

Glen Siding
Orange River Colony.

Thursday
January 31st

Dearest Grandma,

I feel that it
is time I wrote to you again
so here goes. I have been at this
place now just twelve weeks
& on the whole have enjoyed
myself very well as far as
circumstances allow though
naturally there is the ever-present

longing to get home again.
The country is still in a terribly
unsettled state & the people don't
seem in the least to realise how
far the country is from being
conquered. Of course we at present
hold all the railways in the
country & are in possession of ^{all} the
chief towns but beyond this
we hold very little else: it is
a positive fact that one can
never leave the railway any
distance or any town either without
running the risk of being
fired at by some bandit belonging

to one of the many roving
bands that are the curse of the
country. Those that are still
fighting may be divided into three
classes, firstly those that are being
kept against their will or commands
by their leaders & who are afraid to
leave them, secondly the leaders
themselves & other desperadoes including
many Cape Rebels who are fighting
with the halter round their necks;
thirdly those who are still unaware
of the true state of affairs & imagine
that they are fighting a just cause
& must win, & are led on by all sorts
of ~~false~~ malicious games by their

leaders: the latter certainly
form the largest class. They
go ~~of~~ about the country in
bands of 100 to 1000, & owing
to being very well mounted &
being able to live off the land
they are very difficult to catch.
Our difficulties are very much
increased by the ridiculous
leniency with which we treat
them: no farm is ever allowed
to be looted for provisions, so
we have to carry all food with
us which of course considerably
hampers our mobility.

as far as one can judge the war is likely to last for some considerable time yet as the Dutch are so terribly obstinate, & the women too are especially bitter & urge the men on to fight.

The Volunteer Companies have been promised to be allowed to go home after a year's service out here, but I rather doubt if the promise is kept unless a very bright aspect is put upon things before April when our year is up. Personally, as you may imagine, I am quite 'fed up' with the

business & am longing to be back
at home & at Oxford again.

We have not been attacked ever since
we have been in this spot but we
never know when it may come &
it is really a great strain, the continual
expectation & I may call it, disappoint-
ment, for we have a score we wish
to wipe off the slate! Lately we have
especially harassed by rumours of
impending attacks as there have
been several large bodies moving
about in the neighbourhood: we
occupy a very important strategical
position in that we are the first
station north of Bloemfontein &

& are guarding two very large &
valuable bridges over the Modder,
the loss of which would very
seriously interfere with the railway
traffic & all operations in the
North, so it would be worth any
risk while to blow them up but
it would trouble them exceedingly
to do so! De Wet has been in the
neighbourhood lately & we have
had to turn out frequently at
very short notice owing to alarms.
One has to ~~at~~ turn night into
day, & day into night nowadays;
we have to live in the trenches by
night, & what with that & visiting the

sentries one gets very little peace
by night. Sleep is certainly the
thing we miss most, & we have
to take as much of it as we can
by day as far as the flies &
unmerciful heat allow us. As far as
living is concerned we do uncommonly
well & live off the fat ~~of the~~ ~~of the~~
of the land & drink of the best.
It is certainly a good thing to
live up to the motto 'Eat, drink,
& be merry etc' in these troublous
times. There is a little
shorting to be done in the way of
such & porran & guinea fowl, but

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one has to feel very keen to
go out & face the heat which
during the day is terrible.

Next month ^(month) the buck-shooting
commences & I hope to have
some good fun with them. There are
some baboons on a hill some distance
away but I have never had
the energy to go out & put one.

I occasionally drive into Blumentown
or go by train just to have a chat
at the ~~Club~~ Club & buy stores.

Blumen is a terribly hot place - worse
than this - & terribly dusty. Our
existence - there are five officers here -

is periodically brightened by
picnic parties from Bloemfontein
consisting of nurses & doctors with
whom we have most entertaining &
recherche luncheons by the river-
side. We had a most interesting
& hilarious time at Xmas: I
dare say Mother will have sent
you out one of the newspaper
cuttings on the subject that I
sent her. I have ^{had} myself photographed
here & have sent them home: I
dare say you have received one by
now. I have taken a series of

snapshots that ought to prove
very interesting in years to
come. We are expecting the rains
shortly, & when it does start,
there is no 'half & half' about
the business but it pours -
much harder than any ever
seen in England - for a fortnight
or end by which time the
dry beds of the rivers have
become raging torrents & the
whole aspect of the country
is changed. It is marvellous
the way the look of a river is
changed in half an hour: you

would hardly believe it would ^{be} the
same place. I hope Uncle Bache
received the stamps I sent him
for Mrs. And now I must
end with all best love to
everybody & especially, & trusting
that it will be my good luck
to cross the bay to see you
again in the summer,

I remain,

Yr affectionate grandson,

F. A. Simons

Would you please send this on to
Uncle Harry & Aunt Emily to whom all love

Mrs T. W. Simonds

147 East 34th St

New York

U. S. A.

