SOLDIERING

IN DAKOTA,

Among the Indians,

IN 1863-4-5,

—BY—

PRIVATE FRANK MYERS,
Co. B., 6th Iowa Cavalry.
FRANK MYERS

Francis Myers, or Frank as he was usually known, was born in the town of Erin, Chemung County, New York, June 17, 1833. His father was a farmer and Frank worked on the farm and attended the district school during his boyhood. When old enough to do men's work, he labored on the farm in summer and in the woods in winter. In September, 1858, he married Martha V. Shappee, of Freeport. In December, 1859, the young couple migrated to Grundy Center, Iowa, where a farm was secured.

On October 15, 1862, Mr. Myers enlisted in Company B, 6th Iowa Cavalry for three years. During the winter of 1862-1863, his regiment was stationed at Camp Hendershot, Davenport, Iowa. Instead of being sent south as was expected, the regiment was ordered to report for service in Dakota Territory. Mr. Myers' story of his experiences covers the period.

Following his discharge on November 1, 1865, Mr. Myers farmed in Boone County, Iowa, for seven years. He then engaged in the meat business at Albion, Iowa for eight years, and at Aurora, Nebraska, for seven years. On June 2, 1887 he took up his residence at Miller, South Dakota, where he lived for thirty years. He died in Minneapolis, on Sept. 27, 1922.

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See Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion, Vol. IV, p. 1199.

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In quoting Mrs. Kelly's account, Myers changed the date Dec. 12th to Dec. 9th. The reprint gives the date used by Mrs. Kelly on page 40.
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INTRODUCTORY

At the solicitations of many friends and a few comrades, I have been induced to present to the public this little book, containing the experiences of a perilous expedition in which I took part, through Dakota to the Yellowstone country, at a time when there was scarcely any settlement west or north of the Iowa border. I little thought at that time while chasing Indians and wild game over this vast domain, that anyone, much less myself, would ever make a home in this "Great American Desert," but the modifying influences of civilization have been such in the Northwest during the past quarter of a century, that the entire world looks with amazement upon the wonderful transformation wrought in so comparatively short a time. The truthfulness of this diary record which I kept, could be easily verified by evidence from several participants still living. However, it is my purpose to portray the feelings and experiences of a private soldier, rather than add to the official history of that expedition, hoping thereby to interest the people who now reside in peace and prosperity where the principal events herein noted occurred.

THE AUTHOR.

Soldiering in Dakota,

CHAPTER I.

ENLISTMENT—REFUSAL TO JOIN A GERMAN COMPANY

Catching the enthusiasm so prevalent over the Northwest in 1862, I determined to leave my home at Grundy Center, Iowa, and tender my services and musket to the Federal cause. My enlistment dates from Oct. 15th, 1862, for the first regiment of Iowa sharp-shooters, then being recruited with the expectation of going immediately to the front of the Union forces in the Southwest.

But one month had passed, however, when myself and two neighbors who had enlisted with me, were notified the attempt to recruit a regiment of sharp shooters had been abandoned and that we would be sent to Davenport and placed in the 6th Iowa Cavalry, then recruiting at Camp Hendershot, Davenport, Iowa.

The recruiting officer in whose charge we were placed, was a German, and he told us we would be placed in a German company. Learning that a great many members of the company could not speak the English language, we refused to join the company, simply upon the grounds that it would be an unpleasant duty to so closely associate with men we could neither understand nor talk to. We had not yet been mustered into the service, and consequently could not have been removed from the state. This fact alone, probably, permitted us some say in the matter, and at the request of Capt. Cram, we were transferred to his company, then called the Dubuque company, afterwards, when properly lettered, known as Co. B, 6th Iowa Cavalry. We were at once given uniforms and commenced a soldier's life of drilling and standing guard. The system of guard then in vogue consisted of a "chain guard," which was kept around the camp day and night, rain or shine. It was intimated this guard was to prevent the boys going down town, but it most signally failed of its purpose, for it was an easy matter to slip out between the guards almost any night.
The winter of 1862-3 was very mild and open, with a great deal of rain and mud. In fact, there was nothing but mud around that camp, and frequently the men would walk their beets half knee deep, while an occasional cold night would nearly freeze us to death. Our barracks consisted of buildings just boarded up like cow sheds, and during the cold nights the wind whistled through them with such force as to considerably cool the ardor of any a raw recruit. This exposure resulted in a great deal of sickness and a few deaths. However, with the return of a pleasant day and an order to go out upon regimental drill, our spirits were revived to the usual enthusiastic pitch.

About the 6th of February, one-half the regiment was granted a ten days' furlough for the boys to go home and once more bid their friends good-bye, which in many cases proved to be forever.

As our regiment became more proficient in the use of arms and the winter was drawing to a close, we began daily expecting orders to move south into actual service, but the orders never came.

During the summer of 1862 the Indians had broken out in Minnesota and killed a great many whites, in some instances whole settlements. Also in northwestern Iowa, the settlers in some of the smaller towns, were compelled to abandon their homes for safety. These outbreaks prevented our regiment from ever engaging in the war. For about March 1st we received orders to prepare for a raid against the Sioux Indians in the northwest. Disappointment was manifested among the boys at the time, many preferring to seek glory on other fields in the south, but by the time our three years' soldiering was completed, we were pretty well satisfied with the healthy climate of the northwest, which was preferable to the malaria laden swamps of the south.

On March 16th, 1863, we packed up our traps at Camp Hendershot and started on the march across the state of Iowa, going by way of Iowa City to Council Bluffs and up the Missouri river to Sioux City. The middle of March, we discovered, was rather too early to begin marching and camping out nights. We experienced many discomforts during several days and nights of rain and snow before reaching Council Bluffs. One day in particular, we had a rough time while a terrible storm was raging. After marching through rain and sleet, we were deprived of the use of our tents by the high wind which prevailed and in which no tent could stay up. The boys sought shelter wherever they could find it, going some distance to farm houses, barns, haystacks, or any place to get shelter from the storm.

For several days after that storm the Iowa sloughs seemed to have no bottom, and our big government wagons were too much for the six mules hitched to each one. We soon discovered a way, however, to pull a wagon out when one got stuck. This was to fasten a two inch rope to the tongue, string a number of soldiers along the rope, and a pull all together brought the wagon out in a hurry. In consequence of such drawbacks, we were about thirty days in crossing the state to Council Bluffs, whence we struck north up the east side of the Missouri river and went into camp six miles west of Sioux City on the west bank of the Big Sioux river in Dakota, about May 5th.

This camp was named Camp Cook, after the General in command. Shortly afterwards, however, Gen. Cook was succeeded in command by General Alfred Sully. As soon as the latter saw our "chain guard," he wanted to know if we had a lot of prisoners there it was necessary to guard. He at once dispensed with the guard, much to the delight of the boys.

CHAPTER II.

BEGINNING OF THE EXPEDITION TO THE INDIAN COUNTRY

After becoming somewhat rested at Camp Cook, on May 17th we received orders for the second battalion, including companies B, C, H, and E to be ready the following morning to start upon an expedition some four hundred miles up the Missouri river. Accordingly, the line of march was taken up on the east side of the river, until we came to Ft. Randall, at which place we crossed the river on an old ferry boat. While doing so, we lost a soldier belonging to Co. H, who by some accident fell off the boat and was drowned.
A few days' stop was made at Ft. Randall, and then the journey was continued up the west side of the river to Ft. Pierre, arriving there about June 5th. While in camp there, an Indian by the name of Crazy Dog, who afterward became our guide, came into camp one day with a white girl in his possession whom he had stolen from the hostile Indians some three or four hundred miles further up the river. After a perilous journey, traveling by night and hiding in the daytime, he had succeeded in eluding the bands of Indians constantly roaming over the country.

This young girl's name was Luvina Ingle, and she had been captured by the Indians during the summer of 1862, at the massacre of New Ulm, Minn., all the rest of her family being murdered.

Crazy Dog turned her over to the officers, who sent her down to Sioux City, where she secured a home in the family of Dr. Yeoman. The General rewarded Crazy Dog for his humane act, by giving him his pick of four ponies out of a large lot he afterwards captured from the Indians.

Ft. Pierre was only a trading post belonging to the Northwestern Fur Co., which was at that time doing an immense business buying hides from trappers and the Indians. After a brief stay there we went twenty-five miles further up the river and camped.

We remained in this camp some two or three weeks, but the Indians became so numerous and aggressive, we were compelled to return to the Fort to await the arrival of ammunition, as our supply had run short. In our preparations for returning to the Fort, it was discovered the horse of Ethnor Foster, a Co. B man, was gone, and he was ordered to remain and hunt for it. Being quite young, he was relieved by an older brother, who succeeded in getting a couple of boys to assist him. After finding the horse, they hid themselves in the brush to wait darkness, as it was impossible for so few to safely pass the Indians in the daytime. After dark, they let their horses mingle with the Indian ponies and slowly worked their way through without being discovered. When nearly to camp they ran into eight Indians prowling about, but a few shots soon put them to flight.

On the 7th of July we crossed to the east side of the river on a steamer, to meet the balance of the command, which had just arrived. We then marched up the river to the mouth of the Little Cheyenne, whence we left the Missouri and started in a northeast direction.

CHAPTER III.

BATTLE OF WHITE STONE HILL

The departure from the river country was for the purpose of finding a band of Indians known to be somewhere in that country. After marching a few days we captured an Indian and two squaws. We tried to find out from them where the camp was located, but they were apparently very dumb. However, a threat to kill him loosened his tongue and hands to such an extent that we figured out the camp was south of us and contained 9000 reds. We also learned that they had had a battle with Gen. Sibley, on Apple Creek, a few days before.

We went into camp for a couple of days and a detail of one hundred men was sent to the scene of Gen. Sibley's fight, about 40 miles to the south of us. The detail started early in the morning, taking Crazy Dog and Frank Lefrumboy, a half breed, as guides. The "signs" of Indians were frequent and pointed out to the soldiers by the trained guides. While on the trip, Crazy Dog caused considerable comment by sticking a couple of arrows in the ground and refusing to inform the soldiers why he did it. The detail reached the battle ground about sun down, but all signs of life had disappeared. The remains of a Dr. Wixner, of Sibley's command, were found buried in a lonely grave; also a number of dead horses and mules scattered around the battle field.

During the return trip, in the night, the soldiers became uneasy and suspicion that the guides were not going in the right direction to reach camp, but about midnight their fears were allayed by Crazy Dog pulling up the two arrows he had stuck in the ground in the day time. They reached camp about daylight, having been in the saddle continuously for 24 hours.
The line of march was again taken up, swinging around to the south. During the day we found a few dead Indians lying on the prairie, who we supposed had been wounded in the encounter with Gen. Sibley, and crawled off that far and died.

On the afternoon of Sept. 3, 1863, we went into camp after four days of marching, to await the return of a scouting party of four companies that had been sent out to look for the Indian camp. In the evening we saw a soldier coming in from the west, his horse on the run, and five or six Indians in hot pursuit. As the soldier drew nearer we saw it was the half breed Laramboy. As soon as the Indians discovered us, they put back behind a hill. The bugle blew to horse, and in ten minutes we were after the reds. As we came to the top of the hill we saw a large body of Indians in the valley, who were not inclined to face our rush at them, and started on the run with the command in close pursuit. An order for division soon passed along the line, the 6th Iowa Cavalry taking the left and the balance of the command the right. The superior speed of our horses over the Indian ponies, soon placed us in a position to flank them and bring the reds between the fire of the divided command, which was poured in upon them with deadly effect.

One hour of incessant fighting was too much for the reds, and they made a break through our lines, which finished the fight. Our loss was twenty-two killed and fifty wounded, among the number killed being our second Lieutenant, Levitt. As near as we could tell, we killed about 300 Indians. We also captured 250 squaws and papooses, 300 ponies and 60 tons of dried buffalo meat.

The command camped at the battle ground for three days, and found the prairie alive with Indian lice. We then removed our captives to Ft. Thompson Indian agency and turned them over to the agent.

As it was getting late in the season we were ordered to continue down the river and go into winter quarters. After marching all one day in a heavy rain and sleet, we camped at night on American creek, with our clothes wet through. That was one of the worst nights in our experience; we were campground on the open prairie with nothing to build fires, and had to endure a regular northwestern snow storm all night. A great many of the men were forced to keep moving all night to prevent freezing. The next morning a number of horses were found to have perished during the storm. We arrived at Sioux City, Ia., November 6th, where Co. B, with four or five others, went into winter quarters, the balance of the command being stationed at other points.

CHAPTER IV.

EXpedition Through Dakota To The Yellowstone

During the early summer of 1864, while stationed at Sioux City, Iowa, Co. B received orders to join an expedition against the Indians in Dakota, to protect the frontier and open up a trail through to the Yellowstone country. The expedition was under the command of General Alfred Sully, and consisted of about 2000 troops. After considerable time for preparation, on June 4th, 1864, we packed our tents, folded our blankets, saddled our horses and started on the big march for the Yellowstone river. Crossing the Big Sioux river six miles west of Sioux City we took up our March in Dakota. June 7th we camped on the Vermillion river, at the town of the same name, which consisted of two or three small stores and a half dozen houses, and the first sign of civilization since leaving Sioux City. Our next camp on the 8th, was on the Jim river; plenty of wood and good water, but grass very short. Here we saw a Frenchman farming, the first farmer we met in Dakota. On the 9th we marched 8 miles and camped at the capital, Yankton, which was a small town beautifully located on the north side of the Missouri river. Just north of town we saw new houses and evidence of an attempt to open up this wild country; also noticed there were no houses except close to town—guess they were afraid of Indians. On the 10th we marched 22 miles and camped at Bon Homme, which was not much of a town and consisted of some eight or ten log houses, located on a high, rolling prairie. There was no settlement between Yankton and this place, which was the
last sign of civilization in Dakota, except the forts we passed. June 11th we marched 25 miles and camped on Chouteau creek, having passed over a rough country with very poor feed for our horses. The 12th consisted of a twenty mile march, with camp four miles above the Yankton agency; country traveled again rough, but at the agency were several hundred acres of beautiful bottom land. The Indians had in some three or four hundred acres of corn and it looked fine. On the 13th, after a jaunt of 14 miles, we reached Ft. Randall, where we lay over next day.

Starting again on the 15th, we passed Ft. Thompson on the 19th, reaching Ft. Sully the 22d, four miles above which we camped without incident worthy of note. We had kept most of the time close to the river; country generally quite rough. On the 26th, we left Sully and struck 20 miles north, camping for the night on Okabojo creek; we had worked out from the river to the beautiful prairies, where we found good water and plenty of grass. 20 miles the 27th and 18 the 28th, brought us to Cheyenne creek (this is now in Potter county). In the morning as we started, Capt. Fielner, our topographical engineer, with two soldiers, left the command and went off to the west to inspect a rock close to the Cheyenne. This rock had a flat, smooth surface, some fifteen feet wide, and on the top of it were three foot prints imbedded in the rock about two inches. The Indians called this medicine rock. After examining the rock, the Capt. and two men started for the command. In explanation, I will say we had one company of Dakota soldiers called the Dakota Scouts, in which there were about 20 Indian soldiers. They always marched or scouted ahead of the command. This company had reached the creek and picked out a camp. This is the camp Capt. Fielner and two men were going to, and when getting within about one mile of the scouts, the trio picketed their horses with the intention of going down to the creek to get a drink and wait until the command came up. There was a heavy clump of bushes a few rods ahead of them, and as the men came near these bushes, the Capt. in front, whang! went a gun, and the Capt. was shot through the lungs. Three Indians rushed out of the brush after the three horses, but the horses jerked up the pikeet pins and got away. Then the Indians took to their heels. The soldiers got after them as soon as possible, and had to run about fifteen miles before getting within gun shot of the reds. They killed the three Indians, cut off their heads and brought them into camp, which they reached a little after dark. Capt. Fielner lived until about ten o'clock that night.

On the 29th we camped on Swan creek, after a fifteen mile march, where we expected to meet a lot of Minnesota troops, but failed to find them. After dark we sent up sky rockets, but got no answer. However, the next day the troops arrived, accompanied by an immigrant train of 150 wagons—a colony on their way to Idaho. We now had about 3,000 soldiers in our command.

After resting until July 3d, we again broke camp and marched 20 miles over a beautiful rolling prairie. The 4th was a repetition, with 20 miles further; and made fires of buffalo chips to cook. We saw there had been plenty of buffalo there lately; we saw plenty of antelope every day. After a 35-mile march devoid of interest, except a sight of the beautiful Loon Lake, we camped on Beaver Creek, where grass was good and timber plenty. The next day we had considerable trouble in crossing the Beaver and branches and intervening rough country, making only about eleven miles. My diary is without record of the 7th, but on the 8th we again struck the big muddy at the outlet of Long Lake; country rough and hilly, and full of antelope, several running inside our lines as we marched. We always marched in four lines—that is two lines of wagons and a line of horsemen on the outside. Since going in camp, a Co. E man shot an elk, the first wild meat secured on the trip, which was considerably enjoyed by those fortunate enough to get a cut. A good shower of rain broke the monotony of the night's camp. On the 9th we crossed to the west side of the Missouri river and went into camp for a few days. It was the intention to erect buildings and establish Ft. Rice there, and one regiment of Minnesota infantry was detailed for fort duty. The government boat Isabella arrived and
assisted us across the river. She was laden with supplies for the expedition and the new fort.

We were now in the Indian country and kept our eyes open for something more interesting. On the 12th, myself and five others received permission to go out on a hunt. We wandered over the rough country all day looking for game, but were compelled to start for camp at night without success. On the way back it soon became evident some one was moving backward and forward across our route between us and camp. Our first thought, of course, was Indians! and we began making preparations for a hard tussle, with the probability of never again seeing the command. After considerable time spent in expectancy, with our nerves strung up to a high tension, we made the discovery a squad of our own boys were in front of us—giving us the laugh.

Companies B and C were ordered to pack up on the 15th and march to the Cannon Ball river, eight miles south, as guards for our herd of cattle, which was in charge of two half-breeds. In crossing some bluffs, our company wagon was upset and smashed up things some, but our china ware was made for such occasions. As there appeared no immediate danger, the two companies were ordered to return to Ft. Rice on the 18th.

The following morning the command again broke camp and started on our trip further into the wild country, leaving the regiment of infantry and a few sick cavalrymen in charge of the fort. A march of twenty miles brought us to the Cannon Ball river, and we entered into a very different country from that on the east side of the river. The grass was all buffalo, scenery the wonderful and fantastical shaped buttes of which so much is written. They are apparently piled up around on the prairie, from one to five hundred feet high in all manner of shapes, making at once a weird yet picturesque formation, which imparts a portion of its own lonesomeness to the beholder. After going into camp Sergeant Foster and myself, while strolling along the river, discovered a coal bank, in which there seemed to be plenty of coal of very good quality. (This in what is now called Morton county, a few miles south of the Northern Pacific railroad, and I understand the coal is now extensively mined.)

The next day's march of 18 miles over a rough country was passed with still no Indians, although "signs" were numerous. The 21st and 22d were passed in momentary expectation of attacks from reds, but we reached what we supposed to be the Cannon Ball river again. Here we were stopped by the arrival of three messengers from Ft. Rice, with word that the Indians had attacked the government boats at the mouth of Big Knife river, and were preparing to attack the soldiers at Ft. Rice. We were ordered to hold ourselves in readiness for further word, which soon came, to the effect that no particular damage had been done by the Indians.

Our journey was resumed on the 23d with 22 miles further to our credit, over a rolling country, the last four miles being so rolling that we struggled hard all the afternoon to pass them, and smashed up several wagons. The 24th had a record of very warm weather and a twenty-five mile march to the Heart river; country a beautiful rolling prairie, bounded on the east by a butte the guides claimed to be 600 feet high. Heart river contained very poor water for drinking, strongly impregnated with coal and minerals. Here we corralled the wagon train, left some soldiers and the immigrants in charge, and on the 26th organized a scouting party, taking seven days' rations and about 55 wagons.

A march of 18 miles brought the party into a rough country, full of precipices and deep ravines, a veritable fortress for the Indians with their peculiar and treacherous mode of warfare. We left our horses saddled and bridled at night, placed our picket and camp guards, and prepared to sleep on our arms, with revolvers and sabers buckled to us, expecting an attack at any moment. Not being permitted to bring our tents, no lights were allowed; we ate cold grub and rolled up in our blankets. As the advance guard of Dakota scouts had a little brush with the reds just before camping, it is safe to record not many of us tried very hard to sleep.
Well, we did not have to wait so very long until the camp was transformed suddenly into life and activity. The camp guards thought Indians had got through the picket line and hurriedly shook every man, and at the order of "quick! quick! fall in line!" every soldier sprang to his horse's head. But the alarms were false, as the Indians did nothing except to prevent us from sleeping.

CHAPTER V.
BATTLE OF TAH-KAH-O-KEE-TA

On the 28th we were in the saddle by 3 a.m. and had marched twenty miles, when the column was halted by the scouts coming back on the dead run, and reporting a large Indian camp a few miles ahead of us. After a short conversation with the commander, through the interpreter, the scouts, as usual before a battle, proceeded to a headquarters wagon and changed their Indian costume for soldier's uniforms. This was a necessary precaution, so that they would not be confused with the hostile.

The orderlies were soon flying along the lines, with orders sticking in their belts for the different commanders. We commenced forming in line of battle, consisting of three lines, Co. B being in the middle, or second line.

After we were in proper position, we ran our horses a few miles towards the Indians, halted, and each soldier No. 4 taking the horses and following to the rear. We then made some further preparations for the battle which now seemed certain, although as yet we had seen no reds. Naturally thinking there would be a great many killed in this engagement a great many of the boys left their watches, pictures and other valuables in the hands of our regimental saddler, Dwight F. House, while a few hurriedly scratched off a farewell letter to loved ones, if they should fall in the battle.

After advancing and maneuvering for a short time, we were met by the reds about four miles out from their camp, the first gun being fired at 1:30 p.m. The usual desultory fire in front was engaged in by the reds, to attract attention to that one point, with the intention of making a grand rush elsewhere. However, the scouts and officers seemed to anticipate surprises and were constantly watching all quarters. The first intimation the center and rear of the column had of any change, was the sight of three or four cannons rushing past us to the rear as fast as the horses could run. Turning to the rear we saw several hundred red devils making for our wagon train, which was about a mile back of us. Fortunately their intentions were discovered in time, and the ready response of a cannon checked their wild ride before any serious damage resulted; and after a few shells had been fired into the horde, they concluded they had no further use for that wagon train. And we also felt some reluctance about giving it up, as it contained our provisions of beans, pork, hard-tack and coffee for the next six days.

By this time the prairie seemed alive with Indians bent on our immediate destruction. They dodged about behind rocks, or whatever cover they could find, blazed away at us and were out of sight again. The splendid discipline of the soldiers and destructive cannonading, would soon have decided the battle if the Indians had been concentrated or massed as the soldiers, but this is not their way of fighting; and while they had a solid body to shoot at, they presented a very irregular line for a return fire.

This necessitated maneuvering by the soldiers to secure the desired results from their mode of fighting.

As we commenced preparations for today's battle, we noticed a couple of miles to the front, a large butte standing on the prairie, perhaps 150 feet high. As we drew nearer we saw it was covered with Indian squaws and those not engaged in the battle, watching the progress of the fight. When about one mile from the butte, a cannon was turned on it. The first shell exploded before reaching the butte, but the second one exploded on top of it. In a very short time the Indians were scattered in all directions.

To the right and north of our command where the main engagement took place was a ridge running east and west. Our lines extended to its edge. The Indians also being on the south side of this ridge, actively engaged with the main forces, afforded Major Bracket an opportunity to slip around
the east end of the ridge with four companies and take position about a mile west of our position, but on the north side of the ridge. This, of course, was all unknown to us as well as the Indians, but we were soon enlightened.

About four o'clock we were suddenly thrown into excitement and wonder at the audacity of about 15 or 20 soldiers on their horses galloping along on top of the ridge going westward, away from our lines and to the north of the Indians. They were apparently rushing to their own doom. Why, no one seemed to know. The Indians, of course, started to cut off their retreat, and in doing so were rapidly concentrating at the foot of this ridge. When the few soldiers were about a mile from us and opposite the Indians, they suddenly dropped out of sight over on the north side of the ridge. During all this time Major Brackett's four companies were lying on the north side of the ridge, and when the venturesome horsemen dropped from view they joined the Major's command. All dismount, crawl up to the top of the ridge, raise in line, and the mystery was solved. As our command sent up cheers at the success of this ruse, the Major's forces poured three rounds into the solid mass of Indians who had been so intent upon capturing the few bold soldiers on the ridge.

The slaughter of the reds was terrible, but we were unable to tell the extent, because as soon as one dropped from his pony another would slip his lariat over the dead or wounded Indian as quick as a flash and drag him off. We had now gained a decided advantage and with continued skirmishing we drove the Indians back, until at sundown we had them in a gorge in the mountains.

The cannons were then brought forward and continued throwing shells into the gorge till after dark.

It was amusing to see the desperate efforts made by the Indians to get out of reach of the cannon. We had clearly won the day, and after roll call we went into camp. Our casualties were three men killed and several wounded, which was nothing as compared to the Indian loss.

The weather was very warm and we were compelled to

march and fight all day without food or water. No water was found until about ten o'clock, when a pool was discovered a half mile from camp. Following the line of men we reached the mud hole, filled our camp kettle and returned to strain the stuff through a towel, which, by the way, had not been to the laundry lately. No lights being allowed we had to dig holes in a convenient gulch and build fires to get supper, and about 12 o'clock after fasting some 20 hours, the tired men ate their hardtack and coffee with considerable relish. Three picket lines were formed and every available man was on duty—that is, all who had not learned the art of sleeping with one eye open.

By four o'clock the next morning we were again in the saddle. We passed around the spur of the mountain and marched northwest five miles, halted and remained there a half hour. We then double-quicked part of the command back over our own track to the battle field of the previous day. A number of Indians were already there and a short skirmish ensued, in which, one soldier and several Indians were killed. The balance of our force soon arrived and we went into camp.

We now discovered a fine spring of water that we knew nothing of the night before. After resting until noon a detail was sent up to the Indian camp in the gulch. The Indians had left camp kettles, several fine buffalo robes, etc., in their hurry to get out; but as usual, had removed their dead.

Only one Indian fell into our hands, and that was a wounded one who had been found in a small clump of bushes by the Indian soldiers belonging to the company of Dakota scouts. They set him up on one side of the brush, mounted their ponies and rode around the brush in single file, each one shooting the poor wretch every time they came around.

We soon returned to camp, saddled up and started for our corral on Heart river, having had enough "scouting to satisfy the most fastidious." But we were again visited by the reds in camp that evening. They made a dash past the guards for our horses, and before we could intercept
them, ran off a few horses. We then brought our horses in close to camp, and prepared supper, but before we could finish eating, the guards came running in from the north shouting: "The Indians are killing the pickets!"

When we went into camp, guards were placed from camp to a mile out, and the picket lines had not yet been drawn in for the night. We formed in line and a squad was run out to the northwest of camp to the high ground, but could find no Indians, and after reconnoitering returned to camp.

That night we laid down in line, with our arms on. We got little sleep, however, being ordered up and down several times through the night. In the morning we found two pickets had been killed. Two companies were detailed to bury them and the rest of the command resumed march.

After going a couple of miles we halted to wait for the two companies. Having been up four nights with scarcely any sleep, we were almost worn out, but the order to hold our horses prevented sleep. Still I concluded to take my chances in disobeying the spirit if not the letter of the order. So I tied one end of my lariat to my horse and wrapped the other end around my wrist and laid down. I was awakened by a comrade shaking me and saying my horse had got away. As luck would have it I caught him again without being seen by the captain, so I did not have to walk all day and lead my horse, as I have seen others do for disobeying an order.

We resumed march and in two days reached the corral on Heart river, without further incident of interest. We were heartily welcomed back by the train and soldiers, who had no trouble with the Indians during our hazardous trip.

After resting a couple of days, on Aug. 3d we again broke camp and resumed our journey west. After marching three days over a varied country with poor water and short grass, we reached the "Bad Lands," and wonder of wonders, what a country appeared before us. As we were making a small elevation of the prairie, all at once the ground in front of us seemed suddenly dropped below the general level to the depth of two or three hundred feet. Yet it is not all done, for as far as we could see in all directions, except back over our own track, there were mounds, hills, buttes or whatever you want to call them. The tops of some of these mounds came up to the level of the prairie we were standing on, while others were not so high. They were all kinds of shapes and colors, from a snow white to a dark red. The accepted theory among us for these peculiar formations of mother earth, was that sometime immense bodies or veins of coal had burned over this tract, causing the thin crust of earth to sink from the surrounding country, leaving mounds where there were rocks instead of coal. This was the greatest natural curiosity I ever saw, and furnished an interesting subject that night for our camp on its edge.

The next day was hot and dusty, and we were engaged principally in making roads, which took us ten miles into the Bad Lands.

CHAPTER VI.
A THREE DAYS BATTLE IN THE BAD LANDS

On the 7th a detail of some six or seven hundred men were sent ahead to open up a road through a strip of brush and timber that skirted the banks of a stream, while the rest lay in camp, except a squad that were sent out with the working men as a guard.

About 10 a. m. the detail, guards and all, came rushing back to camp as fast as their horses could bring them, reporting a horde of Indians ahead who out-numbered the detail, and caused a lively retreat among the boys. We saw a cloud of dust arising to the west of us, also the detail rushing back; the bugle blew boots and saddles. We saddled our horses and formed in line to await further orders, but no immediate move was made.

About noon we started on the march, but having to make roads and guard the Indians off, we only made a three mile march that afternoon, most of the time through a heavy dust, with weather extremely hot.

During the afternoon we passed over a half mile stretch of nearly level ground scattered all over which, we found the largest specimens of petrified trees I ever saw. Many
of the trees contained their branches and otherwise almost in their original form. However, we were not allowed to examine curiosities, except as we jumped from our horses, leaving them in the ranks. Among others I availed myself of this opportunity, and now have in my possession a piece of stone I chipped off from one of those stumps with my lariat pin.

That night we camped on the east bank of the Little Missouri river, and had scarcely got settled when the pickets were driven in by the reds. A brief skirmish followed, but the steady fire of musketry and cannons soon compelled our wily enemies to seek cover. My company was stationed on the outside or northeast corner of the camp, directly in front of a butte some two hundred feet high, which was almost perpendicular on the side next us. Just as the sun went down we discovered several Indians on the top of this butte looking down at us. We momentarily expected them to take advantage of their position to fire, or roll some large boulders down upon us. But before they had time to practice any of their deviltry, a cannon ball went whizzing over our heads, and the reds scampered out of sight.

That night was passed with little or no sleep, as an attack was anticipated. However, the one lesson was sufficient for the Indians for the time. What little gen we got to lay down during the night, we had to do so with our revolvers and sabers buckled to us and guns in our hands.

The next morning as we formed in line, in the usual order of changing the positions, our company was placed next the rear of the column, preceding only Co. H. The order of march across the Little Missouri was in single column.

The river was about 300 yards wide, but only a few inches deep at that point, and no trouble was experienced in crossing. No sooner, however, had the head of the column entered a deep canyon on the opposite side, than a general fusillade began. The Indians seemed to hover around, ever watching for an opportunity to practice their sneaking mode of warfare from behind a cover.

Nature had evidently fashioned here a perfect ambush for the treacherous Indian. I have no doubt but they intended, when we entered that canyon, to there wipe us out of existence to the last man. In fact it was a dangerous looking place to enter, with the red devils all around us, outnumbering us five to one. The head of the column, even with the aid of the cannon, had considerable trouble in dislodging the reds at the entrance. In this skirmish our Blackfoot Indian guide was wounded, being shot in the breast, the ball coming out just below the shoulder blade.

As we crossed and entered the canyon we found it to be a creek bed which was probably a living stream only in the spring when the snow was melting on the surrounding hills. The banks of this creek, which we followed for four miles, were perpendicular and from fifteen to twenty-five feet high. A continuous coal belt extended on each side of this canyon, from three to 8 feet in thickness, as far up as we followed it and probably up the canyon. We finally had to dig a road out, and we came out on top of a high ridge. We halted for a short time and had some lively skirmishing with the Indians.

As we had about reached the top of the ridge a private of Co. I fell back out of the ranks. He had scarcely laid his arms down when a squad of the red devils sprang up from the canyon and tried to capture him. He sprang to his horse and while mounting received a slight wound in the hip and a ball through his cap. The Indians secured his weapons and put off again.

We had been all of the forenoon making this four miles and getting out of the canyon. About one-half of the command dismounted and were out on the skirmish line.

Heavy firing and cannonading was continually going on all the forenoon. After coming out of the canyon and getting on the high bluff we soon drove the Indians back to cover and we again moved on. We soon came out on a rough, rolling prairie, and such a hot, dusty afternoon as we had of it. During the afternoon the Indians kept well out of range of our muskets, but the cannons were turned on them.
whenever an opportunity presented itself. We only made a ten-mile march that day, and a hard day’s work we had of it. We got into camp about one hour before sundown, tired and hungry, having had nothing to eat since early in the morning and no water except what we had in our canteens in the morning.

We camped by the side of a big mud-hole and some of those first reaching it had ridden their horses in and badly muddied the water.

To the east of our camp the prairie gradually sloped back for nearly a mile to the top of the ridge. Our immigrant train was camped on the east side of us. Shortly before sundown we saw the Indians sodaing up on top of this ridge and dropping back again out of sight. But in a short time several hundred of them came dashing over that ridge for our camp. The women and children belonging to the immigrant train came rushing and screaming to our camp.

The soldiers, without stopping for orders, grabbed their guns and rushed out to meet them. The cannons were at once turned on the reds, the shells singing through the air and bursting in front or among them, which soon put a stop to their savage intentions. They retreated as quick as they came. The only damage they did, beside scarring the women and children nearly to death, was to capture two horses, belonging to the company of Dakota scouts.

Every soldier in the whole command, not on the sick list, was put on guard, either picket or camp guard, and we got but little or no sleep.

On the morning of the 9th we were again in the saddle very early, with a mountainous country before us. Skirmishing and fighting soon began with the redskins and was kept up all the forenoon. About noon we came out of the mountains on a very rough, rolling prairie. We had no further trouble with the Indians that day.

One of the hardships of the expedition was our trouble in finding water fit to drink, occasionally having to dig wells to obtain it.

On the morning of the 10th we laid in camp till 9 o’clock, and while there the Indians drove the pickets in. The boys rushed out and skirmished with them for a short time but soon routed them. We marched over a rough, rolling country, with no grass on the prairie, the hills and prairie looking more like chalk than ground.

During the day we came to a creek—or what would have been a creek had there been any water in it—the banks of which were some ten or twelve feet deep and about the same distance from one bank to the other. We had bridge timber with us and made a bridge to cross. As we marched in four columns we now had to single out and cross one column at a time.

Our company crossed, and while waiting for the rest of the command, myself and a comrade went a short distance down the creek bed to look for water. While doing so, we were rewarded with a singular sight in those surroundings which suggested a possible habitation of an extinct people. This peculiarity consisted of a pile of slabs and a tree laying near by, cut up into logs of exact length, the same as seen around any saw mill, but all petrified, the hardest kind of stone. We went into camp in a patch of sage brush. We tied our horses to the lines, without anything to eat, and they had had nothing to eat all day.

Early the next morning we were again on the march. Our horses and mules looked bad, having had nothing to eat for thirty-six hours. We had a very rough country again to march over, with no vegetation visible. About noon we came to a nice stream of water, but it was so badly impregnated with alkali we could not use it ourselves or allow our horses to drink it. We made a heavy day’s march of thirty-two miles, and did not get into camp till 9 o’clock in the evening.

Our horses and mules had been giving out for the want of feed and water, and during the day we had shot about seventy-five head. When they became so tired we could not ride or drive them any further we would take off their saddles or harness and lead them until they could go no
further. Then, rather than leave them on the prairie to complete their starvation, or fall into the hands of the Indians, we would shoot them. I think I never saw a more tired out lot of men and horses than went into camp that night. While the horses belonged to the government, the men were just as anxious to save them as though they had been their own, and would frequently walk miles rather than allow the worn-out beasts to carry them. Besides, we were getting a long way from civilization, which materially increased the value and services of our horses. For that night our camp was located on a small stream which contained, if possible, more alkali than the one passed earlier in the day. We dared not drink it, while at the same time both man and beast were nearly famished for water, having had none since early in the morning of that extremely hot and dusty day. We made coffee out of it, but could drink little of that.

Upon going into camp, we formed a line by companies, each company by itself and about thirty feet from others on either side of it. To prepare a suitable and convenient place for the horses, we would place four posts in the ground and then run a rope through the tops of the posts, forming a line of sufficient space to hitch the horses of one company to. Each soldier slept only a few feet to the rear of his horse, with his saddle and bridle at hand, so that in case of an attack we could readily form into line for action without confusion or delay.

Our horses had gone so long without water and feed that they pawed the earth and kept up considerable noise all night, preventing many from sleeping in their sympathy for the poor dumb brutes.

The next morning, as if to add to the misery of the night before, we found only a short distance from camp, a beautiful spring of water gushing out of the side of a bluff. It was strongly impregnated with minerals, but pure and cold, and was accepted by man and beast as a precious boon from a kind Providence.

Also only a short distance from camp in another direction, we found what had in the spring, probably been a lagoon, having covered something like a section of land. There was no water in it, but it was covered with a swamp grass, as dead and dried up as grass would be in Iowa in the month of December.

After watering our horses we took them out on that dry grass and let them eat until about 10 a.m. I never saw horses turned out in the spring on nice, young, tender grass, that would eat as our horses did this old, dried up grass. I have often made the remark since coming home from the army, that I never knew until after I had been through the war, what men or horses could endure and live through.

About 10 a.m. we again started for the famous Yellowstone river, being told by our guides we would reach it before night.

CHAPTER VII

THE YELLOWSTONE

Sure enough, about noon we suddenly left the mountainous country and came out upon the river bottom. What a beautiful sight to us, after being for several days in such a barren, mountainous country, to see for six or eight miles ahead of us such a beautiful plane—as level as a house floor—and the big groves of timber along the river banks. It was a welcome sight, from the fact that for the last few days our rations had been reduced and we expected to find some steamboats on the river, waiting for us with rations. In a short time we reached the river, but we found no boats, nor grass for our horses.

By all appearances during the earlier part of the summer this bottom had been covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, but the notorious grasshopper had been there ahead of us and eaten the grass down to the very roots, so we tied our horses to their lines, and, going down among the young cottonwoods, cut arms full of limbs and carried them to our horses to eat. Soon after going into camp we heard the cannons booming. We soon learned this was to signal the steamboats, supposed to be somewhere on the river near us.
To our joy the boats came down the river in the evening, in answer to the signals.

That night came my turn to do picket duty. Our post was placed out about one-fourth of a mile, somewhat further than usual, and consisted of five men. We took turns of watching of about two hours each, all but the one on watch sleeping in the meantime. We never stood up on our posts, because of the danger of becoming a target for Indian arrows or bullets. Notwithstanding it was only the 12th of August, the evenings were very cool, so chilly in fact that we were not comfortable even under blankets, and frequently exposed ourselves to danger by moving about to keep warm. However, the night passed without sight of our enemies, and as soon as relieved we made for the comfortable camp fire.

One of the peculiarities of that northern climate, where the nights were so cool, was the entire absence of any dew, the grass being as dry in the morning as the evening before.

The Yellowstone river is a beautiful stream, and although it is not full of mud and sand as the Missouri, the water is of a yellowish cast, which prevents seeing any object in it. The scenery along its banks, while so weird and lonesome, is very picturesque, and in later years has attracted thousands of sight-seers.

The country from the time we left the Missouri till we reached the Yellowstone was a very different country from that east of the Missouri. All the way through, between those two rivers, on the level or rolling prairies are great buttes, piled up from 100 to 400 feet high. Some of them are very uniform, being round and smooth, built like a potato pit or a long hay rick. They look as if they had been piled up hundreds or thousands of years ago, by a race of people now extinct. It is a picturesque country, every day bringing something new to be seen.

We had two bands of music with us, one silver and one brass band, and mornings and evenings, when not fighting Indians, those bands played several pieces, and I think I never heard music sound out so clear and beautiful as it did on those prairies.

During the forenoon we laid in camp and slept and rested up the best we could. After dinner a squad of us took our horses and went up the river some three miles from camp to where the prairie runs out and the bluffs run down to the river. There is a heavy body of timber in the gulches and canyons and we also found in the timber good grass for our horses, so we turned our horses loose and gave them a chance to get one good feed again, while we rambled around in the canyons looking for game. The most interesting thing we saw was a vein of coal, twelve or fifteen feet thick, cropping out of the side of a canyon. It looked like the Pennsylvania hard coal and caused no little speculation among us as to its value in civilization. We finally came to the conclusion that if we were not working for Uncle Sam we would go to mining coal and run it down the river on flatboats. But at this time it was not very safe business running those rivers in flatboats.

I have in my possession a book published by Mrs. Fanny Kelly, who was a captive among the same Indians at the time we were fighting them. In her book she speaks about a flat boat coming down the Yellowstone with twenty persons in it, composed of men, women and children, only a few days after we were there, and near the same place, they tied up their boat for the night. They had all got out on the bank and left their guns in the boat. The Indians were lying in ambush for them, and all of a sudden, sprang in between the whites and their boat, killing every last one of the twenty persons.

About 4 p.m. we returned to camp and found the command had begun crossing the river. Our baggage, saddles, etc., were taken over on the boats, while we swam our horses through the swift current. The entire night was taken up in crossing the river and until noon the next day. Our company crossed over about 10 o'clock in the night.

In the afternoon we marched down the river ten miles and as we were going into camp, I saw that some of the boys had just downed a big buffalo close to camp. While
we were passing down the Yellowstone we killed a great
many elk and a few buffalo for amusement and food.

The next day we laid in camp again in the forenoon.
But about noon we received word that one of the boats was
stuck on a sandbar up the river a few miles, so the 6th Iowa
Cavalry, with a wagon train, was ordered back to unload the
boat so it could float off the bar.

The next day we resumed march down the river, and on
the 19th crossed the Missouri to Ft. Union. My company
was the last to cross, and it was some time after dark before
we were all over. I was unable to find my saddle and blank-
quets and consequently had to use the root of a big cotton-
wood tree for a pillow that night. Being very tired, I slept
as good as I ever did in my own comfortable bed at home,
and got up in the morning feeling excellent.

Ft. Union, and in fact all forts so far from civilization,
were owned and controlled by the Northwestern Fur Co., and
were really trading posts, although prepared to withstand
any attack from an ordinary force of Indians.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUFFALO BY THE TENS OF THOUSANDS

The condition of our stock and the good feed we found
in the neighborhood of Ft. Union, was sufficient inducement
for a two-days' camp, where we obtained a good rest and
permitted the weary and half starved horses and mules to
re recuperate. The dead, dry buffalo grass was very nourishing
and the stock would soon have grown fat upon it.

Changing our course to the eastward we followed the
Missouri river, camping on August 28th on a beautiful little
stream five miles above Fort Berthold. Here we found three
tribes of Indians—the Mandans, Rees and Grosventres, all
inclined to be peaceable. They were doing a little farming,
on the river bottom, such as raising pumpkins, squashes,
squaw corn, etc.

In the afternoon the Indians from the fort came to our
camp and General Sully made a speech to them. Whether
they could understand each other's language or not I do not
know, but they had three different interpreters to interpret
the General's speech to them.

Those Indians had the finest ponies I ever saw; they
were the regular Oregon ponies—fat and sleek as moles.
They appeared to be great fellows for sporting and fun, and
were horse-racing among themselves, out by our camp, dur-
ing the day, or playing cards with our boys.

After another day's rest we again continued down the
river till we were thirty miles east of Ft. Berthold. Here
the river makes a bend to the south or southeast, and we
left it marching in a north or a little east of north direction.
We were in hopes of continuing on down the river and get in
winter quarters somewhere, as we were getting pretty well
worn out and tired of the continual marching for three
months. But when we started nearly due north again, it
looked as if our marching was not done with yet. Soon after
leaving the river, we came to a beautiful country of rolling
prairie, where grass was plenty. This course soon brought us
into the heart of the buffalo country, where the prairie
seemed alive with the noble bison. Hard after herd was
passed, and in every direction we could see thousands of
them. At times, when changing their location or becoming
scared, they would start to running, fall into single file, and
stretch out for two miles. If we happened to be crossing
one of these paths, we had to break our lines and allow them
to pass, killing only what we could conveniently take care of.

We circled around and again started in a southeast
direction, at times being nearly swamped by the buffalo.

On the 6th of Sept. we marched all day in a heavy rain,
which lasted until some time in the night. We went into
camp about the middle of the afternoon, our blankets and
clothing being soaked through. We camped on the prairie
without timber or water, except rain water, and to add to
our discomfort the weather turned very cold; "Buffalo chips"
were numerous, but they would not burn, and as wet and
cold as we were, we had to pass the night without fire or
supper. After crawling into our tents for the night, it
seemed that we would surely chill to death; but after a time
We commenced warming up and slept much better than could have been expected. In the morning when we got up out of our wet nests with clothes steaming, we very much resembled a lot of pigs crawling out of a wet straw pile.

We continued on in a southerly direction without incident of interest for a few days, reaching the Missouri on the 9th, eight miles below the Ft, where we camped.

After going into camp near Ft Rice, we received our first mail since leaving there on the 19th of July, which brought back thoughts of civilization and loved ones at home. But these happy thoughts were of brief duration for some of the boys, as we were soon ordered to fall into line for the purpose of getting volunteers to go to the relief of an immigrant train besieged by the Indians about 200 miles west of us.

The next morning 1000 volunteers started to the rescue, while the rest of us remained in camp. We learned those immigrants were from Minnesota, and tried to reach Ft. Rice to accompany our expedition to the Yellow Stone, but failed to arrive in time. The train was in charge of Capt. Fisk, and started on our trail with only forty-five soldiers, furnished at Ft. Rice. When near the Bad Lands they were surrounded by the Indians and could move in neither direction. After being held there a few days, two soldiers succeeded in stealing through the Indians one dark night, taking their horses with them, and made for the Ft, reporting the condition of the immigrants.

While Capt. Fisk and train were thus besieged, an Indian came out toward them one day, stuck a stick in the ground with a piece of paper attached to it, and then retreated. The Captain sent out for the paper and found it to be a letter from a white woman, whom the Indians had in captivity. They kept up a correspondence for some time, the reds dictating to her what to write and she writing what she pleased. They proposed to trade her to Fisk, and the Captain offered them two wagons loaded with provisions and the mule team hitched to them, for the woman. The Indians agreed to the trade, but stipulated the property be first placed

in their possession, when they would deliver up the woman. This the Captain refused to do, knowing only too well that the wily Indians would not fulfill their part of the contract. So the trade was not made. The immigrants were soon relieved by our boys and returned with them to Ft. Rice.

While the main command laid in camp, nothing particular transpired until the morning of Sept. 21st, when some Indians slipped down a gulch near camp and made way with five or six horses that had been picketed out. Several squads started out after them, the Indians as usual scattering. Sergeant Murphy and two others of Co. L, singled out three Indians and fell into one of the traps the red devils were always planning. The three indiscreet soldiers were coaxed about ten miles away from camp by the prospect of capturing the three whom they were pursuing.

Suddenly they found their retreat cut off by about forty Indians springing up between them and camp. Their only chance for escape was to get to the river, but in their desperate ride for life Sergeant Murphy's horse was shot down, and before he could get up the Indians were upon him and killed him. His two companions succeeded in reaching the river, and got back to camp at dark. The Sergeant's body was sent for the next day, brought into camp and buried.

On the 27th we received word that Capt. Fisk and the volunteers were on their way back, so we packed up and started down the river, reaching Ft. Sully October 7th. Companies B, H and K were left at Sully to go into winter quarters, the rest of the command going to other posts.

We began getting things ready for winter, with Major House in command. We were issued flour instead of hard tack, but had considerable trouble in finding anyone to bake for us. Finally I was induced to take hold of the bakery department and had much better luck than I expected. The boys had a good deal of sport over one batch of bread I made. They said they would use the loaves for cannon balls to kill Indians. But then we were soldiering and did not expect things as elegant as when at home.

After being in the fort awhile I saw some eight or ten
behind a woman the Indians came and went as they pleased until one day in November one of them came into the fort and said they had the woman and would soon bring her in. On the evening of December 7th another Indian came bearing a letter from the woman. She said the Indians told her they would be at the fort the next day. She also warned us there was a large band of Indians following them up and they intended to take the fort.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE OF A WHITE CAPTIVE

About 9 o'clock in the morning of December 9th we saw a small squad of Indians coming over the bluffs about two miles to the northwest, and close behind a long train of Indians following them. Orders were given to close the four corner gates, and the guards stationed at the big gate on the south, which was left open.

The Indians came around to the gate, and as they did so, I recognized them as the ones who had been drawing rations. They rode in through the gate with the white woman on a pony, all bundled up in buffalo robes, as it was a frosty morning. As soon as the big gate slammed shut behind her, the woman exclaimed, "My God, am I a free woman?"

Those Indians who were following her were close up to the fort, when the guards swung the big gate to. We immediately prepared for action, but they went on down the river and crossed on the ice to a big island, and made no effort to molest us.

The woman was given quarters with a soldier and his wife. Those Indians that were following up were a part of the same Indians we had been fighting in the summer on our trip to the Yellowstone. They remained on the island a week or two and then departed.

I saw and talked with the captive frequently in the fort, and learned her experience with the Indians. She was a very intelligent young married woman named Mrs. Kelly. Herself and husband left Kansas with two four-horse teams and joined an immigrant train bound for Idaho, the previous spring. Somewhere on the Platte river in Nebraska, they were attacked by the Indians, a great many killed, and herself and a little girl taken captive. Her husband was shot, but she did not learn whether fatally or not. About dusk on the evening of their capture, she was placed on a pony, with the little girl behind her, and started north with the Indians. After traveling a short distance and darkness had settled over the earth, they passed through some very tall grass which came up to the pony's back.

Of course they were surrounded by the Indians, but she concluded there was a possibility of the little girl escaping. So she whispered to her to slip down off the pony and lie still in the grass until they had all passed, and then return to the train. The little girl did so, and was not missed by the Indians until the next morning. Mrs. Kelly, however, learned nothing further of her escape.

While we were fighting the Indians at the battle of Takahakuta and through the Bad Lands, Mrs. Kelly was with them. She was always kept back to the rear, but was allowed to watch us through a field glass which the Indians had. She could readily watch our movements, and even see the buttons on our coats.

The first time we could send mail down the river Mrs. Kelly wrote to her home in Kansas, informing her relatives of her whereabouts. On the 9th of February her letter was answered in person by her husband. He arrived in company with a few of our boys who had been down to Ft. Thompson for mail. The joyous meeting between these two young people, so rudely separated, can be better imagined than described. Mr. Kelly informed us her little girl whom his wife had assisted to escape from the Indians did not get back to the train, nor was she ever heard of. The next day the Major gave Mr. and Mrs. Kelly an ambulance and escort to Ft. Randall, from which point they took the stage, and the happy couple returned to their home in Kansas.
Mrs. Kelly afterwards wrote a book descriptive of her capture and life among the Indians, wherein she speaks of the expedition of which I was a member, and gives views and impressions obtained from the Indian side of the battles. Mrs. Kelly devotes one chapter of her book to matters bearing directly upon the subject of this sketch, which is here-with presented in her own language:

“During the summer of 1864, and while I was a prisoner with the Indians, an expedition, composed of Iowa and Minnesota volunteers, with a few independent companies of Dakota and Nebraska men, with one company of friendly Indians of various tribes, started from Ft. Sully, in Dakota, with the double purpose, under instructions from the war department, of escorting a large emigrant train through the Indian country on their way to Idaho, and, if possible, to inflict such punishment on the hostile bands they might meet as would make them willing to sue for peace.

“The expedition was commanded by General Alfred Sully, of the United States Army, a brave, skillful officer, and veteran Indian fighter, having spent the best part of twenty-five years' service on the frontier. He was a Captain of Infantry under General Harney, in his memorable campaign of 1857, and was present at the battle of Ash Hollow, where Harney surprised a large band of Indians with their families, who were slaughtered indiscriminately, inflicting such punishment as made the name of General Harney a terror to the Indians, and, at the same time, brought upon his head the execration of thin-skinned philanthropists, who thought savages—the “noble red men” of their imagination—should be conquered only by a sugar-plum and rose-water policy.

“For many interesting particulars of this expedition, and its bearing upon some of the incidents of my captivity and final ransom, I am indebted to the correspondence of one who was a member of the expedition, written to his family during its progress.

“The first day’s march carries the command to the Cheyenne river, where the topographical engineer of General Sully’s expedition, was killed. His fate was sad, indeed. An officer in the regular army, he served with distinction in the South, during the rebellion, participating in over fifty battles, and passing through all without a wound. He was captured by the rebels, paroled, and sent to join General Sully’s expedition, to make a topographical survey of the country.

“Having faced danger on many a well-contested field, he held the Indian in utter contempt, and roamed the country along the line of march with reckless indifference to danger.

“A short time before reaching the place where the command intended to go into camp, Captain Fielder started in advance, accompanied by only two men.

“Reaching the river, they dismounted and were about to fasten their horses to graze near a grove of wild plum trees, when two Indians stepped out, and one of them shot Captain Fielder, the ball from his rifle passing through both arms and the breast. The advance guard arriving soon after, word was sent back to General Sully, who ordered the company of Dakota cavalry to deploy and occupy so much of the country as to make it impossible for the Indians to escape. This was done, and, closing toward a center, the two savages were found in a “buffalo wallow,” a depression in the ground made by the buffalo, and forming a very good rifle-pit. Being addressed in their own language they refused to surrender and were shot. General Sully afterwards had their heads cut off, and when the command left camp next morning they graced two pointed stakes on the bank of the river, placed there as a warning to all straggling Indians.

“The feeling manifested by General Sully at the occasion of Captain Fielder’s death was intense. A brave officer, a scientific scholar, and a gentleman of rare social qualities, he had won upon the kindlier feelings of his associates in rank, and was respected by all. His untimely death was sincerely mourned by the whole command.

“Death by the hand of the enemy had seldom touched the little army—so seldom that when a companion failed to answer at roll call his absence was felt.

“The only other officer killed during the three years of General Sully’s operations against the Indians was Lieutenant Thomas K. Leavitt, of company B, Sixth Iowa cavalry, at the battle of Whitestone Hill, in September, 1863. After the Indians had been utterly routed, Lieutenant Leavitt went through their deserted camp on foot, his horse having been shot under him, and, approaching a buffalo robe, raised it with the point of his sabre, revealing an Indian and squaw, who sprang upon him so suddenly that he had no opportunity to defend himself, and with their knives stabbed him in several places. Darkness came on, and, separated from his companions, stripped of his clothing, and wounded mortally, he was all night exposed to bitter cold. Despite his wounds he crawled over the ground fully half a mile, was found next morning and conveyed to camp, where he died soon after.
"A young man of superior education, of a wealthy family, he relinquished a lucrative position in a bank and enlisted as a private, but was soon promoted to a lieutenant, and at the time of his death was acting adjutant-general on General Sully's staff.

"The emigrant train to be escorted by General Sully's command came across from Minnesota and were met at a point on the Missouri river about 400 miles above Sioux City.

"Here the whole party crossed to the west bank of the Missouri, where they went into camp, and remained long enough to recruit their jaded animals, preparatory to a long and fatiguing march into an almost unknown wilderness, jealously guarded by a savage foe.

"During this halt Ft. Rice, now one of the most important fortifications on the Missouri river, was built, and when the march was resumed a considerable portion of the command was left to garrison it. Here, also, General Sully learned that all the tribes of the Sioux nation had congregated in the vicinity of Knife River, determined to resist his passage through their country, and confident that superior numbers would enable them to annihilate the whole expedition, and gain a rich booty in horses and goods, to say nothing of the hundreds of scalp-locks they hoped to win as trophies of their prowess.

"About the middle of July the expedition took up its march westward, and after a few days reached Heart river.

"Meantime information had been received from Indians employed as scouts, that the enemy had gathered in strong force at a place called Ta-hu-ke-ku-ta, or Deer Woods, about eighty miles to the northwest, and that distance out of the proposed route of the expedition. Accordingly General Sully ordered the emigrant train and heavy army wagons corralled, rifles pitted were dug, and as the emigrants were generally well armed, it was deemed necessary to leave only a small force of cavalry to protect them in case of attack.

"Putting the balance of the command in light marching order, leaving behind tents and all other articles not absolutely necessary, the little band of determined men started for the camp of the enemy. Although the Indians were aware of the contemplated attack, such was the celerity of General Sully's movements, he came within sight of their camp at least twenty-four hours sooner than they thought it possible. The distance could be accomplished, taking the Indians by surprise, they not having time, as is their custom, to remove their property and women and children beyond the reach of danger.

"I was present with this body of Indians when the white soldiers—my countrymen—came in sight. Alternating between hope and fear, my feelings can be better imagined than described. I hoped for deliverance, yet feared disaster and death to that little army.

"At 1 o'clock in the afternoon the fight commenced, and raged with great fury, until night closed on the scene of conflict, leaving the whites masters of the field and in possession of the Indian camp.

"Early in the day, I, with the women and children and old men, and such property as could be gathered in our hasty flight, was sent off so as to be out of the way, not to impede the flight of the Indians in case of defeat.

"This was a terrible blow to the Indians. About eight thousand ... were gathered there, and their village with all their property (except their horses and dogs) including all the stores of provisions they had gathered for the winter, were lost. Without shelter, without food, driven into a barren, desolate region, devoid of game, death from starvation seemed inevitable.

"A hurried morning pursuit was commenced, but after a march of about five miles, was abandoned, as the country beyond was impassable for cavalry. Returning to the scene of the previous day's battle General Sully spent several hours in destroying the property abandoned by the Indians in their flight. Lodge poles were piled together and fired and into the flames were cast furs, robes, tents, provisions and everything that fell into the hands of the soldiers.

"That night the command camped about six miles from, but within sight of, the battleground, going into camp early in the afternoon. Picket guards were stationed on the hills, three at a post, and soon after the camp was thrown into commotion by the appearance of one of the guards dashing towards camp, at the full speed of his horse, with Indians in pursuit. His companions, worn out with the arduous service of the preceding three days, had laid down to sleep, and before the one remaining on guard could give the alarm a body of Indians was close upon them. Discharging his rifle to arouse his companions, he had barely time to reach his horse and escape. The bodies of the other two were found next day, horribly mutilated, and that night, being within sight of the battle-ground, the firelight revealed the forms of a large body of savages, dancing around the burning ruins of their own homes.

"Returning to Heart river General Sully took the emigrants again in charge and resumed the march toward Idaho.
“Traversing a country diversified and beautiful as the sun ever shone upon, presenting at every turn pictures of natural beauty, such as no artist ever represented on canvas, the expedition at last struck the “Mauvais Terra,” or Bad Lands, a region of the most wildest, desolate country conceivable. No pen of writer, or brush of painter, can give the faintest idea of its awful desolation.

“As the command halted upon the confines of this desert, the mind naturally reverted to political descriptions of the infernal regions in other days. The Bad Lands of Dakota extend from the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers toward the southwest, a distance of about 100 miles, and are from twenty-five to forty miles in width. The foot of white man had never trod those wilds before.

“The first day’s march into this desert carried the expedition ten miles only, consuming ten hours of time, and leaving the forces four miles from, and within sight of the camp they left in the morning.

“On the 7th of August the advance guard was attacked in the afternoon by a large party of Indians. After a toilsome march of many days a valley in the wilderness was reached, presenting an opportunity for rest, and here the first vegetation was found for the famished horses. In this valley the troops camped, the advance guard was brought back, having suffered some from the attack of the ambushed savages.

“Next day commenced one of the most memorable battles ever fought with Indians in the whole experience of the government. The whole Dakota nation, including the supposed friendly tribes, was concentrated there, and numbered fully eight thousand warriors. Opposed to them was a mere handful, comparatively, of white men. But they were led by one skilled in war, and who knew the foe he had to contend against.

“For three days the fight raged, and finally, on the night of the third day, and after a toilsome march of ten days through the “Bad Lands,” the command reached a broad, open country, where the savages made a final, desperate stand to drive the invaders back. They were the wild Dakotas, who had seen but little of the white settlements, and had a contemptuous opinion. But a new lesson was to be learned, and it cost them dearly. They had seen guns large and small, but the little mountain howitzers, from which shells were sent among them, they could not comprehend, and asked the Indian scouts accompanying the expedition, if all the wagons “shot twice.” Terrible punishment was inflicted upon the Indians in that three-days’ fight. At

the close of the second day, the brigade waggonmaster reported that he had discovered the tracks of a white woman, and believed the Indians held one captive. This was the first intimation General Sully received of my captivity, and, not having received from the western posts any report of captures by Indians, thought it must be some half-breed woman who wore the foot gear of civilization.

“But the sympathetic nature of a brave, noble General, was stirred to its depths, when his Indian scouts brought in the report that they had talked with the hostile foe, and they had tauntingly said, “we have a white woman captive.”

“The Indians were badly whipped, and having accomplished that portion of his mission, General Sully went on with his emigrant train to the Yellowstone river, and beyond that there were long, toilsome marches, but no battles.

“Early in October the command arrived opposite Ft. Rice, and went into camp. The tents of the little band of white warriors were hardly pitched before word came that Captain Fisk, with a large party of emigrants and a small escort of soldiers, had been attacked by a large party of Indians; had corralled their train, and could not move, but were on the defensive and were confident of holding out until relief should come. They were distant about one hundred and eighty miles, and the sympathetic nature of the veteran, while it acrimoniized the action of his junior officer, thrilled with an earnest desire to save the women and children of that apparently doomed train. A detail of men from each company of the command was made, and Captain Fisk and his train of emigrants rescued from their perilous situation. Here was received proof positive of the fact that a white woman was held captive by the Indians; and while every man would have been willing to risk his life for her rescue, and many applications were made to the General for permission to go out on expeditions for that purpose, he had already adopted such measures as must secure her release.

“Friendly Indians who had accompanied the expedition, were sent out to visit the various tribes, to assure them of an earnest desire on the part of the whites for peace, and invite them to meet at Ft. Sully, to make a treaty. The result was, that about the latter part of October, the vicinity of the fort presented an unusual appearance of animation. Several bands had come in, in anticipation of the big feast that had hitherto preceded all talks. Their disappointment may be imagined, when they were told that no talk would be had, nor any feast given, until they brought in the white
woman. Their protestations that she was not their captive, and that they could not get her from the band who held her, were of no avail, and, at length, Tall Soldier, who was thought to be friendly, called for volunteers to go with him for the white woman. About one hundred Indians responded, and the assurance was given that they would get the captive, if even at the expense of a fight with those they went to take her from.

"Weeks of painful suspense passed, and then came a letter from the captive woman, brought by an Indian, in which, warning was given of an intent to capture the fort and murder the garrison. The warning was acted upon; and when, on the 12th day of December, a large body of Indians appeared on the bluffs overlooking the fort, that little band of not more than two hundred men, was prepared to give them a warm reception, should they come with hostile intent. Not only were arms in prime condition, but every heart beat with high resolve.

"When the cavalcade drew up in front of the fort, and the captive woman, with about twelve of her immediate savage attendants had passed through the gates, they were ordered closed, shutting out the main body, and leaving them exposed to a raking fire from the guns in the bastions. But no attack was made. The Indians seemed to know that the little band of soldiers were prepared, and went quietly into camp on an island opposite the fort. Next day a council was held, and the terms of the captive's surrender agreed upon. Three unserviceable horses, to replace ponies left with the Ogalallas by the Blackfeet, as a pledge for the captive's return; also, fifty dollars' worth of presents, some provisions and a promise of a treaty when General Sully should return. The Indians remained about the fort for nearly two weeks, and during that time efforts were made to induce the captive woman to leave the fort and visit them at their lodges, doubtless with the design of recapturing her.

"After making the Captain some presents, they bade adieu. Two months later they returned, apparently very much disappointed when they found the captive had left for her home. They were soon again upon the war path."

CHAPTER X.
THE BLACKFOOT GUIDE'S RESENTMENT—ANOTHER EXPEDITION

There were quite a number of Indians that claimed to be friendly, who were permitted to stay at the fort that winter. Among them was the young Blackfoot guide, who had been so badly wounded in the Bad Lands. He had nearly recovered by this time, physically, but mentally, he still retained a bitter feeling toward those he held responsible for his injury. He frequently came to me, and, placing his hand over the wound, would say, "Seachy"—it hurts me. Toward spring when the weather became more favorable, the Indians at the fort packed up and started out on a hunting expedition, in an east or northeast direction. Sometime after, one of the Indians returned to the fort and reported they had captured three hostile Indians, and had them in their camp. Major House sent out some twenty soldiers, accompanied by the Blackfoot guide, to get the three Indians and bring them into the fort. The detail returned in a few days with the Indians, who were put in the guard house. The boys said they had to watch both the hostiles and the Blackfoot guide, who seemed determined to kill the three Indians, if he got an opportunity. The camp of the friendly Indians, where the soldiers had secured the three hostiles, was some seventy miles east or northeast of Ft. Sully, on Turtle Creek, in a small natural amphitheatrical valley, containing a beautiful grove of timber, which had been protected from prairie fires by the surrounding high bluffs. From the general description then obtained from the boys, and recent observations, I have concluded the Indian camp was the exact place where St. Lawrence now stands. Later events, of course, have occasioned me considerable regret, that I did not accompany the detail of soldiers who must have viewed this locality in all its weird vastness. But at that time I had little expectation of sometime making this my home.

As winter passed away another expedition to the north was talked of for the summer. Nothing of particular interest transpired, however, until about the first of June, when the monotony was broken by the arrival of four rebel companies. These rebel soldiers had been held as prisoners of war on the Island of Davenport and had enlisted in the U. S. Service rather than be in prison, with the understanding that they were to be sent out on the frontier.
To make room for these soldiers our company was sent out to camp on the bank of the river two miles above Ft. Sully. In the fore part of June the expedition was made up and started north for Devil's Lake—our company being left behind for the purpose of carrying dispatches to and from the expedition.

A regular stage line connects Ft. Randall with civilization, but from there all mail matter, dispatches, etc., were taken up to Fts. Thompson, Sully and on up the river by soldiers.

The expedition had been gone some little time before dispatches began arriving for us to take on up to the command. When a dispatch came to Ft. Randall a detail of two or three soldiers took it to Ft. Thompson, then others brought it to Sully, where they were relieved and five of our boys sent on with the dispatch to the expedition.

As soon as a dispatch left our camp five more soldiers were at once detailed to be in readiness for the next one, which might arrive in twenty-four hours, or perhaps not for a week or two.

CHAPTER XI.
CAPTURED BY THE INDIANS—FRIENDS IN NEED

The eleventh dispatch had gone and another detail made, consisting of Privates Gilson, Stickley, Rice and myself, under command of Sergeant Mat Witted. We had no duty to perform but to keep ourselves in readiness for the twelfth dispatch, which was brought in on the evening of August 24th, by a Ft. Thompson detail, after we had waited ten days.

We were ordered to pick out five of the best horses and start on with the dispatch. Just as the sun was going down we started north with the best wishes of the boys that we would go through and back all safe as the rest had done so far. Our orders were to go through to Ft. Rice—two hundred miles—in two days and a half.

Although there was no moon, the night was clear and objects could be seen some little distance. About midnight while Rice and myself were riding in the lead I discovered some objects ahead of us, but could not tell what they were. I directed my companion's attention to the objects and he yelled, "Who comes there?" We at once received answer, "Soldiers from Ft. Rice—who comes there?" After exchanging a few words we advanced and found it to be seven boys of Co. G, 6th Iowa cavalry, on their way to Ft. Sully with a dispatch. We picked up horses, rested and talked with the boys about an hour. They had seen no Indians, but judging from numerous fresh "signs" thought the country was full of them.

We struck out again and kept moving all night and till late in the morning, when we came to a little stream of water, about forty miles out from Ft. Sully, where we fixed for getting our breakfast. Each carried hardtack and coffee and an old tin can to make coffee in. One of the boys also had a canvas hat tied to his saddle.

A lot of buffalo chips were gathered up and a fire started, but on cutting the ham found it to be spoiled, so we had to throw it away, and breakfast on hardtack and coffee.

I had not been in the saddle before for ten months to ride ten miles all told, and I was forced to confess I was about played out after riding all night, and feared that I could never get through on hardtack and coffee. But it was go through or die in the attempt, as there was no stopping place between the forts. The boys encouraged me with the promise of an antelope and we resumed our journey after an hour and a half rest.

We had not gone far when, sure enough, Rice succeeded in shooting an antelope, which we quartered without skinning, and hung it onto our saddles, anticipating a rare dinner when we reached the Little Cheyenne river.

A little before noon we came in sight of the Cheyenne, and about the same time discovered a large Indian camp to the left of our trail (we followed the trail made by the expedition when it went up in the spring). The camp appeared to contain about four or five hundred Indians, and of course brought us to a halt, at once dispelling all thoughts of our
dinner. Some of the boys wanted to put back for Ft. Sully and make a run for our lives, but after talking the matter over, we saw that would not do, as the Indians had undoubtedly seen us as soon, or perhaps before we had them. So we concluded we might as well go down into their camp and be killed, as to be chased all over the prairie, only to meet death in the end.

With thoughts coursing through our brains that would be hard to put into words, we started on over the rough ground bordering the river, deciding that if the Indians did not come out after us, we would keep to the trail, and pass their camp to the left of us.

Thus we displayed the inordinate tenacity with which humanity clings to life and hope, even in the face of almost certain death. Our anticipations of becoming objects of the fiendish delight of those savage brutes by a horrible torture at the stake, was mingled with a review of our past, in such a manner as to cause the drama of an entire life to be enacted in the space of a very few minutes—intensified in proportion to its condensation.

Our slender hope was soon dispelled entirely, as our better judgment had told us must be the result. We had gone but a little distance toward the creek, when in passing by a steep bluff, we were all at once surrounded by about fifteen red devils, who had probably been lying in wait there for us for some time. We involuntarily halted, knowing that resistance would only the more quickly cause our death.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION

We assumed as indifferent an air as possible under the circumstances, and spoke to the Indians in their own language, with which we were all familiar at that time, telling them we were friends. They answered the same and shook hands with us. But our fears were not altogether relieved, as we believed this was only another ruse. However, as they did not take our arms or offer us any injury, we complied with the request to go to their camp, while at the same time the proceeding struck us as out of the ordinary.

As we rode into their camp, almost the first Indians we met, were some of those who had been with us at the fort the winter before, and the mystery of our deliverance was solved. They appeared over-joyed at seeing us, rushed up and shook hands, and generally manifested more pleasure than is usual with the Indian. The joy was not altogether one-sided, either, as you may imagine. Our situation made us appreciative of possible assistance from any quarter.

I then had, and yet have, that confidence in Indians, that after becoming acquainted and having once treated them fairly, you forever after have in them the warmest of friends, and here we had ample proof of this.

No sooner had we dismounted, than two squaws came up with a kettle of water and offered us a drink, which we were all in need of, as the day was very hot. Our horses were unsaddled and taken outside the camp to graze. The two squaws then inquired if we had ate dinner. By this time our appetites were returning, and we informed them we were hungry as bears.

They jerked the hide off a quarter of our antelope, placed it with some buffalo meat of their own and boiled it up nicely for us. We also gave them some coffee to prepare. While watching the squaws get dinner, and after exchanging a few words, I recognized them.

I neglected to state that in the spring the Indians came and went along the frontier on peaceful errands, trading their furs, robes, etc. During one of these trading expeditions I had given these two squaws a couple pans of beans at the fort, which had been left over at dinner one day, and they could not do too much to repay my small kindness to them. We learned those Indians were part of the ones we had fought in the Bad Lands the summer before, but the most of them seemed friendly enough. Occasionally an ugly looking brute would pass us and pay no attention to our "how."
One buck who came along, stopped and began talking about the fight. He showed us where one of our bullets went through his arm, but he did not seem to hold any resentment toward us for it. There were several there who would just as leave carried our scalps to their belts as not, although they made no effort to molest us.

The two friendly squaws prepared an impromptu shade by erecting a buffalo robe on top of four stakes and served us a dinner which we greatly relished, even though under such peculiar circumstances.

After dinner and a good rest the friendly Indians, perhaps surmising our thoughts, told us we were at liberty to go when we pleased, at the same time inviting us to stay in their camp all night. This we could not do as long as it was possible to move.

They informed us there was another Indian camp on the next stream, twenty miles further up, who were ugly, and would probably stop us. But if they did to immediately state to them that we were carrying a dispatch to Gen. Sully, and must not be delayed.

We then left the friendly camp where we had been so fortunately spared, with misgivings as to our ultimate success in getting through. We passed the next stream where we expected to encounter more Indians, just after dark; but our lucky star was still in the ascendant, as no reds appeared.

We pushed on to Ft. Rice without further trouble, reaching there in two and one-half days. The command was camped on the east side of the river, opposite the Ft., having just arrived on the way back from the expedition. Our detail was taken across to the fort on the ferry boat, with orders to remain two weeks and rest up. I was so near used up that I could scarcely walk a few rods to the stable.

While the expedition had been north of Ft. Rice, the dispatches had been carried beyond that point by Indian scouts, as the ordinary soldier messenger would have stood little show in getting through the hordes of Indians who infested the country.

In a week five Ft. Sully boys came up with a dispatch, and in another week ten more arrived. Five had started as usual, with the last dispatch, but when about forty miles out, met eleven Indians and were compelled to return.

Capt. Bronson then placed the dispatch in the hands of Sergeant Jas. Carrott, as good a man as we had in our company, gave him nine picked men and told him to fight his way through. They selected ten good horses and loaded themselves with ammunition.

At about the same point, the eleven Indians appeared in all their paint and aboriginal glory. However, this bluff did not win as before, and the Indians were routed. The messengers had no time to follow them, so pushed on to the fort.

The next morning after the arrival of the last dispatch twenty-two Co. E boys started back, two of the last detail having to return with the expedition, as they were worn out. But a Captain of a Minnesota regiment and our regimental sutler took their places, on our return trip.

While we were in what I suppose is now Campbell county, we saw a couple of men on foot approaching us from the south.

When within a half mile of us, one of them turned to the west and passed out of sight over a ridge, the other coming straight for us. We discovered it was one of the young Indians who had been in the guard house at Ft. Sully. The man who had passed over the ridge was another, and the third had got out one dark night in June, and had succeeded in making his escape.

The young brave said himself and companion had escaped from the guard house a few nights before and were returning to their people. We boys wanted to let them go but the Captain said we must take him with us. We fooled along with him for a few miles when he laid down and said he could walk no further. One of the boys gave the Indian his horse to ride. Private Moon was the only one who remained with the Indian, the rest moving on. The wily red fooled around as long as he could, in getting a whip and mounting, until we had got quite a distance ahead. Suddenly
he turned tail and laid whip to the horse, flying across the prairie with a fair prospect of escape. However his hopes were nipped in the bud, for Moan drew a bead on him and shot him dead on the fly.

As we had nothing but case knives to dig a grave with his carcass was left on the prairie, as food for the coyotes.

We reached Sully at daylight, two days and three nights out. Eight boys and as many horses had made the four hundred miles in less than six days. But the horses were so worn out that one of them died about two miles above the fort and the men were about as badly used up.

Ft. Sully at that time was about twenty-five miles further down the river than it is now. The Indian camp, where we had been taken prisoners was almost the exact spot where Captain Fiehner, our topographical engineer, had been killed the summer before. The 6th Iowa cavalry returned to Davenport, Iowa, where we were discharged and paid off on Nov. 1st, 1865, and it is safe to say the majority of us had in that expedition all the experience we cared for in fighting Indians.