CHAPTER XIII.

THE SIBLEY SCOUT.—A CLOSE CALL.

The day after the return of Crook’s party from their hunt, the General, who expected the wagon train and reinforcements from Fetterman to appear every moment, determined to send out a reconnoitering party along the base of the mountains, northwestward, to locate, if possible, the Indian village, and to take a general observation of the country. Lieut. Frederick W. Sibley, of Troop E, 2d Cavalry, with twenty-five picked men, drawn from the regiment, was detailed to accompany the scouts, Frank Gruard and Baptiste Pourier, on the reconnaissance. John Becker, a mule packer, who had had some experience as a guide, was also of the party. The scouts had ventured forward on our projected route, about twenty miles, two nights previously, but, having seen several parties of Sioux, returned to camp and made their report. An officer came around to my tent on the morning of Thursday, July 6th, and informed me of the plan. He said that the party would proceed toward the Little Big Horn river, and if no Indians were discovered there, they would proceed still further, feeling their way as cautiously as possible. As I was sent out to see the country and write it up, and not to dry rot around camp—something insupportable to most newspaper men—I made up my mind to accompany Lieutenant Sibley, who was, at that time, as
fine a type of the young American officer as could be found in the service, and I know that he has not gone backward since. His father, Colonel Sibley, a retired army officer, had died in Chicago, and several members of the family still reside in that city. I had, of course, to obtain General Crook’s permission to accompany the party. The General seemed somewhat surprised at my request, and hesitated about letting me go. However, he finally consented, but warned me that I might get into more trouble than, perhaps, I anticipated. Lieutenant Bourke asked me what kind of an epitaph I would like him to write for me, and the other officers rallied me good-naturedly about my proposed trip. I felt elated at having obtained leave to go, and hastened to inform Sibley, who expressed himself much pleased at my resolution. Grim Captain Wells only said to his orderly—“Bring Mr. Finerty a hundred rounds of Troop E ammunition.” This command was much more eloquent than an oration.

The party mustered at noon, beyond the creek, each man took a double supply of cartridges, and as much food as would last for some days. I think it was a mistake to start in daylight, but the scouts seems anxious to get forward, as the General was impatient for definite information of the Sioux. The scouts led us to camp on Big Goose creek, distant about thirteen miles from Crook’s headquarters, and there we remained until about sundown. After we had saddled up, Pourier thought he observed a horseman watching us from a shallow ravine. Gruard started off in hot pursuit, but was unable to come up with the suspicious object, which ran off like the wind, and was soon lost sight of in
the increasing gloom. The incident rendered the scouts rather uneasy, but they finally reached the conclusion that the object they saw was a stray elk. We moved forward rather circumspectly through the long grass, and I can still remember how we startled scores of sage hens from cover as we advanced. All kept strict silence. We marched, for the most part, over the old Fort C. F. Smith trail, Gruard keeping a sharp lookout from every vantage point ahead. The full moon rose behind us at about 8 o'clock, rendering every object as distinct as if it had been daylight. We looked like a phantom company marching through that great solitude, with the lofty sierra of the Big Horn looming up grandly on our left flank. We continued thus to ride, in almost dead silence, save for the occasional crunching of our horses' hoofs over the pebbles in the water courses we had to cross, until, perhaps, 2 o'clock in the morning. Then we halted at a point supposed to be only a few miles from the valley of the Little Big Horn, at least forty miles from Crook's main body, and bivouacked among some small, grass-covered bluffs. Our horses were half lariated, and pickets were posted on the heights to prevent surprise by the Indians, who, we rightly calculated, could not be very far off.

Early on the morning of Friday, July 7th, we were again in the saddle, pressing on cautiously toward where the scouts believed the Indian village to be. When we had reached a point several miles from our late bivouac, and close to the Little Big Horn river, Gruard, motioning us to halt, ascended a rocky mound directly in our front, leaving
his horse slightly below the crest. We observed the intrepid
scout's movements with some interest, because we knew we
were in the enemy's country, and might encounter Indians
at any moment. Scarcely had the scout taken a first cau-
tious look from the crest of the ridge, when a peculiar
motion of his hand summoned Baptiste Pourier to his side.
Baptiste dismounted also, leaving his pony below the crest.

He joined Gruard, and both scouts keenly observed the
country from between the rocks on the summit of the bluff,
through their glasses. Their observations finished, they
mounted their ponies and came galloping back to us in hot
haste. "Be quick, and follow me for your lives," cried
Gruard. We mounted immediately, and all followed his
lead. He led us through bluffs of red sandstone, which
formed, as it were, the footstool of the mountain chain, and
we were obliged, sometimes, to make our horses leap down
on rocky ledges, as much as six or seven feet, perhaps, in
order to follow his course. We soon reached a bluff of suf-
ficient size to conceal our horses on its westerly side, while
those of us who were provided with field-glasses—namely,
Sibley, Gruard, Pourier and myself—went up into the
rocks and waited to see what was coming.

"What did you see, Frank?" asked Sibley of the scout,
after we had settled down to make our observations.

"Only Sitting Bull's war party," Frank replied. "I knew
they would be here around the Little Big Horn without
coming at all."

We did not have long to wait for confirmation of his
words. Almost as he spoke, groups of mounted savages
appeared on the bluffs north and east of us. Every moment increased their numbers, and, scattered out in the Indian fashion, they seemed to cover the hilly country far and wide. Most of them were in full war costume, which added greatly to the picturesque character of the scene.

"They appear not to have seen us yet," observed Gruard. "Unless some of them hit upon our trail of this morning, we are comparatively safe." Gradually the right wing of the war party approached the ground over which we had so recently ridden. We watched their movements, as may be supposed, with breathless interest. Suddenly an Indian, attired in a red blanket, halted, looked for a moment at the ground, and then began to ride around in a circle. "Now we had better look out," said Gruard. "That fellow has found our trail, sure, and they will be after us in five minutes."

"What, then, are we to do?" asked the young officer in a calm, steady voice.

"Well, we have but one chance of escape," said Gruard, "let us lead our horses into the mountains and try to cross them. But, in the meantime, let us prepare for the worst."

Then we left the rocks and went down among the soldiers, who, poor fellows, seemed ready to face any fate with manly courage.

Lieutenant Sibley said to them: "Men, the Indians have discovered us. We will have to do some fighting. If we can make an honorable escape, all together, we will do it. If retreat should prove impossible let no man surrender. Die in your tracks, because the Indians show no mercy."
“All right, sir,” was the simple and soldierly reply of the men, and, without more ado, the whole party followed the officer and the scouts up the rough mountain side which, at that point, was steep and difficult to a discouraging extent. The Indians must have seen us by that time, because they were scarcely more than a mile distant, and numbers of them had halted and appeared to be in consultation.

We continued to retreat until we struck an old Sioux hunting trail on the first ridge of the mountains. “This path leads to the snowy range,” said Gruard, who had hunted in that region when a captive among the Sioux. “If we can reach there without being overtaken or cut off,” he continued, “our chances are pretty fair.” Most of the trail was fairly good, and we proceeded in a direction west of north at a brisk trot. Having traveled five miles or so, and seeing no Indians following us up, Gruard came to the conclusion that the savages had given up the pursuit, or else did not care about attacking us among the mountains, as they are not much accustomed to the more elevated ranges. Our horses were pretty badly used up, and some of the men were suffering from hunger and thirst. Therefore, it was deemed best for us to halt, make coffee and allow our horses to recuperate on the abundant herbage around. We selected a shady spot, and were glad to stretch our weary limbs under the umbrageous trees. But, a very little later on, we came near paying with our lives for the privilege of brief repose. Our halt lasted an hour—possibly longer, because we had begun to believe that the Indians would not follow us into the recesses of the mountains, and grew, for the time
being, rather careless. It was afternoon, I think, when we again saddled up and pushed forward, feeling much invigorated. We crossed what Gruard thought was the main branch of Tongue river, or else a tributary of the Little Big Horn, flowing clear, cold and deep through the mountain valleys, and were within full view of the superb snowy range. The same splendid type of scenery that I had observed when out with Crook's hunting party, further southward, was visible on every side. The trail led through natural parks, open spaces, bordered by rocks and pine trees, on the mountain sides. At times the country grew comparatively open. We were riding in single file, the scouts leading, and kept tolerably open order. Suddenly John Becker, the packer, and a soldier who had lingered somewhat in rear, rode up to the lieutenant, exclaiming, "The Indians! the Indians!"

Gruard and the rest of us looked over our right shoulders, and saw a party of the red fiends, in their war bonnets, riding rapidly along that flank at no great distance. We had reached a sort of narrow plain in the mountain range, with woods upon our left, woods upon our front, and high rocks and timber on our right. "Keep well to the left, close to the woods," said Gruard to Lieutenant Sibley. Scarcely was the warning uttered, when from the rocks and trees upon our right, distant, perhaps, 200 yards came a ringing volley. The Indians had fired upon us, slightly wounding the horses of two or three of the soldiers, and also the animal which I rode. "Fall back on the woods!" cried the scout, and every horse was wheeled toward the timber on the left. My horse stumbled from the shock of the bullet, but
recovered its feet almost immediately, and bore me in safety to the edge of the timber, under the rapid Indian fire, which, fortunately for us, did not at the moment possess the essential quality of accuracy. There was no need to urge our horses to cover, because they were badly stampeded by the firing, after the manner of most American horses, and we were soon dismounted in the edge of the woods. Lieutenant Sibley, before we tied the animals, made some of the soldiers fire upon the Indians, which had the effect of confining them to the rocks. The savages did not come up to their ordinary marksmanship during this affair, for not a man of ours was seriously wounded, although they succeeded in injuring several other horses by their subsequent volleys, some fatally. We soon had such of the horses as could keep their feet tied to the trees, near the verge of the wood, where, also, Lieutenant Sibley formed us into a semi-circular skirmish line, and matters soon became exceedingly hot in our front. The trees and fallen timber, particularly the latter, served us admirably for breastworks, and we blazed away for some time with right good will. The Lieutenant warned us not to waste our lead, and we slackened fire somewhat. We could see, occasionally, the Indian leader, dressed in what appeared to be white buckskin, and wearing a gorgeous war bonnet, directing the movements of his warriors. Gruard thought he recognized in him White Antelope, a Cheyenne chief famed for his enterprise and skill. He led one charge against us, and every man on the front of the skirmish line fired upon him and his party. We did not know until long afterward that our volley put an
end to his career, but so it was. White Antelope led no more charges after that day. His death was a fortunate thing for us, because it damped the spirits of his men, and rendered them more cautious than they would have otherwise been. But he did not fall until he had made it exceedingly interesting for our little party, battling there in the edge of the woods. The Indians lay low among the tall rocks and pine trees, and kept up an almost incessant fire upon our position, filling the trees around us with their lead. I could hear their bullets rattling against the pine tree trunks like hail-stones on the roof of a barn, and it was not comfortable music either. Not a man of our party expected to leave that spot with life, because all well knew that the noise of the firing would bring to the attack every Sioux and Cheyenne within reach, while we were fully fifty miles from any hope of re-inforcement. The savages evidently aimed at our horses, thinking that by killing them all means of retreat would be cut off from us.

Meanwhile their numbers continued to increase, and they seemed to swarm on the open slopes of the hills within the range of our vision. We could distinctly hear their savage, encouraging yells to each other, and Gruard said that Sioux and Cheyennes were allied in the attacking force, all of whom appeared to be in great glee at the prospect of a scalping entertainment at our expense. They had evidently recognized Gruard, whom they heartily hated, because they called him by his Sioux name, Standing Bear, and one savage shouted to him, "Do you think there are no men but yours in this country?"
The Indians were prodigal of their ammunition, but we reserved our fire until a savage showed himself. Then we would let him have it without stint. Thus we fought and kept them at bay—for Indians rarely ever seriously attempt to take by storm a position such as we occupied—for several hours, but we could tell by the extension of their fire from our front to the right and left flanks that they were being reinforced from the villages in the neighborhood of the Little Big Horn, and we felt that unless a special providence interfered, we could never carry our lives away from that spot. We were truly looking death in the face, and so close that we could feel his cold breath upon our foreheads and his icy grip upon our hearts.

Nevertheless, I remember that, in one of the intervals of the firing, doubtless the one that followed the fall of the Cheyenne chief, I picked a few specimens of the mountain crocus and forget-me-not growing within my reach and placed them between the leaves of my note-book, where they are preserved, almost perfectly to this day. And yet I felt anything but indifferent to the fate that seemed to await me, and would have given the world, did I have the power of its bestowal, to be back safe and sound in Crook's camp again. Life seemed particularly sweet throughout that eventful day. Close acquaintance with death is not a pleasing sensation.

As the volume of the Indian fire seemed to increase, "no surrender" was the word passed from man to man around the thin skirmish line. Each one of us would, if we found it necessary, have blown out his own brains rather than fall
alive into Indian hands. Doubtless, if we had remained long enough, the Indians would have relieved us of all responsibility on that score. A disabling wound would have been worse than death. I had often wondered how a man felt when he thought he saw inevitable, sudden doom upon him. I know it now, for I had little or no idea that we could effect our escape, and, mentally at least, I could scarcely have felt my position more keenly if an Indian knife or bullet had wounded me in some vital spot. So, I think, it was with all the command, but nobody seemed, therefore, to weaken. It is one thing, however, to face death in the midst of the excitement of a general battle. It is quite another thing to face him in almost cold blood, with the certain prospect of your dishonored body being first mutilated in a revolting manner, and then left to feed the wolf or the vulture among the savage mountains. After a man once sees the skull and cross bones as clearly as our party saw them on the afternoon of Friday, July 7, 1876, no subsequent glimpse of grim mortality can possibly impress him in the same manner.

Well, the eternal shadows seemed to be fast closing around us; the Indian bullets were hitting nearer every moment, and the Indian yell was growing stronger and fiercer, when a hand was laid on my shoulder; and Rufus, a soldier who was my neighbor on the skirmish line, said, “The rest are retiring. Lieutenant Sibley tells us to do the same.” I quietly withdrew from the foot of the friendly pine tree, which, with a fallen trunk that lay almost across it, kept at least a dozen Indian bullets from making havoc of my body, and prepared to obey. As I passed by Sibley, who wanted to see every
man under his command in the line of retreat before he stirred himself, the young officer said, "Go to your saddle bags, with caution, and take all your ammunition. We are going to abandon our remaining horses. The Indians are getting all around us, so we must take to the rocks and thick timber on foot. It seems to be our only chance of escape." I did as directed, but felt a pang at leaving my noble animal, which was bleeding from a wound in the right side. We dared not shoot our surviving horses, for that would have discovered our movement to the enemy.

Gruard advised this strategy, saying that as the Indians occupied the passes east, west and north of us—all of them being difficult at the best—we could not possibly effect a retreat on horseback, even if all our animals had escaped unwounded. If the grass had happened to be a little bit dryer, and it would not take long to dry, as there had been only a light thunder shower during the afternoon, the Indians, in Gruard's opinion, would have tried to burn us out of the timber. He bluntly told the Lieutenant that the position was untenable, at such a distance from Crook's camp and even if a man could succeed in getting through to the General, we could not expect timely relief, and all would be over with us long before an attempt at rescue could be made. Therefore, Gruard said, if Lieutenant Sibley did not choose to take his advice, upon the officer should rest the responsibility of whatever might happen.

There was no time to be lost if we meant to get away at all, and certainly there was nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by remaining where we were. Sibley, although very
averse to retreating, finally yielded to the calm advice of the scout, whose great experience among the Sioux rendered him familiar with all the methods of Indian warfare. The arguments used by Gruard were warmly seconded by Baptiste Pourier, one of the most reliable scouts on the frontier, who was acquainted from childhood with the subtle tactics of the savages.

When the retreat was decided on, we acted with an alacrity which only men who have, at some time, struggled for their lives can understand. A couple of scattering volleys and some random shots were fired, to make the savages believe that we were still in position. As we had frequently reserved our fire during the fight, our silence would not be noticed immediately. We then retired, in Indian file, through the trees, rocks and fallen timber in rear of us. Our horses were, evidently, plainly visible to the Indians—a circumstance that facilitated our escape. We retreated for, perhaps, a mile through the forest, which was filled with rugged boulders and the trunks of fallen pine trees, through which no horse could penetrate, waded one of the branches of Tongue river up to our waists, and gained the slippery rocks of the great mountain ridge, where no mounted Indians, who are as lazy on foot as they are active on horseback, could pursue us. Then, as we paused to catch our breath, we heard, in the distance, five or six ringing volleys in succession. It was most likely the final fire delivered by the Indians before they charged our late position, with the hope of getting our scalps.

"That means we are safe for the present," said Gruard,
“but let us lose no time in putting more rocks between us and the White Antelope.” We followed his advice with a feeling of thankfulness that those only who have passed through such an ordeal can appreciate. How astonished and chagrined the reinforced savages must have been when they ran in upon the maimed horses and did not get a single scalp! Even under such circumstances as we were placed in, we could not help indulging in a laugh at their expense. But we had escaped one danger only to encounter another. Fully fifty miles of mountain, rock, forest, river and cañon lay between us and Crook’s camp. We were unable to carry any food upon our persons. The weather was close, owing to the thunder-shower, and we threw away everything superfluous in the way of clothing. With ravenous Indians behind us, and uncounted precipices before us, we found our rifles, and what remained of our 100 rounds of ammunition each, a sufficient load to carry. The brave and skillful Gruard, the ablest of scouts, seconded by the fearless Pourier, conducted our retreat through the mountain wilderness, and we marched, climbed and scrambled over impediments that at any other time might have been impossible to us, until about midnight, when absolute fatigue compelled us to make a halt. Then we bivouaced under the projections of an immense pile of rocks on the very summit of some unknown mountain peak, and there witnessed one of the most terrible wind and hail storms that can be imagined. The trees seemed to fall by the hundred, and their noise, as they broke off and fell, or were uprooted by the roots, resembled rapid discharges of field artillery. To add
to our discomfort, the thermometer suddenly fell several degrees, and, being attired in summer campaign costume only, we suffered greatly from the cold.

Almost before dawn we were again stumbling through the rocks and fallen trees, and, about sunrise, reached the tremendous cañon cut through the mountain by what is called the southern branch of Tongue river. Most of the men were too much exhausted to make the descent of the cañon, so Gruard, finding a fairly practicable path, led us to an open valley down by the river, on the left bank, as hard as we could walk, for if discovered there by any considerable body of Indians, we could only halt, and, worn out as most of the little band were, die together. Fortune favored us, and we made the right bank of the stream unobserved, being then, according to the calculations of the scouts, about five and twenty miles from Crook’s encampment. In our front, toward the east, we could see the plain through which Tongue river flowed, where, no doubt, as it was then a fine game country, hostile Indians abounded, while our only safe avenue of escape was to cross the stream and climb the enormous precipice that formed the right side of the cañon. But the dauntless Gruard was equal to the emergency. He scaled the gigantic wall diagonally, and led us along what looked like a mere squirrel path, not more than a foot wide, with an abyss of, perhaps, 500 feet below, and a sheer wall of rock, 200 feet high, above us. After about an hour’s herculean toil, we gained the crest and saw the point of mountain, some twenty miles distant, where lay our camp and comrades. This, as may well be
imagined, was a blissful vision, but we were half dead from fatigue, and some of us were almost faminestricken. Yet the indefatigable Gruard would not stop until we reached the eastern foot-hills, where we made, so to speak, a dive into the deep valley to obtain water—our only refreshment on that hard, rugged road. The leaves from the pine trees made the hillsides as slippery as glass, and where there was neither grass nor tree, the broken stones and “shale” made walking absolutely painful. Scarcely had we slaked our thirst when Gruard led us up to the hills again, and we had barely entered the timber belt, when the scout uttered a warning “hush,” and threw himself upon the ground, motioning us to do the same. He pointed toward the north, and there, wheeling around the base of the point of the mountain we had doubled so shortly before, appeared another strong party of the Sioux in open order. The savages were riding along quite leisurely, and, although fairly numerous, were evidently only the advance or rear guard of some larger party. This sight made us desperate. Every man examined his carbine and looked to his ammunition. We all felt that life would be too dearly purchased by further flight, and, following the example of the brave young Sibley and the gallant scouts, we took up a position among the rocks on the knoll we had reached, determined, if called upon, to sell our lives as dearly as possible.

“We are in pretty hard luck, it would seem,” said Sibley addressing me, “but d—— them, we’ll show the red scoundrels how white men can fight and die, if necessary. Men,” he said, addressing the soldiers, “we have a good position; let every shot dispose of an Indian!”
At that moment not a man among us felt any inclination to get away. Desperation and a thirst for vengeance on the savages had usurped the place of the animal instinct to save our lives. In such moments mind rises superior to matter and soul to the nerves. But fortune spared us the ordeal of another fight in our weakened condition. Our position, as the lieutenant had said, was a good one. On the left, or north of us, there was a difficult precipice, which hung above the stream of whose waters we had just drunk to satiety. The woods grew quite thinly on our front, toward the east, and south of us was an almost open slope. Our rear was well secured by an irregular line of huge boulders, and rocks of good size afforded us fair shelter in nearly all directions. There was also some fallen timber, but not enough to make a serious blaze if the enemy should try their favorite maneuver of burning us out. The Sioux, fortunately for them, and, no doubt, for us, too, failed to observe our party, and did not advance high enough on the hills to find our trail. They kept eastward, following a branch of Tongue river.

The excitement over, we all again felt thoroughly worn out, and fell asleep, all except the tireless and ever vigilant scouts, and awoke at dark feeling somewhat refreshed, but painfully hungry. Not a man of us, whatever the risk, Sioux or no Sioux, could endure the mountain route longer, so we took our wearied, jaded lives into our hands, and struck out for Crook’s camp across the plains, fording Big Goose creek up to our armpits at 3 o’clock in the morning, the water being as cold as the melt-
ing mountain snows could make it. Two of the men, Sergeant Cornwell and Private Collins, absolutely refused to ford the creek, as neither could swim, and the current was exceedingly rapid. Sibley threatened and coaxed them alternately in vain, but those men, who could face bullets and tomahawks without flinching, would not be induced to cross that stream. They begged to be allowed to hide in the bushes on the north side of the creek, until horses could be sent after them. Sibley, after providentially escaping so many dangers, could not sacrifice the rest of his command for two obstinately foolish men, and the scouts urged him to push on. This he did reluctantly, but there was no alternative. We judged that our main camp must still be some dozen miles away on Little Goose creek, but every step, chiefly because of the toil attending the previous mountain journey, became laborious. My readers can judge for themselves how badly we were used up; when it took us four hours to accomplish six miles. The rocks had broken our boots and skinned our feet, while starvation had weakened our frames. Only a comparatively few were vigorous enough to maintain a decently rapid pace. About 5 o'clock we saw some more Indians toward the east, but at some distance. We took no pains, whatever, to conceal ourselves, which, indeed, would have been a vain task on the nearly naked plain; and the savages, if they saw us, which is highly probable, must have mistaken us for an outlying picket, and being only, comparatively speaking, a handful, kept away. At about 6:30 o'clock we saw two horses grazing on a little knoll, and the carbines glittering in their "boots" on the
saddles proclaimed the riders to be cavalry men. Presently the men rose out of the long grass and made for their guns, but we hailed them and they recognized us. They were men of the 2d Cavalry, who had obtained permission to go hunting, and who were bound for Tongue river, where they would have certainly fallen in with the Sioux. Lieutenant Sibley sent them into camp for horses and some rations, and also told them to ask for an escort to proceed as far as Big Goose creek for the two men who had stopped there. Most of Sibley’s men threw themselves on the ground, unable to move further, and awaited the arrival of the horses. Within an hour and a half Captains Dewees and Rawolle, of the 2d Cavalry, came out to us with led horses and some cooked provisions. They greeted us most warmly, and, having aided us most kindly, proceeded to pick up Sergeant Cornwall and Private Collins, who were found all safe, concealed in the thick undergrowth of Big Goose creek, and who reached camp a few hours after ourselves. It was 10 o’clock Sunday morning, July 9, 1876, when we rode in among the tents, amid congratulations from officers and men alike.

Thus, after passing through scenes of great peril and privation, our little band found itself safe in Camp Cloud Peak, surrounded by devoted and hospitable comrades. After we had somewhat recovered from our great fatigue, and refreshed ourselves by a most welcome bath in the creek, we were obliged to relate our experiences again and again for the benefit of the entire “outfit.” All agreed that Frank Gruard, for his good judgment and the skill with which he managed our retreat, deserved to take rank among
the foremost of scouts and plainmen. Nor did quiet, intrepid Baptiste Pourier lack admirers around the camp-fires of Crook's brigade. The oldest among Indian fighters, including such officers as Colonel Royall and Lieutenant Lawson, concurred in saying that escape from danger so imminent and so appalling, in a manner so ingenious and successful, was almost without a parallel in the history of Indian warfare. It was fortunate, they said, for our party that an officer possessing the coolness and good sense of Lieutenant Sibley had command of it. A rash, bull-headed commander would have disregarded the advice of Gruard and Pourier, and would thus have brought ruin and death upon all of us. Colonel Royall, in the absence of General Crook, who was in the mountains on a hunt, was kind enough to say that while a spare horse remained in his regiment, it would be at my disposal, in lieu of the one I had lost in the Sibley Scout, as the reconnaissance has ever since been called by the American army.