

THE LONE TRAIL

CHAPTER I

THE MURDER AT THE T-INVERTED R

INSPECTOR BARKER, of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, raised his frowning eyes from the weekly report he was scrawling, to watch absent-mindedly the arrival of the Calgary express as it roared out from the arches of the South Saskatchewan bridge and pulled up at the station.

It was a morning ritual of the Inspector's. Three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, relatively at the same hour—if Rocky Mountain slides, foothill floods, and prairie snowstorms permitted—the same train broke in on the mid-forenoon dullness of the "cow-town" of Medicine Hat; and the same pair of official eyes followed it dully but with the determination of established convention, clinging to it off and on during its twenty minutes' stop for a fresh engine and supplies to carry it on its four days' run eastward.

But on Mondays the transcontinental was