

THE DESERTER.

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

Author of "Dunrobin Ranch," "The Colonel's Daughter," "Warrior's Path," etc., etc.

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CHAPTER IV.



There he sat in her prison.

And the sense of neighborliness to one's kind. Out on Prairie avenue all was wintry desolation, except when twice each day the cavalry officers went plodding by on their way to and from the stables, muffled in their fur caps and coats, and hardly distinguishable from many bears, much less from one another.

And yet Mr. Hayne smiled not unhappily as he glanced from his eastern window at this group of busy warriors the afternoon succeeding his dinner at the colonel's. He had been busy all day long unpacking books, book shelves, some few pictures which he loved, and his simple, soldierly outfit of household goods, and getting them into shape. His sole assistant was a Chinese servant, who worked rapidly and well, and who seemed in no wise dismayed by the bleakness of their surroundings. If anything, he was disposed to grin and indulge in high pitched commentaries in "pidgin English" upon the unaccustomed amount of room. His master had been restricted to two rooms, and a kitchen during the two years he had served him. Now they had a house to themselves, and more rooms than they knew what to do with.

While every officer of the infantry battalion was ready to admit that Mr. Hayne had rendered valuable service to the men of the cavalry regiment, they were not so unanimous in their opinion as to how it should be acknowledged and rewarded by his officers. No one was prepared for the announcement that the colonel had asked him to dinner and that Blake and Billings were to meet him at a big room in their number thought it going too far, but no one quite coincided with the vehement declaration of Mrs. Rayner that it was an outrage and an affront aimed at that part of the letter which spoke of Capt. Rayner's offer. It increased his respect for Mr. Hayne's perceptive powers.

There were many, indeed, who asserted that it was because she found her new position unbearable that she decided on her long visit to the east, and departed thither before the Rifles had been at Warren. The colonel's wife, who had greeted her and her lovely sister with charming grace on their arrival two days previous to the starting of the dinner, and every one was looking forward to a probable series of pleasant entertainments by the two households, even while wondering how long the entente cordiale would last—when the colonel's invitation to Mr. Hayne brought on an immediate crisis. It is safe to say that Mrs. Rayner was madder than the captain her husband, who hardly knew how to take it. He was by no means the best liked officer in his regiment, nor the "deepest" and they must have known that a fall of suspicion and crime had overtaken his past, they believed either that he was innocent of the grievous charge or that his years of military suffering had amply atoned for it. It was a happy evening to him; but there had been gloom at Capt. Rayner's.

The captain himself had gone out soon after tattoo. He found that the parlor was filled with young visitors of both sexes, and he was in no mood for merriment. Miss Travers was his consolation, to the post in genuine army style, and was evidently enjoying it. Mrs. Rayner was flitting nervously in and out of the parlor with a cloud upon her brow, and for once in her life compelled to preserve temporary silence upon the subject upon which she had been so long and so forbidden to speak of to her husband. Yet she knew he had gone out again with every probability of needing some one to talk to about the matter, and she did not well brook the topic in the parlor because she was not at all sure how Capt. and Mrs. Greg of the cavalry would take it; and anyway, she was getting that which she sorely needed, and that was a new friend.

"I will, of course, major, if he ask it. I don't propose sending me to do such work for an officer unless the request comes."

"He is entitled to that consideration, Rayner, and I think the men should be sent to him. He is hardly likely to ask."

"Then he is less likely to get them," said the captain, thoughtfully, for, except the post commander, he knew that no officer could order it to be done. He was angry at the major for interfering. They were old soldiers, and he had served his service almost at the same time, but his friend had the better luck in promotion and was now his battalion commander. Rayner made an excuse of stopping to speak with the officer of the day, and the major went on without him. He was a quiet old soldier; he wanted no disturbance with his troubled friend, and, like a sensible man, he turned the matter over to their common superior. In a very short time he was in the presence of the general audience. It was that had caused the colonel to turn quietly to Rayner and say, in the most matter of fact way:

"Oh, Capt. Rayner, I presume Mr. Hayne will need three or four men to help him get his quarters in shape. I suppose you have already thought of sending them?"

And Rayner flushed, and stammered, "They've not gone yet, sir; but I had thought of it."

Later, when the sergeant sent the required detail he reported to the captain in the company colors at five o'clock. "The lieutenant's compliments and thanks, but he does not need the men."

The dinner at the colonel's, quiet as it was with only eight at table, was an affair of almost momentous importance to Mr. Hayne. It was the first thing of the kind he had seen since he had left his home, and he knew that it was intended by the cavalry commander more especially as a recognition of the services rendered their suffering men, and not but rejoice in the courtesy and tact with which he was received and entertained. The colonel's wife, the adjutant's, and those of two captains away with the field battalion were the four ladies who were there to greet him, and he, escorted by Mr. Blake, had made his appearance. How long—how very long—it seemed to him since he had last seen the presence of refined and attractive women and listened to the soft voices of his own kind. They seemed all such good friends, they made him so thoroughly at home, and they showed so much tact and ease that never again did he feel so at ease as that night. He was not only at ease, but he knew of his trouble in his own regiment; and yet there was no actual avoidance of making any reference to them generally interested.

It was mainly of his brief visit to the east, however, that they made him talk of the operations and the results of the picture he had seen, the music that was most popular; and when dinner was over their hostess led him to her piano, and he played and sang for them again and again. His voice was soft and sweet, and though it was unaccompanied, he sang with expression and grace, playing with more skill than he had ever shown before. It went home to the dreary rocky out on Prairie avenue and laughed at the howling wind. The bare grimy walls of the dimly lit room, even Sam's unmelodious more in the room, sent no gloom to his soul. It had been a happy evening. It had cost him a hard struggle to keep his head and emotion which he had felt at times; and when he withdrew, soon after the trumpet sounded tattoo, and the ladies fell to discussing his performance, there was but one verdict—"his manners were perfect."

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CASTORIA for Infants and Children. Castoria is so well adapted to children that I recommend it as superior to any prescription known to me. S. A. Acheson, M.D., 111 So. Oxford St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

GENERAL BUSINESS. Tea, Sugar, Beef, Pork, Bacon, Ham, Flour and Meal, and all other things generally found in a Grocery.

GENERAL BUSINESS. NOW ARRIVING WINTER IMPORTATIONS. FULL LINE OF WINTER DRY GOODS, Hosiery, Haberdashery, etc.

GENERAL BUSINESS. SPECIAL BARGAINS THIS WEEK. NOONAN'S CHEAP CASH STORE. BARGAIN No. 1.—50 Ladies Ulsters, in pleasant style, also Cape Ulsters, in beautiful Colors \$4.00 to \$8.00.

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GENERAL BUSINESS. BANKERS. CHATHAM RAILWAY. WINTER 1889-90. ON and after MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH, Trains will run on this Railway in connection with the Intercolonial Railway, daily, (Sundays excepted) as follows:

GENERAL BUSINESS. NORTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY. WINTER Arrangement. ON and after MONDAY, NOV. 25th, further notice, trains will run on the above Railway as follows:

GENERAL BUSINESS. CHATHAM TO FREDERICTON. FREDERICTON TO CHATHAM. EXPRESS, FREIGHT. CHATHAM, 6:30 a.m. 7:15 a.m. Fredericton, 2:40 p.m. 7:00 a.m.

GENERAL BUSINESS. CONNECTIONS. THROUGH PASSENGERS FOR ST. JOHN, Arrive in Fredericton at 10 o'clock, leaving there for St. John at 11 o'clock, and at 11:30 a.m. for St. John, leaving there for Fredericton at 12:30 p.m.

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GENERAL BUSINESS. MUSIC! PROF. SMYTHE'S CLASSES will reopen December 20th 1889. NEWCASTLE—Mondays and Thursdays. CHATHAM—Tuesdays and Fridays. DIEPOLDSTOWN—Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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GENERAL BUSINESS. DUNLAP, COOKE & CO. AEMERST, N. S. NEW FALL GOODS. TAILORING DEPARTMENT. Notice! The Adjourned Annual Meeting of The Kent Lumber Company.

GENERAL BUSINESS. NEW GOODS. NEW CLOTHING. NEW CLOTHING. I have the largest and best stock of MEN'S BOYS AND CHILDREN'S CLOTHING.

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