

ROCK ME TO SLEEP.

Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight;
Make me a child again, just for to-night!
Mother, come back from the echoes of shore:
Take me again to your heart as of yore—
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair,
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep!

Backward, flow backward O tide of the years,
I am so weary of toll and of tears—
Toll without recompense, tears all in vain—
Take them and give me my childhood again:
I have grown weary of dust and decay—
Weary of flinging my soul wealth away,
Weary of sowing for others to reap—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep,

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you,
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossomed, and faded—our faces between—
Yet with strong yearning and passionate pain,
Long I to-night for your presence again;
Come from the silence so long and deep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep,

Over my heart, in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shone—
No other devotion abides and endures,
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours—
None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and world-weary brain:
Slumbers soft, calm, o'er my heavy lids creep—
Rock me to sleep, mother—rock me to sleep.

Colonel Reno's Official Report.

CUSTER'S FIGHT WITH SITTING BULL.

HEADQUARTERS, 7TH REGIMENT CAVALRY,
CAMP ON YELLOWSTONE RIVER, July 5, 1876.

Captain E. W. Smith, A. D. C. and A. A. G.

The command of the Regiment having devolved upon me, as the senior surviving officer from the battle of June 25th and 26th, between the 7th Cavalry and Sitting Bull's band of hostile Sioux, on the Little Big Horn river, I have the honor to submit the following report of its operations from the time of leaving the main column until the command was united in the vicinity of the Indian village.

The Regiment left the camp at the mouth of Rosebud river, after passing in review before the Department Commander, under command of Brevet Major General G. A. Custer, lieutenant colonel, on the afternoon of the 22nd of June, and marched up the Rosebud 12 miles and encamped. 23rd. Marched up the Rosebud, passing many old Indian camps, and following a very large lodge pole trail, but not fresh, making 33 miles. 24th. The march was continued up the Rosebud, the trail and signs freshening with every mile until we had made 28 miles, and we then encamped and waited for information from the scouts. At 9.25 p. m., Custer called the officers together, and informed us that, beyond a doubt, the village was in the valley of the Little Big Horn, and that to reach it, it was necessary to cross the divide between Rosebud and Little Big Horn, and it would be impossible to do so, in the day-time, without discovering our march to the Indians; that we would prepare to move at 11 p. m. This was done, the line of march turning from the Rosebud to the right, up one of its branches, which headed near the summit of the divide.

About 2 a. m. of the 25th, the scouts told him that he could not cross the divide before daylight. We then made coffee and rested for three hours, at the expiration of which time the march was resumed, the divide crossed, and about 8 a. m. the command was in the valley of one of the branches of the Little Big Horn. By this time Indians had been seen, and it was certain that we could not surprise them, and it was determined to move at once to the attack.

Previous to this no division of the regiment had been made since the order was

issued, on the Yellowstone, annulling wing and battalion organizations. General Custer informed me he would assign commands on the march. I was ordered by Lieutenant W. W. Cooke, adjutant, to assume command of Companies M, A and G; Captain Benteen, of Companies H, D and K; Custer retaining G, E, F, I and L, under his immediate command, and Company B, Captain McDougall, in rear of the pack train. I assumed command of the companies assigned to me, and without any definite orders moved forward with the rest of the column, and well to its left. I saw Benteen moving farther to the left, and, as they passed, he told me he had orders to move well to the left, and sweep everything before him; I did not see him again until about 2.30 p. m. The command moved down the creek towards the Little Big Horn valley. Custer, with five companies on the right bank; myself and three companies on the left, and out of sight.

As we approached a deserted village, in which was standing one *tepee*, about 11 a. m. Custer motioned me to cross to him which I did, and moved nearer to his column, until about 12.30 a. m., when Lieutenant Cooke, adjutant, came to me and said the village was only two miles ahead and running away. To "move forward at as rapid gait as I thought prudent and to charge afterwards, and that the whole outfit would support me." I think those were his exact words. I at once took a fast trot, and moved down about two miles, when I came to a ford of the river. I crossed immediately, and halted about ten minutes or less, to gather the battalion, sending word to Custer that I had everything in front of me, and that they were strong.

I deployed, and, with the Ree scouts on my left, charged down the valley, driving the Indians with great ease for about 2½ miles. I, however, soon saw that I was being drawn into some trap, as they certainly would fight harder, and especially as we were nearing their village, which was still standing; besides, I could not see Custer, or any other support, and at the same time the very earth seemed to grow Indians, and they were running towards me in swarms, and from all directions. I saw I must defend myself, and give up the attack mounted. This I did, taking possession of a point of woods, and which furnished, near its edge, a shelter for the horses; dismounted, and fought them on foot, making headway through the wood. I soon found myself in the near vicinity of the village, saw that I was fighting odds, of at least 5 to 1, and that my only hope was to get out of the wood, where I would soon have been surrounded, and gain some high ground. I accomplished this by mounting and charging the Indians between me and the bluffs, on the opposite side of the river. In this charge, First Lieutenant Donald McIntosh, Second Lieutenant Ben H. Hodgson, 7th Cavalry, and A. A. Sarg. J. M. DeWolf, were killed. I succeeded in reaching the top of the bluff with a loss of the three officers and 29 enlisted men killed, and seven men wounded. Almost at the same time I reached the top, mounted men were seen to be coming towards us, and it proved to be Colonel Benteen's battalion, Companies H, D and K; we joined forces, and in a short time the pack train came up. As senior, my command was then Companies A, B, D, G, H, K and M, about 380 men, and the following officers; Captains Benteen, Weir, French and McDougall; First Lieutenants Godfrey Mathey and Gibson; Second Lieutenants Edgerley, Wallace, Varum and Hare; A. A. Surg. Porter. First Lieuten-

ant DeRudio was in the dismounted fight in the woods, but, having some trouble with his horse, did not join the command in the charge out, and hiding himself in the woods, joined the command after nightfall of the 26th.

Still hearing nothing of Custer, and with this reinforcement, I moved down the river in the direction of the village, keeping on the bluffs. We had heard firing in that direction, and knew it could only be Custer. I moved to the summit of the highest bluff but seeing and hearing nothing, sent Captain Weir, with his company, to open communication with the other command. He soon sent back word, by Lieutenant Hare, that he could go no farther, and that the Indians were getting around him; at this time he was keeping up a heavy fire from his skirmish line. I at once turned everything back to the first position I had taken on the bluff, and which seemed to me the best. I dismounted the men, had the horses and mules of the pack train driven together in a depression, put the men on the crests of the hills making the depression, and hardly done so, when I was furiously attacked; this was about 6 p. m.; we held our ground with the loss of 18 enlisted men killed and 46 wounded until the attack ceased, about 9 p. m.

As I knew, by this time, their overwhelming numbers, and had given up any support from the portion of the regiment with Custer, I had the men dig rifle pits; barricaded with dead horses, mules and boxes of hard bread, the opening of the depression towards the Indians in which the animals were herded; and made every exertion to be ready for what I saw would be a terrific assault the next day. All this night the men were busy, and the Indians holding a scalp dance underneath us in the bottom, and in our hearing. On the morning of the 26th, I felt confident that I could hold my own, and was ready as far as I could be, when, at daylight, about 1.30 a. m., I heard the crack of two rifles; this was the signal for the beginning of a fire that I have never seen equalled. Every rifle was handled by an expert and skilled marksman, and with a range that exceeded our carbine, and it was simply impossible to show any part of the body before it was struck. We could see, as the day brightened, countless hordes of them pouring up the valley from out the village, and scampering over the high points towards the places designated for them by their chiefs, and which entirely surrounded our position. They had sufficient numbers to completely encircle us, and men were struck on opposite sides of the lines, from where the shots were fired. I think we were fighting all the Sioux nation, and also all the desperadoes, renegades, half-breeds and squaw men, between the Missouri and the Arkansas and east of the Rocky Mountains; they must have numbered at least 2,500 warriors. The fire did not slacken till about 9.30 a. m., and then we discovered that they were making a last desperate attempt, and which was directed against the lines held by Companies H and M; in this attack they charged close enough to use their bows and arrows, and one man, lying dead within our lines, was touched by the "coup stick" of one of the foremost Indians. When I say the stick was only about 10 or 12 feet long, some idea of the desperate and reckless fighting of these people may be understood. This charge of theirs was gallantly repulsed by the men on that line led by Col. Benteen. They also came close enough to send their arrows into the line held by Companies D and K, but were driven away by a like charge of the line, which I accompanied.