



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

them changed. Yet to do this, without much delay, was difficult, as all the officers whose authority was adequate to her purpose were many miles beyond. While she was deliberating upon the dilemma, she observed a train of mule teams, loaded with freight for the army, about to start, and with characteristic determination resolved that her supplies should go with it. She went immediately to the master of transportation, who was familiar with the popular name of Mother Bickerdyke, and succeeded in persuading him to allow a small portion of her goods to be carried upon each wagon. By this means she was enabled to convey everything that was necessary for immediate use to its destination. Taking her seat in an ambulance, she was soon upon the road toward the mountain defiles of Georgia. It was well that she lost but little time in Ringold, for ere the long day's journey was at an end, the ominous roar of distant cannon broke like a discord through the minor notes of bird and insect life, that floated upon the evening dusk.

She knew too well the meaning of those solemn sounds, and her face grew pale, though her heart leaped forward at the tidings. The next morning while all nature was resplendent with dew, glittering in the clear light of May, she arrived at the battlefield of Resaca. Knapsacks and overcoats were piled in little pyramids under the trees, and all about, wounded men lay upon the sod, while the hospital tents were being pitched. One by one they were borne into these hastily-arranged shelters, after

having had their wounds dressed by surgeons, whose operating tables were placed under wide-spreading trees, in the shade of which their duties were performed. Ghastly fragments of human bodies were piled upon the ground, and from this sickening sight, Mrs. Bickerdyke turned away to attend upon the pitiable beings who had suffered such losses.

Kneeling upon the ground, she bound up gaping wounds, and bathed agonized faces. She gave spirits and wine to those who were fainting, and thus labored until the field hospitals were made ready.

Then she appeared bustling about a rude, yet well-supplied kitchen, that seemed to have sprung into existence by means of such magic as that attributed to Aladdin's lamp. Nourishing food, so much needed by men in the prostrate condition of these soldiers, was given to them freely. To them it came as a token that even here they were within the reach of kindred and friends. It was manna from Heaven in the wilderness.

In a short time the patients were removed into the town of Resaca, now in possession of the Union soldiers, and placed in comfortable buildings, appropriated for military hospital purposes. Mrs. Bickerdyke remained at her post of duty here, while the valiant Federal forces were pursuing General Johnston's retreating army, and preparing for another battle. During this period, nurses arrived from the North, and the hospitals were completely organized. Well-arranged kitchens were prepared, and likewise fine laundries; so that proper food and clothing were sup-

plied in abundance. This was accomplished principally through Mrs. Bickerdyke's enterprising spirit and ardent zeal, which always impressed those around her, and aroused in them similar qualities, if such were dormant. This faculty of discovering the latent powers of others, and the ability to incite them to action, gave every work in which she interested herself an impetus that greatly promoted its success.

When the army again attacked the Confederates, this noble woman was free to follow it into the field, and there minister to the wounded and dying, with the tenderness and efficiency that made her so widely known and so highly esteemed.

At Kingston, Georgia, Mrs. Bickerdyke labored in the hospitals, and there was much for her to do; as there were more than nine thousand disabled soldiers placed in them, and treated until they were able to travel to the more salubrious regions of the North. Early in the summer, many of the men, not being acclimated, were attacked with fever and sunstroke, and the cool, airy wards of the Kingston hospitals were, to such, havens of refuge most eagerly sought. When suffering from wounds, the light tent, or even the branches of trees arched into a shelter, may be quite comfortable and healthful for men accustomed to the atmospheric changes of all seasons, as the veterans were; but the burning agonies of fever and sunstroke, that seemed to make the strongest wither like a wilting plant, demand more careful treatment.

Through the bewildering sensations caused by feverish delirium, the only things that calm and soothe