

has been trying to do this for years, and has made repeated advances to the Crows and Blackfeet. This is one reason why the Peace Commissioners urged that he must be subdued lest he should demoralize all the treaty Indians and bring on a general war. Of course the Government has no alternative except to bring him to terms. Any other course would be a cowardly and wicked surrender of our frontier settlers and our friendly Indian allies and subjects to a barbarous and determined enemy of our country."

CUSTER AND HIS MEN.

General Custer's mouth is closed. If there is anything to explain, anything to be said in extenuation of his apparently reckless charge, he cannot say it, and the justification of his wild assault must be gathered from other lips, or taken from the dumb mouths that appeal so strongly for generous judgment. It appears from General Terry's despatch to Gen. Sheridan that for some cause the former's instructions to Custer were not obeyed. What the reasons were for this failure to carry out a plan which had been mutually agreed upon we can only surmise. It is possible that Major Reno and the other officers who are spared may be able to give some explanation of the disobedience of General Custer, and tell also how it was that such a fatal attack came to be made at all. The despatch of General Terry, though couched in the language of the keenest sorrow for the terrible fate of the three hundred, plainly indicates that except for the failure to observe his instructions the massacre would not have occurred; but that on the contrary, Sitting Bull and his warriors would have been totally overcome and routed. General Terry says that the plan of operations was submitted to Gen. Gibbon and Gen. Custer and approved by both those commanders. Gen. Custer was to move with his regiment up the Rosebud river till he should meet the Indian trail. He was not to follow the trail directly, but send scouts over it, and keep his main force further to the south, to prevent the Indians from slipping in between himself and the mountains. He was also to examine the headwaters of Tullock's Creek, and send word of what he found there. While General Custer was making this wide detour General Gibbon's command of infantry and cavalry was to ascend the Big Horn and attack the Indians in the rear. The march of the two columns was so planned as to bring Gibbon's forces within co-operating distance of Custer by the evening of the 26th. The march of the latter was carried out to the letter, and on the morning of the 26th Gibbon's command arrived on the spot designated. Here they learned the horrible news which has shocked the whole country; and here they arrived also just in time to save from annihilation the remaining companies of the Seventh Cavalry under Major Reno. It was ascertained that General Custer, instead of keeping to the southward after striking the trail, as agreed upon, had followed it night and day, making in the last twenty-four hours preceding the fight sixty-eight miles, and arriving upon the field on the morning of the 27th, twenty-four hours ahead of the time agreed upon. What caused this abandonment of his instructions, and this extraordinary haste to reach the field in advance of the supporting column, can only be guessed. Our own correspondent, who has made frequent trips with General Custer, and knew him well, says he has frequently heard the General remark that with six companies of his regiment he could whip all

the Indians on the plains. In this encounter he had his full complement of twelve companies, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he thought victory so certain that he could afford to make the fatal dash without calculating the chances or admitting to himself that there were any chances at all about it. It may be, too, that he received information leading him to suppose that the Indians were trying to escape, which caused him to disregard General Terry's instructions and push directly forward to their camp. The latter thinks that at the moment the attack was begun General Custer must have believed the Indians to be in retreat, and that the rush upon them was therefore made under a misapprehension, and with a divided force. But whatever may have been the mistake that led to this disastrous charge, the spectacle of this handful of men fighting the overpowering force of savages, bravely, steadily, desperately, until every man of the little number lay dead upon the field, is one to arouse the warmest admiration as well as to excite the deepest sorrow at their fate. It was equal to the charge of the Six hundred at Balaklava and in its fatal results surpassed that instance of blundering in an English commander and bravery of English troops. But it was a useless sacrifice, an awful expenditure of life without any compensating results; and it is this reflection which sharpens the pang that is everywhere felt at the fate of Custer and his gallant men. — *Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

SKETCH OF GEN. CUSTER.

Major Gen. George A. Custer, who was killed with his whole command while attacking an encampment of Sioux Indians, under command of Sitting Bull, was one of the bravest and most widely known officers in the United States Army. He has for the past fifteen years been known to the country and to his comrades as a man who feared no danger, as a soldier in the truest sense of the word. He was daring to a fault, generous beyond most men. His memory will long be kept green in many friendly hearts. Born at New Rumley, Harrison County, Ohio, on the 5th of December, 1839, he obtained a good common education, after graduating, engaged for some time in teaching school. In June, 1857, through the influence of Hon. John A. Bingham, then member of Congress from Ohio, he obtained an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, and entered that institution on the 1st July of the year named. He graduated on the 24th June, 1861, with what was considered the fair standing of No. 31 in one of the brightest classes that ever left the Academy. Immediately upon leaving West Point he was appointed Second Lieutenant in Company G, of the second United States Cavalry, a regiment which had formerly been commanded by Gen. E. Lee. He reported to Lieutenant General Scott on the 29th of July, the day preceding the battle of Bull Run, and the Commander-in-Chief gave him the choice of accepting a position on his staff or of joining his regiment, then under command of Gen. McDowell, in the field. Longing for an opportunity to see active service, and determined to win distinction, Lieut. Custer chose the latter course, and after riding all night through a country filled with people who were, to say the least, not friendly, he reached McDowell's headquarters at day break on the morning of the 21st. Preparations for the battle had already begun, and after delivering his dispatches from Gen. Scott and hastily partaking of a mouthful of coffee and a piece of

hard bread he joined his company. It is not necessary now to recount the disasters of the fight that followed. Suffice it to say that Lieut. Custer's company was among the last to leave the field. It did so in good order, bringing off Gen. Hentzelman, who had been wounded in the engagement. The young officer continued to serve with his company, and was engaged in the drilling of volunteer recruits in and about the defenses of Washington, when upon the appointment of Phil Kearney to the position of Brigadier General, that lamented officer gave him a position on his staff. Custer continued in this position until an order was issued from the War Department prohibiting Generals of Volunteers from appointing officers of the Regular Army to staff duty. Then he returned to his company, not, however, until he had been warmly complimented by Gen. Kearney upon the prompt and efficient manner in which he had performed the duties assigned to him. At the same time the General predicted that Custer would be one of the most successful officers in the Army. Nor were these predictions without a speedy realization. With his Company Lieut. Custer marched forward with that part of the Army of the Potomac which moved upon Manassas after its evacuation by the rebels. Our cavalry was in advance, under Gen. Stoneman and encountered the rebel horsemen for the first time near Catlett's Station. The commanding officer made a call for volunteers to charge the enemy's advance post. Lieut. Custer was among the first to step to the front, and in command of his company he shortly afterward made his first charge. He drove the rebels across Muddy Creek, wounded a number of them, and had one of his own men injured. This was the first blood drawn in the campaign under McClellan. After this Custer went with the Army of the Potomac to the Peninsula and remained with his company until the Army settled down before Yorktown, when he was detailed as an Assistant Engineer of the left wing, under Sumner. Acting in this capacity he planned and erected the earthworks nearest the enemy's lines. He also accompanied the advance under Gen. Hancock in pursuit of the enemy from Yorktown. Shortly afterward, he captured the first battle flag ever secured by the army of the Potomac. From this time on he was nearly always the first in every work of daring. When the Army reached the Chickahominy he was the first man to cross the river; he did so in the face of the fire from the enemy's pickets, and at times was obliged to wade up to his armpits. For this brave act Gen. McClellan promoted him to Captaincy and made him one of his personal aids. In this capacity he served during most of the Peninsula campaign, and participated in all its battles, including the bloody seven days' fight. He performed the duty of making out the position which was occupied by the Union Army at the battle of Gaines' Mills. He also participated in the campaign which ended in the battles of the South Mountain and Antietam. Upon the retirement of Gen. McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, Custer accompanied him, and for a time was out of active service. — *N. Y. Times.*

RIFLE COMPETITION.

Sherbrooke Rifle Association. The Annual Meeting was held on Monday and Tuesday, at the Rifle Range, in East Sherbrooke. There were about thirty marksmen present