

Ray's Recruit

.....BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING, U. S. A.

AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FROM THE RANKS," ETC.

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(Continued.)

In his stern renunciation of the world, the flesh and the devil of his old life Trooper Hunter would admit no interest in the doings of Gotham. The one thing that bound him to the

old life was the knowledge that up to October at least his fond old uncle was still in the land of the living. A stroke of some kind had prostrated him before Gray's return from abroad. Physicians had prescribed a long sea voyage. Mr. and Mrs. Darcy Hunter had sailed for North Cape—had gone thence to some German spa. His health was shattered, his mind almost a blank. She was still in the prime of life. He, said the last news Darcy had of him before starting for the wide west, hardly recognized his attendants. She bore her sorrows with the patient resignation of the Christian who knows there's life for her beyond the grave—of a departed husband.

Of the remnant of his fortune Gray had still a few thousand dollars banked where it would be safe until sorely needed. Under a humble roof within the limits of Butte were stored certain trunks containing civilian clothing and things he valued. Here at barracks he had only his soldier outfit of uniform, with the addition of better underwear and shoes than were issued by Uncle Sam. One poor fellow and his suffering wife at least were the better for the strange coming of this eccentric. The starving tramp who boarded the train that night at Willow Springs had now a roof over his head and hers, and food, fire and clothing. She was sufficiently recovered to take in washing, for Chinamen were unpopular if not unprofitable servants just then in Wyoming, and he, the starveling of that night on the train, was once more a carpenter, his tools out of pawn and he no longer out of work. That man's actual misery and suffering, all for the lack of a few dollars, no more than he, Hunter Gray, had been accustomed to throw away on cigars or sundries in the course of a month, had opened the eyes of the world weary traveler and given him food for thought and spur to action.

One anxiety had oppressed him since his voluntary entrance upon the task of training Stella, a duty which need have occupied but a few days had it not been for that untoward mishap. She fought shy of the bar for several lessons thereafter, connecting it and the flapping blanket unerringly with her violent fall. Hunter's anxiety was that any afternoon when so occupied he might find Mrs. Mainwaring and her niece among the lookers on, and he shrank from recognition. He had even sought to get his captain to change the hour to morning, but there had been fine, open weather, and Atherton lost no opportunities for battalion drills. Hunter took to these, despite the crowding and squeezing when in line, like a duck to the water, but all the same he would have preferred giving Stella her lesson when he knew Miss Leroy to be engaged at the hospital, for the fame of that benevolent young lady's work had spread throughout the barracks as well as the quarters.

And it was of her and that odd introduction he was thinking now, as he briskly tramped up and down, peering among the haystacks and stables. Just before the midnight call his post had been visited by the sergeant of the guard, who inquired as to his orders and bade him look out any moment for Captain Blake or Lieutenant Brady. The midnight call of the sentries went round in rather slipshod fashion, thanks to the wind, but no sooner had Hunter shouted the prolonged "All's well" than

he wished he could recall it. Not a suspicious sight or sound had he noted after the sergeant went his way, but now, before he could realize or dodge, something came spinning through midair, over his head, settled down on his shoulders with a jerk; then a blanket was whirled about his face, and, with his breath fairly choked out of him, with only time for one startled, stifled cry, the loop of a lariat was suddenly drawn taut, hurling him violently to the frozen ground, and in another second two or three men had thrown themselves furiously upon him.

Despite mad struggles he was bound, gagged and kicked behind the haystack. His carbine was whisked away. He lay there, helpless and half strangled, but they had removed the blanket, so that he at least could breathe and see. And then from beyond the stable of his troop came two more men with a cart. Into this was swiftly loaded box after box of some weighty substance, the boxes being dragged from underneath the very stack that had caused the colonel's censure—the stack that interposed between Ray's stable and the little domicile of Sergeant Merriweather under the low bluff. Loaded with all it could safely carry, the cart was swiftly trundled off into the darkness, three burly forms propelling, two remaining close at hand. Not a word was spoken that Hunter could hear. The cart came back for another load in less than five minutes, and this time, in addition to heavy little boxes which he could almost swear contained ammunition and possibly revolvers, they dragged sacks of oats from underneath the stack and loaded them, too, upon the cart. Three trips were made in all, then they were gone, and he was utterly alone.

Raging at his plight, powerless to help himself in any way, and suffering not a little from the sharpness of his cords and the brutal manner in which he had been gagged, Hunter managed to keep cool and think. At the utmost he probably would not be left there more than 20 minutes. When the call was passed at 12:30, his voice would be missed. The corporal would have to come down and, not finding him on his post, would institute search; then he would be released and could tell his story.

Even as he lay there he could swear he heard the sound as of hoofs and heavy laden wheels crashing through the ice on the little shallow stream beyond the stables. Presently the bitter cold of the frozen ground seemed to penetrate through his heavy clothing, and he began to suffer keenly. The wind blew but lightly where he lay in the lee of the stack, and, though he knew it was not time for the sentries to call off, he strained his ears to catch the sound of footfalls—Blake or Brady, and the sergeant, too, might be along again. He prayed indeed they might be, for robbery had been committed before his very eyes. He had heard rumors of the disappearance of forage. He had heard the men talk of the exposed situation of the brick magazine out there on the prairie, southeast of the post. Only on bright moonlit nights could the sentry see it from the east gate, while from the south gate it was hidden entirely. He knew that most of the ammunition—pistol, carbine and cannon—was kept there and at one time quite a lot of small arms. The ordnance sergeant slept in the garrison, his keys in a strong box under his bed, yet thieves had plundered both the magazine and the stables, and hidden their loot underneath the big haystack, awaiting opportunity to run it away to some reliable customer in town. That they were members of the garrison was evident from that very fact. Townsfolk would have come with wagons in the first place.

Fifteen minutes at least had he still to wait and suffer, possibly more, if no officer of the guard chanced to inspect right after 12, or if the corporal should be slow running to ascertain why the 12:30 call was not repeated. Fifteen minutes, and already he was enduring torment. Then came sudden hope—the sound of a swift, light footfall—then a woman's voice.

"Dan, Danny, where are you? Come home quick, for God's sake. They're hunting for you now."

No answer. Again the plaintive cry was repeated. A woman's slender form sped swiftly by, turned the corner of the huge stack, and then, as though recoiling at sight of danger, darted back, shuddering, stumbled over his prostrate body, and only with difficulty saved itself from falling. Quick as thought the woman leaped upon him, one hand stifled his cry escaping from her lips. "You're here! You're here! Why are you lying there? You are not drunk. The doctor gave you wouldn't do this to me, has he gone? Answer, I say, answer!" And the cold hands that had held and shaken him fell away in

recovered herself, fumbled in her pocket, found a pair of scissors and slashed the hands that were strangling him. "What fool work is this!" she whimpered. "Sure Dan shouldn't have gagged you, Scully. Who was with him? Who did it? Answer," she implored, shaking him vehemently. "Get up, Scully, quick! For the love of God bind him. They've been to the house already—the guard. Somebody's peached. Somebody— Who tied this lariat? It's knotted like— Wait till I get a knife. Lie still, Scully." And away she sped, leaving him to wonder, bound as he was, how he could lie otherwise. She was back in a moment, panting, breathless. She sawed at the thick cordage until it snapped, then stared wildly one instant as the tall figure straightened up, then with a cry of horror started back. "Scully— No! What—you? Hunter? Oh, blessed saints, have mercy."

(To be Continued.)

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Fails to cure any case of Eczema or piles, no matter of how long standing. For sale only at
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NOTICE!

In the matter of Thomas J. Morris, of Charlottetown, in Queen's County, merchant.
Notice is hereby given that Thomas J. Morris, of Charlottetown, in Queen's County, in Prince Edward Island, merchant, has by an assignment bearing date the 27th day of November, A. D. 1900, assigned all his estate to me, the undersigned, George E. Auld, of Charlottetown, merchant, for the general benefit of his creditors.
Dated this 28th day of November, A. D. 1900.

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CLEARING OUT SALE.

LIVERY STABLE OUTFIT

FOR SALE BY AUCTION.

am instructed by the executors of the estate of the late A. N. Large Esq., to sell by auction, at the stables, corner Queen and Kent Streets, commencing on

Thursday, 20th day of December

at 11 o'clock, a. m. and to continue until the whole stock is cleared out.

STABLES.—Eight Horses, 8 Mares, including the celebrated trotting horse Montrose, record 2 20³/₄, and Golden, 7064, record 2.29¹/₄.

COACH HOUSE.—Four Barouches, 5 Carry-alls, 17 Buggies, 2 Concord Wagons, 2 Express Wagons, 1 Road Cart, 1 Cart, 9 Single Sleighs, 3 Double Sleighs, 1 three seated Sleigh, 2 Box Sleighs, 1 Gladstone Sleigh, 2 Word Sleighs, 5 Carriage Poles, 5 sets Double Harness, 15 sets Single Harness, 2 Riding Saddles and Bridle, lot of Collars and Hames, 10 strings Sleigh Bells, 19 Sleigh Robes, 3 dozen Carriage Wraps, lot of Horse Rugs, etc.

RESTAURANT.—Lot of Furniture, etc. consisting of 1 Sideboard, 1 Safe, Tables, Chairs, Carpets, Oilcloths, Portiers, Stoves, Pictures, Crockery, Cutlery, etc.; 1 Bottling Table, lot of empty bottles. Also 5 cans Apollinaris Water.

Any one wishing to inspect the stock can do so at any time before the sale.

The horses to be sold the first day.

TERMS.—All sums over \$40 three months will be given on approved joint notes with the bank discount added.

R. BEIRSTO, Auctioneer.

Baby's Own Soap.

He ran a mile, and so would many a young lady, rather than take a bath without the "Albert"

It leaves the skin wonderfully soft and fresh, and its faint fragrance is extremely pleasing.

Beware of imitations.

ALBERT TOILET SOAP CO., MRS. MONTREAL.

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Our Lines are All Right.

Why pay high prices for a name when we give you Quality at low prices?

Gents' Box Calf, lace, Goodyear welt—**\$2.80**

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