ogallala bucks under the command of Short Bull and Crow Dog.

The women and children of the dead savages made last night hideous with their wailing. They are in charge of the troops, and will be disposed of as Major McLaughlin directs.

There is already evidence that the killing of Sitting Bull is likely to settle the war without further bloodshed. Large numbers of hostiles are coming into the agency professing loyalty and offering their services to bring in the fleeing hostiles. The acknowledged leaders of the Sioux, Chiefs Gall and John Grass, stand firmly by the Government and express no regret at the taking off of Sitting Bull.

The bringing in of the dead bodies of Bull and his sons caused a good deal of excitement at the agency. There is a great deal of bitterness among the squaws of the Indian policemen, who charge that they were sacrificed to save Uncle Sam's pale-faced soldiers. These Indian women will keep up death songs for weeks, cut off their hair, chop pieces from their fingers, and slash their bodies fearfully.

When Sitting Bull surrendered to the authorities in the Spring of 1881 he was at first placed in the prison at Fort Randall, South Dakota, but was later transferred to the Standing Rock Agency. The old man felt the loss of his power keenly, and sought some means to regain at least a part of his lost prestige. Pretending that he desired to secure a farm and settle down like a white man, he was given a location on the beautiful Grand River at a point forty-three miles southwest of the Standing Rock Agency, which was located at a point half way between the Grand and Cannon Ball Rivers on the Missouri.

At the home of Sitting Bull gathered a few who still acknowledged that he was a chief, and he longed for the time when he could again count over the large numbers of his followers. During the time he was away from the agency Gall, John Grass, and other noted chiefs secured again their former positions as leaders, and on Bull's return they were in a position to interfere with his ambition, and they thwarted his every move toward hostility to the Government, their influence with the Indians being so much greater than his that they prevented much trouble that had been planned by the old rascal.

The first report of the coming of the Indian Messiah was hailed by Sitting Bull as the longed-for opportunity, and he tried his best to take advantage of it. Naturally superstitious, the Indians were ready for such an outpouring of their pent-up feelings in the form of a religious dance. Bull had always gained his greatest success from his stability as a medicine man or diplomat, and he felt that the time for him to get his revenge on the other chiefs and on the Government had arrived. He at the start joined in with the ghost dancers, not shouting and dancing so much as inciting the others to the greatest activity in that line. When the Indians would go dancing around in a circle until they

fell to the ground from dizziness and exhaustion, the wily old chief would take his place alongside of the fallen one and after a few words with him would announce what visions the Messiah and the coming again of the hunting grounds of the past had been witnessed, and the dance would be resumed with renewed vigor. Soon another would fall in a faint, and the same programme would be gone through with.

By carefully nursing this budding religious belief, Bull was fast regaining his old prestige, and it was but natural that the Government should at the first announcement of his connection with the troubles seek to effect his capture. This had been planned some time ago by Gen. Miles, but President Harrison thought the time had not yet come for such action and the arrest was postponed. Buffalo Bill went out to Standing Rock Agency with orders to bring Bull in dead or alive, and he would have made a splendid attempt to do so had not the order been revoked. The brave scout did not enjoy being recalled, but he was too old a soldier to complain and at once returned, and now others have done what he wanted to do. In view of the sharp fight of early Monday morning it seems certain that had Col. Cody tried to carry out his plans with regard to Bull, a fight in which the small company of whites would have all been killed would have resulted. They were all fighters of the bravest stamp, but no chance for their lives would have been given against the odds they would have faced.

At the time Buffalo Bill was sent out into the Indian country, Major McLaughlin, the agent at Standing Rock for the past fifteen years, and one of the best agents in the service, felt that he could accomplish the arrest of the arch traitor with the aid of his faithful Indian police. With these picked men, Major McLaughlin felt that he held the situation well under control, and that when he wanted any of the hostile dancers he could reach out and take them. He had some hopes that Bull would come into the agency peaceably, and waited for some such action.

Bull was an accomplished liar, and he made frequent promises that he would return to the agency, but each time he forgot about it and did not come in. Neither did he send in his children to the Indian school, and at last the agent decided to go out on an investigating tour. About ten days ago Major McLaughlin visited Sitting Bull at his camp. The visit was an unexpected one, and he found the Indians amid one of their ghost dances. What he saw on that visit and a talk he had with Bull and others decided the matter, and on his return to the agency he simply waited orders before making the arrest. On Sunday he heard that Sitting Bull and his followers were about to make for the Bad lands, and deemed it necessary to act at once, and the police set out Sunday night, the troops following close after.

Capt. Fountain moved southward at daybreak from Dickinson, N. D., with the Eighth Cavalry. A courier just in says the soldiers are in camp to-night at New-England City, on the Cannon Ball River. No reds were encountered to-day. The hostile savages are encamped at White Buttes, fifty miles southwest of the Cannon Ball. Capt. Fountain's command, with four days' rations, will move rapidly in that direction to-morrow, and hope to strike the Indians before nightfall. It is said by teamsters in from the south that the Indians are seeking an opportunity to gallop up one of the passes of the Little Missouri and escape to the British possessions.

Two companies of infantry will move westward from Dickinson early in the morning, and attempt to prevent the savages from escaping to the northward. Settlers are apprehensive of pillage and perhaps murder, and are moving into the villages in considerable numbers. It is believed that all the hostiles will be rounded up before the end of the week.