

Just as she was leaving the house, a sound caught her ear which caused her to come to a standstill, and listen intently.

"They're coming!" she exclaimed excitedly; then she sprang lightly into the saddle.

She looked very different now, even at close quarters, and anyone viewing her from a distance, would never have believed that she was a girl. Riding astride, as was her custom, and garbed in a man's coat, with the broad Stetson hiding her tell-tale curls, she indeed looked a handsome young man.

Guiding the horse towards the rear of the homestead, she brought it to a standstill and listened. The sound of the approaching hoof-beats grew louder and louder.

"It's time I made a move," she muttered, "or else they'll get too close."

She lightly spurred the horse as she spoke, causing it to spring forward, and the next moment they were travelling fast across the prairie.

As they issued from the cover the buildings had provided, a shout came faintly to her ears.

"There he goes!"

The words called up a smile of satisfaction on the girl's flushed face, and she turned in the saddle and glanced in the direction from which they came. She saw that a party of three of the mounted policemen had started in pursuit of her. She had no difficulty in recognizing Inspector Combrone as leader.

There was no doubt that they believed the fleeing figure before them, mounted on Burleigh's well-known riding horse, to be that of the owner. It was evident to them that he had been warned of their approach, and was making for the safety from pursuit which a crossing of the frontier into the States would provide. It was essential that they came up with him before he left Canadian territory.

With this end in view they set their horses along at their greatest speed.

The troopers' horses, however, were no match for that of the inspectors and the latter soon began to leave his subordinates behind. But try as he did, he was only able to gain very slightly on the flying figure in front of him.

Nelly was in high spirits, for she realized that she had put the police off the scent of the real fugitive, who would be able to evade them completely.

But when she gazed back and saw the figure of the inspector galloping along doggedly in her rear, she knew that she would have the greatest difficulty in shaking him off.

It was essential for many reasons that not only should he not capture her, but that he should not learn the trick she had played him.

But as time went on she knew the inspector was slowly but surely gaining. Up till then she had been riding in a bee-line for the frontier, but taking a different road to that which Burleigh would have traversed to reach the town to which she had directed him.