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THE DESERTER.

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I saw him in a foreign land—I knew him by his air
 That he had been a soldier once with prospects bright and fair.
 His clothes were torn and tattered, his toes were peeping through,
 A pair of military boots that long ago were new;
 His garb and reputation had dwindled to decay:
 They each, alas! had once stood well—had seen a better day.
 He dwelt amongst strange people who knew from whence he came,
 But not a man would trust him—his was a traitor's name.
 A downcast, melancholy gloom had settled on his face,
 And mantled o'er his features with the shadows of disgrace;
 His glance was restless, and a dread shone in his haggard eye
 Of something dim, intangible, haunting and ever nigh;
 He herded with the vilest in the wretched sinks of sin,
 Where misery unlocks the gates to let its fellow in.
 Ah! 'twas a melancholy sight, that picture of decline—
 The tottering remnant of the once proud soldier of the line;
 As with a sad and pitying glance I passed the stranger by,
 I paused—I gazed upon him—I asked the reason why.
 He straightened up his stooping frame, and held erect his head,
 A tear stood trembling in his eye, the man was not all dead;
 And then with accents of remorse, and words with sorrow rife,
 The solitary stranger told the story of his life.
 "Once, once I was a soldier under the Union Jack—
 Oh! would beneath its gallant folds I once again was back;
 I swore the soldier's solemn oath my country to defend—
 An oath that should have bound me to my colors to the end.
 I wore my country's uniform, and proudly kept my head
 Erect amongst my comrades, as on with measured tread
 We marched to the sweet cadences of many a martial strain—
 Oh! that mine ear were greeted with their melody again.
 My name was honored in the ranks, for steadiness was mine—
 How faithful is sad memory to those happy days lang syne!

I see them now in fancy, in line, a stalwart band,
 Arrayed in scarlet uniform, with rifle each in hand;
 The colors waving o'er them which I shall never more
 Behold with the same feeling which thrilled my heart of yore.
 I brooded over fancied wrongs till real errors grew
 Around me on the downward path dishonor urged me through;
 Led on by wicked council and by the wine cup's power,
 I wandered from my duty, and in an evil hour
 Became a traitor to my oath, a wretched perjured man,
 And basely from my colors like a criminal I ran!
 I lost my spotless character, my honor and my fame,
 And fell beneath the foulest blot that blasts a soldier's name!
 The thief may steal to keep the fiend starvation from his door,
 For strong are the temptations which oft assail the poor.
 The robber never swore an oath to be an honest man,
 The coward oft had cannon balls behind him when he ran;
 Mercy may find some dim pretext, some palliating plea
 For such as these, but nothin, ah! no excuse can be
 Urged in defence of treachery and baseness black as mine,
 For I am a "Deserter" from a regiment of the line—
 A skulker from the colors I had sworn to defend;
 Such is the story of my life, and here without a friend
 I wander amongst strangers, a mark for every scorn,
 A traitor, a deserter, the vilest thing that's born!

A DAY UNDER ARMS IN HYDE PARK.

In common with the remainder of the 20,800 volunteers who assembled under arms in Hyde Park on the memorable 23rd of June, I have no doubt that I should feel considerable difficulty in assigning the real motive which first led me to enrol myself in the gallant Hundred-and-first Middlesex. Indeed, were I asked to state the reasons why I should not have done so, I could respond with much greater facility. Professionally, I have at my disposal but the

very parings and fag-ends of leisure hours; and personally, I have neither the length, strength, nor, as the advertisements of outfitters say, 'the breadth round the shoulders,' to enable me to match myself with advantage against one of our possible Zouave visitors. If anybody had told me six months ago that I should be seen in Hyde Park with a long Enfield and a dust-coloured uniform, I should have laughed at him; and if my informant added that this escapade on my part would take place in presence of the Queen of England and half a million of her subjects, I should straightway have recommended him to the particular care of his medical attendant. Yet the prophecy would have been fulfilled. Constitutionally timid, with a strong love of ease, and a dislike amounting to an abhorrence of damp, my habitual conversation has been of the rifle and sword-bayonet; I have risen at fabulous hours to reach the rendezvous at the appointed times of drill; and I have run through all the moods and tenses of the proverbial 'Volunteers' weather.' A description of what I have undergone in the way of 'extension movements,' 'balance step without gaining ground,' and 'getting a comfortable seat upon my heel,' would constitute a neat medical treatise on nervo-muscular sensations. When I thought I had been trained and polished to the highest degree in the 'preliminary class,' which is the delicate synonym for the awkward squad, and I was permitted to join the ranks, it was only to find that new trials await the brave. Company drill and the intricacy of 'fours' surmounted, I was exercised at position drill till my arms ached again; and finally, my knees were made to take their turn of duty when the regiment was in fulness of time instructed in bayonet-practice. Do I repine at the sufferings which I have thus brought on myself? Would I now retire, if I might do so without discredit? Or am I even disgusted with the constrained and sign-post 'regulation' attitude in which fame and prizes were most certainly to be won on Wimbledon Common? No, a thousand times; and though I indignantly repudiate the feeling which leads men to stroll about the streets in uniform on every occasion, I would not have forfeited for any light consideration the enjoyment and privilege of sharing in the Hyde Park display. Friendship, class-feeling, emulation, or what the 'Times' calls instinct, may have led to my enrolment in the first instance. As the poet says—

Reason however able, cool at best,
 Cries not for service, or but serves when prest,
 Stays till we call, and then not often near,
 But honest instinct comes a volunteer.