

WHERE CUSTER FELL.

The Scene of the Terribly Disastrous Fight of the Little Big Horn.

Story of the Fight as Told by Chief Gall and His Indians—Sitting Bull Not There.

I have just returned from the field where Custer fell, writes J. M. T., in the *New York World*. There can hardly be a sadder, lonelier, or more dreary-looking spot in all the United States. A worn and weather-beaten monument crowns the highest point of the battle-field. The shaft is rapidly disintegrating under the combined influences of burning sun, driving rains, winter storms and withering winds. This part of the valley of the Little Horn River, which was the scene of the disaster of June 25, 1876, is fourteen miles above Fort Custer, on the right and left banks of the clear Lesser Horn, as it winds down through the valley from the Big Horn range. It was a hap-hazard selection for a battle-ground, and slightly more favorable to the soldiers than to the red men, otherwise, instead of Maj. Reno and his handful of men escaping after a terribly close conflict, in which defeat meant annihilation and nothing else, not one man would have been left alive to tell the terrible story of that dreadful June day. I have had exceptional opportunities for arriving at the truth concerning the massacre, and I am convinced that neither the reds nor the whites knew what they were about when the battle was begun. General Custer knew that a large and powerful Indian village was over in the Little Horn Valley somewhere, and he determined, with rare pluck though extreme rashness, to attack that village in his usual pell-mell style, depending upon dash and discipline to carry him through in spite of the force of numbers opposed to him. Custer made his first mistake when he divided his forces. With less than 240 men he attempted to do what would have required four or five regiments united and in mass. Even with all his force together and making a swoop down upon the great village the chances were a hundred to one that he would be whipped anyhow, and badly, too.

The Indian camp was on the left side of the Little Horn River, extending up and down the stream, in a lovely, fertile bottom, covered with rich herbage and luxuriant grasses, and occupying an area fully three miles in length by half a mile in width. When one considers the size of this camp, close packed with lodges, tepees and wickiups, he can form some idea of the population it contained. It must be remembered, too, that every red-skin in a tribe—bucks, squaws, boys, maidens, and all except the papooses—does his or her level best at fighting when attacked by the enemy. So it was with Sitting Bull's village in the Little Horn Valley. When the brave cavalry leader swept down on the Indians with his usual dash and elan, he was not checked by bullets or arrows; no want of courage caused him to pause or falter, but simply mass of numbers got in his way, beat him back step by step, notwithstanding the leaden hail poured into the savages from the cavalry carbines, and finally overpowered and killed every white man after the ammunition of the latter had been exhausted. Custer's men fought all they could, fired shot after shot with telling effect, but all to no purpose.

Indians who were in that fight have told me some strange stories. Sitting Bull was not in the fight at all. Gall was the big chief and generalissimo of the day, and while he was leading the bucks and directing the engagement old Tonka-te-Tonka (Sitting Bull) was back in his medicine lodge making medicine. As the Indians won and Sitting Bull made the medicine he, of course, got all the credit for the victory. One of the Indians says that the shells got stuck in the white men's carbines, and when those weapons were thus rendered useless as firearms the poor fellows, pressed to the wall and overpowered ten to one, clubbed their guns and fought desperately, with death staring them in the face, until the last doomed man fell in his tracks. When the ammunition was exhausted the Indians walked up, knocked them down with clubs and butchered them with hatchets. Gall told me that the main object of his young men was to stampede the horses, which carried the saddle-pockets in which each soldier had stored his ammunition. The troopers had, perhaps, fifty rounds apiece on their persons, but the main supply was in the saddle-bags, being entirely too heavy to carry on the body. In all, the soldiers were supplied with about 200 rounds per man for the fight. When the cavalrymen were dismounted to fight on foot one soldier was detailed to hold every eight horses. Gall says he quickly saw the advantage to be gained could the horses laden with ammunition be stampeded, so he devised a plan to that end. He sent a score or two of young bucks up a ravine to the rear, and these embryo warriors, unmindful of flying lead and the danger of the job, suddenly rose up with yells and shouts just in front of the horses, swung their blankets wildly in the air, and every steed in the outfit broke loose from the holders and scampered down the ravine toward the Little Horn, where they were gathered in by the squaws and old men, on the wait for just what had occurred. Many of the Indians were armed with cavalry carbines and United States muskets, so this very ammunition was turned against Custer and his men, and no doubt had very

much to do with deciding the fortunes of the day.

From all that can be gathered by questioning Curley, the Crow scout, and the only living survivor of those who marched with Custer, and also from the narrative of Gall, who has since visited the spot and told the story of the day on the ground where he made it, it appears that there were between 6,000 and 7,000 Indians in the village at the time Custer descended upon it, and that the attack was not so much of a surprise to the red men as has generally been supposed. Gall says that he saw the soldiers early in the morning crossing the divide, and noted carefully that the white men divided themselves into three divisions. When Custer's command swept off to the right they lost sight of the force temporarily, keeping their eyes on Reno, who came directly down to the river, seeking a ford to cross over and fight. Reno did cross over, paused a minute to rest and tighten girths, remounted all his men, and rode up alongside some ash timber a mile and a half, when he suddenly came in sight of the village. When the soldiers saw all these Indians the bugles sounded "charge," the soldiers came rushing like the wind upon their women and children and killed many of them, but the braves rallied in great force, turned on the troopers, and chased them back to the river, into which everybody tumbled and scrambled up to the top of a steep hill opposite. When they had Reno on the hill, the bucks in great numbers tried to drive them off; but, not succeeding, the women, old men and some bucks were left to guard them while the others recrossed the stream and hurried down to the other end of the village, where the cry had been raised that more soldiers were coming. Of course this was Custer's outfit, and we have no tale of that terrible affair except what the Indians tell us.

From all that can be gathered, it seems that Custer must have come down as far as the river with his troopers, although Gall says he never got within half a mile of the stream; but the footprints of the cavalry horses led in broad and well-defined trail clear down to the river, notwithstanding Gall's statement to the contrary. Gall went with me, placed his foot on a certain spot, fully one-half a mile from the river, and said flatly and positively that the white soldiers got no nearer the river than that point, and were then first met by his braves and fought back step by step to the ridge where all finally perished. When asked how these footprints came on the bank, the chief explained that they were made by white soldiers on horseback who had attempted to escape from the field by going down a ravine and then crossing the river. These were met by some bucks on the other side, who turned them up stream again, and, after racing parallel to the village for nearly three-quarters of a mile, were finally crowded into the water, and they recrossed the river once more. They came out just where all the cavalry tracks appeared, and, after running half a mile farther, were finally caught and knocked on the head with stone clubs. The chief, who was undoubtedly the leader of the red forces on that day, further says that only forty-three Indians were killed in all, although a great many afterward "fell over and died." This phrase, I think, refers to the wounded who died of their injuries. This seems a very small percentage of casualties among the red men, when it is considered that 240 white bodies were found on the field, although more than 240 men yielded up their lives on Custer's field, not counting the killed and wounded of Reno's and Benteen's commands. History has been corrected somewhat since that dark and bloody page was recorded, and not the least important is that the Indians outnumbered fully five to one all the white men in the country, including the different commands of Custer, Benteen, Reno, as well as Gen. Terry's and Gen. Gibbon's commands, then at the fork of the two Horn Rivers, on the way up to effect a junction with the Seventh Cavalry. Had they only known it the savages could have swept everything before them, as they were in superior force, armed with magazine rifles and fighting for their lives, although as a rule our North American aborigines have a wholesome dread of artillery, of which Gen. Terry had one or two pieces along.

Another correction should be made in the case of Gen. Custer himself. He did not wear long, golden hair, as has been generally supposed, but had it clipped short before he left his post to take the field. He was also scalped, like all the rest, but he being slightly bald on the crown of his head, a scalpel cut was cut from further back. The brave man died game, so every redskin admits, and set an example for courage and bravery which was followed by every soldier in his battalion. Many of the white men were sadly mutilated.

Expectations of Human Life.

The following table of the expectation of life at 25 years of age coincides with singular accuracy with the whole experience of one of the oldest and most reliable life assurance establishments in London, England:

Age	Expect. in Age	Expect. in Age	Expect. in Age
23.....	37.86	42.....	29.31
24.....	37.14	43.....	27.71
25.....	36.41	44.....	25.09
26.....	35.67	45.....	24.46
27.....	35.06	46.....	23.83
28.....	34.24	47.....	23.17
29.....	33.43	48.....	22.50
30.....	32.63	49.....	21.86
31.....	32.06	50.....	21.15
32.....	31.50	51.....	20.43
33.....	31.00	52.....	19.68
34.....	30.32	53.....	18.97
35.....	29.64	54.....	18.27
36.....	28.98	55.....	17.58
37.....	28.38	56.....	16.89
38.....	27.75	57.....	16.21
39.....	27.15	58.....	15.53
40.....	26.57	59.....	14.83
41.....	26.07	60.....	14.13

THOSE BATTLE FLAGS.

A Calm View of the Situation— "Let Us Have Peace."

[From the New York Herald, Ind.]

When making up our judgment on an important matter it is better to be cool than excited. The mere partisan seizes every opportunity to create political capital and will use this battle flag incident as a stepping stone to the attainment of his personal ambition. But the thoughtful American citizen, whose motto is "With malice toward none, with charity for all," and who wishes to form an opinion from cold facts rather than hot prejudices, will look twice before he leaps to a conclusion.

Let us take a quiet view of the situation. A large number of flags, riddled with bullets—proof of an unparalleled struggle in which the South stoutly defended them, but were compelled to give way to the all-conquering onset of the Boys in Blue—were placed for safe-keeping in charge of the United States War Department. They were the sacred relics of a fratricidal contest which left behind it a million graves. They had and always will have a value not to be measured by bullion, but by the unquenched and unquenchable spirit of patriotism which summoned our fathers and sons, and even our sisters and wives, to the battle-field to do and die in defense of the best Government the sun ever shone upon.

These tattered battle flags, some of them borne by Northern troops, many of them wrested from Southern regiments, were for a time on exhibition in the Winder Building in Washington. For nearly a score of years they were one of the chief attractions in the capital of the country. Old soldiers sought them out, and with flashing eyes recounted the scenes which in this hurrying age are rapidly fading from the nation's memory, to be preserved, however, on the glowing page of history. Strangers from abroad gazed upon them as proof of the ability of a people without a standing army to create an army of volunteers by a magic unknown in other countries to protect their institutions at all hazards.

At last, however, these battle flags were packed away in boxes and stored in cellar or attic, where access to them was impossible. The time had arrived when the spirit of Charles Sumner's resolution in the Senate, that "it is inexpedient that the names of victories obtained over our fellow-citizens should be placed on the regimental colors of the United States," began to dissipate the fierce animosities engendered by war. Sumner read the problem aright, but he was twenty years ahead of his time. He saw, and we all see it now, that a magnanimous victor can afford to forget; that if North and South are to stand shoulder to shoulder in coming generations the fiery and terrible memories of the past must be obliterated by the loyalty that was born when the family squirrel came to an end.

That same policy was adopted by Mr. Cleveland. But he, too, is possibly ahead of his time. When the national drill occurred in Washington and he saw the Northern and Southern soldiers drawn up in line together the scene itself suggested the action which he afterward took. He saw the representatives of the whole country from the lakes to the Gulf march in review. Sectional differences had disappeared forever. Mason and Dixon's line no longer existed. Slavery had been extinguished. North and South stood for "liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever."

Perhaps he recalled the fact that the Ninth Connecticut Volunteers had given back to the Third Mississippi the flag they captured from that regiment, and also the fact that the Confederates had returned their flag to the One Hundred and Sixty-Fourth New York Volunteers, and other incidents of a like nature, which show that the American people can fight like heroes, and forgive like brothers. With the consciousness that the spirit of unity is to be fostered, that sectional ties are to be strengthened, he leaped, too hastily, perhaps, to the conclusion that the riddled flag might be returned to the Northern regiments which had deposited them in the War Department, and to the Southern regiments from which they were captured.

It was a plan worthy of the President of a united people. It had its origin in that prescience which takes in the future and would prepare to fitly welcome it. It reminds us of the words of Grant on his death-bed: "I feel that we are on the eve of a new era, when there is to be great harmony between the Federal and the Confederate. I cannot stay to be a living witness to the correctness of this prophecy, but I feel it within me that it is to be so."

* * * Let us have peace.

But there are reasons why it cannot be. At once successfully carried out. Mr. Cleveland recognizes the statute which throws the master, and rightly, into the hands of Congress. The people, it is said, are not ready for it. As a whole we believe that they are quite ready. At any rate it will be done ten or twenty years hence, when our children take our places. Then the last remnant of sectional feeling will have passed away, and we shall be really one people, the noblest, strongest nation on the globe. Mr. Cleveland, therefore, throws the responsibility upon the shoulders of Congress and the country.

General Fairchild, a churlish aspirant for the Presidency himself, invoked the palsy on the hand, brain and tongue of the man who hoped to make the country a solid unit. His capital in trade would disappear were sectional feeling to die. His hope is to lift the tide of hatred that he may ride on its crest to power. His language is that of a charlatan, and his curses can do no better than come home to roost.

He does not represent the veterans, only his personal scheme for preferment.

Let that pass. The soldiers have been the first to forget a wrong, and if they place the country which they saved on a better vantage ground by giving up the trophies of war to those from whom they were captured, history will not be unmindful of the fact that the Northern volunteer knew how to face the foe, and, after the battle, to bury everything except his love of his native land in the grave which covers "the last cause."

Unlike His Party.

It is pleasant to remember, in these days of threatened secession and disloyal attacks on the Government, that the greatest of all the Union Generals, Grant, counseled peace, conciliation, and fraternity, and asked that rebel Generals unite with Union Generals in bearing his body to the tomb. —Keokuk Constitution.

It is estimated that there are in the British army and navy over 13,000 declared Methodists.

AMONG THE BALL TEAMS.

Mike Kelly's Return to Chicago Signalized by Great Crowds and Great Enthusiasm.

Anson's Lads Sweeping Everything Before Them in the League Pennant Race.

[CHICAGO CORRESPONDENCE.]

If ever a season of base-ball promised great things before the pennant races ended, that of 1887 is as bright with promises of a great finish as any lover of the national game, be he ever so enthusiastic, could wish for.

The wholly unexpected and remarkable spurt made by the White Stockings toward the close of their last Eastern trip still continues, and the prospects for its eventually placing them at the head of the string, in the race for the flag, seem better with each day. Boston came Friday with the famous Mike Kelly at its head, and not before in the history of the game in this city has the arrival of a ball team created such great enthusiasm as that which marked the return of Chicago's old favorite.

KELLY'S RECEPTION.

Kelly has hundreds, yes, thousands of admirers in Chicago, and upon the day of his arrival (Friday) these admirers spread themselves out at the park—spread themselves in flowers and spread themselves in yells. But before going to the park they performed the reception act at the Leland Hotel, where Kelly and his confreres are staying. At 2 p.m. the street opposite the north entrance to the Leland was jammed with people. Not less than 5,000 were in the crowd. In the middle there was a big brass band playing "See the Conquering Hero" and other things of an adulatory character.

In the hotel rotunda Kelly was holding a levee. A circle of people twenty deep craned their necks and jostled each other to see the hero, and those in his immediate vicinity shook hands with him until his patience gave out. The Imperial Quartet crowded in and surrounded him and sang at him, Mike meantime looking as if he wished they would go to Jericho and leave him alone. Then the White Stockings arrived, and a row of carriages and horses driven by coachmen in drab liveries drove up, and the White Stockings got into the three first carriages, and Anson and Kelly into the next, and the Bostons into the next three carriages; next followed a lot of lordly sporting reporters in other carriages. Then the band struck up "Biddy McGee," and the procession started as grand as could be to parade the streets just like a circus, 5,000 people cheering the start and other thousands cheering all along the line. The procession went parkwards.

OUR SECOND VICTORY.

No one could have asked for a more rarely beautiful day than that which dawned on Saturday for our second game with the Bostons. Kelly was suffering greatly from an attack of "Charley Horse," or contraction of the muscles in his left leg, and young Madden, of the Bostons, had to do the running for him. Still, Mike played with much of his old-time vim, and the game was a great one in every way.

The crowd was nearly as large as that of the day before. Men and boys were packed in the side stands like sardines, and the grand stand was so full that men sat in the aisles. There was a deep semi-circle of plug hats and bonnets in front of the grand stand in the space reserved on either side of the catcher's path, while the outfield was fringed with at least two thousand men. Baldwin pitched for Chicago, while Conway pitched for Boston.

The score was one of the most remarkable ever recorded at White Stocking Park, the clubs standing tied in the fourth inning and again in the eighth, and Chicago winning by a single run in the ninth. Following is the score by innings:

Chicago.....2 0 0 0 0 0 4 1 1—8

Boston.....1 0 1 3 0 1 1—7

CHICAGO'S IMPROVEMENT.

A noticeable feature in the work of the White Stockings is the improvement in their batting, while their fielding is far more brilliant than it was a year ago. Against such strong points as these opposing clubs will find it a difficult task to win games.

VAN HALTREN ARRIVES.

George Van Haltren, the young California pitcher, about whom there has been more newspaper talk than any ball player of the present time, Mike Kelly alone excepted, arrived from Frisco Friday. He certainly looks like a ball player, and it is to be hoped will prove one. I had a brief chat with him in A. G. Spalding & Bros' Madison street store, the morning of his arrival when he said: "I pitched my first league game about fourteen months ago, retiring the opposing side with five hits. In one game I struck out three men on nine pitched balls, and my greatest strike-out record was nineteen men. On another occasion I struck the Pioneers without a hit and struck out seventeen men. At the end of that season I was fourth in batting, and was No. 1 in batting this season, with an average of .450. During this season I led in pitchers' averages, and gave but four bases on balls in a total of nine games."

Van Haltren says that he would not have gone to Pittsburgh or Detroit for any amount of money.

HOW THEY STAND.

In the League race the Detroits still hold the lead, with the Bostons second, closely pursued by New York third, and both so closely followed by the Chicagoans that they are uncomfortable. The Philadelphias will do well to hold fifth place. Pittsburgh, Washington and Indianapolis bring up the rear. They are all out-classed and do not belong in the League.

In the Association race the St. Louis team is firmly fixed in the lead, with the Baltimores second, closely followed by Cincinnati third, and Louisville and Athletics next. The Brooklyns, Metropolitans, and Cleveland bring up the tail end of the list.

The fight is a hot one between the Milwaukee and Oshkosh teams for