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## A Horse and Buggy

By R. RAY BAKER

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Kenneth Phillips frowned when he saw the long, gray touring car come to a stop on the other side of the street. The frown deepened when he saw Harold Briggsworth step out of the car and jauntily mount the steps of the Harmon residence, snapping a driving glove jauntily against his leg. Kenneth's frown remained for ten minutes, then it changed to a savage scowl and he bit the rubber of the pencil he had been grinding between his teeth. The scowl was accounted for by the fact that Miss Matilda Harmon came tripping down the steps with Mr. Briggsworth and both of them got into the car and drove away.

Kenneth was seated in his office, which was nothing more nor less than a room in his paternal domicile. From the window he had a good view of Matilda's home, and he told himself it gave him an inspiration.

The young man was called a dreamer by many of the citizens of Cedar Springs, who had an idea of what he was trying to do but were dubious concerning his ability to do it. By a larger percentage of the population he was dubbed "shiftless."

His real friends, however—and among them he numbered Matilda Harmon, although he winced at applying the word "friend" to her—expressed sympathy with his purpose, and although they did not always have faith in his future, they professed to and gave him what encouragement they could. Mostly this encouragement consisted of praising his poems. More often than not the magazine editors did not concur in the friends' verdict, for most of the manuscripts



"I Hate All Automobiles."

came back, accompanied by little printed slips which expressed regrets and informed the poet that "rejection does not imply lack of merit." Occasionally, however, this send-out and get-back machinery got jammed and a check would be forthcoming instead of the poem and printed slip.

Kenneth winced at calling Matilda "friend," because he had ambitions which called for more intimate and endearing terms. In fact, that ambition was linked inseparably with his poetic aspirations. That was why he chose the window overlooking her home at which to do his writing.

However, the disadvantages of working at that window were more plentiful than the advantages. It seemed that every time he looked across the street for inspiration, he got instead a view of some big automobile taking one of Matilda's numerous suitors to her abode.

"I haven't a chance in the world," he said repeatedly during periods of sad soliloquy. "All those fellows are rich and have machines, and what kind of a show have my horse and buggy against such odds?"

"But I'll own a big machine, too, some day," he would add savagely, and then his typewriter would rattle steadily for an hour or so, and soon Kenneth would dash out of the house with a long envelope in his hand.

Matilda and Kenneth were born on opposite sides of the same street. Kenneth still lived in the house where he first opened his eyes on the world, while Matilda's parents had torn down their old residence and erected in its place a modern dwelling that could lay claim to being a veritable mansion. This happened three years ago, when Mr. Harmon reaped a harvest of several hundred thousand dollars from an investment in the automobile industry.

This, of course, projected the Harmon into a new social plane, and Matilda, who possessed exceedingly noticeable physical as well as personal charms, became the target of a never-ceasing bombardment of matrimonial candidates.

Still, Kenneth was not left entirely in the cold. The childhood romance continued, in so far as outward ap-

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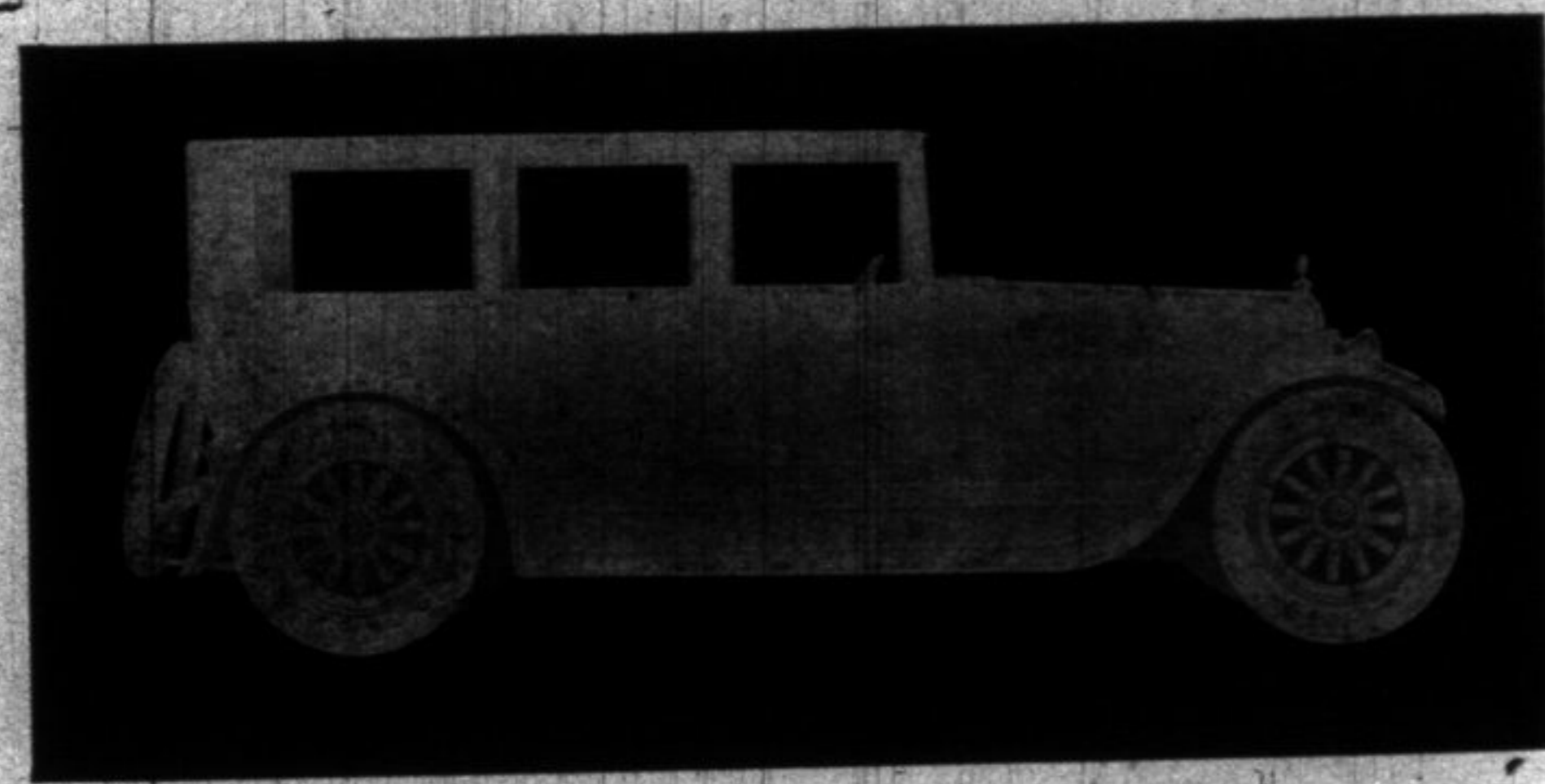
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