

An Automobile, a Burglar and a Girl.

Specially written for The W.H. M. Chadwick, Winnipeg.

"My, but I'd like to be a detective," exclaimed Claribel Marsh, one morning at the breakfast table, as she laid down the morning paper.

"I'd like to catch Bad Dick. Just think, Claude, last night was the third time in a week he has entered houses and not one of those detectives have even so much as got sight of him; leaving his picture with his name beneath. He is just making fun of them. How I would like to catch him."

"Give up the idea, Sis," responded her brother Claude, in a bantering voice, as he pushed back his chair and started to the door.

"If 'Bad Dick' should ever get sight of your pretty face he'd lose all taste for silver ware and jewelry immediately, and the next thing we'd know some dark night he'd be bundling you into his kit; then what would mother and I and a certain young man do?"

"Oh, Claude, do hush your foolishness," answered Claribel, while her face grew very rosy. "What shall I tell mother for you when she comes down?"

"Give her a kiss, and tell her not to

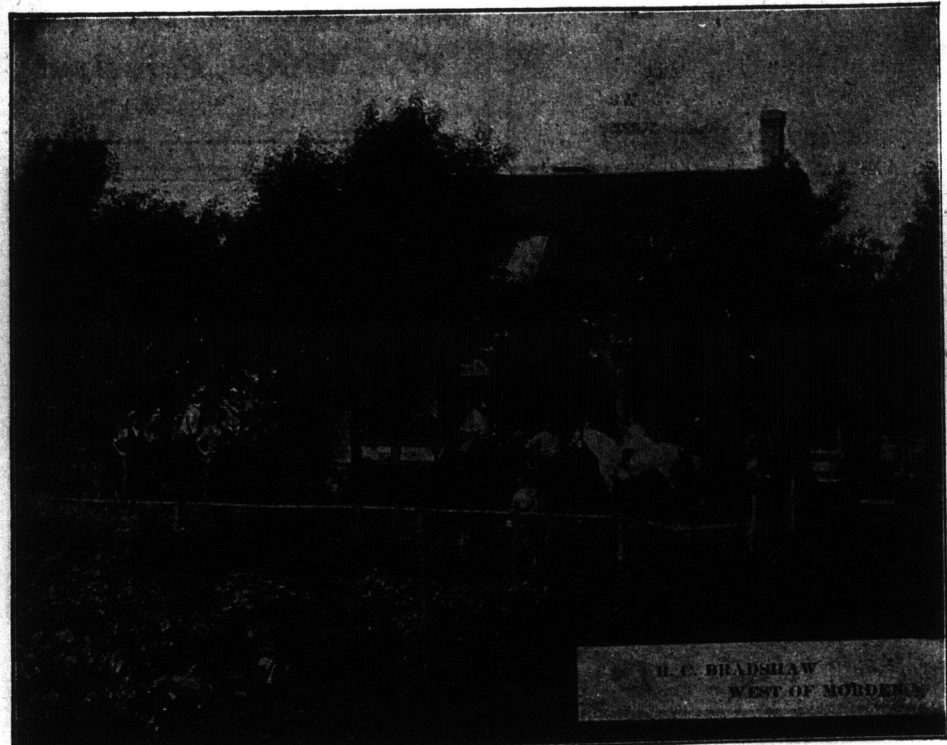
seent of the wild flowers and sweet clover.

It was late in the afternoon, and Claribel was nearing the city. From the top of the low hill she could see the chimneys and roofs in the business section. At the foot of the hill grew a great bush of pink wild roses. "I must have some of those," she thought, as she brought the machine to a standstill, and, stepping out, she was soon busy breaking off the great fragrant blooms, stopping now and then to bury her face among them that she might inhale more of their rich fragrance.

Suddenly the bushes at her side parted, and before she was hardly aware of his presence, a man stood at her side, a pressure of cold steel was upon her temple and a gruff voice spoke in her ear.

"Git in dat 'mobile quick now, lady; dere's folks bin along here lookin' fer me, an' dey mought come back wile yer a hesitatin. Dat's right, now turn her round, quick, 'fore I makes this little feller bark."

"Oh, what are you going to do with



be alarmed if she sees you peering into closets and behind doors in search of burglars."

"By the way, Roy said he would bring his new auto over this afternoon and let you try it, it's a dandy; but he is anxious for your good opinion, too. Bye, bye, Sis, keep your eye open for Bad Dick," and, dodging just in time to avoid getting his ears boxed, he hurried down the street.

That afternoon all thoughts of Bad Dick vanished; Claribel stood on the porch arrayed for the promised ride. Her face flushed with pleasure and her eyes bright as her lover, Roy Smithson, drove his shining new automobile up to the curb.

"Isn't it a beauty?" he asked, by way of greeting.

"I'd hoped and intended to go with you, Claribel, but I'm needed at the bank; so if you don't mind—"

"I'd love to have you go, Roy; but if you're not afraid to trust me with it—"

"Afraid to trust you? Why, girlie, I'll trust you with everything I have just as soon as you give me the chance."

"Oh, Roy, do hush; someone might hear you."

"Well, I'll come back by the bank and bring you home with me to supper, if you will come?"

"I'll come," answered the stalwart young fellow, as he started down the street, and Claribel, stepping into the auto, was soon out of the city and into the green country lanes, where she went more slowly that she might catch the

me?" she almost sobbed, as she slowly turned the auto and started up the long gentle slope of the hill she had descended a few minutes before.

"Nuttin', lady, nuttin.' You're jest de engineer and I'se the conductor o' dis 'mobile. Sorry I couldn't let you'se be de boss, but I'se only an amychoor, an' wanted a good hand to steer. Turn to the right, dere lady, an' make her fly. Dat's the way; you'se game alright."

Instinctively feeling that her captor meant no harm to her so long as she did his bidding, Claribel's anxiety turned to her friends, who would be alarmed at her continued absence, and Roy had trusted her with his new machine, and here she had allowed it to be stolen and herself too. What would Claude and her mother think when she failed to return? Such a chaos of thoughts were whirling through her brain that she scarcely noticed the road her captor had chosen. Suddenly the man lifted his hat, and with a quick gesture pushed back his hair, and Claribel felt a strange thrill as she recognised his face. It was the same she had seen in the paper that morning. Then she noticed their road ran parallel with the railroad. Bad Dick was making his "get-away." That leather bag he had thrown in the auto surely contained a valuable part of his booty.

On and on they flew. The sun had set but Claribel's hand never faltered. It seemed that the knowledge she had gained in that brief glance had given her courage. Passing through a stretch



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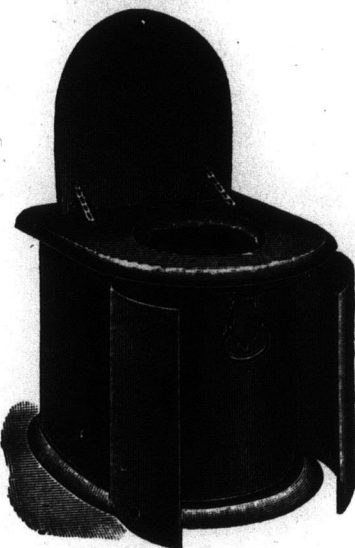
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