

A PROFESSIONAL SKIPPER

The Trials of a Deserter as Told by Himself.

Desertion was, and is, the open sore of the American army. Like all other ills, it has its causes. In the old days when the frontier was the frontier, harsh treatment, bad food, hard service in the field, the monotony of garrison life and the lack of amusements and recreations in the isolated and shabby little posts were among the causes that impelled men to desert their colors.

Among the enlisted men desertion was regarded as a very venial offense; and it was held that men who were ill-treated had a right to desert; men who were discontented ought to desert; and men who were found to be rogues were encouraged to desert by public sentiment and certain rude but significant hints.

This constant depletion of the ranks by desertion, and the great expense in transporting recruits to distant stations, as well as the difficulty of obtaining recruits for the hard and unromantic service of the plains, made the evil a very serious problem for the war department to solve.

Fort Wingate, situated on the slopes of the Zuni mountains in Campbell's pass, New Mexico, being without telegraphic communication with the inner world, suffered a great deal from desertion.

After each visit of the paymaster there was a decrease in the ranks and stables of the garrison. The officers were used to it; the men expected it; and the flight of these military birds of passage became one of the pleasing excitements of the post. They furnished a week's holiday for a pursuing party, which chased the fugitives as far as San Mateo, where they remained to have a good time with the daughters of the town as long as their cash lasted, and then returned leisurely to the post, to report that the deserters had escaped.

In the case and safety of "skipping," as it was termed in army slang, the cavalryman had the advantage over the mere infantryman. While the poor "doughboy" deserter was hiding in the hills by day and tramping over dusty trails by night, with a heavy "long Tom" on his shoulder, the cavalry "skipper" was riding gayly to freedom, careless of pursuit, able and willing to stand off any too-officious civil officer, confident that his comrades would not bother him unless he ran into their arms, and certain that his good troop horse was worth a hundred dollars in the settlement, when he had cunningly burned out the U. S. brand with a red-hot currycomb.

The experience of Fort Wingate was duplicated in every western post, and soldiers deserted in parts of the country and reached civilization when it was deemed hazardous for armed trains to travel. Strange as it may appear, men never deserted in the field during an Indian campaign; it was garrison dullness that made deserters, not the fighting and hard riding of plains and sierras.

In 1873 Gen. Grant issued a proclamation pardoning all deserters who surrendered to the military authorities and returned to their colors. The president wisely concluded that this would bring back a number of men into the army and stop the outflow for awhile; but he hardly realized that the story it would tell in the army itself. At Wingate the proclamation was the universal subject of talk in the company quarters, and conjectures were made as to the number of men who would avail themselves of its clemency. Out of a total strength of eighty men in my own company, some twenty returned themselves as "skippers."

Then we began to hear from posts in Arizona, Utah, Kansas, Texas, Dakota, in fact from all parts of the American military world, from men who were getting in out of the rain, and, per contra, there was a constant demand for the records of elusive soldiers who in times past had slipped away unaccountably and were now willing to return to their first love.

The most interesting of all this host of prodigals, to me, was a quiet, smart, clean, well set-up fellow in my own company, named Dick Brandon, who modestly admitted twenty-three desertions. Dick had evidently been on the move for years and had a nervous objection to remaining long anywhere. What troubled Dick, now that his desertions were wiped out, was the haunting dread of the big charges that went with his "skipping."

The captain of a company in the army is responsible to the government for every piece of property in his care, and he must account for it all or pay for it. Now, the most painstaking officer in the world loses things, and unless they are covered, some way, the unlucky officer would never draw a cent on his pay certificate. Hence the military sarcasm hurled at a soldier when he loses a cartridge or anything else: "Lost it, did you? Well, you'll find it on your muster roll!"

Now a smart quartermaster sergeant found a convenient outlet for all losses in desertion. When a man slipped he was charged with not only all he actually took, but with all that the frugal quartermaster sergeant had lost. This was simple and effective. The extent and variety of property alleged to be stolen by deserters would stagger anybody except an experienced company quartermaster sergeant or a dull department auditor. They knew from experience that a deserter was capable of stealing anything from a ramrod to a battery of artillery.

When the last of Dick Brandon's accounts came in, we figured it out that he owed Uncle Sam about four thousand dollars; and, as he ruefully scratched his head, Dick guessed he would be ready for the soldier's home by the time the bill was settled. He began to grow uneasy and was about ready to skip, when the buckboard from Santa Fe brought ease to his mind and balm to his soul. A letter came from the adjutant general's office stating that the attorney general had given a decision that wiped out old scores and

save the deserter a chance to begin again with a clean record.

That evening after "retreat" Dick and I sat on our bunks, polishing belts, cleaning breeches, burnishing our saber scabbards and getting things ready for guard mounting next morning, for Dick was a great fellow "to run for orderly."

As we smoked and talked and polished I wormed some of Dick's experience out of him.

"Say, Dick," I asked, "what was your first enlistment?"

"Well," said Dick, with a laugh, "my first soldiering was sailing. I listed in the marines and was sent down to a flyblown hole in Florida. The heat, the bugs and the style of the marine officers sickened me, so I resigned.

"Resigned?" I queried.

"Gave them a French resignation, you know. I struck New Orleans in a Cuban banana boat, dead broke, and joined a company of 'doughboys' at Baton Rouge. That place was worse than Florida. The first pay day settled me, and I took a trip up the river. They charged me with two rifles, a dozen brooms and a wheelbarrow on my muster roll, when I skipped. Handy thing for a deserter, a wheelbarrow! I often wondered that they did not charge me with Tom Gorman's wife, who lit out with a coon about the time I retired."

"Where did you go, Dick—St. Louis?"

"Yes! Thought I'd take a flyer in the cavalry. Got sick of old Bully Welch there, and was glad enough to go with a detachment to the Third in Arizona. Well, that's a lovely country to get away from. If there's a hell on earth, Arizona is the place. I was stationed at Verde, and the malaria, bad grub and Apache chasing changed my views of the cavalry. Three of us skipped the first time the paymaster got round, and we worked down through Apache pass into New Mexico with our hair all right. We struck the settlements, sold our horses, and separated. I worked down to El Paso and went broke on a monte game. I went over to Fort Bliss and 'took' another blanket. I liked soldiering there first rate and got the chevrons; but the captain 'broke' me for raising a row down town and thumping a greaser. That made me mad and I went on the retired list once more. That quartermaster sergeant was a daisy, and, as I was a chum of his, he socked it to me—charged me with a six-mile harness, a grindstone, two spades, a long Tom and a hundred rounds of ammunition. Just think of me a hoofing it across desert between Quitman and Davis with a grindstone under my arm! Must have thought I wanted it to sharpen my appetite. I got a job as teamster at Fort Clark, but I ran across a fellow I knew at Baton Rouge, and he was always hard up and had an idea that I was a bank, and I concluded to go east."

"And then?" I inquired.

"Then," resumed Dick, "I guessed I had all the west I wanted for awhile, so I honored the artillery. I made a mistake. I was in a fort where you could see nothing but sea and sand, and where it was cold enough to freeze a brass monkey. Lord! but the artillery is tough and dull, all guard duty and polishing; no mountains, no plains; all buttons and drill. That heavy artillery made a flying artillery man of me. I waited for pay day and left without leaving my address. Well, my muster roll caught it. They landed me on the pay roll for a caisson and fifty rounds of fixed and strapped ammunition and other tridles."

"Draw it mild, Dick," I suggested.

"Well, if they didn't," said Dick, earnestly, "may I be 'bottled.' I put out for the west and 'listed in Covington in the 'doughboys' again, like a fool. I was just in time to be rounded up for a batch of 'Johnnies' going to Montana. 'The worst lot of fresh fish I ever got from. Tough? Well! say! We hooped it all day and stood guard every other night. We had a chap just appointed from civil life in command, and he was scared to death. And the grub! Well, let that go. We got to our post and had to build new stables for the cavalry. Fatigue duty every day and dress parade every night made life hardly worth living. Then I was detailed to guard a railroad survey. That was exciting, for the Sioux had a spite against us, but I concluded thirteen dollars a month was too small a bet to stake my life against. Four of us said good-bye and waited for the railroad, sleeping in ravines by day and tramping by night. Once more I figured a big thief on the muster roll. The post quartermaster sergeant sold six mules to a freighter and the team turned up on my pay roll, with plunder enough to start a sutler's store."

"Well, go on, Dick," I said.

"Oh, to make a long story short, I kept getting in and out all the time. Had to keep going and changing my name, for I was always running into some fellow that knew me. Not many fellows will blow on you—but you can't help thinking they will. Then a fellow that knows you have a skip against you finds you very convenient to borrow tobacco from and money, and a chap winds up by getting out. Now, there's Mackey who just joined. He was with me in the Nineteenth. I was nervous about him, though he never pretended to know me; but he owned up to four himself. I'm going to stick this time and get out fair and square with a clean discharge, for I'm sick and tired of running away like a rabbit."

Dick made a good soldier and got a sergeant's chevrons; but he never served his enlistment out. He was smoking a cigar in a saloon in Las Cruces two years later, when two fellows had a row and pulled pistols on each other. Both fired. One was killed and his bullet missed his man and went through Dick's head, killing him instantly.

We buried him in the little graveyard there, and every man chipped in his dollar to put a stone over the head of poor Dick Brandon, the "professional skipper."—Joseph Smith, in Illustrated American.

—Quite Likely.—"Yes, I have a position in a powder mill now." "Well, stick to it, old fellow. You may have a chance to rise some day.—Truth.

TROUBLES OF BUSINESS

New York Bankers on the Financial Situation.

THEIR WORDS NOT ENCOURAGING.

The Milwaukee Bank that Failed Yesterday Had Been Regarded as One of the Strongest Institutions in the Country. Three Louisville Banks Collapse—Almost a Panic on the New York Stock Exchange—The Indianapolis Failure.

New York, July 26.—The continued reports of failures among Western banks in the opinion of New York bankers shows that the financial situation there is in no way improving. In fact, it is less encouraging than ever.

The feeling is more than confirmed by the suspension of the Wisconsin Marine and Fire Insurance Company's Bank at Milwaukee.

"The Wisconsin Marine and Fire Bank," said President Cannon, of the Chase National, "has always been regarded as one of the strongest and most prosperous institutions in the Northwest, and its failure is certainly the most serious calamity that has yet occurred since the financial depression began to be felt in the West."

"Such an institution going under cannot fail to add to the general distress, and the suspension may be far-reaching in its effects."

"I do not like to make gloomy predictions, for the situation is bad enough as it is, and financial institutions need all the support and encouragement that can be given. Yet it is evident that all these failures can be traced to a common cause, anxiety for the future, lack of confidence and the withdrawal of money from circulation."

President J. Edward Simmons, of the Fourth National Bank, also said that the failure of the Milwaukee Bank was in his opinion the most serious that had occurred in the West, as it was an old and well-established institution, with extensive connections and ramifications all over the Northwest. Other institutions would undoubtedly be affected by its collapse.

The New York banks, he said, by associating as closely as they did had formed a mutually protective organization which had enabled them to tide over the difficult situation, and their strength had undoubtedly contributed to reassure financial institutions elsewhere. He did not think that the crisis in the West had passed, but said that if the banks would form associations to protect each other a great deal of the threatened danger would be averted.

New York, July 26.—Almost a panic raged on the Stock Exchange yesterday afternoon. Stocks dropped away violently, and some of the lowest prices in years were recorded.

The failure of the Marine & Fire Insurance Bank of Milwaukee started the heavy selling, and later on the failures of two large banks in Louisville added to the excitement.

The Milwaukee Bank is the largest in Wisconsin, and the largest in the West.

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., July 25.—While the Indianapolis National Bank that failed yesterday was a United States depository but \$3,439,96 was tied up. "At our last payment we checked out nearly \$200,000 from the Indianapolis National," said Pen-son Agent Enslay.

MILWAUKEE, Wis., July 26.—The Wisconsin Fire and Marine Bank of Milwaukee, which suspended yesterday, has always been known as Mitchell's Bank, and was one of the half dozen famous private banks of the continent.

It has succumbed to the paper of the Schlesinger Iron syndicate, of which it held \$750,000.

This paper is all secured by iron receipts, but these could not be used anywhere.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., July 26.—Yesterday was a memorable day in the financial history of Louisville. At 10 o'clock a. m. the Merchants' National Bank posted a notice of suspension and half an hour later the failure of the Louisville Deposits Bank was announced.

By this time half a dozen banks in the city were being run by depositors, mostly small ones. They all stood the pressure except one, the Fourth National, which closed its doors in the Board of Trade building at 10 o'clock.

TOLEDO, O., July 26.—The Farmers' National Bank, of Findlay, has closed its doors. No statement has been given out as yet. No excitement prevails, and the other three banks in the city are prepared for any run that may follow.

A Shoe Factory to Shut Down.

LOWELL, Mass., July 26.—Work at Pilling's shoe factory is being finished up preparatory to a temporary shut-down, made necessary by the stringency of the money market and the numerous failures in the West where the greater portion of Pilling's customers are.

Cotton Mills to Shut Down.

WARE, Mass., July 26.—The Otis Company's cotton mills in this town will shut down Saturday for one month, on account of being unable to find a market for their product. The number of hands employed is 1,750 and the pay roll is \$30,000 per month.

Run on Tacoma Banks.

TACOMA, Wash., July 26.—This morning as soon as the banks opened there was a steady stream of depositors to withdraw their money at nearly all the prominent banks. They, however, paid promptly all demands.

Oberman Brewing Company Fails.

MILWAUKEE, Wis., July 26.—The J. Oberman Brewing Company has failed. Hermann P. Oberman is the assignee. His bond is for \$1,300,000.

\$30,000 Blaze at Rockaway Beach.

ROCKAWAY BEACH, L. I., July 24.—A disastrous fire ravaged a small section of the beach yesterday. The large ice factory of Jameson & Bond, their coal and wood yard, stables and the residence of John A. Bond, were totally destroyed. Eleven horses were burned. The Scull House and church were saved by the heroic efforts of the firemen, the new steamers doing great execution. The ice factory and plant cost \$22,000 and the total loss is \$30,000, with very little insurance.

The Men Would Not Quit.

PITTSBURG, Kan., July 20.—W. J. Lan-son's strip pits were visited last evening by about 150 miners who called the workmen out and talked with them in regard to stopping work. The men would not promise to quit and another meeting was decided upon.

It Tastes Good



One reason why Scott's Emulsion of Pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda has had such a large sale is because it is "Almost as palatable as milk;" but the best reason is that its curative properties are unequalled. It cures the cough, supplies the waste of tissues, produces flesh and builds up the entire system.

Scott's Emulsion cures Coughs, Colds, Consumption, Scrofula, and all Anæmic and Wasting Diseases. Prevents wasting in children. Almost as palatable as milk. Get only the genuine. Prepared by Scott & Bowne, Chemists, New York. Sold by all Druggists.

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A large lot of Window Curtains in stock.

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In order to close out our stock of summer goods while our customers need them, we have made sweeping reductions in prices.

85c. Whip Cords and Henriettas are now 75c.

35c. Goods now 25c. 30c. " " 20c. 15c. and 18c. " " 10c. 10c. and 12 1/2c. " " 8c. 8c. Dress Gingham " " 5c. 7c. and 8c. Prints and Zephyrs 5c.

Come soon as these bargains will not last long.

W. H. MOORE.

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MILK AND CREAM can be kept perfectly fresh and sweet for seven days WITHOUT USING ICE. Simple, cheap, unfailing. Sample free. Write. The Preservaline Mfg. Co., Sole Mfrs. and Patentees, 10 Cedar St., New York.

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W. H. Brooke & Co.

THE MARKETS.

BLOOMSBURG MARKETS.

COLLECTED WEEKLY. RETAIL PRICES.

Table with 2 columns: Item and Price. Includes Butter per lb., Eggs per dozen, Lard per lb., Ham per pound, Pork, whole, per pound, Beef, quarter, per pound, Wheat per bushel, Oats, Rye, Buckwheat flour per 100, Wheat flour per bbl., Hay per ton, Potatoes per bushel, Turnips, Onions, Sweet potatoes per peck, Cranberries per qt., Tallow per lb., Shoulder, Side meat, Vinegar, per qt., Dried apples per lb., Dried cherries, pitted, Raspberries, Cow Hides per lb., Steer, Calf Skin, Sheep pelts, Shelled corn per bus., Corn meal, cwt., Bran, Chop, Middlings, Chickens per lb., Turkeys, Geese, Ducks.

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