

THE DESERTER.

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

Author of "Deserter's March," "The Colonel's Daughter," "Marion's Faith," etc., etc.

Copyright, by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, and published by special arrangement with them.

CHAPTER III.



Alone in the colonel's presence.

The officers of Fort Warren were assembled, as was the daily morning custom, in the presence of the colonel commanding. It had long been the practice of that veteran soldier to require all his commissioned subordinates to put in an appearance at his office immediately after the ceremony of guard mounting. He might have nothing to say to them, or he might have a good deal; and he was a man capable of saying a good deal in very few words and meaning exactly what he said. It was his custom to look up from his writing as each officer entered and respond to the respectful salutation tendered him with an equally punctilious "Good morning, Capt. Gregg," or "Good morning, Mr. Blake," never omitting the mention of the name, unless, as was sometimes tried, a squad of them came in together and made their obeisance as a body. In this event the colonel simply looked each man in the face, as though taking mental note of the individual constituents of the group, and contented himself with a "Good morning, gentlemen."

When in addition to six troops of his own regiment of cavalry there were sent to put in an appearance at his office immediately after the ceremony of guard mounting, he might have nothing to say to them, or he might have a good deal; and he was a man capable of saying a good deal in very few words and meaning exactly what he said. It was his custom to look up from his writing as each officer entered and respond to the respectful salutation tendered him with an equally punctilious "Good morning, Capt. Gregg," or "Good morning, Mr. Blake," never omitting the mention of the name, unless, as was sometimes tried, a squad of them came in together and made their obeisance as a body. In this event the colonel simply looked each man in the face, as though taking mental note of the individual constituents of the group, and contented himself with a "Good morning, gentlemen."

When in addition to six troops of his own regiment of cavalry there were sent to put in an appearance at his office immediately after the ceremony of guard mounting, he might have nothing to say to them, or he might have a good deal; and he was a man capable of saying a good deal in very few words and meaning exactly what he said. It was his custom to look up from his writing as each officer entered and respond to the respectful salutation tendered him with an equally punctilious "Good morning, Capt. Gregg," or "Good morning, Mr. Blake," never omitting the mention of the name, unless, as was sometimes tried, a squad of them came in together and made their obeisance as a body. In this event the colonel simply looked each man in the face, as though taking mental note of the individual constituents of the group, and contented himself with a "Good morning, gentlemen."

The matinee, so called, were by no means unpopular features of the daily routine. The officers were permitted to bring their pipes and cigars and take their after breakfast smoke in the big, roomy office of the commander, just as they were permitted to enjoy the post-prandial whiff when at evening recitation in the same office they sat around the room, chatting in low tones, for half an hour, while the colonel received the reports of his adjutant, the surgeon and the old and the new officer of the day. Then any matters affecting the discipline or instruction or general interests of the command were brought up; both sides of the question were presented, if question arose, the decision was rendered by the colonel, and the officers were dismissed for the day with the customary "That's all, gentlemen." They left the office well knowing that only in the event of some sudden emergency would they be called thither again or disturbed in their daily vocations until the same hour on the following morning. Meantime, they must be about their work—drills, if weather permitted; stable duty, no matter what the weather; Garrison Court, and the various surveys, the general command that was perennially dispensing justice at the post, and the long list of minor but none the less exacting details of the command and company commanders.

The colonel was a strict, even severe, disciplinarian, but he was cool, deliberate, and just. He "worked" his officers, and thereby incurred the criticism of a few, but held the respect of all. He had been a splendid cavalry commander in the field of all others where his sterling qualities were sure to find responsive appreciation in his officers and men—on active and stirring campaigns against the Indians; and among his own regiment he knew that deep in their hearts he was respected and beloved in him, even when they grieved at garrison exactions which seemed un-called for. The infantry officers knew less of him as a stirring commander, and were not so well pleased with his discipline. It was all right for him to "roust out" every member of the cavalry at reveille, because all the cavalry officers had to go to stables soon afterward—that was all they were fit for—but what on earth was the use of getting them—the infantry—out of their warm beds before sunrise on a wintry morning and having no end of roll calls and such things through the day, "just to keep them busy." The real objection for many of them to the colonel's system was that it kept a large number of officers, most of whom were educated gentlemen, hammering all day long at an endless routine of trivial duties, allowing actually no time in which they could read, study, or improve their minds; but, as ill luck would have it, the three young gentlemen who decided to present to the colonel this view of the case had been devoting most spare time they could find to a lively game of poker down at "the store," and their petition for "more time to themselves" brought down a reprimand from the captain's lips of the commander that became immortal on the frontier and made the petitioners nearly frantic.

For a week the trio was the butt of all the wits at Fort Warren. And yet the entire commissioned force felt that they were being kept at the grindstone because of the frivolity of these youngsters, and they did not like it. All the same the cavalrymen respected him, and the infantrymen were business like, and the matinees were business like and profitable. They were rarely unpleasant in any feature, but this particular morn-

ing—two days after the arrival of Mrs. Rayner and her sister—had been a scene of somewhat dramatic interest, and the groups of officers in breaking up and going away could discuss nothing else. The colonel had requested one of their number to remain, as he wished to speak to him further, and that man was Lieut. Hayne.

Seven years had that young gentleman been a second lieutenant of the regiment of infantry, a detachment of which was now stationed at Warren. Only his very winter had promoted him to the rank of all companies in the regiment, he was promoted to the first lieutenant of Capt. Rayner's. For a while the regiment when by itself could talk of Lieut. Hayne. Mr. Hayne had spent three or four years in the exile of a little "two company post" far up in the mountains. Except the officers there stationed, none of his comrades had seen him during that time.

No one of them would like to admit that he would care to see him. And yet, when once in a while they got to talking among themselves about him, and the question was sometimes confidentially asked of comrades who came down on leave from that isolated station, "How is Hayne doing?" or "What is Hayne doing?" the language in which he was referred to grew by degrees far less truculent and confidential than it had been when he first went thither. Officers of the "Riflers" of Mr. Hayne. Unlike one or two others of their rank of the service, this particular regiment of foot held the affairs of its officers as regimental property in which outsiders had no concern. If they had disagreements they were kept to themselves; and even in a case which in its day had attracted widespread attention the Riflers had long since learned to shun all talk outside.

It was evident to other commands that the Hayne affair was a sore point and one on which they preferred silence. And yet it was getting to be whispered around that the Riflers were by no means so unanimous as they had been in their opinion of this very officer. They were becoming divided among themselves; and what complicated matters was the fact that those who felt their views undergoing a reconstruction were compelled to admit that just in proportion as the case of Mr. Hayne rose in their estimation the reputation of another officer was bound to suffer, and that officer was Capt. Rayner.

Between these two men not a word had been exchanged for five years—since a single word since they met when, with ashen face and broken accents, but with stern purpose in every syllable, Lieut. Hayne, standing in the presence of nearly all the officers of his regiment, had hurled this prophecy in his adversary's teeth: "Though it take me years, I will live it down despite you; and you will live to God you had bitten out your perjured tongue before ever you told the lie that wrecked him."

No wonder there was talk, and lots of it, in the "Riflers" and all through the garrison when Rayner's first lieutenant suddenly threw up his commission and retired to the mines he had located in Montana, and Hayne, the "senior second," was promoted to the vacancy. Speculation as to what would be the result was given a temporary rest by the news that war department orders had granted the subaltern six months' leave—the first he had sought in as many years. It was known that he had gone east, but hardly had he been away a fortnight when there came the trouble with the Cheyennes at the reservation—a leap for liberty by a score fifty of the cavalry, and an immediate rush of the cavalry in pursuit. There were some bloody atrocities, as there always are. All the troops in the department were ordered to be in readiness for instant service, while the officers eagerly watched the reports to see which way the desperate battle would turn, and which way the fate of Mr. Hayne would be decided. He had thrown up his leave and had hurried out to join his company the moment the eastern papers told of the trouble. It was all practically settled by the time he reached the department; but the spirit and intent of his action could not be doubted. And now here he was at Warren. That very morning during the matinee he had entered the office unannounced, walked up to the desk of the commander, and, while every voice but his in the room was still, he quietly spoke:

"Permit me to introduce myself, colonel—Mr. Hayne. I desire to relinquish my leave of absence and report for duty."

The colonel quickly arose and extended his hand:

"Mr. Hayne, I am especially glad to see you and to thank you here for all your care and kindness to our men. The doctor tells me that many of them would have had to suffer the loss of noses and ears, even of hands and feet in some cases, but for your attention. Maj. Stannard will add to what he has to say when he returns. Take a seat, sir, for the present. You are acquainted with the officers of your own regiment, doubtless. Mr. Billings, introduce Mr. Hayne to ours."

Whereat the adjutant courteously greeted the newcomer, presented a small party of yellow striped shoulders, and then drew him into earnest talk about the adventure of the train. It was not till that Mr. Hayne noticed he was being gazed upon by the slightest recognition of the presence of the officers of his own regiment, and that they as studiously avoided him. One or two of their number had indeed risen and stepped forward as though to offer him the civil greeting due to one of their own club, but it was with evident doubt of the result. They hesitated when he met their intention—which was that of a gentleman such as all the officers regarded him. He did not choose to see them, and of course, that ended it.

Not was his growing dislike among the cavalrymen. There were only a few present, as most of the company were out in the field and marching to their homes. The instructions were very cautious and formal, there was even constraint among two or three, but there was civility and an evident desire to do for his services a benefit of their men. All such attempts, however, Mr. Hayne waved aside by an immediate and abrupt refusal. It was plain that to them, too, he had the manner of a man who was at odds with the world and desired to make no friends.

The colonel quickly noted the general silence and constraint, and resolved to shorten his remarks as possible. Drooping his pen, he was led toward his chair with a desecrated cheerfulness.

"Mr. Hayne, you will remain a day or two in the barracks, and I will be glad to see you for work, if possible. No, sir, I shall move in this afternoon and be on duty tomorrow morning," was the curt reply.

The answer. A faint smile crossed Mr. Hayne's features; he seemed rather to enjoy the situation:

"I have considered, colonel. I shall turn nobody out, and nobody need be commended in the least."

"Oh! then you will share quarters with some of the lachrymose?" asked the colonel, with evident relief.

"No, sir," and the answer was stern in tone, though perfectly respectful: "I shall live as I have lived for years—utterly alone."

One could have heard a pin drop in the office—even on the matted floor. The colonel half arose:

"Why, Mr. Hayne, there is not a vacant set of quarters in the garrison. You will have to move some one out if you decide to live alone."

"There may be no quarters in the post, sir, but if you permit me, I can live near my company and yet in officers' quarters."

"How so, sir?"

"In the house out there on the edge of the garrison, facing the prairie. It is within stone's throw of the barracks of Company B, and is exactly like those built for the officers in here along the parade."

"Why, Mr. Hayne, no officers ever lived there. It is utterly out of the way and isolated. I believe it was built for the government afterwards. Who lives there now, Mr. Quartermaster?"

"No one, sir. It is being used as a tailor shop; half a dozen of the company tailors work there; but I can send them back to their own barracks. The house is in good repair, and, as Mr. Hayne says, exactly like those built for officers' use."

"And you mean you want to live there alone, Mr. Hayne?"

"I do, sir, exactly."

The colonel turned sharply to his desk once more. The strained silence continued a moment. Then he faced his officers.

"Mr. Hayne, you will remain a few moments? I wish to speak with you, gentlemen, that is all this morning." And so the meeting adjourned.

While many of the cavalry officers strolled into the neighboring club and reading room it was noticed that their comrades of the infantry lost no time at intermediate points, but took the short road to the row of brown cottages known as the officers' quarters. The feeling of constraint that had settled upon all was still apparent in the group that entered the club room, and for a moment no one spoke. There was a general settling into easy chairs and picking up of newspapers without reference to age or date. No one seemed to want to say anything, and yet every one felt it necessary to have some apparent excuse for becoming absorbed in their matters. This was so evident to Lieut. Blake that he speedily burst into a laugh—the first that had been heard—when two or three heads popped out from behind their printed screens to inquire into the cause of his mirth that light hearted gentleman was seen sprawling his long legs apart and gazing out of the window after the groups of infantrymen.

"What do you see that's so intensely funny?" growled one of the elders among the dragons.

"Nothing, old mole—nothing," said Blake, turning suddenly about. "It looks too much like a funeral procession for fun. What I'm chucking in is the absurdity of our coming in here like so many mutes in weepers. It's none of our funeral."

"Strikes me the situation is damned awkward," growled "the mole" again. "Here's a fellow coming in who's cast his regiment and has placed orders under his belt, and he gets inside the post."

"Well, does any man here know the rights and wrongs of the case, anyhow?" said a tall, bearded captain as he threw aside the paper which he had not been reading, and rose impatiently to his feet.

"It seems to me from the little I've heard of Mr. Hayne and the little I've seen that there is a broad variation between facts and appearances. He looks like a gentleman, and the charges are a hundred to one he has been doing something respectable, but say the least."

"Then why are you so disinterested?" queried a young lieutenant. "The law says he must be."

"That's right, Dolly; pull your eyes and Benet on 'em and show you know all about military law and courts martial," said the captain, crushing. "It's one thing for a court to sentence and another for the president to approve. Hayne was dismissed, so far as a court could do it, but the president renitented the whole thing."

"There was more to it than that, though, and you know it, Buxton," said Blake. "Neither the department commander nor Gen. Sherman thought the evidence conclusive, and they said so, especially old Gray Fox. And you ask the any of these fellows here now whether they believe Hayne was really guilty, and I'll bet you that eight out of ten will flunk at the question."

"And yet they all cut him dead. That's prima facie evidence of what they think."

"Cut him dead? By God, if any man asked me to testify on oath as to where the cat lay, I should say he had cut them. Did you see how he ignored Foster and Graham this morning?"

"Did, and I thought it damned ungentlemanly in him. Those fellows did the proper thing, and he ought to have acknowledged it," broke in the third officer.

"I'm not defending that point; the Lord knows he has done nothing to encourage civility with his own people, but he ought to have acknowledged it," asked the adjutant. "When there was some talk of his company's being sent here, what Hayne's status was, and he told me. There isn't a square man or soldier soldier in the army that the adjutant of the Riflers, and he said that it was Hayne's stubborn pride that more than anything else stood in the way of his restoration to social standing. He had made it a rule that every one who was sent to Warren should be invited to dine with him, and he refused to admit any man to his society who would not first come to him of his own volition and say he believed him utterly innocent. As that involved the necessity of their looking up a Rayner as either pardoned or openly and persistently mistaken, no one felt called upon to do it. Guilty or innocent, he has lived the life of a Pariah ever since."

"I don't know," said Blake, more seriously, and with a tone of concern. "I like Rayner, and have found most of the good fellows thorough gentlemen and good friends. This will test the question thoroughly. I believe most of them, except, of course, Rayner, would do the same were they in my place. At all events, I mean to see."

"What are you going to do, Gregg?" asked "the mole," wheedling suddenly on his brother troop commander.

"I don't know," said Gregg, doubtfully. "I think I'll ask the colonel."

"What do you suppose he means to do?"

"I don't know again; but I'll bet we all know as soon as he makes up his mind—or he's making it up, for there goes Mr. Hayne, and here comes the orderly. Something's up already."

Every head was turned to the doorway as the orderly's "yes" was heard in the outer hall, and every eye ceased to hear the message, it was so unusual for the commanding officer to send for one of his subordinates after the morning meeting. The soldier tapped at the panel, and at the prompt "Come in" pushed it partly open and stood with one white gloved hand resting on the knob, the other raised to his cap in salute.

"Lieut. Blake," he asked, as he entered, "the commanding officer's compliments, sir, and could he see the lieutenant one minute before the court meets?"

"Coming at once," said Blake, as he pushed his way through the chairs, and the orderly faded about and disappeared.

"It'll be all right, Hayne," was the apparently unanimous sentiment as the cavalry party broke up and scattered for the morning's duties. Some waited purposely to hear.

The adjutant alone stood in the colonel's presence as Blake knocked and entered. All others had gone. There was a moment's hesitation, and the colonel paused and looked his man over before he spoke:

"You will excuse my sending for you, Mr. Blake, when I tell you that it is a matter that has to be decided at once. In this case you will consider, too, that I want you to say yes, or no exactly as you would to a command of your own officers, and you are asked to meet Mr. Hayne at any other house in the garrison than mine, would you desire to accept? You are aware of all the circumstances, the adjutant tells me."

"I am, sir, and have just announced my intention of calling upon him."

"Then will you dine with us this evening to meet Mr. Hayne?"

"I will do so with pleasure, sir."

It could hardly have been an hour afterward when Mr. Rayner entered a literary bet house home and found Miss Travers entertaining herself with a book.

"Have you written to Miss Van Antwerp this morning?" she asked. "I thought that was what you came here for."

"Did mean to, but Mrs. Waldron has been here, and I was interrupted."

"It is fully fifteen minutes since she left. Nellie, yes, might have written two or three pages ago; and you know that all manner of visitors will be coming in to-night."

"I'm just thinking over something she told me. I'll write presently."

"Mrs. Waldron is a woman who talks about everything and everybody. I advise you to listen to her no more than you can help. What is she told you?"

Miss Travers smiled roguishly: "Why should you want to know, Kate, if you disapprove of her revelations?"

"Oh, with visible annoyance, 'tis to let me know so as to let you see that I was something unfounded, as usual."

"She said she had just been told that the colonel was going to give a dinner party this evening to Mr. Hayne."

"Who told her?"

"Who are you going to, Kate?"



Facing the broad, level prairie, separated from it only by a rough, unpainted picket fence, and flanked by uncouth structures of pine, one of which was used as a storehouse for quartermaster's property, the other as the post trader's depository for skins and furs, there stood the frame cottage which Mr. Hayne had chosen as his home.

Facing the broad, level prairie, separated from it only by a rough, unpainted picket fence, and flanked by uncouth structures of pine, one of which was used as a storehouse for quartermaster's property, the other as the post trader's depository for skins and furs, there stood the frame cottage which Mr. Hayne had chosen as his home. As has been said, it was precisely like those built for the subalterns with one exception. The locality made the vast difference which really existed. Theirs stood all in a row, fronting the grassy level of the parade, surrounded by verandas, bordering on a well kept gravel path and an equally well graded drive. Clear, sparkling water rippled in tiny acqueducts through the front yards of each, and so furnished the moisture needed for the life of the various little shrubs and flowering plants. The surroundings were at least "social," and there was companionship and jollity with an occasional bluff to keep things lively. The married officers, as a rule, had chosen their quarters farthest from the entrance gate and nearest those of the colonel commanding. The lachrymose, except the two or three who were old in the service and had "rank" in lieu of emblems, were all herded together along the eastern end, a situation that had disadvantages as connected with duties which required the frequent presence of the occupants at the court martial, or at headquarters, and that was correspondingly far distant from the barracks of the soldiers. It had its recommendations in being convenient to the card room and billiard tables at "the store," and in embracing within its limits one house which possessed mysterious interest in the eyes of every woman and most of the men in the garrison; it was said to be haunted.

A sorely perplexed man was the post quartermaster when the rumor came out from the railway station that Mr. Hayne had arrived and was coming to report for duty. As a first lieutenant he would have choice of quarters over every second lieutenant in the garrison. There were ten of these young gentlemen, and four of the ten were married. Every set of quarters had its occupants, and Hayne could move in nowhere, unless as occupant of a room or two in the house of some comrade, without first compelling others to move out. This proceeding would lead to vast discontent, occurring as it would in the dead of winter, and the youngsters were naturally perturbed in spirit—their wives especially so. What made the prospect infinitely worse was the fact that the cavalry lachrymose were already living three in a house; the only spare rooms were in the quarters of the second lieutenants of the infantry, and they were not on speaking terms with Mr. Hayne. Everything, therefore, pointed to the probability of his "displacement" by a junior who would in turn displace somebody else, and so they went on turning like a row of bricks until the lowest and last was reached. All this would involve no end of worry for the quartermaster, who even under the most favorable circumstances is sure to be the least appreciated and most abused officer under the commandant himself, and that worthy was simply agasp with relief and joy when he heard Mr. Hayne's astonishing announcement that he would take the quarters out on "Prairie avenue."

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its scattering appendages, then the entrance gateway, then a broad vacant space, through which the wind swept like a hurricane, then the little shanty of the trader's fur horse and one or two hovel like structures.

It was the talk of the garrison all that day. The ladies, especially, had a good deal to say, because many of them seemed averse to expressing their views on the proper thing for Mr. Hayne to do. It was the apparent opinion of the majority of the young wives and mothers. As a particularly kind and considerate thing, that was viewed of the case went not entirely unrepresented. In choosing to live there Mr. Hayne separated himself from companionship. That, said some of the commentators—men as well as women—was simply accepted as a matter of necessity, and so there was nothing to commend in his action. But Mr. Hayne was said to possess an eye for the picturesque and beautiful. If so, he deliberately condemned himself to the daily contemplation of a treeless barren, streaked in occasional shallows with dingy patches of snow, and the low lying hills of the eastern horizon.

Southeastward lay the distant rocks and the low, squat buildings of the frontier town; southwestward the shallow valley of the winding creek in which lay the long line of stables for the cavalry and the great stacks of hay; while the row on which he chose to live—"Prairie avenue," as it was termed—was far worse at its end of it than at the other. It occurred the whole eastern front. The big, brown hospital building stood at the northern end. Then came the quarters of the surgeon and his assistants, then the snug home of the post trader, then the "store" and its