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CHAPTER XXIII.

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The Dead Body.

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mark intently.

"Five in the party," he said solverly. "Three mustangs and two American horses, exaulty shoot. About three hours ahead of us." He straightened hours ahead of us." He straightened up, his giance pearing into the gray mists. "I reckon it's likely our outsit, but wo'll never catch them on foot. They'll be-behind the sand-dunes between the straight of the sand-dunes between the said of t



more men—wasson if i can get his—
and equipment for a hard rida. Come
on, Jack."

They waded the river, and ran
through the town, abouting their disconvey to the marshal and his possetower to the marshal the same of
the marshall the same of the chart
Hamilton and his clothing stolen. Jooks
tilke a carefully planned affair, Senseant; seading that fellow through to
Rilpley was expected to throw us off
the track. That's why they were so
careless covering their trail; expected
to have several days' start. It is my
notion they never intended to kill
him; had a row of some kind, or else
Mac tried to get away. Any trace of
the grif!

"No; but she must have been there."
"So I think; got mixed up in the afLife some way, and they have been
clair some way.

"When was acting paymaster. The
""He was acting paymaster. The

sand dollars."
"What!"
"He was acting paymaster. The
mopey came in from Wallace last evening, and he was ordered to take it to
Ripley at once."
Hamilm drew in his breath quickly

Hamiin drew in his breath quickly in surprise.

"Who knew about that, str?"

"No one but the Adjutant, and Major McDonald—not even the orderly."

The eyes of officer and soldier met.
"Do you suppose he could have told her?" the former asked in sudden sus-

amar, and that the outit is headed for that section. I don't know, sir, where those Indians came from, or how they happened to be up here, but I believe they belong to Black Kettle's band of Cheyennes. His bunch is down below the Canadian, is it not, sir?" "Yes."

in Pursuit.

The four men, heavily armed, a equipped for winter service, rode the bank of the ravine to the irreg larity of plain keyond. The trail, iet ing directly south into the solitud

ture of desolation, a dun-colored plant, unrelieved by vegetation, matching the sites above, extending in every direction through weary leagues of dismal lonsilines. The searching eye caught to relief from desolate same constitution of the searching eye caught to relief from desolate same the searching eye caught to relief from desolate same the searching eye caught to relief from desolate same the searching eye caught to relief from desolate same the searching eye desolates the searching eye desolates and the searching eye desolates and the searching formation under the beating of a ceaseless wind. It was desert, across which not even a snake crawled, and no wing of migrating bird beat the 164den sky above.

The marks of their horses' hoots cutting sharply into the soil, told security the fightires' rate of progress, and the confidence of those shaded and the confidence of the shaded a



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