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DESERTER

By Capt. Charles King, U. S. A.

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

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CHAPTER X.

"I wish you would play, Mr. Hayne."

Miss Travers had other reasons for wanting to be alone. That very afternoon, just after stable call, she found herself unoccupied for the time being, and decided to go over and see Mrs. Waldron a few moments. The servant admitted her to the little army parlor, and informed her that Mrs. Waldron had stepped out, but would be home directly. A bright wood fire was blazing on the hearth and throwing flickering lights and shadows about the cosy room. The piano stood invitingly open, and on the rack were some waltzes of Strauss she remembered having heard the cavalry band play a night or two previous. Seating herself, she began to try them, and speedily became interested. Her back being to the door, she did not notice that another visitor was soon ushered in—a man. She continued slowly "picking out" the melody, for the light was growing dim and it was with difficulty that she could distinguish the notes. Twice she essayed a somewhat complicated passage, became entangled, bent down and closely scanned the music, began again, once more became involved, exclaimed impatiently, "How absurd!" and whirled about on the piano stool, to find herself facing Mr. Hayne.

"I wish you would play, Mr. Hayne." From his eyes it was no such easy matter to meet him. Her sweet face flushed instantly as he bent low and spoke her name.

"I had no idea any one was here. It quite startled me," she said, as she withdrew from his the hand she had mechanically extended to him.

"It was my hope not to interrupt you," he answered, in the low, gentle voice she had marked before. "You helped me when my music was all adrift the other night. May I not help you find some of this?"

"I wish you would play, Mr. Hayne."

"I will play for you gladly, Miss Travers, but waltz music is not my forte. Let me see what else there is here," and he began turning over the sheets on the stand.

"Are your eyes well enough to read music—especially in such a dim light?" she asked, with evident sympathy.

"My eyes are doing very well—better than my fingers, in fact, and, as I rarely play by note after I once learn a piece, the eyes make no difference. What music do you like? I merely looked at this collection thinking you might see something that pleased you."

"Mrs. Ray told me you played Rubinstein so well—that melody in F, for one."

"Did Mrs. Ray speak of that?"—his face brightening. "I'm glad they found anything to enjoy in my music."

"They found a great deal, Mr. Hayne, and there are a number who are envious of their good fortune—I, for one," she answered, blithely. "Now play for me. Mrs. Waldron will be here in a minute."

And when Mrs. Waldron came in a little later Miss Travers, seated in an easy chair and looking intently into the blaze, was listening as intently to the soft, rich melodies that Mr. Hayne was playing. The firelight was flickering on her shining hair; one slender white hand was toying with the locket that hung at her throat, the other gently tapping on the arm of the chair in unison with the music. And Mr. Hayne, seated in the shadow, bent slightly over the keyboard, absorbed in his pleasant task and playing as though all his soul were thrilling in his finger tips. Mrs. Waldron stood in silence at the doorway, watching the unconscious pair with an odd yet comforted expression in her eyes. At last, in one long, sweet, sighing chord, the melody softly died away, and Mr. Hayne slowly turned and looked upon the girl. She seemed to have wandered off into dreamland. For a moment there was no sound; then, with a little shivering sigh, she roused herself.

"It is simply exquisite," she said. "You have given me such a treat!"

"I'm glad. I owe you a great deal more pleasure, Miss Travers."

Mrs. Waldron hereat elevated her eyebrows. She would have slipped away if she could, but she was a woman of substance, and as solid in flesh as she was warm of heart. She did the only thing left to her—came cordially forward to welcome her two visitors and express her delight that Miss Travers could have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Hayne play. She soon succeeded in starting him again, and shortly thereafter managed to slip out unnoticed. When he turned around a few minutes afterwards she had vanished.

"Why, I had no idea she was gone!" exclaimed Miss Travers; and then the color mounted to her brow. He must think her extremely absorbed in his playing; and so indeed she was.

"You are very fond of music, I see," he said, at a venture.

"Yes, very; but I play very little and very badly. Pardon me, Mr. Hayne, but you have played many years, have you not?"

"Not so very many; but—there have been many in which I had little else to do but practice."

She reddened again. It was so unlike him, she thought, to refer to that matter in speaking to her. He seemed to read her;

"I speak of it only that I may say to you again what I began just before Mrs. Waldron came. You gave me no opportunity to thank you the other night, and I may not have another. You do not know—what an event in my life that meeting with you was, and you cannot know how I have gone over your words again and again. Forgive me the embarrassment I see I cause you, Miss Travers. We are so unlikely to meet at all that you can afford to indulge me this once." He was smiling so gravely, sadly, now, and had risen and was standing by her as she sat there in the big easy chair, still gazing into the fire, but listening for his every word. "In five long years I have heard no words from a woman's lips that gave me such joy and comfort as those you spoke so hurriedly and without premeditation. Only those who know anything of what my past has been could form any idea of the emotion with which I heard you. If I could not have seen you to say how—how I thanked you, I would have had to write. This explains what I said a while ago; I owe you more pleasure than I can ever give. But one thing was certain: I could not bear the idea that you should not be told, and by me, how grateful your words were to me—how grateful I was to you. Again, may God bless you!"

And now he turned abruptly away, awaiting no answer, resented himself at the piano and retouched the keys. But, though she sat motionless and speechless, she knew that he had been trembling so violently and that his hands were still so tremulous he could play no more. It was some minutes that they sat thus, neither speaking; and as he regained his self control and began to attempt some simple little melodies, Mrs. Waldron returned:

"How very domestic you look, young people! Shall we light the lamps?"

"I've stayed too long already," said Miss Travers, springing to her feet. "Kate does not know I'm out, and will be wondering what has become of her sister." She laughed nervously. "Thank you so much for the music, Mr. Hayne! Forgive my running off so suddenly, won't you, Mrs. Waldron?" she asked, pleadingly, as she put her hand in hers; and as her hostess reassured her she bent and kissed the girl's flushed cheek. Mr. Hayne was still standing patiently by the center table. Once more she turned, and caught his eye, flushed, half hesitated, then held out her hand with quick impulsive grace.

"Good evening, Mr. Hayne. I shall hope to hear you play again."

And, with pulses throbbing and cheeks that still burned, she ran quickly down the line to Capt. Rayner's quarters, and was upstairs and in her room in another minute.

"This was an interview she would find it hard to tell to Kate. But told it was, partially, and she was sitting now, late at night, hearing through her closed door her sister's unmusical lamentations—hearing still ringing in her ears the reproaches heaped upon her when that sister was quietly told that she and Mr. Hayne had met twice. And now she was sitting there, true to herself and her resolution, telling Mr. Van Antwerp all about it. Can one conjecture the sensations with which he received and read that letter?

Mr. Hayne, too, was having a wakeful night. He had gone to Mrs. Waldron's to pay a dinner call, with the result just told. He had one or two other visits to make among the cavalry households in garrison, but, after a few moments' chat with Mrs. Waldron, he decided that he preferred going home. Sam had to call three times before Mr. Hayne obeyed the summons to dinner that evening. The sun was going down behind the great range to the southwest, and the trumpets were pealing "retreat" on the frosty air, but Hayne's curtains were drawn, and he was sitting before his fire, deep in thought, hearing nothing. The doctor came in soon after he finished his solitary dinner, chatted with him awhile, and smoked away at his pipe. He wanted to talk with Hayne about some especial matter, and he found it hard work to begin. The more he saw of his patient the better he liked him; he was interested in him, and had been making inquiries. Without his pipe he found himself uninspired.

"Mr. Hayne, if you will permit, I'll fill up and blow another cloud. Didn't you ever smoke?"

"Yes. I was very fond of my cigar six or seven years ago."

"And you gave it up?" asked the doctor, tugging away at the strings of his little tobacco pouch.

"I gave up everything that was not an absolute necessity," said Hayne, calmly. "Until I could get free of a big load there was no comfort in anything. After that was gone I had no more use for such old friends than certain other old friends seemed to have for me. It was a mutual cut."

"To the best of my belief you were the gainer in both cases," said the doctor, gruffly. "The longer I live the more I agree with Carlyle: the men we live and move with are mostly fools."

Hayne's face was as grave and quiet as ever.

"These are hard lessons to learn, doctor. I presume few young fellows thought more of human friendship than I did the first two years I was in service."

"Hayne," said the doctor, "sometimes I have thought you did not want to talk about this matter to any soul on earth; but I am speaking from no empty curiosity now. If you forbid it, I shall not intrude; but there are some questions that, since knowing you, and believing in you as I unquestionably do, I would like to ask. You seem bent on returning to duty here to-morrow, though you might stay on sick report ten days yet; and I want to stand between you and the possibility of annoyance and trouble if I can."

"You are kind, and I appreciate it, doctor; but do you think that the colonel is a man who will be apt to let me suffer injustice at the hands of any one here?"

"I don't, indeed. He is full of sympathy for you, and I know he means you shall have fair play; but a company commander has as many and as intangible ways of making a man suffer as has a woman. How do you stand with Rayner?"

"Precisely where I stood five years ago. He is the most determined enemy I have in the service, and will down me if he can; but I have learned a good deal in my time. There is a grim sort of comfort now in knowing that while he would gladly trip me I can make him miserable by being too strong for him."

"You still hold the same theory as to his evidence you did at the time of the court? Of course I have heard what you said to and of him."

"I have never changed in that respect."

"But supposing that—mind you, I believe he was utterly mistaken in what he thought he heard and saw—supposing that all that was testified to by him actually occurred, have you any theory that would point out the real criminal?"

"Only one. If that money was ever handed me that day at Battle Butte, only one man could have made away with it; and it is useless to charge it to him."

"You mean Rayner?"

"I have to mean Rayner."

"But you claim it never reached you?"

"Certainly."

"Yet every other package, memoranda and all, was handed you?"

"Not only that, but Capt. Hull handed me the money packet with the others—took them all from his saddle bags just before the charge. The packet was sealed when he gave it to me, and when I broke the seal it was stuffed with worthless blanks."

"And you have never suspected a soldier—a single messenger or servant?"

"Not one. Whom could I?"

"Does he say he knew me? or does he talk of that affair?" asked the lieutenant, with sudden interest.

"Not that. He cannot be said to say anything; but he was wonderfully affected over your rescuing him—strangely so, one of the nurses persists in telling me, though the steward and Mrs. Clancy declare it was just drink and excitement. Still, I have drawn from him that he knew you well by sight during that campaign; but he says he was not by when Hull was killed."

"Does he act as though he knew anything that could throw any light on the matter?"

"I cannot say. His wife declares he has been queer all winter—hard drinking—and of course that is possible."

"Sam told me there was a soldier here two nights ago who wanted to talk with me, but the man was drunk, and he would not let him in or tell me. He thought he wanted to borrow money."

"I declare, I believe it was Clancy!" said the doctor. "If he wants to see you and talk, let him. There's no telling but what even a drink racked brain may bring the matter to light."

And long that night Mr. Hayne sat there thinking, partly of what the doctor had said, but more of what had occurred during the late afternoon. Midnight found him still musing, when he went to his door and looked out on the broad, bleak prairie, the moonlight glinting on the tin roofing of the patch of buildings over at the station far across the dreary level and glistening on the patches of snow that here and there streaked the surface. It was all so cold and calm and still. His blood was hot and fevered. Something invited him into the peace and purity of the night. He threw on his overcoat and furs and strolled up to the gateway, past the silent and deserted store, whose lighted bar and billiard room was generally the last thing to close along Prairie avenue. There was not a glimmer of light about the quarters of the trader or the surgeon's beyond. One or two faint gleams stole through the blinds at the big hospital, and told of the night watch by some fevered bedside. He passed on around the fence and took a path that led to the target ranges north of the post and back of officers' row, thinking deeply all the while; and finally, re-entering the garrison by the west gate, he came down along the hard graveled walk that passed in circular sweeps the offices and and the big house of the colonel commanding, and then bore straight away in front of the entire line.

All was darkness and quiet. He paused in succession the houses of the field officers of the cavalry, looked longingly at the darkened front of Maj. Waldron's cottage, where he had lived so sweet an hour before the setting of the last sun, then went on again and paused surprised in front of Capt. Rayner's. A bright light was still burning in the front room on the second floor. Was she, too, awake and thinking of that interview? He looked wistfully at the lace curtains that shrouded the interior, and then the clank of a cavalry saber sounded in his ears, and a tall officer came springily across the road.

"Who the devil's that?" was the blunt military greeting.

"Mr. Hayne," was the quiet reply.

"What? Mr. Hayne? Oh! Beg your pardon, man—couldn't imagine who it was mooning around out here after midnight."

"I don't wonder," answered Hayne. "I am rather given to late hours, and after reading a long time I often take a stroll before turning in."

"Ah, yes; I see. Well, won't you drop in and chat awhile? I'm officer of the day, and have to owl to-night."

"Thanks, no, not this time; I must go to bed. Good night, Mr. Blake."

"Good night to you, Mr. Hayne," said Blake, then stood gazing perplexedly after him. "Now, my fine fellow," was his dissatisfied query, "what on earth do you mean by prowling around Rayner's at this hour of the night?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Terrible Slaughter.

Thousands of lives were needlessly sacrificed last year in this country, and other lives are being as wantonly sacrificed to-day. Disease is Grinding Many Down into the dust of death who might be well. Mark those initials, for thereby hangs a tale: "G. M. D." They stand for Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, which is unequaled for imparting vigor and tone to the liver and kidneys, in purifying the blood, and through it cleansing and renewing the whole system. For scrofulous humors, and consumption (or lung scrofula), in its early stages, it is a positive specific. It is sold under a *positive guarantee* of benefiting or curing in every case, on being given a fair trial, or money paid for it will be refunded.

The stalks from old asparagus beds should be burned, and a good dressing of manure spread over the ground. Any good, rich garden soil is suitable for asparagus. Newly set plants should be lightly covered during winter.

FACTS ABOUT ALCHEMY.

A SUCCINCT ACCOUNT OF THE MUCH ABUSED SCIENCE.

Alchemy Led to the Discovery of Many Important Problems in the Scientific World—It Also Hindered the Study of Chemistry 1,000 Years.

Professor Fristoe, of the faculty of the Columbian university, delivered an interesting lecture in the hall of that institution on the subject of "Alchemy, the Infancy of Chemistry." He stated that modern physical science dates from the discoveries of Copernicus, the first real astronomer, Torricelli and Pasquelin, who discovered so the world the matter of the weight of the atmosphere, and Priestly, the discoverer of oxygen, thus giving three distinct eras. Alchemy first started in form most of the problems which science is still engaged in solving, and it was the infant efforts of chemistry that drew to the study many men whose donations to science have been beyond value. The search for gold was the crisis of these efforts, accompanied by a wild striving for the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life.

The Bible contains many allusions to the science, but the first record is to be found in an ancient Chinese work dating back into ages almost beyond computation, in which the elements are stated to be earth, fire, water, metal and wood. Moses was evidently an adept in the science, from several references in the Bible to his works. Rome carried the study to a great extent, and reached such a degree of proficiency that Diocleasian, upon the eve of a reported invasion by the Egyptians, ordered all books on the subject to be burned, lest they fall into the hands of the enemy and thus give them so much knowledge that they should be able to make gold enough to enable them to own the earth.

ARISTOTLE'S INFLUENCE.

Aristotle forms quite a prominent figure in the history of the science, he being the first man to advance the theory of a universal element binding all the others together, corresponding to what we should call "quintessence." Aristotle was faithfully believed by many students of alchemy up to a comparatively late day, and it is probably due to him that philosophy and chemistry did not make greater strides forward. They would have been a thousand years earlier had it not been for his influence.

There were some funny theories held by those old philosophers as to the essences and elements of matter. One who lived about 600 years before Christ contended that water was the source of all things, another that air was the primary element, and each had a line of argument and analogy to prove his idea. A man who breathed about 450 B. C. took the ground that fire was the prime feature of the combination and that the human soul was a fiery vapor.

SOME EARLY REASONINGS.

One of the early lights was named Lucippus, who came near the truth when he said that the earth was made by the falling together of small particles. This is probably the first appearance of the atomic theory. This is a sample of the reasoning by which some of the ancients arrived at their conclusions as to the elements of matter: When wood is burned it produces fire, which gives off air, which in turn, when condensed, produces water, while the ashes of the wood form earth; therefore wood is at the bottom of all creation. A growing tree was used to show that water was the prime element by pouring on water every day until the tree had increased in size and weight and weighing the earth with which the roots were surrounded.

This, said the old chemist, proved that water had given the tree, or the wood, its increase. Aristotle made up a schedule of constructions and juggled with it to the mystification of all his followers. He said that the four elements—fire, air, water and earth—are not single and definite substances, but derive their existence from other more primal elements. Thus, fire was composed of heat and dryness, air of heat and moisture, water of cold and moisture and earth of dryness and cold. On the basis of this table he constructed some very plausible questions and led the way to the idea of the discovery of the one prime element with which one could transform any substance into anything else.

THE LOST ARTS.

In ancient times the workers in metals and other substances handed their secrets down from generation to generation, and in time some of them were lost. These are the "lost arts" so often mentioned, which are simply lost family secrets. From the Fifth to the Sixteenth century was the age of fabulous pretensions in alchemy, when every discovery was kept a profound secret, thus making the time one of almost total ignorance.

The old alchemists sometimes used good logic in their arguments as to the existence of the philosophers' stone, and all alchemy was not the fraud that modern people would think. There were some good, honest workers in the ranks, searchers after the truth, as well as the knaves that are to be found in every trade and every branch of life.

There was one monk living in the Middle Ages who made a specialty of antimony. Thinking it to be the great cure all he first tried some of it on his hogs and the beasts fattened so that he thought that it must be good for human beings. So he gave it to his brethren with fatal results. This is supposed to be the reason why the metal is called "antimony," from its bad effect on monks.

There are alchemists of today just as dishonest as those of old, men who swindle and cheat others with tricks that are almost as primitive as those used by their predecessors in the crooked art. They have only changed their forms of delusion and have struck for higher wages.—Washington Star.

The daily rations of a pair of ostriches on a farm in San Diego county, Cal., are forty pounds of beets for breakfast and a half peck to a peck of grain for dinner.

Harrowing Wheat in the Spring.

We have made repeated trials with harrowing wheat in the spring with a smoothing harrow. The work being done first as soon as the ground was sufficiently hard and dry, and again when about a foot high. Breaking the hardened crust and making a fine mellow surface among the plants had obviously an excellent effect: the heads of wheat were longer than usual, and the increase was estimated at five bushels more per acre than unharrowed wheat. The last harrowing was accompanied with the sowing of clover seed, which succeeded well and produced a good growth. At the last harrowing the harrow was passed over the wheat twice, the first before sowing the clover seed and the last after the operation. Any slant tooth harrow, with numerous fine teeth, will answer. The teeth need not be sharp, provided they are sufficiently so to mellow the crust; generally, however, the sharper the better.—Country Gentleman.

Better Than a Romance.

The story of the wooing of Mr. Henry Gladstone, son of the ex-premier, and Miss Maud Rendel, has just transpired. It seems that the two met in the summer of 1889 at Posilipo, the young lady's father having at that picturesque little hamlet on the gulf of Naples a lovely villa. One beautiful evening the two were in the garden overlooking the water upon which the moonlight hung like a misty gauze; the scene was one of poetic loveliness—young Gladstone felt that there never could be a fairer spot or a better moment for the confession of his love, so he declared himself to his inamorata with a fervor which the picturesqueness of the surroundings enhanced, if it did not inspire. Instead, however, of answering him the pretty girl covered her face with her hands and fled precipitately into the villa.

Of course this astounded the young lover, he could not understand it at all; should he interpret the maiden's conduct as a rejection? If so, it were better for him to leave Posilipo at once. But no, his Scotch instincts came to his rescue; he had done the proper thing properly—he would bide his time. Next morning after breakfast, at which his idol did not appear, he sought the garden and meandered gloomily therein, wondering what tactics he ought to pursue. Suddenly he heard Miss Maud call to him, and turning he beheld that young girl advancing. She put both her hands in his and said, with charming frankness: "I would not answer you last night fearing you were under the influence of the insidious summer evening and of the poetical and almost magical scene, and that it was not your heart that spoke; so I would hear in the daytime if you love me, and, if this is so, I will tell you that I am willing to give you my life and my love."

Now, isn't this bit of truth quite as pretty as anything that could be culled from fiction?—Eugene Field's London Letter in Chicago News.

Book Teaching of Science.

I once visited a large high school, one of the best in the country, with a science teacher whose studies have won him the respect of his fellow workers. But for some reason, on that day at least, he failed to bring his own knowledge into the class room. I heard him quizzing a class of boys and girls on animals—not on the animals of the woods and fields, not on the animals before them, for there were none, but on the edentates of South America. An especial point was to find out whether it is the nine banded armadillo (novemcinctus) or the three banded armadillo (tricinctus) which does not dig a hole in the ground for its nest. The book, written by a man who did not know an armadillo from a mud turtle, gives this piece of information. It was in the lesson, and the students must get it. And on this and like subjects these boys and girls were wasting their precious time—precious because, if they do not learn to observe in their youth, they will never learn, and the horizon of their lives will be always narrower and darker than it should have been.

Already the work of that day is a blank. They have forgotten the nine banded armadillo and the three banded, and so has their teacher, and so have I. All that remains with them is a mild hatred of the armadillo and of the edentates in general, and a feeling of relief at being no longer under their baleful influence. But with this usually goes the determination never to study zoology again. And when these students have come to the college they know no more of science and its methods that they did when at the age of 1 year they first cried for the moon.—David Starr Jordan in Popular Science Monthly.

Death Rate of Ministers.

Comparing the death rate of ministers, in respect of the causes of death, with the mortality of other men, the following results are obtained: Of 26,831 clergymen, 180 died of infectious diseases. The usual experience of an insurance company would have made the number 320; that is, the mortality of the clergymen was only 73 per cent. of the ordinary death rate. The death rate of physicians from these diseases was 127 above the usual rate, pointing to the greater danger of contagion in the case of the physician than in that of the pastor.

Of infectious diseases, including consumption, 811 clergymen died, instead of 628, the number expected from mortality tables. Physicians died of such diseases 115 per cent. above the average rate. Between the ages of 26 and 45 the mortality of Roman Catholic clergymen compared with Protestant ministers of the same age was as 187 to 109, while between the ages of 45 and 65 the difference was as 154 to 100, and between the ages of 65 and 85 as 118 to 100. How to explain this striking difference is no easy task. It is suggested that it may be connected with the life of celibacy followed by the priests, also with the rigid penances of Catholic ecclesiastics, which, especially in the case of young men, are apt to derange the digestive organs.—Medical Journal.

Lamb's Protest to Coleridge.

No man with a keen perception of the ludicrous can take him seriously. So when Coleridge addressed to Lamb those maudlin verses entitled, "This Lime-tree Bower My Prison," during a visit to him at Nether Stowey of the brother and sister, in which he gushes over the "gentle hearted Charles," this latter revolted. "For God's sake, don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle hearted in print, or do it in better verse! Substitute drunken dog, ragged head—said shaven, odd eyed, stuttering and any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question."—Benjamin Ellis Martin in Scribner.

The Multiplying Coin.

Fill a tumbler with water, put a sixpence in it, and, holding a plate over the top, turn it upside down. The sixpence will fall down on the plate and appear to be a shilling, while at the same time a sixpence will seem to be swimming in the glass. This can also be done with a twenty-five cent piece.—G. Ben White in Sunny Hour.

A lady entered a crowded street car, and but one man, a laborer, offered her a seat. "No, thank you," she said, "I don't wish to take the only gentleman's place."

Keep Them in the Nursery.

HAMBURG FIGS should be kept in the nursery, where they are particularly useful in case of constipation or indigestion, as they are liked by children, and are prompt and efficacious in their action. 25 cents. Dose, one Fig. Mack Drug Co., N. Y.

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—U. S. Gov't Report, Aug. 17, 1889.

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