

country and migrate to Lapwai in Idaho, the site of one of the Whitman mission stations. Part of the Nez Perces, in their desire for peace with the United States, agreed to go, but others refused, relying upon the treaty of 1855. But our treaties with the Indians have had even less virtue than "scraps of paper." Troops were sent to remove the unwilling Nez Perces by force. It was then that the masterly energies of Chief Joseph came into play. He placed himself at the head of his rebellious people, intending to lead them into Canada, where, as he said, the Government kept faith with its wards.

The Federal troops in that region were commanded by General O. O. Howard, whose ardent piety did not interfere with the execution of inhuman orders from his superiors. His first move was to block the exits to Canada, expecting to pen up the Indians in the Wallowa Valley and carry the entire tribe into captivity. But Joseph found a way out over the Lolo Pass, which led into the Bitter Root Valley, then a wild region but now a paradise. His plan was to proceed toward Canada through the Mullan Pass, not far from Helena, but, learning that it was held by a strong guard, he turned southward and sought shelter in the Big Hole Basin, a retreat which seemed secure. General Howard's troops were four days in the rear and Joseph knew of no other danger. But Major Gibbon had pursued him with a battalion of cavalry which attacked the sleeping Indians before dawn. Confused at first, the Nez Perces soon rallied and inflicted a terrible defeat upon the foe. Gibbon's cavalry was rendered so helpless that he could not interfere with the movements of the Indians, who quietly decamped from the Big Hole, made their way eastward and northward through the Yellowstone Park and across the valleys of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers to within eighty miles of the Canadian border. Here, on the western slope of the Bears Paw Mountains, they camped to replenish their store of provisions by a buffalo hunt.

During their flight before the Federal troops the Indians had committed no depredations. They injured nobody and paid for the supplies which they received. This is strictly true of Joseph's band, whatever may be said of other and less competently commanded parties. But the military made no distinctions between the bad and good. They visited upon the heads of the innocent the real or imaginary crimes of the guilty. It fell to Colonel Miles to strike the last and killing blow at the fleeing Nez Perces. Passing round the northern flank of the Bears Paw Mountains, he came upon their camp early in the morning of the last day of September. The year was 1877. Mr. Titus narrates in careful detail the events that followed. If any white reader can peruse the account with pride, we do not envy his stone heart and moral insensibility. The usual attempt was made to surprise the Indians, but it failed.