

her comforts conveyed there. As the artillery changed their position and galloped past her, they shouted to her, "Take your apron off, mother, it's a mark for the Boers." A stretcher-bearer was shot close beside her, but she, unharmed, continued to do her utmost for the poor wounded men, who were carried past her on their way from the medical officers, who, with their bearer companies, were on the field of battle, to those who were waiting to give them further help, a little way back and out of the firing line. Nourishment and cheering words she gave them, and received blessings in return.

General Sir Penn Symons was one who gladly took some of the beef-tea she offered; describing it in her own words, she said, "He didna look sae verra bad, and just said, with a wee smile, 'I'm not much hurt, I'll be with you all to-morrow.'"

That night she spent among the wounded in a store shed near the battle-field. Some were our men, some were Boers—many of them dying. She was giving some nourishment to one of our men, when the pleading, anxious look of a dying Boer near her made her think he also wished for some; so, kneeling beside him on the floor, she raised his head, and put the feeding-cup to his lips. An able-bodied Boer, standing at the door, saw her, and, coming up to where she was, gave her a terrible kick in the side. She never really recovered from the result of this kick, and there is no doubt that it hastened her death. The very thought that such men can exist, makes one's blood boil. In spite of the suffering, she remained through the night, helping where she could. Her helplessness added to her difficulty in escaping from Dundee, which she had to do very suddenly on the next night. Luckily, a friend, who had the means of driving away, took her with him—a drive full of danger, and of terror to all but such a brave soul, where, as they pressed into the darkness, they expected to be shot at each moment, for the Boers were already pouring into the town. Mrs. Wier had no idea that our troops were leaving Dundee, and that she must go till the Cape cart called for her after dark, and she was told to come, silently and quickly. She just caught up the photograph of her dead daughter, and left all. It was a terrible wrench to her to leave home and hope without a moment's warning. Her deepest regret seemed equally divided between two things—that the fine ham she had boiled and laid out ready on the table (thinking some of her boys might be glad of it on the morrow) should be food for the Boers, and that they should get an embossed silver bowl, which her father had brought from India or Burmah, and which she described as "just pure silver, bashed out."

In those early days there were very few army nurses in Natal, and they were much wanted in Ladysmith and Maritzburg. Mrs. Wier did what she could to help, with that motive alone—she was not paid, but if she was of use to any sufferer, that was enough for her.

Next we find her at Estcourt, and by this time there were a good many more nurses in the Colony. Still, she managed to be the one to go out in the train that followed on the armoured train disaster. Here again, with her box of comforts and her spirit lamp, she was of use.

Then at Frere, when we occupied that place, in the very first ambulance waggon that came in with the column, there sat Mrs. Wier, contentedly knitting, delighted to be once more at the front. How she managed to get there is not known, but her aim and object was to make herself of use. Later, when the bridges were mended, she got leave to meet the ambulance trains, and give cocoa and beef-tea to any one who wished for it. Proud indeed was she, when on one occasion Prince Christian accepted a mug of cocoa from her; it was a joy to her that her Queen's grandson had taken refreshment from her hand.

For months before the end of the siege, she prepared a cart of food to take into Ladysmith, and after hope deferred for many a long day, the glad time came at last. She had made all arrangements, and rode into Ladysmith, in triumph, with her cart of comforts, just a day or two after the relief—no small task for a suffering woman, but the willing spirit was there.

Welcomed, indeed, was she, and very useful, too. Starving men flocked to her cart, and all too quickly her stores vanished. She found one man, in a house in Ladysmith, a trooper in the Imperial Light Horse, both wounded and very ill, at death's door. For some reason he had not been moved to Intombi Hospital—perhaps he was too ill. He had no nurse but his kind comrades, so our good friend took him under her wing, and coaxed him back to the world with carefully administered food and utmost care. Her stores were almost gone, and good fresh food—chicken and eggs for choice—she must get, if her patient was to live. Again and again she turned over in her mind the best plan of getting these. Sitting by his bedside one still night, she heard, from far in the distance, a sound that made her heart beat. Afraid to trust her ears, she went out into the open air, listening and hoping—yes, the faint crow of a cock was repeated again and again—of all strange sounds to be heard in a starving town. Dawn saw her trekking off in the direction of "the cock that crew." Surely and cleverly she tracked him down to a Boer farm beyond the river, where a fowl-house met her sight.

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