

## THE DESERTER.

I.

It was one evening, after an unusually harassing day's work that I sat with my chair tilted back before a blazing fire endeavouring to gain a little comfort assisted by my pipe and a current number of the "Lancet," when suddenly a soft nervous tinkle came from the surgery bell, and a minute after my housekeeper came and informed me a lady desired to see me.

"I will be there directly," I said, as I rose with a muttered "No peace for the wicked," and quickly exchanged my old loose jacket for a more orthodox garment, glanced in the glass to see that my tie had not wandered under my ear, or that the crease in my hair was not obliterated. Then sticking a smoker's license in my mouth, I hastened to the surgery.

As I entered I beheld a slight, drooping figure in black near the table. She bowed, and motioning her to a chair, I stepped quickly across the room and turned up the gas. The extra light revealed my visitor to be a woman verging on middle age. She had a thin, anxious face, with faded blue eyes, and her hair left uncovered by her small rusty, black bonnet, was thickly sprinkled with silver. Her attire was poor, and yet there was a certain air of refinement which I could not mistake.

Taking a chair opposite my visitor I prepared to hear the object of her visit. For several seconds her faded blue eyes scrutinized my face closely, and then, apparently satisfied with the inspection, she spoke: "I have not called as a patient, doctor," she said in a well modulated voice, "but to ask you a question."

I bowed, and she went on:

"The question I am about to put to you, perhaps, you will think a strange one; but believe me it is not put in mere idle curiosity, but it is of vital importance."

She paused and eagerly watched my face, while she nervously twisted her handkerchief round her thin fingers. The question, whatever it was, evidently, from her manner, was one she felt reluctant to ask, for she sat fully a minute in silence, and while her lips opened once or twice they seemed unable to form the syllables of that query which apparently lay uppermost on her mind.

"I saw she needed encouragement to speak," I said at length, "and although I cannot call to mind at the moment an operation such as you mention, it doubtless would be possible to a skillful surgeon. But I need scarcely add he would have to be well satisfied that everything was above board ere undertaking it."

A sigh of relief escaped her, and her face lost something of its strained look. When she spoke next her voice had regained some of its strength.

"Your question, madam, is, as you say, a strange one," I said at length, "and although I cannot call to mind at the moment an operation such as you mention, it doubtless would be possible to a skillful surgeon. But I need scarcely add he would have to be well satisfied that everything was above board ere undertaking it."

"I did not reply at once: the question was a strange one, and I was quite unprepared for it. For what purpose did my visitor require this information? Did she want her own identity hid, or whose? What was her object? She had said the knowledge was of vital importance to her. Evidently she spoke truly, for her eyes were bent upon my face in a strange, yearning gaze, and her pale lips were parted with expectancy."

"Your question, madam, is, as you say, a strange one," I said at length, "and although I cannot call to mind at the moment an operation such as you mention, it doubtless would be possible to a skillful surgeon. But I need scarcely add he would have to be well satisfied that everything was above board ere undertaking it."

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"Doubtless you wonder, doctor, at my motive in putting the question. You shall know. I feel I can trust you, even if you had not assured me of it. I may say I have not always been in the poor circumstances in which I now am. There was a time when I possessed money and servants. Alas! The crash that made me a beggar also deprived me of a kind husband, for he died soon after from a broken heart, and I was left to face the world with my only child. I loved that boy, more dearly perhaps for his being all that I had left. I most worshipped him, and no sacrifice was too much that I would not have made for his sake; he in return loved his mother better than aught else in the world, and would have done anything for me."

Years passed, and he grew up a fine handsome lad. He became a clerk in a City house, and we lived together and were so happy. But bad times came at last; the firm where he worked failed, and he lost his employment. Poor boy! he sought bravely for something to do, but in vain. He was depressed, and for every vacancy that occurred there was fifty to scramble for it. The strongest, not always the most suitable, secured the prize. To make matters worse, the lady who had supplied me with needlework died. We struggled on for some time, I hardly know how. Although starvation stared us in the face, we loved each other, if possible the more, and we made brave efforts to get bread, so that we might keep together."

"My poor boy came home one day utterly cast down. 'Mother,' he said, 'it is useless trying any longer for work. I have tried so long and found none. I cannot do any more. I will enlist.' I implored him not to, but he said he would enter a regiment stationed in London, and he could often come and see me. And at last I half gave my consent. At any rate he would be well fed, and he had gone long with an empty stomach. If it did cost me a pang, ought I not to bear it for his sake?"

"When I first saw him in his uniform I cried as if my heart would break. After a time I became more reconciled to the step he had taken. He was a fine grown lad, and his uniform became him so well. I think he made the handsomest soldier I ever saw. He used to often come and see me, and I was beginning to think it was the best thing he could have done, for he always appeared happy and contented, and it afforded me a deal of comfort."

"One day, however, came the sudden news, that his regiment was ordered abroad. This was a shock which I had never dreamed of. I felt that I could not part with my boy. He was all I had in this world, and he did not want to go. There were a great many chances if he went of our never meeting again."

"When his furlough was ended he did not go back to the regiment. Perhaps it was wrong, doctor; but I could not part with my boy. He was my all, and I loved him so."

At this point my visitor broke off, and buried her face in her handkerchief, while a succession of sobs shook her attenuated form. I as a doctor was accustomed to see sorrow, but I don't think I ever beheld anyone so grief-stricken as this poor woman. When she raised her head she seemed in that brief few moments to have aged ten years.

"There is little more to tell, doctor," she continued, brokenly. "For months we have moved and hidden away, trying to evade those seeking to take my boy from me. If he is taken it will kill me. I thought if his features were altered his identity would be concealed, and my boy would be safe from arrest."

For several moments I sat in deep thought. I had now learnt her motive for asking the question. It was also borne in upon me that I was being made an accessory to this young deserter's escape. What ought I to do? The mother seemed to divine what was passing in my mind, for she suddenly rose from her chair, and threw herself on her knees before me, and with clasped hands and streaming eyes implored me to save her boy. I don't wish to dwell on this painful scene; suffice it to say that before she left, and without committing myself, I had promised to call and see her son.

When I returned to my snug little room I felt unable to pick up the thread of comfort again. I could not settle down, my pipe and magazine had no charm for me, my late visitor had caused the spirit of unrest to settle on me, and after trying vainly to find some comfort from my surroundings, I retired to bed, but not to sleep, for my mind was constantly dwelling on the strange tale which had been confided to my ear. Had I done right in promising to call? Would it not have been better to have advised the woman to let her son give himself up to the authorities? I was in a dilemma which worried me much. I wished from the bottom of my heart to do right. I also sympathised with the poor woman. She loved her boy so. He was her all, and I remembered I had possessed just such a mother once."

II.

It was drawing towards mid-day when I set out for my promised call. I had fully made up my mind to counsel both mother and son that in the end it would be best for the latter to surrender himself to the authorities. It would be far better than starving, and being haunted by the continual fear of arrest. It was killing the poor woman, I knew, and the son, if he loved his mother, would do as I advised. I found their abode was situated in a poor little narrow court. My knock at the weather-beaten door was answered promptly by my late night's visitor, who had evidently been watching for me. By daylight she looked even more emaciated and pale than before, and I felt sad as I looked upon her.

As she conducted me up the long staircase she told me that her son was not very well; he had a cold, and it was rather worse this morning, so she had prevailed on him to remain in bed. At length we reached the poor little room at the top of the house. It was painfully clean and bare. Attempts had been made to make it home like. Pictures cut from illustrated papers had been carefully pinned on the walls to relieve the whitewash, and often to cover an ugly hole in the plaster, while several little rag mats, made by her own busy fingers, I had no doubt, gave a degree of comfort to the room as well as hiding the worst parts of the discoloured rotten boards.

In one corner of the room was a mattress, and draped over the head was an ingeniously contrived curtain manufactured from old newspapers. Looking more closely I made out, stretched on the bed, a thin young fellow with light curly hair and blue eyes, which looked out of their sunken sockets far too brightly. Two red spots burnt ominously on his cheek bones, and as he raised himself on his elbow at my approach, he gave a succession of short, hard coughs.

"Here is the doctor, dear," said the mother, with an attempt at cheerfulness, as she went and proudly smoothed the curls from her son's white forehead.

"I shall have to prescribe for this cough now I am here," I said, drawing near.

"You are very kind, doctor," he answered. "I never had a cold hang about me so long. I would sell the cough for a very small sum, as it worries me so," and his handsome boyish face lit up for a moment with a smile.

"My dear, how you do talk!" said his mother, looking at him lovingly.

"I examined him. I saw that my counsel, to give himself up, would not be required; neither would he want his identity concealed by an operation. His identity was about to be hidden by a change much more powerful. The privation and anxiety had done its work. The poor fellow was in rapid consumption, and his time in this world was very short. The poor mother, in the struggle to gain bread and her anxiety to hide her son, had failed to note the stealthy progress of the dread disease which had now so firm a hold on her child. Far better would it have been for both had he gone back to his regiment at first."

"Weeks glided by, and I continued my visits to the young fellow, and I saw that he had sufficient nourishment as well as many little comforts. The mother waited on her son with a devotion which only a mother can exhibit to the child she bore. It frequently affected me to see the attachment which existed between these two, especially when I thought how soon they were to be parted."

"It was one afternoon that I called, as usual. My patient had been growing rapidly worse the last few days, and the spark of life scarcely flickered in his feeble frame. As I entered the room, I saw a great change had come over him. The end was rapidly approaching. The poor mother, who had borne up bravely all through, now showed signs of breaking down, but she struggled courageously against it and tried to bear up. He had sunk into unconsciousness from which I knew he would not awaken and there was only his slow, faint breathing which showed that life still flickered."

"I had been watching by his side for some minutes, when a loud knocking came at the street door, followed by the sound of men's voices, and soon the tread of heavy footsteps sounded on the rickety stairs. They came nearer, and at length paused outside the bedroom door. Ere I could go to ascertain the cause of the noise, the door was thrown open, and a couple of soldiers

came into the room. They were in full marching order, and I knew their errand; they had run the deserter to earth, but he would escape them."

"One of the men was about to speak, when I held up my hand, and he was silent. The noise had not disturbed the dying boy. His mother lifted her head, and gave one terrified glance over her shoulder at the guard, and her arms were folded more closely round her dying child as if she feared they would even now take him from her."

"The setting sun struggled through the one tiny window, and lit up the bare little room with its expiring rays. It gently touched the thin, white face of the dying boy, and tinged with gold the one curl which lay on his damp forehead. It lingered on the bowed grey head of his sorrow-stricken mother as she bent over him. One sickly beam strayed to my hand as I held my patient's wrist, timing the slow, scarcely perceptible beats, by the watch in my other hand; it sent a glow of light on the red coats of the soldiers standing together by the open door—the only bit of colour in a sad picture."

They had reverently removed their helmets, and stood with bowed heads, silently looking on the deserter who was fast stealing away before their very eyes where they could not follow. The sun sank lower and lower, and at last, with one vivid show of glory it disappeared, leaving the room in gloom. The noise from the streets below appeared to be hushed for a moment, and a strange quietness stole through the room, it was then my patient, with one long weary sigh, ceased to breathe."

"He is gone," I said quietly. The mother still hung over the lifeless form. The soldiers bowed their heads, turned, and crept noiselessly down the stairs out into the street."

## CLIMBING STEEP GRADES.

### Locomotives Which Go up Hill—Great Feats Performed in Brazil.

American locomotives were the first to gain reputation as hill climbers says the Locomotive Engineer. The early English ideas about a locomotive was that it must run on a fairly level road to show favorable performance, and so immense labor was expended in cutting down hills and in filling up valleys to make a level roadbed. There was a belief that smooth wheel locomotives could not be employed in climbing steep grades, and no attempt appears to have been made to test how far this theory was correct until American engineers took it up.

In 1836 a Norris engine, designed by Mr. Joseph Harrison was tried on the Columbia railroad, now part of the Pennsylvania railroad, on a grade of 369 feet to the mile and it pulled a little more than its own weight a distance of 2,800 feet at the rate of 15 miles an hour. Owing to the fame of this feat a Norris engine was shortly afterwards imported to England to pull trains up steep grades on the Birmingham and Gloucester railway, which English engines had failed to ascend without a load.

### MOUNTING AN UNUSUAL GRADE.

An account recently published in the Anglo Brazilian Times indicates that the locomotive is still attaining new triumphs in mountain climbing. Think of an engine with smooth wheels climbing a grade that rises nine feet in every hundred. We quote from the Brazilian paper:

"One of the three Baldwin locomotives recently obtained by the Province of Rio de Janeiro for the Serra section of the Cantagallo railway has been set up and got ready for service. Dr. Honorio Bicalho, director general of public works, of the ministry of agriculture and a number of other engineers went on recently to Cachoeira to attend a trial of the new engine made by the administration of the Cantagallo railway to test its fulfillment of the contract engagement to draw a 40-ton train of gradients of 8.3 per cent. This was successfully effected, the locomotive weighing 40 tons when ready for the trip, drawing a train of 40 tons, composed of three trucks, laden with sleepers, and a passenger car from Cachoeira to Bona do Mato, 8 kilometers at the speed of 24 kilometers an hour, and then easily up a rise of 8.5 per cent, with curve and counter curve of 40 meters radius, a result superior to the contract engagement, and it is believed that when the driver has become familiar with the engine it will as easily ascend rises of 9 per cent."

### AROUND SHOT CURVES.

"It has thus been satisfactorily proved that the Serra section of the Cantagallo railway can be worked with engines without special adherence, and that the Fell system adopted for it, and worked at such serious expense, can be completely dispensed with, and will be as soon as the Barlow rails have been replaced by steel ones on the remainder of the Serra section, and also on the first section, reducing the gauge of the latter to that of the rest of the railway. With these improvements it is expected that the working expenses of the Cantagallo railway will be so largely reduced that instead of a burden, it will become a source of profit to the provincial treasury."

Brazilian engineers called the grades 8.3 per cent, but measurements were afterward made by American engineers and it was found that the gradients were steeper than 9 per cent, and that curves of about 20 degrees twisted the trains on the heaviest part of the climb.

## MIRROR FOR A BICYCLE.

### By Which the Rider Can Survey the Road Behind Him.

A device to enable bicycle riders to observe vehicles, etc., approaching from the rear, without being obliged to turn and look back, has been patented recently. The attachment consists of a yoke-shaped arch bar fastened to the handle bar of the bicycle by means of two clamps, and supporting a mirror, which is hinged to a V-shaped keeper, so that it can be moved up or down the standard bar by pressing the two ends of the keeper together, and releasing at the desired height. The mirror itself may be placed at the inclination desired for distance or near observation by simply pressing it in the desired position, where it will be held by pawls catching into the tooth keeper. The adjusting of the mirror to the proper place can be done with one hand only while riding. All the parts of this bicycle attachment are very simple and not liable to get out of order.

## DUPING POSTMASTERS.

### The Country Officials Give Uncle Sam Much Trouble.

In Canada the country postmaster has sufficient intelligence and common-sense to prevent his being imposed upon by those who would use the mails for fraudulent purposes. But over the border it is said that the mistakes of these officials give endless trouble and anxiety to the post-office department at Washington. For example, says an American paper, there is the business of giving information to swindlers. Dishonest persons write to postmasters all over the Union offering gold watches or valuable books in exchange for lists of the names of people who get mail at their post-offices. In this way they get hold of innumerable "alive addresses," among which to distribute their fraudulent advertisements. The government of late has been trying hard to put a stop to this scheme. The rural postmaster furnishes the list required of him and waits hopefully for his watch. It is hardly necessary to say that he never receives it. Meanwhile complaints of the sharper have reached the post-office department. He is doing business maybe from Jersey City. The postmaster there is instructed to hold his mail unless he will identify himself. This frightens him and he fails to comply. His letters go to the dead letter office at Washington, where they are opened. The postmaster's list of names being found in one of the envelopes a sharp note is sent to him asking what excuse he has for violating the regulations which positively forbid the giving of such information. Nevertheless in the perpetual struggle that is maintained between the post-office department and swindlers who conduct their enterprises through the mails the latter have easily the best of it. Now and then one of them is caught and punished, but such an occasional episode does not seriously interfere with this species of criminal activity. Many complaints have come in recently to the effect that postmasters are selling names, and that respectable persons in various parts of the country are receiving objectionable medical pamphlets and fraudulent literature in quantities. These petty government officials, in fact, too often serve innocently as intermediaries between swindlers and the people. They are utilized as catpaws for working all manner of "fakes" and "skin games" at the expense of the confiding public.

### A REMARKABLE FRAUD.

To one of the most remarkable of such frauds an effective blow has been dealt by the arrest and conviction a few weeks ago of a man whose ingenious tricks have puzzled the police here and abroad for a number of years past. This was the man, who, under the name of William Lord Moore, conducted a so-called "claim agency" in London, advertising to procure in England legacies and estates amounting to many million dollars, for persons in this country alleged to be entitled to them. Of course, the said estates and legacies were wholly mythical. The method adopted was to send to country postmasters all over the United States circulars which they were requested to tack up in conspicuous places. The documents thus distributed gave notice that large sums were due to persons who were believed to reside in that vicinity, wherever it might be. Naturally the number of answers sent in response to these circulars was enormous. Persons who replied in the hope that they might be entitled to the fortunes referred to were informed that they were happily not mistaken, but before their claims could be acted upon they were required to send \$25 to William Lord Moore, in London for preliminary expenses. The money being forwarded, nothing more was heard of it. Undoubtedly the sharper gained an immense sum in this way. He gave no end of worry to the post-office department which was helpless because the circulars and letters were mailed in England. The British authorities, being asked for help, became greatly interested in the case, but the Scotland Yard detectives tried for years in vain to hunt William Lord Moore to his hole. Efforts equally fruitless were made to corner a person called Leger, who acted as Moore's agent in New York. Finally, Moore was run down in London, and England being too hot to hold him, he skipped away to the United States. He was captured in Chicago, but escaped from the marshal who had him in charge.

### A CLERICAL SCAMP.

Then there was the romantic career of a person known as the Rev. George Frederick Burgoyne Howard. He was an Englishman, the son of a policeman. For a while he was in the royal navy, and afterwards he served in the United States navy from which he deserted. He taught a negro school in South Carolina, and during the epoch of the carpet bag he was a trial justice in that state. To escape prosecution for malfeasance in office he fled, eloping with the wife of a railway man. Later he deserted her, went to Georgia, and became a Baptist preacher. The Rev. G. W. F. Howard had a large red beard, hair of the same color, and a most plausible address. He possessed no morals worth mentioning but his cheek is described as amazing. After a while he turned up at Jackson, Tenn., as pastor of a church. Scandals caused by his doings split the congregation in two, one part standing by the preacher and starting a new church under his ministrations. He left that town and went to New York, where he set up a "claim agency" under the name of Leger. The business was of a kind that could be conducted more safely and advantageously from abroad, and so he transferred it to London, where he called himself by various aliases, while known to correspondents from this side of the water as William Lord Moore. How he was finally caught has been already told. After escaping from the marshal he went back to Jackson, Tenn., and gave himself up, thinking to bluff it out. He was again the Baptist preacher and knew nothing of William Lord Moore or his business. It was all a case of mistaken identity. Unfortunately for him the government was determined to spare neither pains nor expense in procuring his conviction. Witnesses were brought from abroad to swear that he was William Lord Moore and none other. Ex-Minister Lincoln and Ex-Consul General New who had seen the man in England, went to Jackson for the purpose of giving their testimony. The defense of the prisoner conducted by himself, was a masterpiece of ingenious frontery. Nevertheless he was sentenced to nine years in the penitentiary.

### ANOTHER KIND OF SWINDLE.

One of the most remarkable swindles

ever heard of was set on foot recently by the establishment of more than a score of small post-offices in South Carolina. The chief conspirator was quite a prominent man in that part of the country, named Barretts, and it was by his influence that the department was persuaded to create the offices, appointing as postmasters men whom he selected. The whole business was fictitious, the localities chosen being uninhabited. Nevertheless the postmasters were able to procure large quantities of goods, paying for some of them with postage stamps, furnished by Uncle Sam and obtaining credit for others. To square accounts at Washington they rendered false affidavits as to cancellations. The fraud was exposed by an inspector, who, traveling through that region, quickly found out what was going on. Postmasters in small places are often called on by congressmen and politicians to furnish lists of names of those persons in their bailiwicks who are likely to be influenced with regard to voting by judiciously selected partisan literature. This is an abuse which the civil service commission is most anxious to put a stop to. Of course, the postmasters represent whatever party may be in power at Washington, and it is unquestionably a fact that they have frequently been employed to propagate political doctrine. They have even been accused of discriminating against opposition documents in the mails. However, it cannot be denied that they are far more sinned against than sinning, being commonly employed as innocent agents for the prosecution of frauds in which they have no share or profit.

## Russia Needs Watching.

Observers of events in Australia have been somewhat puzzled to account for the appointment of a trained diplomatist, like General Pontata, as Russian consul at Melbourne. Mr. Damyon, the general's predecessor, was (the words of the Argus seem to imply) a resident of Melbourne who had assumed the duties at the desire of his compatriots in Australia rather than by any deliberate selection on the part of the St. Petersburg authorities. Nor does there seem to be any obvious reason for putting a more experienced member of the consular corps in his place. The commercial relations of Victoria with the Russian Empire have always been of little importance, the policy of both countries being protective, and no change has occurred to make it probable that the trade between them is about to undergo any marked expansion. General Pontata has for twenty years been stationed at Bucharest, where there was scope for constant vigilance and the exercise of much tact in gathering information and otherwise furthering the interests of Russia. A gentleman of such antecedents must surely be lost in succeeding to the post by no means urgent functions of Mr. Damyon, unless there is work for him to do which indicates a turn in affairs international. Have recent developments in Europe made it possible that complications may arise in the relations between London and St. Petersburg that may render it advisable that the authorities of the latter capital should have the military and naval strength of England at their finger ends? To this end it would be necessary to have able and discreet men at the extremities as well as at the heart of the British Empire. General Pontata may use his abundant leisure in satisfying himself as to the character and value of the chief ports and harbors of Australia and obtaining fuller knowledge than the foreign office of his Government as yet possesses regarding the state of sentiment in the great Australian dominion. This, at any rate, the Argus suggests, may be in part the reason for the change.

## THE CZARINA.

### She is a Most Devoted Wife and Charming Woman as Well.

One likes to read how the Czarina constantly accompanies her husband in his rides and drives. Not only does it indicate wifely devotion, but it proves an intrepidity too often denied as an attribute to woman. It is said that she thinks that her presence is a defence from the nihilists. Certainly she knows that a shot aimed at him might reach her; that a bomb under the carriage would be discriminating. Yet she hopes that her presence may prevent the bomb-throwing, and she equally hopes that the bullet may reach her, if so be that she saves his life.

But one of the pleasantest things to read about her is the motherly devotion to the moral welfare of her children. In this she is an example to all mothers. She allows no governess, but employs teachers, who, coming for a few hours a day and those days not consecutive, have not time to make a lasting impression on the moral nature of her children, as would one employed constantly.

She is very small, and the contrast between her figure and that of the czar, who is almost gigantic, is very remarkable. Her oldest boy is like her in size—a fact that somewhat troubles the Russian people, accustomed to great size in rulers. But his mother's training has developed in him a strong, resolute character, conscientious and studious and capable of standing by a conviction.

## Will be a Respected Citizen.

Mr. Clothierstein—"Dot poy of mine makes a fine business man some days."

Mr. Silverheimer—"What makes you dink so?"

Mr. Clothierstein—"Well, when he was measured a mans for a hair of pants yesterday he gomes to me and says: 'Fadher, dot man has yout got dree dollars in his pockets. I feels dem, and ven I says to him, loud, Moses, bring me some of dose five dollars pants, und he goes und gods me some of dose one dollar pants und I knocks dem down to der mans for dree dollars. Oh, Moses vos all right. He will be a highly-resbegged citizens some days."

## Five Mile Millions.

Of the 1,500,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants the Emperor of China holds sway over 406,000,000; Queen of England rules or protects 380,000,010; the Czar of Russia is dictator to 155,000,000; France, in the republic, dependencies and spheres of influence, has 70,000,000; subjects the Emperor of Germany, 55,000,000; the Sultan of Turkey, 40,000,000; the Emperor of Japan, 40,000,000, and the King of Spain, 27,000,000—two-thirds of the population of the globe under the government of five rulers.