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CHRISTMAS NEW VEAR'S

RANDALL PARRIS V. L. BARNES Syright, 1912, by A. C. McClurg & Co.

Plainly enough the man was not Du- here!" he exclaimed. "Shot him down pont, and McDonald had not departed from behind. Look, men. No; stand on the stage, while some other, pre- back, and don't muss up the tracks. Buffled, bewildered by this unexpected

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Dead Body. That both McDonald and his daugh ter were involved in this strange puzzle was already clear. The disappearthat of the other. Whether the origthat of the other. Whether the orig- loing here?" inal conspiracy had centered about the Major, and Miss Molly had merely been drawn into the net through accident, or whether both were destined as victims from the first, could not be determined by theory. Indeed Sergeant could evolve no theory, could discover no purpose in the outrage. Convinced that Dupont and his wife were the moving spirits, he yet possessed no satisfactory reason charging them with the crime, for

which there was no apparent object.

Nothing remained to be done but search the town, a blind search in the hope of uncovering some trail. Tha crime had been committed-either murder or abduction-was evident the two had not dropped thus suddenly out of sight without cause. Nor did

self to the blazing front of the "Poodle his chair. Late as the hour was, the saloos lated, "and his clothing stolen. Looks ravines, but in every other direction damped!" and the gambling rooms above were like a carefully planned affair, Ser. it stretched level to the horizon, ex. all crowded. Hamlin plunged into the geant; sending that fellow through to regular middles and the sending many plants are sending that sending many plants are sending that sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sending many plants and the sending many plants are sending the sendi mass of men, pressing passage back Ripley was expected to throw us off and forth, his eyes searching the faces, the track. That's why they were so while he eagerly questioned those with careless covering their trail; expected ceaseless wind. It was desert across it freshly trampled send and alight whom he had any acquaintance. Few to have several days' start. It is my among these could recall to mind notion they never intended to kill any acquaintance. The several days' start is my which not even a snake crawled, and "Here." either "Reb" or his boon companion, him; had a row of some kind, or else no wing of migrating bird beat the and even those who did retained no Mac tried to get away. Any trace of leaden sky above. lately. The bartenders asserted that "No; but she must have been there." cutting sharply into the soil, told accu-

and had seen him at the hotel three were after Mac?" hours before, but was positive the fel- "No, sir." low had not been on the streets since. "Well, I do; he carried thirty thou-

Connors he did not know, but if the sand dollars." man was Major McDonald's driver. "What?" then he was missing all right, for Cap- "He was acting paymaster. The tain Barrett had to employ a livery money came in from Wallace last eve man to drive Mrs. Dupont back to the ning, and he was ordered to take it to fort. No, there was no lady with her; Ripley at once." he was sure, for he had watched them Hamlin drew in his breath quickly ture, an' he's cock-sure that nobody's in surprise. get into the carriage. The troopers were no more fortu- "Who knew about that, sir?"

sleep, exhibiting fighting propensities, her?" the former asked in sudden sus huntin' a needle in a haystack to try Move." which had cost one a blackened eye, picion. pressed into a posse. The search was lin's arm. a thorough one, but the ground near-Dupont, and recalling the fact that the man was once a ranchman somewhere devils down." to the southward, jumped to the conclusion that the fellow would naturally head in that direction, seeking familiar country in which to hide. With the two troopers he pushed on toward onel?" the river, choosing the upper ford as being the most likely choice of the

The Man Roughly Dressed Lay on

CHAPTER XXIV.

hoofs appeared on the sloping bank, Hamlin sprang down to where the marks disappeared around the edge of a large bowlder. His hand on the stone, he stopped suddenly with quick indrawing of breath, staring down at a motionless figure lying almost at his feet. The man, roughly dressed, lay on his face, a bullet wound showing above one ear, the back of his neck caked with blood. The Sergeant, mastering his first sense of horror, turned him over and gazed upon the ghastly face of Major McDonald. "My God, they've murdered him

tending to be he, possibly wearing his There are foot-prints here-Indians, clothes to further the deceit, had by heaven! 'Three of them Indians!" taken the seat reserved in the coach. "Some plainsmen wear moccasins." "They don't walk that way-toes discovery, the Sergeant swung back in; and see this hair in McDonald's into his saddle, not knowing which fingers—that's Indian, sure. Here is

where a horse fell, and slid down the bank. Isn't that a bit of broken feather caught in the bush, Carroll? Bring it over here." The three bent over the object.

"Well, what do you say? You men ire both plainsmen."

Hamiin shook his head. "It will require more than guessing o determine that," he said sternly. And there is only one way to find out That fellow was a Cheyenne all right, and there were three of them and two whites in the party-see here; the prints of five horses ridden, and one imal led. That will be the one Mconald had. They went straight up he opposite bank of the ravine. hey leave a trail like that we can de after them full speed."

Carroll had been bending over the lead officer and now glanced up. arn reckless here." "Of course; they'll hide in the dunes, both men realizing the necessity of

whisked away without leaving some letter. Wade, you remain with the ficult after they attained the sand belt, a blizzard of it, er I lose my guess. plains storms before.. It seem possible they could have been and the sooner we're after them the haste. Not only would the trail be diftrace behind. The town was accus- pody; Carroll and I will return to the but, if snow fell, would be utterly blot. trace pening. The town was accus. Now, Carlon and I will letter to the but, it show ten, would be utterly blow tomed to murder and sudden death; 'ort and report. We'll have to have ted out. And the dull, murky sky, see yer hand afore yer face. I've been audible in the blast. "Close up, men; was a corpse they gripped, already to murder and sudden death; 'ort and report. We'll have to have ted out. And the dull, murky sky, see yer hand afore yer face. I've been audible in the blast. "Close up, men; was a corpse they gripped, already to murder and sudden death; 'ort and report. We'll have to have ted out. And the dull, murky sky, see yer hand afore yer face. I've been audible in the blast. "Close up, men; was a corpse they gripped, already to murky sky." the echo of revolver shots would create more men—Wasson if I can get him—threatened snow, the sharp wind hav. but yere in them things afore, an' come here to me—lively now! That stiff with cold, the eyes wide-open and the echo of revolver shots would create more men—Wasson if I can get him—threatened snow, the sharp wind hav. the ecus of revolver shots would create more men wasson it can set min threatened show, the sharp wind may be and equipment for a hard ride. Come ing already veered to the northwest, that outfit mights soon it ain't like you, Wade? Wasson; oh, all right, staring. Carroll, bruised and limping. the piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once.

It is piece was small, and there was on, once of you pain, and the three men together many the small day.

descriptions of both Dupont and Cons is they passed. Twenty minutes later rection through weary leagues of disnors, Hamlin sent his men down the Hamlin stood before the Colonel, hasti- mal loneliness. The searching eye faint marks on the sand. "Two of 'em ready?" straggling street to drag out the one by telling the story. The latter lise caught no relief from desolate same dismounted yere, an Injun an' a white The lariat rope, tied to Hamlin's cupants of shack and tent, riding him- tened intently, gripping the arms of ness, drear monotony. Nowhere was they went ou leadin' their houses

"So I think; got mixed up in the afand the dealers above were equally fair some way, and they have been and the pursuers swept forward with positive. The city marshal, encoun compelled to carry her off to save caution, anxious to spare their mounts tered outside, remembered Duponi, themselves. Do you know why they and to keep out of vision themselves

or three days' get-a-way, and so don't nate in their results, but had succeed- "No one but the Adjutant, and Ma- care a tinker's dam bout these yere ed in stirring up greater excitement jor McDonald—not even the orderly." marks. Once in the sand, an' than during their exploration, several irate The eyes of officer and soldier met. won't be no trail anyhow. It's some "Thar's Nothin' Goin' to Happen to individuals, roughly aroused from "Do you suppose he could have told kintry out thar, an' it would be like Her While This Bunch is on the

"I'll do it for Miss McDonald, but that about the right program, Ser- glancing back. "The poor devil!" by was so cut up by hoofs and wheels not for the money," he said slowly. "I geant?" as to yield my definite that whatever troop, and Wasson is detailed for spe- was, fearful that every additional mobad occurred had been engineered by cial service. But damn it, I'll take the ment of delay might increase the girl's he died whar he fell. Most likely he swirl of the storm. responsibility—go on, and run those danger, he was yet soldier and plains, shot furst, or used a knife. The girl's

scout rode in silence, bent low over face up to the sky. their pommels, eyes strained into the "Snow," he announced soberly, his eyes upon the compass. Wasson mist ahead. It was not yet dark when "Thought I felt it afore, and the wind's and Hamlin took their turns tramping they rode in between the first sand changed." dunes, and Wasson, pulling his horse Hamlin turned in the saddle, feeling They had stopped speaking, stopped "Cheyenne," returned Carroll there is no better scout on the plains up short, checked the others with up-already the sharp sting of snow pel-

said, swinging down from the saddle, a flerce gust of wind hurling the flyand studying the ground. "The wind ing particles against them. In an- arron bluffs. There was no shelter has 'bout blotted it all out, but you other instant they were in the very there in the open, to either man or kin see yere back o' this ridge whar heart of the storm, almost hurled for horse; the sole choice left was to The four men, heavily armed, and they turned in, an' they was walkin' ward by the force of the wind, and struggle on, or lie down and die. The equipped for winter service, rode up their horses. Gittin' pretty tired, I blinded by the icy deluge. The pelting but while a drop of blood ran red and the bank of the ravine to the irregu- reckon. We might as well stop yere of the hail startled the horses, and in warm in their veins they would keep larity of plain beyond. The trail, lead- too, Bergeant, an' eat some cold grub. spite of every effort of the riders, they their feet and fight. ing directly south into the solitudes, You two men spread her out, an' rub drifted to the right, tails to the storm. was easily followed, and Wasson, down the hosses, while Hamlin an' I The swift change was magical. The slightly in advance of the others, made poke about a bit. Better find out all sharp particles of icy snow seemed to catching the numbed trooper under no attempt to check his horse, content we kin, 'Brick.' 'fore it gits dark." swirl upon them from every direction, his weight. The jerk on the lariat to lean forward, his keen eyes mark. He started forward on the faint sucking their very breath, bewilder. head downward. With stiffened fin ing every sign. Scarcely a word was trail, his rifle in the hollow of his arm ing them, robbing them of all sense of head downward. With stiffened flu

e said. "That's why they are so Sergeant, the sober-faced scout concentrated every energy on the pursuit, swirled the sharp grit into their faces. feet ahead of them. "What's comin, Sam; a storm?" All about stretched a dull, dead pic- o' thet outfit mighty soon, 't ain't like- Sam. Here, pass that lariat back; came to their help, groaning with increase would pass long unpoticed. With through the town, shouting their disthen we'll get it." He got down on his take the lead, Sam; we'll have to run horse's back, and to bind it safely to words of instruction, and hasty covery to the marshal and his posse the skies above, extending in every displacement to describe and a state that it is not to be the skies above, extending in every displacement to describe and a state that is not to be the skies above, extending in every displacement to describe a state that is not to be the skies above, extending in every displacement to describe a state that is not to be the skies above. there movement, or any semblance of they went on leadin' their hosses.

The marks of their horses' hoofs ed largely on surprise, and the confidence of those ahead that they were unpursued. Wasson expressed the situation exactly, as the four halted a moment at an unexpectedly-discovered "I'd think this yere plain trail was some Injun trick, boys, if I didn't know the reason fur it. 'T ain't Injun nachasin' him yet. He's figurin' on two

town, the soldiers procured lanterns, trail those fugitives. I need another likely ter camp furst part of ther a man, face up to the sky. It was west, but that won't lose us much. and, leaving the horses behind, began man—a scout—Wasson, if he can be night anyhow. They'll feel safe onct Connors, a ghastly bullet hole between Come on, now." exploring the prairie. In this labor spared—and rations for three days." hid in them sand-hills, an' if they don't his eyes, one cheek caked black with "Hamlin, let me break trail." they were assisted by the marshal. The Colonel hesitated an instant, git no sight of us, most likely they blood. The Sergeant sprang across. "We'll take it turn about, Sam. 1 and a few aroused citizens hastily im- and then rose, placing a hand on Ham- won't even post no guard. Thet's when and bent over the motionless form. be worse in an hour than it is now. "Had quite a row here," returned the flerce pummelling of the wind, yet as to yield no definite results. Hamlin, expect orders every hour for your Burning with impatience as Hamlin blood and it never come from him for

> man enough to realize the wisdom of with 'em anyhow; I reckon this yere Hamlin turned to the door; then the old scout. There were at least was her ribbon; that footprint is "You know this man Dupont, Col- them Indian warriors, the two whites He stirred up the scattered ashes. There was no cessation, no abatefour men in the party pursued, two of sure." desperate characters. Without doubt and then passed over and looked at ment. Across a thousand miles of

they would put up a fierce fight, or, it the dead man. "Any idea where he used to run cat- warned in time, could easily scatter "What do yer think, Sergeant?" "They stopped here to eat, maybe a hurricane, driving the snow crystals saddle, powdered with snow, rested an Wait a minute until I think I "Of course you are right, Sam," he five hours ago," pushing the ashes into their faces, buffeting them merci-

> right, Brick: You kin sure read signs, against their ears. All consciousness you and me to make good. Let's an' now they're scared stiff. It'll take Thet's just bout the whole story, as I left them! only dumb instinct kept crunch some hard-tack and go on,

won't have no scalps to go back home, McDonald was in view. All alike, how-The day grew dark and murky as tives were seeking the wild bluffs of in my presence, this 6th day of Decembey moved steadily forward, the wind the Canadian river for concealment. ld from out the northwest the It was not yet dark when they again heavy canopy of cloud settled lower in picked up the trail, rode around the a frosty fog, which gradually obscured dead body of Connors, and pushed forthe landscape. This mist became so ward into the maze of sand. For an and milcous surfaces of the system. thick that the men could scarcely see hour the advance was without inci- Send for testimonials free. a hundred yards in any direction, and dent, the scout in the lead not even

Hamlin placed a pocket compass on dismounting, his keen eyes picking up Sold by Druggists, 75c. his saddle-pommel. The trail was less the faint "sign" unerringly. Then distinct as they traversed a wide darkness shut down, the lowering bank pation. streak of alkali, but what few signs re- of clouds completely blotting the stars, mained convinced Wasson that the fu- although the white glisten of the sand gitives were still together, and riding under foot yielded a slight guidance. southward. Under concealment of the Up to this time there had been no defog his previous caution relaxed, and viation in direction, and now when the he led the way at a steady trot, only trail could be no longer distinguished. ccasionally drawing rein to make cer- the little party decided on riding up the rear. Again he went down, tain there was no division of the par- straight southward until they struck ty shead. The alkali powdered them the Cimarron. An hour or two later babe. Desperately the others lashed from head to foot, clinging to the the moon arose, hardly visible and yet orses' hides, reddening and blinding brightening the cloud cauopy, so that about him, and went grimly stagger the eyes, poisoning the lips dry and the riders could see each other and ing on, his limp figure rocking above parched with thirst. The two troopers proceed more rapidly. Suddenly Wasswore grimly, but the Sergeant and son lifted his hand, and turned his

lets on his face. Before he could even became automatic, instinctive, the re-"Thar'll be a camp here soon," he answer the air was full of whiteness, sult of iron discipline. They realized what had occurred as they crossed the and the Sergeant ranged up beside direction. Within two minutes the gers, scarcely comprehending what "iver. Hardly less interested than the him. The sand was to their ankles, men found it impossible to penetrate they were about, the Sergeant and

The Sergeant knew what it meant, of the storm which now beat fairly in "Snow," answered the scout shortly, for he had had experience of these their eyes, grasped the dangling

grasped desperately by the gloved "Shot from behind, hey?" he ejaen- life. Behind, the land was broken by here's the spot now Well fill he hands of the men behind. The Serered in the blast, could see merely ill-

The answers were inaubible. "For the Lord's sake, speak up; an-

He drove his horse forward, head bent low over the compass, one arm flung up across his mouth to prevent 'nhaling the icy air. He felt the tug of the line; heard the labored breathing of the next horse behind, but saw nothing except that wall of swirling snow pellets hurled against him by pitiless wind, fairly lacerating the flesh. It was freezing cold; already "Close Up, Men; Come Here to Me." he felt numb, exhausted, heavy-eyed. hind the animals, bunched helplessly The air seemed to penetrate his cloth- together, the howl of the wind like ing, and prick the skin as with a thou- the scream of lost souls, the three sand needles. The thought came that men looked into each other's faces. if he remained in the saddle he would "I reckon Jim died without ever freeze stiff. Again he turned, and sent knowin' it," said the scout, breaking the voice of command down the strug- again the film of ice over his eyes, and

"More'n twenty miles." which had cost one of a tooth. Both, and the other the loss of a tooth. Both, "That would be my theory, sir. But This is my idea—we'll just mosey impressions where men had out. "All right! We've got to make it, can't bear no weight on it. "Twas and the other the loss of a tooth. Both, "That would be my theory, sir. But This is my idea—we'll just mosey impressions where men had out. "All right! We've got to make it, can't bear no weight on it. "Twas and the other the new of the occasion, it is useless to speculate. We have no along slow, savin' the horses an keep-stretched themselves. Almost at Was-boys," forcing a note of cheerfulness darn near froze stiff before; thet's and appeared anxious for more. Hav- proof, no means of forcing her to con- ing back out o' sight till dark. Them son's feet fluttered a pink ribbon, and into his voice. "Hang on to the bit n ing exhausted the possibilities of the fess. The only thing for us to do is to fellars ain't many hours ahead, an' are beyond the fire circle lay the body of even if you drop. I may drift to the quick."

Blinded by the sleet, staggering to

CHAPTER XXV.

In the Blizzard. plain the ice-laden wind swept down fugitives. The trampled mud of the north bank exhibited fresh tracks, but noth bank exhibited fresh tracks, but none he could positively identify, none he could positively identify. However, a party on horseback had forcessed within a few hours, and, with out hesitation, he waded out into the stream.

"Watt a minute until 1 think. I "Of course you are right, Sam," he about with his toe. "The fire has been out that long. Then they got into a looked upon the face liessly, numbing their bodies, and blind. Then they struggled on, night at the club, something Mrs. Du. "Forget it. Thar's nuthin goin' ter out that long. Then they got into a looked upon that, but struggled on, night at the club, something Mrs. Du. "Forget it. Thar's nuthin goin' ter out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip they not that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip they out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that wful grip he out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip he out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip he out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip he out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their eyes. In that awful grip he out that long. Then they got into a quarrel—Connors and Dupont—for he ing their bodies, and fill lies, and the ground nursing his induction and the sought the sought the surface of the sought the sought the surface of the sought the surface of the sought the surface of the sought the sought the sought the sought the sought the sought the s

match a bite an' go on. Our hosses ward, foot by foot, odd phantasies of stiff." What do you imagine they will de 're fresher'n theirs. No sense our imagination beginning to beckon. In stoppin' to bury Connors; he ain't their weakness, delirium gripped their to fight the snow fiend. Aching in

TATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO,

of use of Hall's Catarrh Cure. FRANK J. CHENEY. ever, were convinced that the fugi- Sworn to before me and subscribed

> A. W. GLEASON. NOTARY PUBLIC. ally, and acts directly on the blood

> Take Hall's Family Pills for consti-

Wade, a young fellow not overly strong, fell twice. They placed him face buried in the snow, crying like a him into his saddle, binding a blanket them. Hour succeeded hour in ceaseless struggle; no one knew where they were, only the leader staggered on. a trail, the snow often to their knees thinking even. All their movements

body, swaying back and forth as the



thrashing his arms. "I allers heard "Dismount; wind the rope around tell it was an easy way o' goin'. Looks

"Sure; well, ye'll have ter ride, then

We'll take the blanket off Jim; he won't need it no more. 'Brick' an' kin hoof it yet awhile-hey. 'Brick' Hamlin lifted his head from the shelter of his horse's mane. reckon I can make my feet

they don't feel as though there was any life left in them." He stamped on the snow. "How long do these blizzards generally last, Sam?" "Blow themselves out in about three

"Three days? God! We can never

upon them with the relentless fury of line of Wade stretched across the

"Good enough," and Wasson patted men, sightless in the mad swirl, deaf. down. We've been in worse boxes his arm: "You're a plainsman all ened by the pounding of the blast than this and pulled out. It's up to Nuthin' fer us to do but them battling for life, staggering for afore the whole three of us freeze

The Sergeant thrust out his hand.

ernment

Glass