

Miss Nute:

In going over my papers recently I ran across this translation, made many years ago. For some reason I did not attempt to have it published. Perhaps it might be put in the manuscript division.

It is a translation of chapter 16 (p. 176-196) of Ole Paulson, Erindringer (Minneapolis, 1907).

T. C. B.

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Early in the spring of 1863 a new expedition, under the leadership of General H. H. Sibley, was sent out against the fleeing redskins.¹ Sibley did such a good piece of work in the fall of 1862 that he had been advanced to the rank of brigadier-general.² There was also another expedition dispatched from Sioux City, Iowa, under command of General Sully.³ This consisted entirely of cavalry, while Sibley's on the other hand, was made up of three regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, and two sections of light artillery. It was planned that these two forces should meet at or in the vicinity of Devils Lake, where the Indians were supposed to be.

Sibley's expedition assembled on the Minnesota River just between the two agencies described, which were now razed. The place where the troops gathered was called Camp Pope.⁴ It took considerable time to assemble and prepare for the trip. It was necessary to have three hundred wagons with six mules for each, one thousand cavalry horses, two sections of artillery with four or six horses for each cannon, etc. In addition, four hundred cattle to be used for slaughter were taken along. ~~It was~~ To get all this prepared before starting, ~~was an arduous and extensive~~ ^{was an arduous and extensive} undertaking. It was of course impossible to go before the grass had grown so that horses

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and cattle could graze and find food. The force lay in Camp Pope several weeks before it could start. From the time our company left Glencoe in April until about the middle of July I had the command of it. The Captain was sick and Lieutenant Weissman had gone out on some military mission so that he was prevented from joining the Company until the latter date. I do not remember the exact date on which the force marched out from Camp Pope; but it must have been in the first days of June. At the beginning the boys became footsore, for the summer was quite warm and the prairie as dry as tinder. It was so dry that the grass on the prairie scorched in June, and hardly a drop of rain fell during the entire summer. The march grew wearisome and very difficult, and occasionally the expedition was forced to halt and rest. The heat sometimes rose to 110 degrees in the shade.

We followed the Minnesota River through Medicine, Lac qui Parle and Grant counties, past Big Stone Lake. On the flat-land between Big Stone and Lake Traverse we rested for a few days. There were high hills on the north and south sides. The prairie between the lakes is absolutely flat, three miles from lake to lake. The town of Browns Valley is now situated here on this flat. The peculiar feature of the place is that here is the water-parting between North and South. The Minnesota River has its source here and empties its waters into the Gulf of Mexico. The Red River has

5. The date was June 16th, 1863. (West, p. 304).

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INTENTIONAL DUPLICATE EXPOSURE

DAKOTA CONFLICT OF 1862 MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102

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its head-waters in Lake Traverse and empties into Hudson Bay.

When the expedition reached Breckenridge, where it camped one night, it divided into two detachments, a number being sent down to Fort Abercrombie, mainly for the purpose of getting the mail which must have come there. My company was with this detachment. We celebrated the Fourth of July there, -- by lying still; not even so much as firing a rifle in honor of the independence of the country. It was scorching hot that day.

On the afternoon of the following day our detachment marched out from Fort Abercrombie, and encamped at Wild Rice River. It was so dry that, except in a few holes, there was hardly any water in the river. The next day, that is, the seventh, we had to march twenty miles over a flat prairie to the Cheyenne River. The heat was violently oppressive, --over one hundred degrees in the shade. During the morning, we had muddy water from Wild Rice River in our canteens. They were soon emptied, in the heat. The thirst became unendurable before we reached the Cheyenne.

At last we came to the bluff above the river. Just as the word Halt! was given, the men broke ranks and rushed down to the river to quench their burning thirst. Spring water was found there in a great spring which flowed out of the ground. To drink their fill was not enough for the men; there were some who lay down in the stream which ran from the spring. No doubt it was healthful to take a cold bath after drinking so much cold spring water.

To satisfy one's thirst with good water was truly a blessing. This was the only instance when we found good water from the time we left Minnesota till our return there. We had to dig wells wherever we pitched camp. The water in the lakes, streams, and rivers was unfit for use, though the water in the Missouri River is good.

I must now pass ~~by~~ many days of tiresome marching over these endless, dry, sun-scorched prairies. Many a soldier was overcome by the heat and left lying behind until the ambulance came and picked him up and carried him along to the camp.

One day was much like another. We saw nothing but the sky overhead and the prairie underfoot; the sun burned mercilessly. Scarcely a cloud-fleck appeared in the sky during the whole summer. Only a single time did we get a few drops of rain. That was the time a bolt of lightning killed a Norse cavalryman during the first fight we had with the redskins.

In this almost unendurable heat of the sun we had to march twenty miles each day. It was no fun, I must say. But there ~~was~~ ^{were} none who complained, not even over the meager rations, which consisted of "hard tack" and salt pork. Every other day we got fresh meat. Of coffee we were blessed with a great abundance. The black, strong coffee, without sugar, tasted very good. We filled the canteens with coffee and drank that in place of water.

One day ^{as} we were approaching Devils Lake we saw a large troop of horsemen galloping toward us in regular battle array. On closer inspection we found that they were not enemies coming to give

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battle, for the troop carried the stars and stripes, which waved proudly in the wind and testified to the friendship and security. The troop halted and saluted. It was composed of Red River halfbreeds who were out on the prairies for a buffalo hunt.

At the head of these half-breed Indians was a French Catholic padre, who delivered a speech in French.⁶ General Sibley translated the speech to English. Sibley was a Frenchman himself, if I am not mistaken.⁷

The padre was heartily glad that the expedition had come for the purpose of punishing the criminal redskins, and wished us success in our project. He informed us besides, that they had been in the camp of the Indians the week before, and he told us where this camp was. For their part, (he said) they were too weak and few to attack the redskins who were numerous and strong.

When their errand was ended, the troop wheeled about and galloped away.

This was a few miles south of Devils Lake. The expedition stopped here a short time to reorganize for a rapid advance against the Indians. All the sick, exhausted, and tired, both among men and cattle, were left behind at this point. Fortifications were built and a guard was placed over the camp.⁸

When this had been done we advanced in a quick march against the redskins. There were perhaps twenty-five hundred of us in this body, and after a hard day's march we reached the camp where the Indians had been; but they had disappeared. It was necess-

6. This was on July 30th. The Indians were Chippewas.
7. Sibley was of English descent, but through his association with the Canadian-French was able to speak French.
8. Camp Atchison.

ary to find out where they had gone. This was on the so-called Missouri Coteau, a high ridge which extends through North Dakota in a southern direction from Devils Lake. We pitched camp here for the night.

After dark a bold Sioux ventured within the camp itself and tried to steal a horse. Though he did not achieve his purpose, yet he succeeded in escaping with his life. At sunrise the next morning the expedition was again on the march in search of the fugitives. There was, however, no trace left behind them. At about eleven o'clock one of our Indian scouts, Chaska, by name, came galloping up gasping for breath, and informed us that Cavalry-Lieutenant Freeman of St. Cloud and George Bracket of Minneapolis, the meat-supervisor of the expedition, had been killed by the Indians, and he himself had barely escaped with his life.

These three men rode out in the morning to shoot buffalo, and encountered the Indians.

George Bracket had not been killed, however. He sprang from his horse and hid himself in the high grass of a swamp. He did not find his way back to us however. After wandering painfully on the prairie for many days, he made his way to the barricades where the sick were kept, and ^{by} that time he ^{was} almost dead of hunger and thirst. Freeman was killed and scalped.

In a little while our scouts came in with the report that there were six thousand Indians in camp three miles away. The expedition had now reached a lake about one mile in breadth. The land on the south side was flat as a bottom. Around the lake on the

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other sides were high hills. Also on the south side, a distance from the lake, there was a very high hill, which resembled an old-fashioned sugar-loaf.

Here on this flat, a halt was made, and defences were hurriedly thrown up, primarily for the protection of the expedition's baggage train of three hundred wagons and three hundred head of cattle. The cattle and mules were enclosed with wagons inside the defences themselves.

While we were doing this work, all the hills around us became black with Indians, and we were literally surrounded by our red-skinned enemy. They gave no sign, however, of wanting to attack us. There stood the soldiers armed to the teeth, burning with the desire to have permission to fire on the bloodthirsty savages. But we had to wait patiently until the word of command was given.

There we stood several hours and surveyed each other, without a shot being fired. Our scouts reported that the enemy would surrender without battle. They were only waiting for a few chiefs, who had not yet arrived, such as "Standing Buffalo" and others.

In our number there was a cavalry-physician from Shakopee named Weiser, an old settler who had lived among Indians for many years, had been their physician, and knew their language. With his negro servant, he rode out to the enemy just a little way from the camp. The Indians pretended friendship, shook his hand as an old acquaintance and friend, and gave out that they would surrender without battle, etc. After the Doctor had parleyed with them for a while, he rode back toward the camp. The negro followed him.

A little later the same two rode back again on the hill to the Indians, taking with them tobacco and a flask of whiskey with which the Doctor treated his good friends. They were "good Indians". When he had finished with them he set spurs in his horse to ride back to camp; three rifle shots cracked and the Doctor fell dead to the ground while the horse came galloping into camp with empty saddle. We stood there and witnessed this tragedy.

Two companies of cavalry mounted, prepared to fight; two sections of artillery stood by their cannons, ready to open fire on their red foes, and at least two regiments of infantry stood armed for attack.

The great sugar-top swarmed with Indians. The artillery fired a few shells in their midst and cleared the hill. The cavalry charged out along the long ridge of the hill and swept it clean. The cavalry shot and killed many redskins. The Indians returned the fire and killed a soldier. Lightning struck down at the same instant ^{and} killed a Norwegian cavalryman.

An unprecedented running-race followed. Indians before and the soldiers after them in wild pursuit the rest of the day until darkness fell! By that time the Indians and the whites were so intermingled that one could not tell who was Indian and who was white man.

The General remained in the camp and sent a courier with an order to the commanding Colonel to remain where he was over night. The latter misunderstood the order and gave the signal for retreat. In the morning the boys came back tired and sleepy, bringing with them all possible kinds of trophies from the camp of

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the Indians.

Sibley was deceived this time by the crafty redskins. Their assurance that they would surrender without fight was only a lie. It was only a ruse to entertain us with "good talk" until they could get time to escape, with their families. If Sibley had not ordered the halt, but had pressed forward against the camp of the Indians, we should without doubt have captured every Indian. As it was, they got time to escape with "bag and baggage". The Indians tried the same stratagem every time they gave us battle. As soon as they attacked us a halt was ordered, and this gave them time to get away.

We rested the day after the battle of Sugar Loaf Mountain. ~~A Christian burial was given to the fallen.~~
The scalped Lieutenant Freeman was found ^{and} buried with the other three. This took time; then we advanced a few miles and stopped again. In the meantime a force was ordered to destroy everything which the Indians had been unable to take with them. Many tons of dry buffalo meat were burned up. This was a part of the winter-provisions of the redskins. Poor Indians! They had to pay dearly for the outrages which they had committed. On the second day after the Sugar Loaf Mountain battle we took up the march again—this time with the tracks of the Indians before us.

At the time we usually pitched camp, about one o'clock, the warriors met us again and gave us a fight. This was also by the side of a little lake,-- where there lay a dead buffalo, and it was called the Battle of Dead Buffalo Lake. This time the cavalry had the opportunity of amusing themselves with the Indians. As the Indians were all mounted, the infantry were therefore unable

to do much with them. The Indians seemed to have tremendous respect for the infantry.

The cavalry were a couple of miles in advance of us when the Indians met them. As usual, the expedition halted and pitched camp under a high ridge. At this place we stood and watched the fight between our cavalry and the Indians.

Our cavalry allowed the Indians to chase them right into our camp. When our boys reached the defences on the hill they wheeled about and fired a volley in the face of the Indians who came rushing after them. Some of the Indians were killed, among them a chief, who was scalped by the whites while yet alive. This ended the fight of Buffalo Lake.

The following day the expedition had a hard march. On that day the land seemed empty of Indians. From morning until late at night not an Indian was to be seen. All had disappeared as completely as if swallowed up by an abyss.

That ~~day~~ ^{of both} we again encamped by a small lake on the south side of a high, long ridge of hills. A strong watch ^{of both} picket and guard was kept at this time. My company stood watch that night and I had the honor of being in command. We were on our feet again the next morning at three o'clock. The watch was separated into two divisions, the advance guard and rear guard, one hundred and fifty men in each. Next there was a company of cavalry and one section battery in each division. The advance guard went forward first, the cavalry in advance in line-of-battle, thereafter the artillery and infantry in battle-array. The sunrise was glorious and the day warm. We had not had sleep for two nights and for that reason were ~~rather~~ ^{rather} tired. As we marched up across the long hill,

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not even dreaming that the redskins were in the vicinity, -- almost half asleep, -- suddenly we heard a fearful war-whoop in front of us. At the summit of this high hill we came face to face with our enemies. The cavalry horses became unmanageable and retired past our lines down the hill. The cannons opened fire on the onrushing enemy ~~with~~ with shells that exploded among them and killed a number of them. Our boys became terror-stricken, so that they seemed unable to give a good account of themselves. I said to my senior, "Had we not better retreat?"

"No Sir!" he answered, but he stood there as though he were a lifeless statue.

"Then we will fight", I said, and gave the command:

"Deploy as skirmishers!"

I got the boys in line of battle and gave the command:

"Fire at will!"

Then they awakened as though from a trance, and their volleys echoed in the hills. The Indians became just as terror-stricken as we had been. They seemed to have come into the very jaws of death. The two cannons which we had ^dcurled the blood of the redskins. Like the spreading of a pair of wings they divided to right and left of us. When they grasped the situation, they tried to get between us and our main body, which had not yet marched out from camp. Then the cannons were turned, and bombarded the side of the hill so that the redskins did not dare to stick their noses into the gap. When the main body of our troops heard that we were having a bout with the reds, they at once rushed to our aid. The cavalry and artillery came storming up the hill at a gallop.

The Indians retreated to a point so far back that we could not reach them with our rifles, nor they us.

Like two fighting cocks the two enemies stood there and eyed each other. At last the leader of the Indians gave the signal for retreat. He blew a whistle and swung a blanket. They rallied on a high hill and we charged at them with a rush. My company protected the battery which galloped up the steep hill, and we kept pace with the battery, ready to give the redskins their deserts when we reached the top of the elevation. The cannons were got ready to open fire, when the staff officer came galloping up and shouted, "Don't fire that cannon, Sir!" That is the Indian's train you see there."

"That's why I wanted to fire," answered the Lieutenant who was in command of the battery. There we stood with long faces. Not a redskin was to be seen except the object which ^{we} took to be the Indian's train. What had become of the Indians was a puzzle to us. It seemed as though they were sunken into the earth. The object which we saw was a little dwarfed oak which stood on a bluff at least two miles away. The air out there is so deceptive that objects a long distance away seem to be very near. The prairie between us and the object was hilly with deep depressions in between, but to our eyes it appeared smooth and flat as a pancake.

We now advanced toward our goal. A short distance before us we saw a pony which was grazing on the prairie directly in front of my company. Suddenly an Indian sprang up out of the grass and ran as if for dear life. My whole company shot at him but did not hit him. Then our guide, Mr. Burcheno, rode almost up to him

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and shot twice at him, but failed to hit him. Thereupon three cavalymen rode up to him and took him prisoner. He proved to be a young Indian belonging to another tribe than the one we were fighting. He declared that his father and he had come to the camp of these Indians to buy horses. In the morning when the Sioux drew up to give us battle, he had followed at a distance to see how the struggle went. In the meantime he grew tired, let his pony graze, and then lay down to sleep, and slept until we were almost over him. He awakened in terror and ran without knowing what he did. He was now glad that he had escaped with his life. He was a boy of about eighteen years, and was well treated and at once set free. But he accompanied us of his own will to the Missouri River, ^{where he presumably found his father.} The next morning the march was begun again and in a few hours we were in the hills which slope toward the Missouri. It was a magnificent morning. The sun gilded the tops of the trees and the sides of the hills. Not ^{side} we left the Cheyenne had we seen woods. Now they smiled ^a friendly greeting to us from the other bank of the Missouri. We were at first somewhat amazed over what we saw in the high hills over on the other side of the river. All the hills seemed to be living. They glittered and gleamed everywhere in the sunshine. Later we realized that this was caused by the small mirrors which each Indian hangs by his belt. Furthermore they had shining rifles which glistened in the sun.

In good time the expedition reached the river. The train stopped on the flat a distance -- perhaps ten miles -- from the river. The General had his headquarters there. A division of ~~the~~

The following night we encamped near the object which had deceived us. This was not many miles from the Missouri River.

troops with a line of skirmishers went through the wide woods down to the river. The heat was almost unendurable as it was 110 degrees in the shade, and ^{the} thirst was parching. When the soldiers had pushed their way through the thick woods with its underbrush of prickly ash, they rushed down to the river to get water. The redskins were lying in the grass on the other side, and shot at us; but the river is so wide that the bullets failed to carry over.

Our artillerymen fired several shells across the river, which caused the redskins to take to their heels to get away from the grass and up in the hills. Here also we lost two men, namely Lieutenant Beaver, an Englishman, supposed to be an English Lord, who had applied to the Governor for an appointment as an officer of the staff so that he might accompany the expedition, and a Norwegian cavalryman. Both of these were murdered in the woods and scalped. Lieutenant Beaver had been sent by the General with a despatch to Colonel Crooks who was in command of the troops at the river. He had encountered Indians in the woods, who had shot him with an arrow, and taken all he had; horse with trappings, clothes, money, a check on a London bank calling for six thousand dollars, or twelve hundred pounds, sabre, two valuable revolvers, and a fieldglass. Lord Beaver had had his hair cut so short that the Indians could not get his scalp; they had however taken his long mustache with the lip.

Crab Apple Creek empties into the Missouri several miles below the place where we reached the river; here we encamped for this night as well as the following day and night. Defences were thrown up here around the camp as a protection against attack.

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As night came on the redskins began to make their presence felt. Now and then shots could be heard round about us. Later in the night they set fire to the prairie on all sides of us. It was so dry that the prairie burned in spite of the fact that it was still early in the summer.

The soldiers had to go out and start a counter fire. ~~The~~ ^{was a turbulent one.} ~~was turbulent throughout~~ The whole night. We had strict orders to lie on our weapons out in our intrenchments. No one could permit himself the luxury of sleep. Ah, how good it would have felt to have had a bit of sleep! For we had not had any sleep for several nights. I had command of the company and felt sorry for my men. I gave the boys permission to sleep. I and one of the men agreed to keep watch and waken them if it became necessary. Now all the men slept peacefully with the exception of us two.

The fire had now burned the grass a long distance out on the prairie. By the light beyond us we could well see the movements of the redskins. They were around us the whole night. At about midnight, as the boys were sleeping soundly and I sat moping back of an earth embankment which was not particularly high, a shot rang out just in front of our intrenchments and was followed by a salvo of about one hundred shots; ^{The bullets whistled over my head and grains of sand} Bullets cut through the tents ^{whipped me in the face.} and killed a mule in the camp. The animals broke out of the enclosure. There arose a fearful din in the middle of the night. All the men had to go out to save the animals and get them back within the corral. The Indians heard the din, took fright and fled, and did not come back again that night.

The next day a search was made for the missing and both were found dead in the woods. It was thought that Beaver had sold

^{He was well armed} his life dearly. ^{and} had without doubt killed several redskins before he was overcome. The dead were buried in the sandbank by Crab Apple Creek, where their bones now rest. Beaver was a Freemason and was buried with the Freemason ceremonies. Before we began our return all the wagons, buggies, and other things which the Indians had not been able to take with them across the river, were destroyed and burned. We had with us a large number of Red River half-breeds who rode in their wooden carts. They now discarded their carts and took instead whatever they wished of that which the Indians had left behind ~~the~~. Some rode in buggies, others in good light wagons..

How the Indians had managed to cross the river was a puzzle to us. Nevertheless all the Indians were on the other side of the river when we came there.

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General Sibley's expedition ended here. Autumn was already approaching. There was therefore no sense in continuing the pursuit of the Indians longer. The General determined therefore to return to civilization while we still had something to live on. The redskins were punished severely enough for their misdeeds. Hundreds of them had fallen in the fights, thirty eight had been hanged and four hundred or more taken prisoners, besides which the soul of the massacre, Chief Little Crow, fell before Lawson's rifle. It has been said that Sibley did not accomplish very much by his expensive expeditions. That may be so. Nevertheless it was by the leadership of Sibley that the Indians were broken.

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Sibley came out later in the fall and had serious brushes with the Indians in one or two engagements.

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