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Prayer Meeting: Wednesday, at 8 p m. W.M.S.: First Wednesday of month at 8 p.m.

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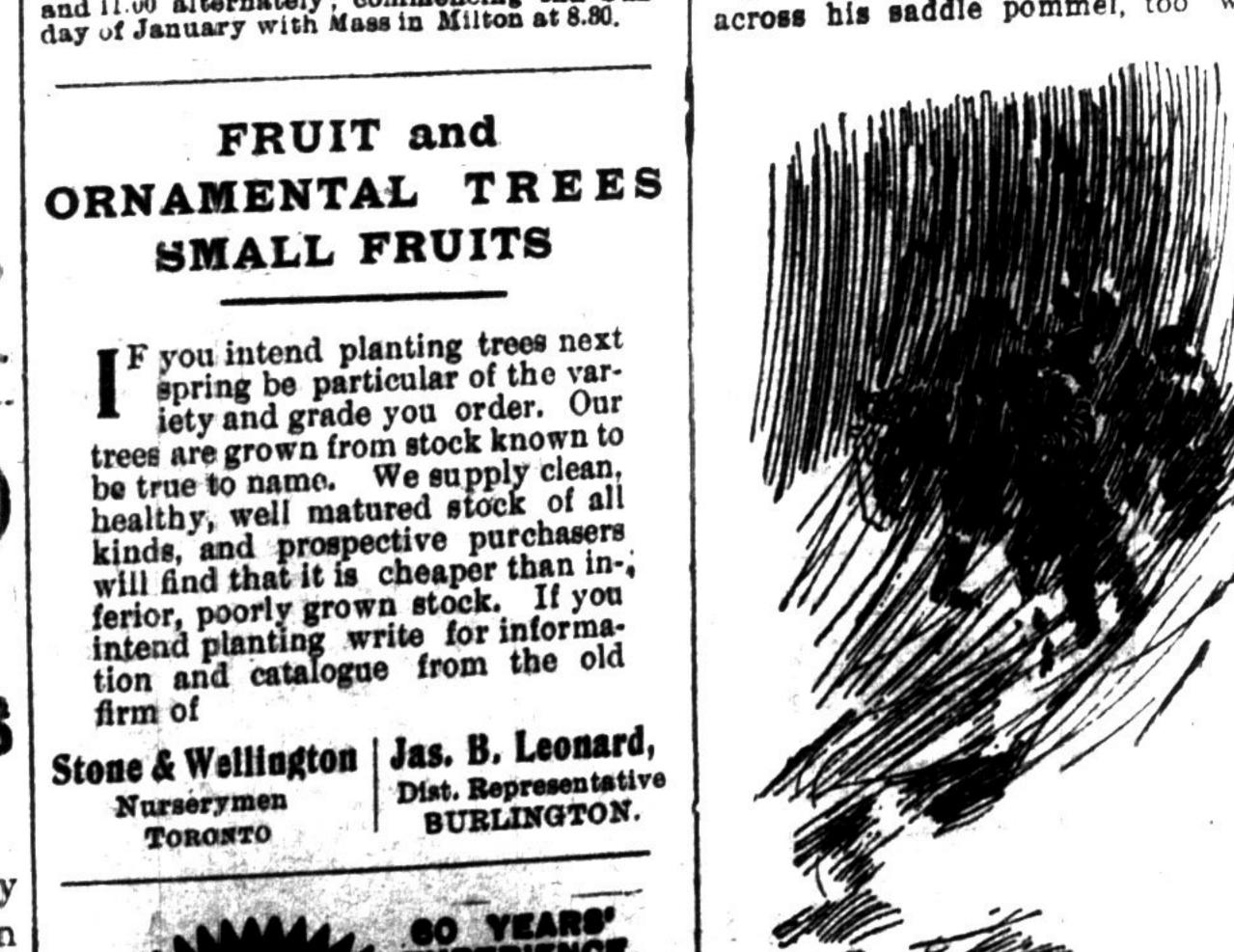
A TALE of the FRONTIE

and thaw him out. Get up there, you that's at stake. Brace up!" "How far have we come?"

has kep' us straight." sionally exchanging a muttered word saw Wasson crumble up, and go down, or two, thrashing their limbs about still clinging to his horse's rein. It He Buried His Eyes on the Neck to keep up circulation, and dampening came so suddenly, so unexpectedly,

they could. "Now keep kicking and thrashing at the silent hill. about, George," ordered the Sergeant sternly. "For God's sake, don't go to sleep, or you'll be where Jim is. We'll haul you out of this, old man. roll a whack every few minutes: I'll break trail. Forward! now."

snails, when the pale sickly dawn the smother.



The man made a desperate effort bracing his hands on the horse's neck and staring at his tormentor with dull, "Oh, go to hell!" he muttered, and went down again. Hamlin struck him twice, his chilled hand tingling to the blow, but the

"No use, Sam. We've got to get on,

inert figure never moved.

The ghostly shape of the hill was to Well, then, they couldn't a ben far their right, and they circled its base com the Cimarron when the storm almost waist-deep in drift. This come. They'd be safe enough under brought the wind directly into their, the bluffs; have wood fer a fire, and faces, and the horses balked, dragging lay thar mighty comfortable. That's back and compelling both men to beat, whar them bucks are, all right. Why, them into submission. Wasson was damn it, man, we've got to get jerking at the bit, his back turned so through. "Tain't just our fool lives that he could see nothing ahead, but Hamlin, lashing the rear animal with his quirt, still faced the mound, "A good ten miles, an' the compass mere dim shadow through the mists of snow. He saw the flash of yellow They drew in closer together, and flame that leaped from its summit, munched a hard cracker apiece, occa- heard the sharp report of a gun, and

their lips with snow. They were but that the single living man left scarce-

CHAPTER XXVI.

Unseen Danger. doubled fury, blinding their eyes, where he had run down the opposite somewhere amid those barren wastes

came, revealing inch by inch the dread. It required an effort for the Ser- Carroll to freeze in his saddle. It desolation, stretching white and ghast- geant to recover, to realize his true would be better to take a chance; perly in a slowly widening circle. The position, and the meaning of this mys- haps they had become confused by the exhausted, struggling men, more near- terious attack. He was no longer storm,

action, every nerve throbbing. God! swift reaction came, and he buried hir angrily out of red-rimmed eyes. iron will, and left him weak as a child. wait! I'll get you!"

denly some awakened instinct in gone; no human effort could aid them, you mind, or shall I have to hand you

the Nearest Horse.

dim, spectral shapes in the darkness, ly realized what had happened. Yet his way past, but he had no strength limbs of several stunted cottonwoods of skins beyond. There was an ap cause of a hard winter. So I come the air filled with crystal pellets, dazed as he was, some swift impulse to lift those heavy bodies. Every waved dismally against the gray sky. pearance of neatness also, the floor swept about by a merciless wind, the flung him, headlong, into the snow ounce of power must be conserved for Hesitating, his eyes searching the swept, the table unlittered. Yet he ther bunch." horses standing tails to the storm and behind his pony, and even as he fell, the preservation of life. Little as he barrenness above to where the stream scarcely realized these details at the heads drooping. In spite of the light his numbed fingers gripped for the could see through the snow blasts bent northward and disappeared, he time so closely was his whole attentions and disappeared, he time so closely was his whole attentions. refraction of the snow the eyes could revolver at his hip. The hidden there was but one means of passage, turned at last and tramped down- tion centered on the figure of a man scarcely see two yards away through marksman shot twice, evidently dis- that along the narrow rift between the ward along the edge of the stream. The fellow occupied a stool before but anyhow I got a thousand head the smother. Above, about, the cease- cerning only dim outlines at which to ridges. The snow lay deep here, but Across stretched the level, white praise fireplace, and was bending slightless wind howled, its icy breath chill- aim; the red of discharge cut the they floundered ahead, barely able to rie, beaten and obscured by the storm ly forward, staring down at the red ing to the bone. Carroll clambered gloom like a knife. One ball hurtled surmount the drifts, until suddenly stiffly into his saddle, crying and past Hamlin's head; the other found they emerged upon an open space, while to his left rose the steep, bare embers, unconscious of the intruder. broke loose. 'Fore we'd got that swearing from weakness and pain billet in Wade's horse, and the strick- sheltered somewhat by the low hills bluff, swept clear by the wind, reveal. He was a thin-chested, unkempt in bunch o' cattle twenty mile down The others, stumbling about in the en creature toppled over, bearing its and swept clean by the wind. Direct- ing its ugliness through the haze of dividual with long hair, and shaggy the Cimarron we was rounded up by deep snow, which had drifted around dead burden with him. The Sergeant ly beneath, down a wide cleft in the snow. Not in all the expanse was whiskers, both iron gray. The side a gang o' Cheyenne Injuns, headed by them during the brief halt, stripped ripped off his glove, found the trigger bank, dimly visible, appeared the welthe blanket from Wade's dead body, with his half-frozen fingers, and fired come waters of the Cimarron. The track of any kind. He was alone, in while his nose was prominent. The 'em drove off. Thar wa'n't no fight; and tucked it in about Carroll as best twice. Then, with an oath, he leaped stream was but partly frozen over, the the midst of indescribable desolation sergeant surveyed him a moment, his the damn bucks just laughed at us, and they could. madly to his feet, and dashed straight dark current flowing in odd contrast -a cold, dead, dreary landscape.

The Sergeant halted, examining his est growth, a dozen gaunt, naked trees he stepped within and closed the door. They hogged hosses an' all." surroundings cautiously, expecting ev. at the river's edge, stunted, two of At the slight sound the other leaped He wiped his face, and spat into sand miles of snow-covered plain, the was still trampled; he could see nood. Then the feeling clutched him storm howled down upon them in re- where the man had kneeled to fire; that he was not alone; that from

making them stagger helplessly be-side of the hill. There had been only hostile eyes watched, skulking murone—a white man from the imprint— derers sought his life. Yet there was They were still moving, now like and he had fied south, vanishing in no sign of any presence. He could not stand there and die, nor permit

by little he gained control, stood up sleep," the other retorted, poking the the reality of his strange discovery by to kill you, if you were the cur who they held up a paymaster, er someagain in the snow, and began to shapeless body with his foot, his feeling the rough bark of the logs. shot us up. But I'm willing to listen thing like that, fer a big boodle. They think. He was a man, and must do thoughts already elsewhere. 'Don't It was a form of habitation of some to what you have got to say. I'm some expected to do it quiet like, hold the a man's work. With an oath he forced be a fool. I'll get a fire if I can, and kind beyond question; apparently unon the fight, but plain murder don't officer a day er so out in the desert, himself to act; reloaded his revolver, something hot into you. Within an occupied, for there were no tracks in appeal to me. How is it? Are you an' then turn him loose to how!. But to sit erect, but held by the taut blanthrust it back into the holster at his hour you'll be a man again. Now see the snow without, and no smoke of a ready to talk? Spit it out, man!" them plans didn't just exactly work.

The sit erect, but held by the taut blanthrust it back into the holster at his hour you'll be a man again. Now see the snow without, and no smoke of a ready to talk? Spit it out, man!" them plans didn't just exactly work. ket, and gripping his horse's ice-cov- hip, and, with one parting glance at here—stop that! Do you hear? You fire visible anywhere. ered mane. Wasson was ahead now, poor Sam, plowed across through the lie still right where you are, Carroll, gedly crunching a path with his drifts to Carroll. He realized now his until I come back, or I'll kick your doggedly crumoning to duty, the thing he must strive to ac ribs in!" He bent down menacingly,

n this God-forsaken country? And Kettle's winter camp of hostiles was Sworn to before me and subscribed whoever it was, where had he gone? not far away. This but might, of in my presence, this 6th day of Decem-How had be disappeared so suddenly course, be the deserted site of some ber. A. D. 1886. and completely? He could not be far old cow camp, some outrider's shack,

bluffs in face of the storm. It would at hand. be suicidal. And if Dupont and his The sergeant stole along the front

judge through that smother—the bare broad-brimmed hat on the floor, a nile hurry, an' they was scattered some

ery instant to be fired upon by some them already toppling over the bank, to his feet, overturning the stool, and the fire, while Hamlin sat silent, gun unseen foe. The violence of the storm apparently undermined by the water, whirled about swiftly, his right hand in hand. Sam, you take the rear, and hit Car. Ince he paused, blinded by the prevented his seeing beyond a few threatening to fall before each blast dropping to his belt. I snow, flung up his arm, and fired, yards, and the whirling snow crystals that smote them. Hoping to discover "That will do, friend!" Hamlin's ol' Koleta wise to that game, but I imagining he saw the dim shape of a blinded him as he faced the fury of some splinters for a fire, Hamlin voice rang stern. They plunged into it, plowing a way man on the ridge summit. There was the wind sweeping down the valley. kicked a clear space in the snow, yet ."Stand as you are—your gun is ly-regretfully. "Wall, we,—thar wus brough the deliter the through the drifts, the reluctant no return shot, no visible movement. Nothing met his gaze; no sound reach- kept his face always toward the bluff, ing on the bench yonder. Rather four o' us,—hoofed it east till we home drawing back at first and bear and the bluff, ing on the bench yonder. Rather four o' us,—hoofed it east till we horses dragging back at first, and Reckless mad with rage, he sprang ed his ears; about him was desola- his eyes vigilantly searching for any careless of you in this country. No, struck some ranchers on Cow Crick. drifting before the fierce sweep of the up the wind-swept side, and reached tion, unbroken whiteness. Apparently skulking figure. Silent as those des- I wouldn't risk it if I was you; this and got the loan o' some ponies. Then wind, in spite of every effort at guid the crest. It was deserted, except for they were alone in all that intense ert surroundings appeared, the series a hair trigger." step torture, but Hamlin bent to it, the fierce wind. Helpless, baffled, the liness of it—the dark, silently flowing a feeling that he was being watched, Sergeant's gray eyes. clinging firmly to the bit of his ani- Sergeant stared about him into the river, the dun sky, the wide, white ex. spied upon; that somewhere near at "Who-who the hell are you?" he But I struck their trail, whar I.e. mal, his other arm protecting his eyes driving flakes, his ungloved, stiffen panse of plain, the mad violence of hand, crouching in that solitude, the managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had driven 'em up into Missouri managed to articulate hoarsely, "a. Fevre had from the sting of the wind. Behind, ing hand gripping the cold butt of the storm beating against him—eyes of murder followed his every a soldier?" whether its lash struck the horse's Nothing but vacancy and silence en ness. He was a mere atom, strug- up, staring at the bluff nearly op let the other talk.

flank or Carroll. And across a thou- compassed him. At his feet the snow gling alone against Nature's wild posite where he stood. Was it a "You're—you're not one o'

y dead than alive from their cease- numb with cold or staggering from Foot by foot, feeling his passage, less foil, had to break the film of ice weakness. The excitement had sent he advanced down the gully, fairly from their eyes to perceive their sur- the hot blood pulsing through his dragging his own horse after him. roundings. Even then they saw noth- veins; had brought back to his heart Behind, held by the straining lariat, ing but the bare, snow-draped plain, the fighting instinct. Every desire lurched the others, the soldier swaythe air full of swirting flakes. There urged him forward, clamoring for reing on the back of the last, swearing was nothing to guide them, no mark venge, but the aroused sense of a and laughing in delirium, clutching at of identification; merely lorn barren- plainsman held him motionless, star- snowflakes with his hands. At the end ness in the midst of which they wan- ing about, listening for any sound. Be- of the ravine, under shelter of the dered, dragging their half-frozen hind him, down there in the hollow, bank, Hamlin trampled back the snow, horses. The dead body of Wade had were huddled the horses of his out herding the animals close, so as to stiffened into grotesque shape, head fit, scarcely distinguishable from gain the warmth of their bodies. Here and feet dangling, shrouded in cling- where he stood. If he should venture they were well protected from the ing snow. Carroll had fallen forward farther off, he might never be able cruel lash of the wind and the shower across his saddle pommel, too weak to find a way back again. Even in the of snow which blew over them and gray light of dawn he could see noth drifted higher and higher in the open was the thought which brought him through his veins, the Sergeant hastitramping back through the drifts—
| the man shuffed drifts |
| the man shuf been only slightly wounded. He wadset about vigorously rubbing the soled through the snow to where the
dier's exposed fiesh with snow. The
the bank? He could not believe it "I spose that and the use of the gun in on the red afore but he was friendly
possible, nor could he be sure. If so, in' it," reluctantly, eyeing the gun in on the red afore but he was friendly
possible, nor could he be sure. If so, in' it," reluctantly, eyeing the gun in on the red afore but he was friendly
the through the snow to where the
dier's exposed fiesh with snow. The
then it consisted merely of a room the corner, "but I didn't mean to 'nough, natch'ally mistakin' me fer
then it consisted merely of a room the corner, "but I didn't mean to 'nough, natch'ally mistakin' me fer man lay, face downward, his face still smart of it, together with the rough- excavated in the side of the hill, the shoot up no outfit but Le Fevre's. So one o' Le Fevre's herders. His name excavated in the side of the hill, the shoot up no outfit but Le Fevre's. So one o' Le Fevre's herders. His name gripping, the rein. Before Hamlin ness of handling, aroused the latter opening closed in by cottonwood logs, help me, I didn't! The danged snow was Black Smoke, an' he couldn't turned him over, he saw the jagged from lethargy, but Hamlin, ignoring It in no way extended outward beyond was so thick I couldn't see nohow, but talk no English worth mentionin', but wound and knew death had been in his resentment, gripped the fellow the contour of the bank, and was so I never s'posed any one was on the we made out to understan' each other stantaneous. He stared down at the with hands of iron, never ceasing his white face, already powdered with violent ministrations until his swear-indistinguishable a dozen steps away. white man 'long yere in three months. The wanted to know out o' him." snow; then glared about into the ing ended in silence. Then he wrap Yet those were logs, regularly, laid. Didn't hit none of yer, did I?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

away, that was a certainty. No plains, but—the fellow who fired on them! He man would attempt to ford that icy was a reality—a dangerous reality stream, nor desert the shelter of these and he was hiding somewhere close and mucous surfaces of the system.

Indians were close at hand, Miss Mc to the door, listening intently for any Sold by Druggists, 75c. Donald would be with them. He had warning sound from either without or Take Hall's Family Pills for constihad no time in which to reason this within. Every nerve was on edge; all pation. out before, but now the swift realiza- else forgotten except the intensity of tion of the close proximity of the girl the moment. He could perceive nothcame to him like an electric shock. ing to alarm him, no evidence of any Whatever the immediate danger he presence inside. Slowly, noiselessly, didn't faze Gene none, if he did have must thaw out Carroll, and thus be his Colt poised for instant action, he a white wife—a blamed good-looker lifted the wooden latch, and permitted she was too. She was out here onc't, He could look back to where the the door to swing slightly ajar, yield three kears ago, bout a week maybe. weary horses huddled beneath the ing a glimpse within. There was light Course she didn't know nothin bout bank, grouped about the man so help-from above, flittering dimly through the squaw, an' the Injuns was all lessly swaddled in blankets on the some crevice in the bluff, and the huntin down in the Wichitas. But ground. They were dim, pitiable ob- darker shadows were reddened by the as I was sayin', Gene caught on to jects, barely discernible through the cheery glow of a fire place directly op- this yere Injun war last spring-1 flying scud, yet Hamlin was quick to posite, although where the smoke dis- reckon ol' Koleta, his Injun father-inperceive the advantage of their post-appeared was not at first evident. law, likely told him what wus brewin' tion—the overhanging bluff was com- Hamlin perceived these features at a \_he's sorter a war-chief. Anyhow he plete protection from any attack ex. glance, standing motionless. His knew that hell was to pay, an' so we cept along the open bank of the river, quick eyes visioned the whole interior natch'ally gathered up our long-horns Two armed men could defend the spot -a rude table and bench, a rifle lean- an' drove 'em east whar they wouldn't against odds. And below, a hundred ing in one corner, a saddle and trap- be raided. We didn't git all the crityards away, perhaps—it was hard to pings hanging against the wall; a ers rounded up, as we wus in a

cocked revolver covering the motionbetween the banks of ice and snow. He came to the little patch of for less figure, his lips set grimly. Then left us sittln' thar out on the prairie.

ance. It was an awful journey, every tracks already nearly obliterated by dreariness of snow. The solemn lone. geant knew he was not alone. He had The fellow stared helpless into the It didn't take me long, stranger, to

Wasson wielded a quirt, careless his Colt, ready for any emergency, brought to him a feeling of helpless- movement. Suddenly he straightened Hamlin nodded, willing enough to Then the damn cuss just natch'ally movement. Suddenly he straightened to have a soldier:

Fevre's outfit?" "Whose?" "Gene Le Fevre-the damn skunk

vou know him?" Startled as he was, the sergeant . held himself firm, and laughed. "I reckon there isn't any one by "I reckon there isn't any one by put what I hed left in a grub stake, that name a friend o' mine," he said an' drift back yere. I figgered thet coolly. "So you're free to relieve maybe I could pick up some o' those your feelings as far as I'm concerned. Injun cattle again, and maybe some Were you expecting that gent along mayericks, an' so start 'nuther hard

this trail?" ant little reception I lowed to give back soon as he thought the CORET him neither. Say! Wouldn't yer just wus clear. I knew then he an' Koleta as soon lower that shootin' iron? We was in cahoots an' he'd be headin' this ain't got no call to quarrel so fur as way after the stock. So I come down kin see."

"Maybe not, stranger," and Ham-up." lin leaned back against the table, low- "What then?" ering his weapon slightly, as he "Nuthin much, till yisterday. I got glanced watchfully about the room, tergether some cows, herded down "but I'll keep the gun handy just the river a ways, out o' sight in the bluffs. same until we understand each other, but hev hed ter keep mighty quiet Anybody else in this neighborhood?" ter save my hair. Them Cheyennes are

ing distinctly a dozen yards distant. space beyond. Warking feverishly, And Wasson had the compass. This the blood again circulating freely slowly, Noiselessly, His Colt Poised 'Then I reckon you did the shoot afore. But I hung on yere, hidin' out. Instant Action. ing out there a bit ago?" cause I didn't hev nowhar else ter go The man shuffled uneasily, but the An yisterday, just ahead o the bliz

the bank? He could not believe it "I s'pose thar ain't no use o' deny- fore ever I saw him. Never laid eyes what I wanted to know out o' him.

murky distances, revolver ready for ped him tightly in the blankets, and beyond a doubt; he was certain he "Yes, you did," returned Hamlin "Well, go on, Hughes, you are mak stood himself erect, glowing from the detected now the dim outlines of a slowly, striving to hold himself in ing a long story out of it." If he ever met the murderer! Then exercise. Carroll glared up at him door, and a smooth wooden shutter, to check. "You killed one of the best "The rest is short nough. It seems which the snow refused to cling, the fellows that ever rode these plains, he an' ol' Koleta, an' a young Chey-"I'll get you for that, you big boob!" size and shape of a small window. His you sneaking coward, you. Shot him enne buck, had been hangin 'round and his bour should he shouled, striving to release his heart throbbing with excitement, the dead, with his back to you. Now, see across the river from Dodge fer quite pressed sous, the matter from the clinging blankets. "You Sergeant slipped in against the bluff here, it's a throw of the dice with a while waitin' fer Le Fevre to pull for protection, moving cautiously me whether I fill you full of lead, or off some sorter stunt. Maybe I didn't But the mood did not last. Little "Hush up, George, and go to closer until he convinced himself of let you go. I came in here intending get just the straight o' it, but anyhow

Fevre an' I hev been grazin' cattle in

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"And brand a few outsiders." He grinned. together by the last o' June, an' hit

"I reckon now as how Le Fevre put discover thar wa'n't no herd to locate Le- three months hopin' ter ketch up with

him, but I never did. I heerd tell o him one't or twice, an' caught on he was travelin' under 'nuther namesome durn French contraction-but thet's as much as I ever did find out. Finally, up in Independence I wus so durn near broke I reckoned I'd better Anyhow I could lie low fer a while. "Yes, I was, an' 'twa'n't no pleas- believin' Le Fevre was sure ter come

yere quiet, an' laid fer him to show "Not unless it's Le Fevre, an' his sure pisen this year, an' raisin' Calu I never see 'em so rambunctious Slipped down the bluff, an' caught me

"Do it my way then; answer when the pinch was made, an' they straight what I ask you. Who are hed to take her long too. Then the you? What are you doing here?" officer man got ugly, an' had to be shot, an' Le Fevre quarrelled with the



nment

oes

it have

exper-

ILTON.