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8.47 a. m.

GOING NORTH.

10.57 a. m. 2.56 p. m.

3.45 p. m.

many a large for une

Copyright 1012, by A. O. Mooning & Co. If the woman has not ensuared him by her usual methods," he said sober the voice. "How kind of you, ly, "and I think myself you are right about that, for I watched them togeth. "And poor Major McDonald! bend what it meant then, but it seemed my firting with him?" to me he actually disliked being in her company—then she has uncovered term in this connection. But you have something in his past of which he is strange influence over him. For some which he does not desire you ever to you."

"Yes," softly, "that must be true." has been fooling you, Dave. I No; it may not be true; it may all merely Major McDonald's guest. be a lie, concocted for a purpose. A wonder who told you that? clever woman might so manipulate cir- guess?" cumstances as to convince him she Before he could realize her purpose held his fate in her hands. We must find that out in this case."

not tell me." else that husband of hers-Dupont, his eyes spitefully. He'll know the whole story. It would give me pleasure to choke it out of him-real pleasure. Then there's Connors, just the sort of sneaking rat if he can be caught with the goods; only it is not likely he knows much. I shall have to think it all out, Miss Molly," he smiled at her confidently. "You see, I am a bit slow figuring puzzies, but I generally get them in time.

Everything. It almost seems silly when I try to explain what I feel to "Not to me. I knew enough before to understand. But, perhaps, you had better go-hush, some one is entering

You've told me all you know?"

She got to her feet in spite of his restraining hand, startled and "Oh, I must not be seen here. In there no other way?"

"No; be still for a moment; step back there in the shadow, and let me go in alone." He stepped forward, his grasp already on the curtain, when a woman's

voice spoke within: "Yes, that was what I meant; he does not know you-yet. But must keep away."

CHAPTER XXI.

Hamlin's one thought was to prevent any discovery of Miss McDonald, girl had escaped notice.

was intended to be private." The woman stepped somewhat in

advance of her companion, as though to shield him from observation, instantly mastering her surprise. "Nothing at all serious, Mr. Sergeant Hamlin," she retorted scornfully. "Don't be melodramatic, please; it

tions?"

out of this room, aren't you?" The man growled something unintelligible, but Mrs. Dupont prevented any direct reply. "That's all right, John," she broke in

impatiently. "You understand what I to this man." She waited an instant while he left the room; then her eyes defiantly met Hamlin's.

"I was told you had driven every one out of here," she said coldly. "What was the game?"

"This room was reserved— "Pish! keep that explanation age. "I fall to see wherein you are

Yes, of course—her first husband." on were a daughter then of her

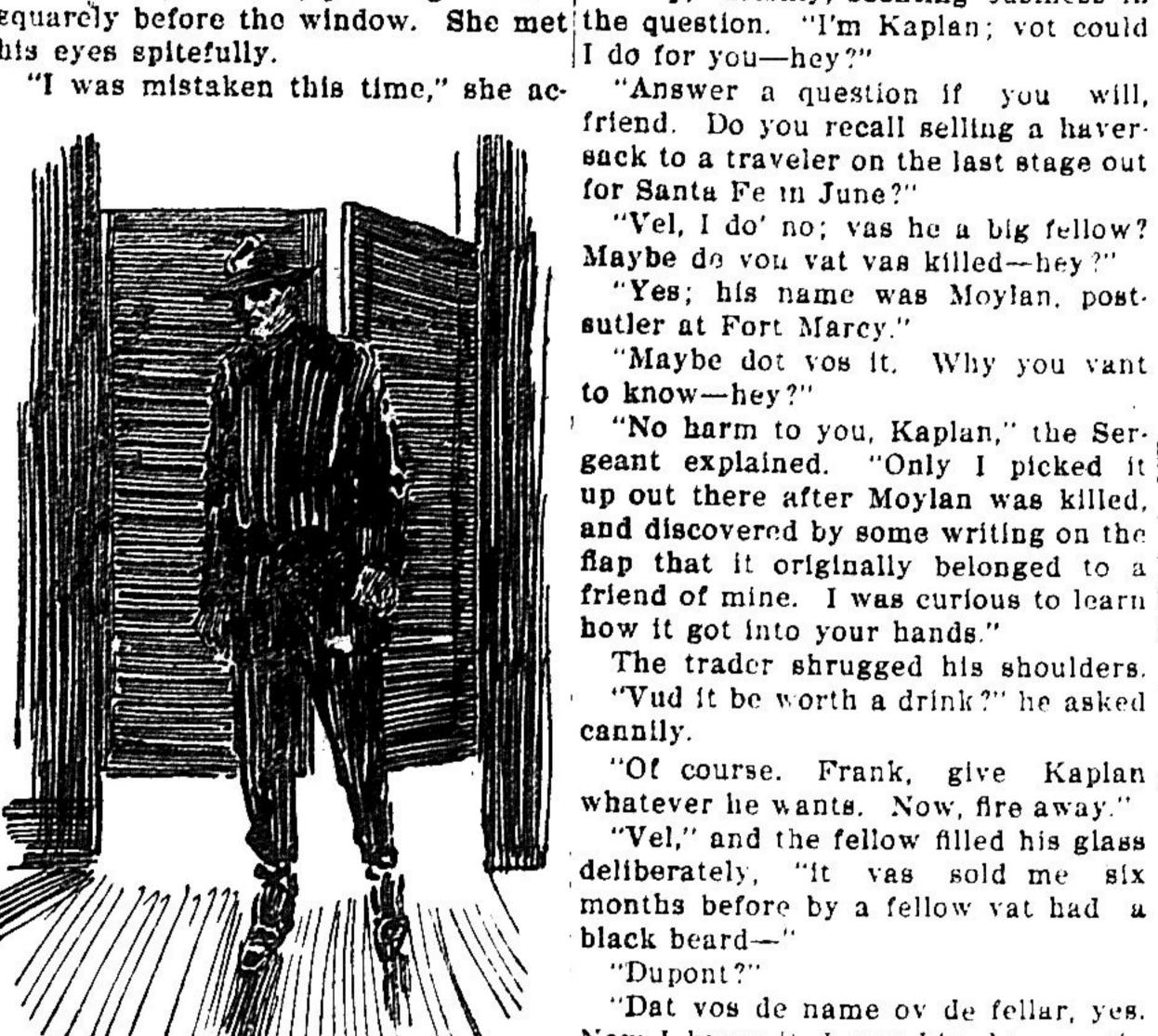
"The change was natural enough," he went on, "But why did you also be come Vera in place of Sarah?" "Oh, is that it? Well, never attempt to account for the vagaries of a girl," she returned lightly, as though dismissing the subject. "I presume took a fancy to the prettier name, But how did you know?"

"Garrison rumor picks up nearly everything, and it is not very kind to you, Mrs. Dupont. I hope I am doing you a favor in saying this. Your rather open flirtation with Lieutenant Gaskins is common talk, even among enlisted men, and I have heard that your relations with Major McDonald are per

"Indeed!" with a rising inflection ? delicately expressed." She er in the dance hall—I did not compre- that is ridiculous. Could you imagine "I have no recollection of using that

afraid, something unknown to you, reason the man is apparently afraid of "Afraid of me? Oh, no! Some one

the woman took a hasty step forward, peering forth from a mass of unand swept aside the curtain, thrusting trimmed gray whiskers, were familiar. "But how, Sergeant Hamlin? He will her head past to where she could gain "You keep the junk shop down by a view outside. Hamlin pressed her the express office, don't you?" "Perhaps she will tell me if I can back with one hand, planting himself "Yep," briskly, scenting business i reach her alone," he said grimly, "or squarely before the window. She met the question. "I'm Kaplan; vot coul



"And let you alone?"

to remember that."

knowledged drawing away, "but I'd got the bag, I presume?" like to know why you were so anxious "I know notting more as I tell you

to prevent my looking out. Do you alreatty," rather disconsolately, as he The speaker was Mrs. Dupont, but know whom I thought you had there?" realized that one drink was all he was "As you please," rejoicing that the going to receive. "That little snip of a Molly. You street. He had learned something, but drew aside the curtain, and stepped in made a hit with her all right, and she not much that was of any value. Uncertainly don't like me. Well, delight-doubtedly the haversack had come in-"Pardon me," he said quietly, as the ful as it is to meet you again, I must to Dupont's possession through two started back at his rather abrupt be going." She turned away, and then wife, but this knowledge yielded no inentrance, "but I did not care to over- paused to add over her shoulder: formation as to the present where-

hear your conversation. No doubt it "Don't you think it would be just as abouts of Le Fevre. When the latter safe for you to attend to your own had separated from the woman, business. Sergeant Hamlin?" old army bag was left behind. needing money. Dupont had disposed "Exactly; and let me alone. I am of it, along with other truck, seeminghardly the sort of woman it is safe to ly of little value. play with. It will be worth your while The Sergeant reached this conclu-

sion quickly, and, satisfied that any He walted, motionless, until assured further investigation along this line gets on the nerves. If you must know, that she had passed down the hall as would be worthless, reverted to his I was merely giving our ranch fore- far as the door of the dining-room. earlier quest—the safety of Miss Mcman a few final instructions, as he The sound of shuffling chairs evi Donald. Merely to satisfy himself leaves tomorrow. Have you object denced the breaking up of the party, her presence, he crossed the street in prepartation to return to the ball- and glanced in at the whirling dancers. have to slip out now and rejoin the the guard, where he was able to sur others as they left the house. He again vey the entire room. Mrs. Dupont was turned down the light, and held back upon the floor, and swept past twice, without lifting her eyes in recognition.

"The way is clear now, Miss Molly." but neither among the dancers, nor There was no response, no move seated, could be discover Miss Molly. ment. He stepped outside, thinking Startled at not finding her present, the girl must have failed to hear him. Hamlin searched anxiously for the Malonger. I have a word to say myself The porch was empty. He stepped jor, only to assure himself of his abfrom one end to the other, making sence also. Could they have returne sure she was not crouching in the to the fort as early as this? darkness, scarcely able to grasp the how did it happen their guest was still fact of her actual disappearance. This, present, happily enjoying herself? then, was why Mrs. Dupont had failed course she might be there under esto see any one when she glanced out cort of some one else-Captain Bart where could the girl have gone? rett, possibly. He would ask the in-brief. How gotten away? He had heard no fantryman.

sound behind him; not even the rustle, "Have you seen Miss McDonald a skirt to betray movement. It since supper?" was not far to the ground, five or six The soldier hesitated an instant, as perhaps; it would be perfectly though endeavoring to remember. safe for one to lower the body over "No, I ain't, now you speak of it. She "you may never have heard of the af-

grass under foot would render the act he came back alone. Don't believe during a little Indian trouble out on pied. noiseless. No doubt that was exactly he's danced any since. The Major was the trail a few months ago." the way the escape had been accom- here, though; Conners brought him a plished. Alarmed by the presence of note a few minutes ago, and he got his those others, suspecting that the wom- hat and went out." an within would insist on learning Hamlin drew a breath of relief. "Well, ever since she has seemed for field service, the three troopers cir-darkness behind whom Hamlin was attempting to con- "Girl must have sent for him to take grateful and friendly. You know how cled the guard-house and rode rapidly

ceal, possibly overhearing enough of her home," he said. "Well, it's time some women are; well, she is that down the dark road toward the yellow cent, possibly overhearing enough of her home," he said. Wen, it's their conversation to become fright for me to turn in—good-night, old kind. Tonight she came to me, belights of the town. The Sergeant ex- Sam?"

| their conversation to become fright for me to turn in—good-night, old cause she didn't seem to know whom plained briefly the cause of the expedition." In sudden desperation, had He tramped along the brightly Illu surmounted the rail, and dropped to mined street, and out upon the darl ble she was having. I realize, Captain

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hind to quench their thirst. Hamlin The Sergeant felt that he could solve "That's what I thought at the time, drank little, but lingered a moment these problems if given an opportunit sir, but what happened to her after Really, just inside the doorway, to observe ty, but he was handicapped by his po- that? She didn't return to the hotel; ing, sir," respectfully, yet not permitwho was present. Unconsciously he sition; he could not leave his troop, she was not at the dance hall, and ting his glance to leave the woman's was searching for Dupont, half in-could not meet or mingle with the sus- hasn't come back to the post." clined to pick a quarrel deliberately pected parties; was tied, hand and "The hell you say! Are you sure?" | you know nothing of the girl's disapwith the fellow or with Connors, deter- foot, by army discipline. He could not "I am; I searched for her high and pearance?" mined if he found the little rat alone even absent himself from the post low before I left, and she could not get to frighten whatever knowledge he without gaining special permission. He in here without passing the guardpossessed out of him. But neither swore to himself over the hopeless- house." worthy appeared. Having assured him- ness of the situation, as he tramped | Kane stared into the Sergeant's face | She shrugged her shoulders, endeavself of their absence, Hamlin turned through the blackness toward the a moment, and then out across the pa- oring to smile. to depart, but found himself facing a guard-house. The sentinel glanced at rade ground. A yellow light winked "The parties mentioned are of very little man with long hair, roughly his pass, scrutinizing it by the light of in the Colonel's office, occasionally small interest to me dressed, who occupied the doorway, a fire, and thrust the paper into his blotted out by the passing figure of a The hooked nose, and bright eyes, pocket. Hamlin advanced, and at the sentry. The officer came to a prompt utterly ignoring the increasing arger corner saluted the officer of the day, decision. who had just stepped out of the guard- "The 'old man' is over there yet, you were aware of his departure?"

down there tonight." "Answer a question if you will

"Vel, I do' no; vas he a big fellow? "Yes; his name was Moylan, post-

about an hour ago." "Maybe dot vos it. Why you vant geant repeated the words, dazed shortly, as the officer's story ended. "Very well," he said quietly, "I will "No harm to you, Kaplan," the Ser-

Returned to the Post?"

geant explained. "Only I picked it up out there after Moylan was killed, and discovered by some writing on the flap that it originally belonged to a friend of mine. I was curious to learn how it got into your hands." The trader shrugged his shoulders. "Vud it be worth a drink?" he asked

"Of course. Frank, give Kaplan; whatever he wants. Now, fire away." "Vel," and the fellow filled his glass deliberately, "it was sold me six months before by a fellow vat had a black beard-" "Dupont?"

"Dat vos de name ov de fellar, yes. Now I know it. I saw him here again soon. You know him?" "By sight only; he is not the original inal owner, nor the man I am trying to trace. You know nothing of where he

Hamlin elbowed his way out to the "May I Ask if Major McDonald Has Why--why, what has become of Mi

The officer smiled, shaking his head I'm sure I don't know, my man," he cturned carelessly. "Come back with Barrett and his ladylove, likely. Why? 3 iddenly interested by the expression on the other's face. "What's han pened? Is there anything wrong?"

CHAPTER XXII. A Deepening Mystery. Startled and bewildered as Hamli ment of his own position. He could not confess all he knew, certainly not be fact that the girl had met him secretly and had vanished while he was endeavoring to turn aside Mrs. Dupont. He must protect her at all hazards. To gain time, and self-contro he replied with a question:

'Did not Connors drive them down "Yes, the four of them." "And Major McDonald knew then that he was ordered East?" "No, the order came by telegram later. An orderly was sent down about

> other. He knew little about him, except that he had the reputation of being a capable officer. "I will, sir," he responded quickly fair, but I was with Miss McDonald

Hamlin glanced at the face of the

"I heard about that; Gaskins brought

to you that a young lady like Miss Mc-Donald, an officer's daughter, would turn for help to an enlisted man, but am telling you only the truth; sir. You see, she got it into her somehow that I was square, and-and well, that I cared enough to help her."

"Wait a minute, Sergeant," broke in Kane, kindly, realizing the other's embarrassment, and resting one hand on his sleeve. "You do not need to apoloto the straight facts. You mean that

"Why couldn't the girl tell her fa-

That is where the main trouble if

were on the side porch at the hotel ing of the Eustachian Tube. When talking while the dancers were at sup this tube is inflamed you have a rumper-it was the only opportunity the bling sound or imperfect hearing, and girl had to get away—and Mrs. Dupont when it is entirely closed, Deafness is and her husband came into the par the result, and unless the inflammatio "Her husband? Good Lord, I thought stored to its normal condition, hearing

her husband was dead." "He isn't. He's a tin-horn gambler, which is nothing but an inflamed con known in the saloons as 'Reb,' a big dition of the mucous surfaces. duffer, wearing a black beard." "All right, go on; I don't know him for any case of Deafness (caused by

Well, I stepped into the room to catarrh) that cannot be cured by Hall's keep the two apart, leaving the girl Catarrh Cure. Send for circulars alone outside. We had a bit of talk free. before I got the room cleared, and when I went back to the porch. Miss Molly had gone." "Dropped over the railing to the pation.

grubbing at some papers. Come on "Good evening, Sergeant," the latter over, and tell him what you have told me of his orders, and bade me good said genially. "Just in from town? I me. I believe the lass will turn up all bye later. So fas ar Connors is con The Colonel and the Post Adjutant here for us at two o'clock. Is that ali,

expect they are having some dance right, but it does look rather queer." "Yes, sir," hesitatingly, and then were in the little office, busy over a Mr. Sergeant Hamlin?" venturing the inquiry: "May I ask if pile of papers. Both officers glanced "You better make it all," threatened Major McDonald has returned to the up, resenting the interruption, as Kane the Captain belligerently, "before I entered, Hamlin following. The for lose my temper at this infernal im-"McDonald? No," he glanced at his mer explained the situation briefly, pertinence." watch. "He had orders to go east to while the commandant leaned back in Hamlin surveyed the two calmly. Ripley on the stage. That was due out his chair, his keen eyes studying the confident that the woman knew more younger man. "To Ripley? By stage?" the Ser- "Very well, Captain Kane," he said ferent as to the other.

"We shall have to examine into this, learn what I desire elsewhere. I shall the whole affair a false alarm. There has actually occurred. have come to you in her distress?" Hamlin stepped forward, and told lin to pursue. He had no trail to fol the story again in detail, answering low, only a vague suspicion that these the Colonel's questions frankly. "This, then, was the only time you plotters were in some way concerned have met since your arrival?"

"Yes, sir." Some years ago.'

"I know her to be utterly unscrupulous, sir. I am prepared to state that the toils prepared for another claiming to be a niece of Major Mc. for McDonald a part of the conspir. pose, but am convinced it is an evil affair? The Sergrant was a sold

fully, glancing at the silent adjutant. geant. I have, of course, met the lady, and found her pleasant and agreeable somewhere, it he could only discove as a companion. Deuced pretty, too; hey, Benson? Why do you say she in any way, hence dead, something was masquerades as McDonald's niece?" sure to be left uncovered, some ship to son and the Major's sister married man named Counts."

"There might have been another Miss Molly says not, Colonel. has known nothing of his sister for over twenty years, and accepted this,

woman on her word." "Well, well! Interesting situation; hey, Benson? Like to get to the bottom mysel! Damme if it don't sound like a novel. However, the thing be has become of Miss McDonald." straightened up in his chair. leaned across the table. Kane, make a thorough examination of McDonald's quarters first. If the girl is not found there, detail two men to accompany Sergeant Hamlin on a search of the town." "Very well, sir; come on, Sergeant

"Just a moment-if we find the trai. leads beyond the town are we authorized to continue?" "Certainly, yes. Adjutant, write out the order. Anything more?"

'roop, sir, mounted." "Very well; see to it, Captain." The two men walked down past the how to deal with such as they dark row of officers' houses, the Serrow cinder path. McDonald's quarters were as black as the others, and there

"Pick out your men, Hamlin," the transportation. There were two other Captain said sternly, "and I'll call the stable guard." Ten minutes later, fully equipped

else to go to, and told me of some trou- tion, and the two troopers, experienced Kane, that it may seem a bit strange tions. Side by side the three men rode ed," she explained, "and the man in swung down from his saddle at the him by sight, for he's been down here door of the dance hall. With a word a dozen times when I was at the desk to the guard he crossed the floor to in. This fellow was about his size, but tercept Mrs. Dupont. The latter re. dark and stoop-shouldered ment, her hand on Captain Barrett's eagerly

"Certainly not," she replied rather I noticed one had a black beard sharply to his first question. "I am not! no doubt amusing herself somewhere: special attention to any of them, only possibly lying down over at the hotel; to wonder who the officer was, 'cause she complained of a headache earlier I never remembered seein' him here in the evening. Why do you come to before at Dodge, but, as I recollect,

is what I wish to know, Hamlin. By cap on." what authority are you here?"

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"The orders of the Colonel commandface. "You insist then, madam, hat "No!" deflantly, her cheeks red

"Nor of what has become of Con-

of the officer beside her. "Possibly "Yes." more deliberately; 'he old cerned, he was to have the carriage

than she would tell, and utterly indif

of course, but will probably discover and Miss McDonald, and discover what is, at present, no necessity for alarm- "My best wishes, I am sure," and ing any others. Sergeant, kindly ex- the lady patted the Captain's arm plain to me why Miss McDonald should gently. "We are losing this waltz There was but one course for Haus

in the mysterious disappearance. Thus far, however, they had left behind no "And this Mrs. Dupont? You have clue to their participation Moreover with he was seriously handicapped by ign rance of any motive. Why should the desire to gain possession of the g th "You consider her a dangerous It could not be money, or the hope of ransom What then? Was it so accident which had involved here: she is here under false pretenses, were those unexpected orders for b Donald's. I do not know her real pur- or had their receipt complicated

The Colonel shook his head doubt- a straight touch in his revestigation "That remains to be proven, Ser some trail to follow as patiently as an Because her maiden name was Car. veal the method. He would trace the



"I should prefer two men of my own then search the saloons and gambling

dens for the two men. Though unsuc cessful with Mrs. Dupont, he knew The stage agent was routed out of bed and came to the door, revolver at

reckon; none in the station at all What's that, Jane"" . A woman's voice spoke from out the

"I didn't know either of them, only

"A very large, burly fellow?" "No, I don't think so. I didn't pay the fellow with a beard was rather un-"Yes," broke in the Captain, "that dersized; had a shaggy buffalo-skin

To be continued.

a "Tument