

toward Collie, who shrank back toward the corner of the building, fascinated by the hate that gleamed in the cow-boy's eyes.

"So you've been spying around here ever since waiting for this. Well what're you goin' to do, now you've found out somethin'?"

By this time he had reached Collie, and seizing him in an ugly grasp, he crushed him against the wall of the depot.

"What're you goin' to do about it you whelp?" Brown shook his victim roughly, cursing as he did it.

"Look here, you spy," went on the rustler, "I've got no time to fool with you; but just one word: Your dad's got you here sneaking around this beef—layin' for us. You think you've found out somethin'; but if you squeal one word of what you saw or what I say, I'll kill you. Kill him like a dog, see? Then you go the same road. If you want to save your hides, stop spyin' around and keep your mouth shut." With this brutal threat, Brown hurled Collie savagely away from him.

Collie arose to his feet from where he had been thrown, turned and saw the half-frightened look on the agent's face, then went quietly to his horse.

On the way to the ranch he fought the battle of his life and for his life. After months of persevering search, absolute proof had been discovered against the thieves that for months had been a menace to the whole Kootenai range, but at the same moment his lips were sealed by threats against his own and his father's life—threats that he knew only too well would be made good, eventually, should this matter be pushed. As he fought for an answer to his own problem, he realized that each moment of delay meant everything to the value of his evidence. None but himself, Jack Brown, and the station agent, knew of the discovery. Meanwhile the branded quarters, the real proof, hastened to the block. A few hours meant the effacement of all proof. The rustlers would see that the like did not occur again.

Suddenly it flashed upon Collie that Jack Brown's dire threat would be effective for only the brief period that fear bound him. A day's delay and action would be impossible for all proof would be gone. He spurred for home and told his father everything.

"Never mind, my boy," said Jim Folkins, approvingly, "you have done well, those threats are idle. Times have changed since that sort of outlawry had its day.

Within two hours the Mounted Police had intercepted the branded beef, and learned that Folkins' neighbor had not sold a hoof to buyers for ten years. A quiet search of the Brown ranch discovered more than a hundred hides at the bottom of an old lake. These ranged in age from hours to years, and were marked by a score of different brands, the Folkins' numbering into the twenties.

At the trial the cogs of the law ground relentlessly, fed by a dozen witnesses, a number of hides, and a piece of the preserved quarter of beef. The two Brown boys who conducted the meat market, were sentenced to three years each found guilty of rustling, and at Stony Mountain.

Old Bennie growled impotently under the fearless progress of the machine he could not bluff, and when passing out of the vestibule, voiced a passion that might yet have to be reckoned with: "I'll get you yet, Folkins, and that kid, too."

When Jack's Troubles Began

By G. Armine Relyea, Jr.

JACK was to marry a girl who lived in a small town of Hoffmans, New York, and on the morning selected for the event, he arose early, packed his grip carefully, partook of an early breakfast downtown and hurried to the depot.

It was beginning to snow, but he did not mind that, and he whistled cheerily as he walked up and down on the platform, waiting for his train. He was very happy; his thoughts were of an elevated, ennobling sort, that kings might reasonably envy. But suddenly in the middle of his lofty meditations, he stopped short. An icy chill crept down his backbone.

"What have I done with my grip?" he

muttered to himself. He looked around, but it was nowhere in sight. Roused to realization of his loss, he rushed up to a uniformed official who bore the title, "Station Agent" on his cap. "Where's my grip he demanded?"

The station agent looked him over closely. "What do I know about your grip?" he replied.

"That's what I want to find out," continued Jack, excitedly, "because my clothes and my money are locked in that grip, and I've lost it."

"That being true," answered the official gently, "I'd advise you to find it." And he walked away.

Jack ran after him. "But I haven't

the least idea where it is," he panted, "And I'm going to be married."

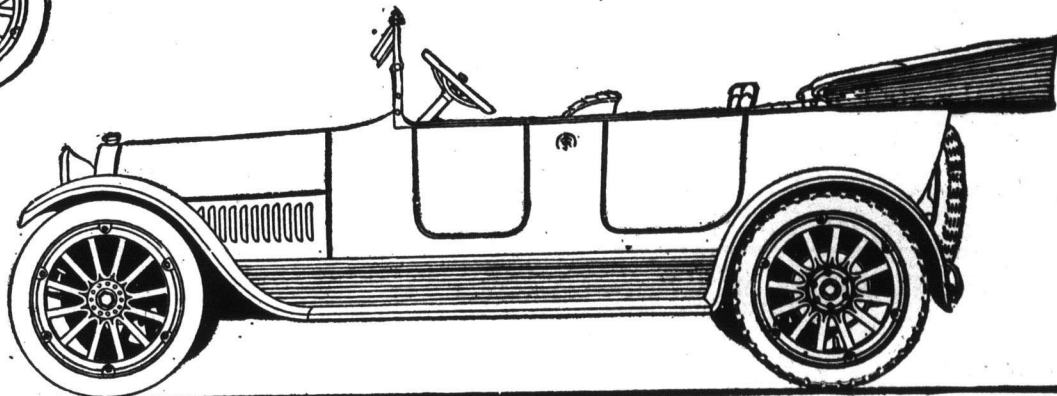
"That so?" returned the station agent, pausing.

"Yes, it is. And I can't get married without any money, can I?"

"That depends on the girl," answered the man, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh, I might just as well not try to get married!" ejaculated Jack. "We were going to New York City too. Dear me! What shall I do?"

The station agent suddenly remembered a time long ago when he himself was getting ready to be married. "Young man," he said, somewhat kindly, "if your grip is in this station, I'll find it. But don't depend too much on me; there's a party of thieves working here, and if they have stolen your property, it is doubtless miles away by this time. But I'll do



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