

RAY'S RECRUIT

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Ray's recruit by Charles King

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CHARLES KING

RAY'S RECRUIT



"Oh, porter, would you kindly get me some water?"

RAY'S RECRUIT

BY

Captain Charles King, U.S.A.

AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "THE
GENERAL'S DOUBLE," ETC.

Library of
California

ILLUSTRATED



PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1898

ILLUSTRATIONS



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PRELIMINARY.

To Mr. Darcy Hunter Gray.

“**M**Y DEAR BOY,—As foreshadowed in my last, the concern has gone to smash and your prospects with it. When its affairs are settled, the firm of Hunter, Bloom & Co. will have enough to pay its funeral expenses, and that's about all. What I have left is my wife's, who will, I trust, be able to support me until certain life insurance policies become due, out of which she can reimburse herself, through my dying, for the cost of my living. I'm too old to try again,—too sad to care much, except for you.

“Your father was my dear friend, your mother my beloved sister. When he died I promised him I would be a father to you. When she died her last words were a plea that I should be good to her boy. I accepted both trusts, Darcy, and—betrayed both.

“They died poor: I was rich. They would

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have had you learn to carve your own career, and I loved you so that from your bright, brave boyhood you were spoiled and indulged as my own son. I gave you the best I had. I balked you in only one desire, that of going to West Point. Harvard, London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and the Riviera were your educators. I planned to make you a railway magnate when you hadn't learned the first principles of the business. I've accustomed you to every luxury,—to a life of careless ease, to be a dawdler and a dilettante—isn't that what you call it? I counted on leaving you rich, and I leave you ruined. The self-reproach—the misery which overcomes me as I write these words, no words can tell you.

"I know what you would write and say,—you were always generous; but, Darcy, don't write, don't come,—just yet. Wait until you get—the next news. Wait until—"

"However, let us get down to business. Of course you and Mrs. Hunter will not be apt to see much of each other. She will mourn me less than you; and you more than I deserve. The very little nest-egg your mother set aside for you is intact. With accrued interest it amounts to some eleven thousand seven hundred and twenty dollars. You have no debts to speak of, have you? I've paid all you ever told me about, twice, I think, and you were always frank and truthful. That little sum,