

## A Thrilling Tale.

## ROMANCE OF THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN.

(From the New York Herald).

Those who have read the accounts of the disastrous battle of the Little Big Horn are familiar with the name of Lieut. De Radio, who was cut off from his command and lost for thirty six hours. The particulars of his adventures while endeavouring to get to the fellows of his command have not yet been given to the public, and but for the kindness of a friend in this city, to whom he has written a letter containing an account of his adventures, the interesting story given below might never have reached beyond his own small circle of army companions. Through the kindness of Lieut. De Radio's friend we spread before our readers a story of thrilling adventure and miraculous escape equal to anything ever conceived in the mind of a novelist. It contains an element of truth which makes it stranger than fiction and shows what a world of romance and interest may be concealed in a single line of telegram. Every one knows that De Radio had been cut off from his companions for thirty six hours, but the story of how that time was spent has been reserved for him to tell.

The letter is dated "Camp on the north side of the Yellow Stone river opposite the Big Horn, July 5th, 1876," and referring to the disastrous battle of the Little Big Horn, it says:—

"I had a narrow escape at the battle of the Little Big Horn on the 25th and 26th of June, and I will endeavour to give you my experience of Indian fighting. At about ten a.m. on the 25th of June, after having marched all night, General Custer's scouts returned and reported that they had discovered an Indian village, about fifteen miles distant, on the Little Big Horn, and that from what they had seen they supposed the Indians to be retreating before our advance. We continued our march two or three miles further, when a halt was ordered, and General Custer began preparations for attacking the enemy. He detailed companies H, D and K under the command of Colonel F. W. Benteen, to take the left of our route with orders, so I hear, to sweep everything in his way. Companies M, A and G were put under the command of Colonel Reno, and being temporarily attached to company A, I found myself with this division. General Custer took companies E, I, F, L and C, and occupied the right of the line of attack. The remaining company B, was left to guard the pack train. After marching two or three miles, our command, the centre, was ordered to trot and hold the gait until we reached the river, six or seven miles distant. Having reached the river we forded, and on reaching the plain beyond the opposite bank we were ordered into line of battle. Everything being as was ordered, we started on a gallop, and for two miles pursued close on the verge of an immense and blinding cloud of dust raised by the madly flying savages ahead of us. The dust cloud was so dense that we could distinguish nothing, so Colonel Reno halted the battalion, and, after dismounting, formed a skirmish line, the right flank resting on the edge of a dry, thickly wooded creek. While the horses were being led to shelter in the wood the Indians opened a galling fire on us, which was immediately responded to, the skirmish continuing for about half an hour. It was now discovered that on the other side of the creek, in a park like clearing, there were a few lodges, and the whole line crossed the

creek to find the lodges deserted and received by about 200 yelping, yelling red skins. The fire from the numerically superior force necessitated a retreat, which was almost impossible, as we were now surrounded by warriors. When we entered the engagement we were only 100 strong, and the fire of the enemy had made havoc in our little band.

"When we were half way over the creek I, being in the rear, noticed a guidon planted on the side we had left, and returned to take it. When coming through the wood the guidon entangled itself in the branches and slipped out of my hand. I dismounted to pick it up, and led my horse up the south bank of the creek. As I was about to mount, my horse was struck with a bullet, and, becoming frightened, he ran into the Indians, leaving me dismounted in the company of about 500 Sioux not more than fifty yards distant.

"They poured a whistling volley at me, but I was not wounded, and managed to escape to the thicket near by, where I would have an opportunity of defending myself and selling my life at a good high figure. In the thicket I found Mr. Gerard, the interpreter, a half breed Indian, and Private O'Neil, of Company G, Seventh cavalry. The first two of the quartet had their horses, while O'Neil, like myself, was dismounted. I told the owners of the horses that the presence of the animals would betray us, suggesting at the same time that they be stampered. They declined to act on the suggestion, and I left them and crawled through the thick underwood into the deep, dry bottom of the creek, where I could not be easily discovered, and from whence I hoped to be able, under cover of darkness, to steal out and rejoin the command. I had not been in this hiding place more than ten minutes when I heard several pistol shots fired in my immediate vicinity, and shortly thereafter came the silvery but to me diabolical voices of several "squaws." I raised my head with great caution to see what the women were at and to discover their exact location.

"I found the women at the revolting work of scalping a soldier who was perhaps not yet dead. Two of the ladies were cutting away, while two others performed a sort of war dance around the body and its mutilators. I will not attempt to describe to you my feelings at witnessing the disgusting performance. You, as the father of a family, can imagine what another father would feel on such a terrible occasion. I confess I thought of my dear wife, my dear children, relatives, and friends, whom I would probably see no more, and there before my eyes was being performed what, in the event of discovery, would be my fate. I determined to hope to the last, die as I had lived, and sell my life as dearly as possible. Finally the squaws went away, probably to hunt for more victims, and I employed the time thinking of my perilous position.

"While thus engaged I heard a crackling noise near me, which on investigation I found proceeded from the burning wood, the Indians having ignited a fire. The wood being very dry the fire made rapid headway and I was forced from my hiding place. I crawled out of the creek bottom the same way I had approached, and as I was about to ascend the bank I heard a voice calling, 'Lieutenant! Lieutenant!' I could see no one, but the call was repeated, and advancing a few yards in the direction from which it proceeded, I found all three of the party I had left a short while before, hidden in the bottom of the creek. Mr. Gerard told me he had left the horses, tied, together, where I had seen them, and followed down after me.

"I found that the party, like myself, were afraid of the progress of the fire; but fortunately for us the wind subsided and a little rain fell, which, thank God, was sufficient to arrest the flames and revive our hopes that we might be able to remain there till night. It was now three o'clock p. m.—six more hours to wait—and you may imagine how immensely long we found them. During this time we could hear and often see Indians around us, and could hear them talk quite near us.

"I cannot find words sufficiently expressive to describe my many thoughts during those six or seven hours of suspense. Many times I asked myself if it was possible that I should end my life in so barbarous, ignominious and obscure manner. Sometimes I would answer myself that it could not be. I had gone through so many sacrifices for my adopted country, I could not think I should die in such a way. I could not believe I had been preserved so long to end in so unjust and obscure a manner. Finally the time came when, under the protection of night (it was very cloudy) we were able to come out of our hiding place and take the direction of the ford, which was two miles to the south, through an open plain. Mr. Gerard and the scout mounted their horses and the soldier and myself took hold each one of a horse's tail and followed them. Mr. Gerard proposed that, in case he should be obliged to run and leave us and succeeded in joining the command, he would notify Colonel Reno, the commander, of my position. During our transit through the open plain we passed many Indians returning to their village and could hear but not see them, as the night was very dark. We reached the wood near what we took to be the ford we had passed in the morning, but we were mistaken and had to hunt for the crossing. Once we forded the stream, but found it was at a bend and that we would have to ford again. When we recrossed the river we ran full into a band of eight savages.

"The two mounted men ran for their lives, the soldier and myself jumped into the bushes near us. I cocked my revolver, and, in a kneeling position, was ready to fire at the savages if they should approach me. They evidently thought from the precipitate retreat of the two mounted men that all of us had decamped, and began to talk among themselves. In a few minutes to my surprise, they continued their course, and soon after went out of hearing. I raised up from my position, approached the bank of the river and called to the soldier, who immediately answered. We then saw that the fords were all well guarded by the savages, and that it would be very dangerous to attempt to cross any part of the river. Of course, we did not know the condition of our regiment, and knew nothing about the extent of their defeat, so that we hoped if we could find a good hiding place for the night we could wait for the probable return of our command in the morning and could then easily join them. We also hoped that the Indians would leave during the night. Accordingly we searched for a good place in the thick underwood, and briars near the river and there waited with much anxiety our fate on the morrow. The night passed, and in the dull dawn of day we heard a immense tramping of a large cavalry command, and the splashing of the water convinced us some troops were crossing the river. I imagined it was our command, as I could distinctly hear the sound of the horse's shoes striking the stones. I cautiously stepped to the edge of the bushes to look out (I was then no more than three yards from the bank of the river), and thought