THE DESERTER.

By Capt. CHARLES KING, U. S. A.

Author of "Dunraven Ranch," "The Colonel's Daughter," "Marion's Faith," Etc., Etc.

"Mr. Hayne, this is Ross. I come with Foster and Graham to say how deeply we regret your injuries, and to tender our sympathy and our services."

There was dead silence for a moment. Foster and Graham stood with hearts that beat unaccountably hard, looking at each other in perplexity. Would he never reply?

The answer came at last—a question:

"To what injuries do you allude, Mr. Ross?"

Even in the twilight they could see the sudden flush of the Scotchman's cheek. He was a blunt fellow, but, as the senior, had been chosen spokesman for the three. The abrupt question staggered him. It was a second or two before he could collect himself.

"I mean the injuries at the fire," he replied.

This time no answer whatever. It was growing too painful. Ross looked in bewilderment at the bandaged face and and again broke the silence:

"We hope you won't deny us the right to be of service, Mr. Hayne. If there is anything we can do that you need or would like"—hesitatingly.

"You have nothing further to say?" asked the calm voice from the pillow.

"I—don't know what else we can say," faltered Ross, after an instant's pause.

The answer came, firm and prompt, but icily cool:

"Then there is nothing that you can do."

And the three took their departure, sore at heart.

There were others of the infantry who had purposed going to see Hayne that evening, but the story of Ross's experience put an end to it all. It was plain that even now Mr. Hayne made the condition of the faintest advance from his regimental comrades a full confession of error. He would have no less.

That evening the colonel sat by his bedside and had an earnest talk. He ventured to expostulate with the invalid on his refusal to go to the major's or to Stannard's. He could have so many comforts and delicacies there that would be impossible here. He did not refer to edibles and drinkables alone, he said, with a smile; but Hayne's patient face gave no sign of relenting. He heard the colonel through, and then said slowly and firmly:

"I have not acted hastily, sir; I appreciate their kindness, and am not ungrateful. Five years ago my whole life was changed. From that time to this I have done without a host of things that used to be indispensable, and have abjured them one and all for a single luxury that I cannot live without—the luxury of utter independence—the joy of knowing that I owe no man anything—the blessing of being beholden to no one on earth for a single service I cannot pay. It is the one luxury left me."

CHAPTER VII.

"You shall not go!"

It was a clear winter's evening, sharply cold, about a week after the fire, when, as Mrs. Rayner came down the stairway, equipped for a walk, and was passing the parlor door without stopping, Miss Travers caught sight of and called to her:

"Are you going walking, Kate? Do wait a moment, and I'll go with you."

Any one in the hall could have shared the author's privilege and seen the expression of annoyance and confusion that appeared on Mrs. Rayner's face.

"I thought you were out. Did not Mr Graham take you walking?"

"He did; but we wandered into Mrs. Waldron's, and she and the major begged us to stay, and we had some music, and then the first call sounded for retreat and Mr. Graham had to go, so he brought me home. I've had no walk and need exercise."

"But I don't like you to be out after sunset. That cough of yours"——

"Disappeared the day after I got here, Kate, and there hasn't been a vestige of it since. This high, dry climate put an end to it. No, I'll be ready in one minute more. Do wait."

Mrs. Rayner's hand was turning the knob while her sister was hurrying to the front door and drawing on her heavy jacket as she did so. The former faced her impatiently:

"I don't think you are at all courteous to your visitors. You know just as well as I do that Mr. Foster or Mr. Royce or some other of those young officers are sure to be in just at this hour. You really are very thoughtless, Nellie."

Miss Travers stopped short in her preparations.

"Kate Rayner," she began, impressively, "it was only night before last that you rebuked me for sitting here with Mr. Blake at this very hour, and asked me how I supposed Mr. Van Antwerp would like it. Now you"——

"Pshaw! I cannot stay and listen to such talk. If you must go, wait a few minutes until I get back. I—I want to make a short call. Then I'll take you."

"Do I want to make a short call—going to the doctor's; and you are going to the hospital, are you not?"

"How do you know I am?" asked Mrs. Rayner, startled.

"I know you go there every evening, it seems."

"Well, suppose I do. Who told you I did?"

"Some one who mentioned your kindness to the Chinaman, Kate."

"Well, I do go. Now, shall we walk?"

"Why, Kate, you haven't asked about your father," waited Miss Travers, pointedly.

"Why, so I did. Kate, dear, how [illegible] of me! Is he better? Has he asked for me? Has anything happened?"

"Not a bit. He is just as he was when you left him. I'm sorry to be so engaged girl. I have more to complain of than you, but it doesn't make me forlorn, whereas you look fearfully worried about nothing."

"Who says I'm worried?" asked Mrs Rayner, with sudden vehemence.

"You look worried, Kate, and haven't been at all like yourself for several days. Now, why shouldn't I go to the hospital with you? Why do you try to hide your going from me? Don't you know that I must have heard the strange stories that are flitting about the garrison? Haven't I asked you to set me right if I have been told a wrong one? Kate, you are fretting yourself to death about something, and the captain looks worried and ill. I cannot but think it has some connection with the case of Mr. Hayne. Why should the Clancys"——

"You have no right to think any such thing," answered her sister, angrily. "We have suffered too much at his hands or on his account already, and I never want to hear such words from your lips. It would outrage Capt. Rayner to hear that my sister, to whom he has given a home and a welcome, was linking herself with those who side with that—that thief."

"Kate! Oh, how can you use such words? How dare you speak so of an officer? You would not tell me what he was accused of; but I tell you that if it be theft I don't believe it, and no one else"——

There was a sudden footfall on the porch without, and a quick, sharp, imperative knock at the door. Mrs. Rayner fled back along the hall towards the dining room. Miss Travers, hesitating but a second, opened the door.

It was the soldier telegraph operator with a dispatch envelope in his hand.

"It is for Mrs. Rayner, miss, and an answer is expected. Shall I wait?"

Mrs. Rayner came hastily forward from her place of refuge within the dining room, took the envelope without a word and passed into the parlor, where, standing beneath the lamp, she tore it open, glanced anxiously at its contents, then threw it with an exclamation of peevish indignation upon the table.

"You'll have to answer for yourself, Nellie. I cannot straighten your affairs and mine too." And with that she was going, but Miss Travers called her back.

The message simply read: "No letter in four days. Is anything wrong? Answer paid," and was addressed to Mrs Rayner and signed S. V. A.

"I think you have been extremely neglectful," said Mrs. Rayner, who had turned and now stood watching the rising color and impatiently tapping foot of her younger sister. Miss Travers bit her lips and compressed them hard There was an evident struggle in her mind between a desire to make an impulsive and sweeping reply and an effort to control herself.

"Will you answer a quiet question or two?" she finally asked.

"You know perfectly well I will," was the sisterly rejoinder.

"How long does it take a letter to go from here to New York?"

"Five or six days, I suppose."

Miss Travers stepped to the door, briefly told the soldier there was no answer, thanked him for waiting, and returned.

"You are not going to reply?" asked Mrs. Rayner, in amaze.

"I am not, and I inferred you did not intend to. Now another question. How long have we been here?"

"Eight or nine—nine, it is."

"You saw me post a letter to Mr. Van Antwerp as we left the Missouri, did you not?"

"Yes. At least I suppose so."

"I wrote again as soon as we got settled here, three days after that, did I not?"

"You said you did," replied Mrs. Rayner, ungraciously.

"And you, Kate, when you are yourself have been prompt to declare that I say what I mean. Very probably it may have been four days from the time that letter from the transfer reached Wall street to the time the next one could get to him from here, even had I written the night we arrived. Possibly you forget that you forbade my doing so, and sent me to bed early. Mr. Van Antwerp has simply failed to remember that I had gone several hundred miles farther west; and even had I written on the train twice a day, the letters would not have reached him uninterruptedly. By this time he is beginning to get them fast enough. And as for you, Kate, you are quite as unjust as he. It augurs badly for my future peace; and—I am learning two lessons here, Kate."

"What two, pray?"

"That he can be foolishly unreliable in estimating a woman."

"And the other?"

"That you may be persistently unreliable in your judgment of a man."

Verily, for a young woman with a sweet, girlish face, whom we saw but a week agone twitching a kitten's ears and saying little or nothing, Miss Travers was displaying unexpected fighting qualities. For a moment, Mrs. Rayner glared at her in tremulous indignation and dismay.

"You—you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" was her eventual outbreak.

But to this there was no reply. Miss Travers moved quietly to the doorway, turned and looked her angry sister in the eye, and said:

"I shall give up the walk and will go to my room. Excuse me to any visitors this evening."

"You are not going to write to him now, when you are angry, I hope?"

"I shall not write to him until to-morrow, but when I do I shall tell him this, Kate: that if he desire my confidence he will address his complaints and inquiries to me. If I am old enough to be engaged to him, in your opinion, I am equally old enough to attend to such details as these in my own."

Mrs. Rayner stood one moment as though astounded; then she flew to the door and relieved her surcharged bosom as follows: "Well, I pity the man you marry, whether you are lucky enough to keep this one or not!" and flounced indignantly out of the house.

When Capt. Rayner came in, half an hour afterwards, the parlor was deserted. He was looking worn and dispirited. Finding no one on the ground floor, he went to the foot of the stairs, and called:

"Kate."

A door opened above: "Kate has gone out, captain."

"Do you know where, Nellie?"

"Over to the hospital, I think; though I cannot say."

She heard him sigh deeply, move irresolutely about the hall for a moment, then turn and go out.

As his gate he found two figures dimly visible in the gathering darkness; they had stopped on hearing his footsteps. One was an officer in greatcoat, wrapped in heavy overcoat, with a fur cap, and a bandage over his eyes. The other was a Chinese servant, and it was the latter who asked:

"This Maje Waldlon's?"

"No," said he, hastily. "Maj. Waldron's is the third door beyond."

At the sound of his voice the officer quickly started, but spoke in low, measured tone: "Straight ahead, Sam." And the Chinaman led him on.

Rayner stood a moment watching them, bitter thoughts coursing through his mind. Mr. Hayne was evidently sufficiently recovered to be up and out for air, and now he was being invited again. This time it was his old comrade, Waldron, who honored him. Probably it was another dinner. Little by little, at this rate, the time would soon come when Mr. Hayne would be asked everywhere and he and his correspondingly dropped. He turned miserably away and went back to the billiard rooms at the store. When Mrs. Rayner rang her bell for tea that evening he had not reappeared, and she sent a messenger for him.

It was a brilliant moonlit evening. A strong prairie gale had begun to blow from the northwest, and was banging shutters and whirling pebbles at a furious rate. At the sound of the trumpets' walking tattoo a brace of young officers calling on the ladies took their leave. The captain had retired to his den, or study, where he shut himself up a good deal of late, and thither Mrs. Rayner followed him and closed t. e door after her. Throwing a cloak over her shoulders Miss Travers stepped out on the piazza and gazed in delight upon the moonlit panorama—the snow covered summits to the south and west, the rolling expanse of upland prairie between, the rough outlines of the foothills softened in the silvery light, the dark shadows of the barracks across the parade, the twinkling lights of the sergeants as they took their stations, the soldierly forms of the officers hastening to their companies far across the frozen level.

Suddenly she became aware of two forms coming down the walk. They issued from Maj. Waldron's quarters, and the door closed behind them. One was a young officer; the other, she speedily made out, a Chinese servant, who was guiding his master. She knew the pair in an instant, and her first impulse was to retire. Then she reflected that he could not see, and she wanted to look, so she stayed. They had almost reached her gate when a wild blast whirled the officer's cape about his ears and sent some sheets of music flying across the road. Leaving his master at the fence, the Chinaman sped in pursuit, and the next thing she noted was that Mr. Hayne's fur cap was blown from his head, and that he was groping for it helplessly.

There was no one to call, no one to assist. She hesitated one minute, looked anxiously around, then sprang to the gate, picked up the cap, pulled it well down over the bandaged eyes, seized the young officer firmly by the arm, drew him within the gate and led him to the shelter of the piazza. Once out of the fury of the gale, she could hear his question, "Did you get it all, Sam?"

"Not yet," she answered. Oh, how she longed for a deep contralto! "He is coming. He will be here [illegible]."

"I am so sorry [illegible] trouble to you," he [illegible] "I am glad I was where I happened to see you and could help."

He spoke no more for a minute. She stood gazing at all that was visible of the pale face below the darkened eyes. It was so clear cut, so refined in feature and the lips under the sweeping blonde mustache, though set and compressed, were delicate and pink. He turned his head eagerly towards the parade; but Sam was still far away. The music had scattered and was leading him a lively dance.

"Isn't my servant coming?" he asked, constrainedly. "I fear I'm keeping you Please do not wait. He will find me here You were going somewhere."

"No—unless it was here." She was trembling now. "Please be patient, Mr Hayne. Sam may be a minute or two yet, and here you are out of the wind."

Again she looked in his face. He was listening eagerly to her words, as though striving to "place" her voice. Could she be mistaken? Was he, too, not trembling? Beyond all doubt his lips were quivering now.

"May I not know who it is that led me here?" he asked, gently.

She hesitated, hardly knowing how to tell him.

"Try and guess," she laughed, nervously. "But you couldn't. You do not know my name. It is my good fortune, Mr. Hayne. You—you saved my kitten. I—your cap."

There was no mistaking his start. Beyond doubt he had winced as though stung, and was now striving to grope his way to the railing. She divined his purpose in an instant, and her slender hand was laid pleadingly yet firmly on his arm.

"Mr. Hayne, don't go. Don't think of going. Stay here until Sam comes. He's coming now," she faltered.

"Is this Capt. Rayner's house?" he asked, hoarse and low.

"No matter whose it is! I welcome you here. You shall not go," she cried impulsively, and both little hands were tugging at his arm. He had found the railing, and was pulling himself toward the gate, but her words, her clinging hands, were too persuasive.

"I cannot realize this," he said. "I do not understand"——

"Do not try to understand it, Mr Hayne. If I am only a girl, I have a right to think for myself. My father was a soldier—I am Nellie Travers—and if he were alive I know well he would have had me do just what I have done this night. Now won't you stay?"

And light was beaming in through his darkened eyes and gladdening his soul with a rapture he had not known for years. One instant he seized and clasped her hand. "May God bless you!" was all he whispered, but so softly that even she did not hear him. He bowed low over the slender white hand and stayed.

CHAPTER VIII.

March had come—the month of gale and bluster, sleet and storm, in almost every section of our broad domain—and March at Warrener was to the full as blustering and conscienceless as in New England. There were a few days of sunshine during the first week; then came a fortnight of raging snow storms. The cavalry troops, officers and men, went about their stable duties as usual, but, except for roll call at the porch of the barracks and for guard mounting over at the guard house, all military exercise ceased suspended. This meant livelier times for the ladies, however, as the officers were [illegible] to devote just so many more hours a day to their entertainment. There were five or three hops a week over in the barracks dining room, and there was some talk of getting up a german in honor of Miss Travers, but the strained relations existing between Mrs. Rayner and the ladies of other families at the post made the matter difficult of accomplishment.

There were bright little luncheon, dinner and tea parties, where the young officers and the younger ladies met every day; and, besides all this, despite the fact that Mrs. Rayner had at first shown a fixed determination to discuss the rights and wrongs of "the Hayne affair," as it was now beginning to be termed, with all comers who belonged to the Riflers it had grown to be a very general thing for the youngsters to drop in at her house at all hours of the day; but that was because there were attractions there which outweighed her combativeness Then Rayner himself overheard some comments on the mistake she was making, and forbade her discussing the subject with the officers even of her own regiment. She was indignant, and demanded a reason. He would name no

Could she have seen the figure that was stalking in the snow.

names, but told her that he had heard enough to convince him she was doing him more harm than good, and, if anything, contributing to the turn of the tide in Hayne's favor. Then she felt outraged and utterly misjudged. It was a critical time for her, and if deprived of the use of her main weapon of offense and defense the battle was sure to go amiss. Sorely against her inclination she obeyed her lord, for, as has been said, she was a loyal wife, and for the time being the baby became the recipient of her undivided attention.

True to her declaration, she behaved so coldly and with such marked distance of manner to the colonel and his wife when they met in society immediately after the dinner that the colonel quietly told Mrs. Rayner she need not give either dinner or reception in honor of Mrs. Rayner's return. She would like to have her do something to welcome Miss Travers, for he thought the girl had much of her father in her. He knew him well in the old days before and during the war, and liked him. He liked her looks and her sweet, unaffected, chatty manner. He liked the contrast between her and her sister, whom he had listened to [illegible] Mrs. Rayner had listened to [illegible] her sister's exposition of what her manner should be to the colonel and his wife, and when they met she was bright and winsome. The colonel stood and talked with her about her father whom she could remember only vaguely but of whom she never tired of hearing and that night Mrs. Rayner rebuked her severely for her disloyalty to the captain, who had given her a home.

But when Mrs Rayner heard that Maj. and Mrs Waldron had invited Mr Hayne to dine with them, and had invited to meet him two of the cavalry officers and their wives, she was incensed beyond measure. She and Mrs. Waldron had a brief talk, as a result of which Mrs. Rayner declined to speak to Mrs Waldron at the evening party given by Mrs. Stannard in honor of her and her sister It was this that brought on the crisis Whatever was said between the men was not told. Maj Waldron and Capt. Rayner had a long consultation and they took no one into their confidence; but Mrs. Rayner obeyed her husband, went to Mrs. Waldron and apologized for her rudeness, and then went with her sister and returned the call of the colonel's wife; but she chose a bright afternoon, when she knew well the lady was not at home.

She retired from the contest, apparently, as has been said, and took much Christian consolation to herself from the fact that it so great a sacrifice she was obeying her husband and doing the duty she owed to him. In very truth, however, the contest was withdrawn from her by the fact that for a week or more after his evening at the Waldrons' Mr Hayne did not reappear in garrison, and she had no cause to talk about him Officers visiting the house avoided mention of his name Ladies of the cavalry regiment calling upon Mrs. Rayner and Miss Travers occasionally spoke of him and his devotion to the men and his bravery under fire, but rather as though they meant in a general way to compliment the Riflers, not Mr. Hayne, and so she heard little of the man whose existence was so sore a trial to her What she would have said, what she would have thought, had she known of the meeting between him and her guarded Nellie, is beyond us to describe, but she never dreamed of such a thing, and Miss Travers never dreamed of telling her—for the present, at least. Fortunately, or unfortunately, for the latter, it was not to much of her relations with Mr. Hayne as of her relations with half a dozen young bachelors that Mrs. Rayner speedily felt herself compelled to complain It was a blessed relief to the elder sister Her surcharged spirit was in sore need of an escape valve. She was ready to boil over in the mental ebullition consequent upon Mr. Hayne's reception at the post, and with all the pent up irritability which that episode had generated she could not have contained herself a minute.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Electrician.

Goethe was an experimentalist as well as a poet. [illegible] of the curiosities of the electrical [illegible] at Frankfort-on-the-Main is [illegible] machine. He, of course, [illegible] the days of dynamos and [illegible] glass frictional machines [illegible] used to draw sparks from [illegible] jars in lectures. The glass [illegible] shape of a globe, which [illegible] on an axle and revolved [illegible] wheel and cord. Up to [illegible] battery was developed.

Drinking Iced Water.

It is a pity that with our readiness for copying Old World vices, small and great, we should not be willing to adopt some of their virtues as well. In the matter of drinking iced water the native American is a constant marvel to the Europeans. At some of the hotels across the water designed to cater to our citizens abroad the notice is broadly published on menu cards, circulars, and even in newspaper notices, "Ice water served for drinking purposes." The average German landlord has only lately begun to understand that his American guests want water to drink, and he has by no means recovered from his astonished horror at the quantity consumed as a beverage.

A woman who spent a winter in Munich at a boarding house tells of coming down one cold morning to breakfast and asking for a glass of water. The servant brought it, round eyed with wonder, but docile. As it was placed before the guest the presiding fraulein caught sight of the glass. "Oh!" she said quickly, "don't drink that; it is fresh from the faucet. Send it to me and I will warm it," and she reached for the hot water kettle. It was with difficulty that she could be made to believe that persons over here drank iced water winter and summer alike. "I wonder you live at all," she commented feelingly, "if you treat your stomachs like that."—Her Point of View in New York Times.

Domestic Felicity.

The wife of a drum major, a colossus, is a dwarf. She is a despot. He has the docility of a child. When they quarrel she orders him to put her on the table and let her slap his face. He lifts her in his arms, puts her on the table, bends his head, receives the slap which she gives with her might and then replaces her on the floor with respectful terror. This vulgar parody of the Samson and Delilah story would be called by Courbet a real allegory.—New York Times.

A Gigantic Cherry Tree.

There is an Ohio Beauty cherry tree in the old Bassford orchard in Brown's Valley, Cal., which bears from 11,000 to 15,000 pounds of fruit per year. The tree is so large that each year a big scaffolding has to be built around it so that the cherries can be picked.—Fruit Grower.

American freight cars carry about thirty tons' weight, the cars weighing about nine tons. They are gradually superseding the English cars in that country, which weigh five tons and can carry only seven tons of cargo.

In Massachusetts there are more than $350,000,000 deposited in savings banks; and all of it is in small sums, for the law does not allow any person to draw interest on more than $1,000 in any bank.

THE RICH SANTIAM VALLEY.

Its Deep Alluvial Soil Unsurpassed and Its Genial Clime Unrivaled.

A Section of Wondrous Resources That the Spirit of Progress is Just Beginning to Bring Into Requisition.

A Land Where Health, Wealth and Happiness is Easily Obtained.

This Stands at the Head of the Many Valleys That Have Made Western Oregon Famous as the Country Where the Denizens "Lay Upon Their Oars" and Live Upon the Fat of the Land.

This valley is tributary to the great Willamette, and possessing all the natural advantages of the latter and because of its higher altitude, being far more healthy, it is no wonder that the tide of enterprise and emigration is being turned toward this Nile of Oregon, the Eldorado of the West.

The soil is strong, bringing forth perhaps a greater variety of products than the same acreage anywhere else in the State. The product of grain, wheat and oats is up to the average of the Willamette Valley, and the culture of hops is becoming a leading industry.

But the line that is is destined to predominate in this section in the future is fruit-growing. The bottom land here is already celebrated as producing the finest strawberries grown in the State, while the quality of prunes and pears are unexcelled, and the Oregon Big Red Apples and Glory Mundys grown here are prodigious in size and superb in flavor.

Timber is within easy reach of any part of the valley. The surface is level, rolling or hilly, and land can now be purchased very reasonably. Since the advent of the Oregon Pacific railroad into this section and the prospect of a line being extended across from Salem, which surely will be done in a very short time, the value of real estate is gradually enhancing, and as surely as reaping follows sowing he that judiciously invests here now will reap a rich reward in the near future.

The climate is mild and equable, the atmosphere wholesome and invigorating, many people seeking this locality in the summer season as a place of recreation and a health resort. Taken all in all, without fear of successful contradiction, the assertion is made that no section of Oregon offers greater inducements to the seeker of home and fortune.