

The girl did not reply; she was too busy wishing herself at home.

It was a noisy, crowded place; and finding the "Exhibition Hall" and the numberless tents uncomfortable, she wandered off towards the rear of the grounds, and found herself among rows of frame cattle-sheds, where were her cousin's "quarters." An attendant brought her a camp-chair, and placed her comfortably, where she was glad to rest and watch the midday milking. Now she was here, she wondered about "Susan Nipper," and wished she could see that fateful animal just once, herself unseen.

"Where is the cow that rivals 'Maggie Darragh'?" "Behind you, miss, in that shed on the left."

Katharine glanced furtively over her shoulder. What if "her rival's" owner should be present?

But he was not, and she ventured to approach and gaze upon her enemy. Here, too, the milking had just been accomplished, and she found herself listening to the discussions of "the judges."

She fancied that there was something a little strange about "Susan's" attendant; he was evidently indifferent to the success of his side, and she thought he needed watching.

"Where is the owner?" asked one gentleman decorated by a "badge."

"Couldn't come to-day," replied the employee, carelessly.

"No man ought to leave a creature like that in inexperienced hands," said another. "That fellow doesn't understand his business; her yield falls below 'Maggie Darragh's,' yet she's by all odds the finest creature. Well, we'll get around here by six, and see her milked again."

They did, and Mr. Emslie and his fair cousin as well. If her old friend, Mr. Lansing, could not be present, there was no impropriety in her availing herself of this amusement, sheltered behind Cousin Walter's responsibility. The operation was carried on with spirit in the two rival stalls. Mr. Emslie and "the judges" fitted from one to the other; but Katharine was stationary.

Watching with eager eyes the attendant of "Susan Nipper," who, supposing himself to be the object of special interest, "lost his head" in his clumsy vanity.

"You have made a mistake in that measurement," Therustic was dumfounded. "I reckon not, miss."

"Yes; I watched you. It must be done over." Cousin Walter and the others drawing near, she appealed to them, and one in authority commanded, briefly: "Try it over."

The accused refused to obey.

"Oh, but you shall!" cried Kate. "It's cheating, else. 'Maggie Darragh's' owner is here to look after his own affairs, and his men are honest; but you, either ignorantly or purposely, have blundered."

"Quite right," said "Judge" Deniston. "If there's a question of fraud, we'll see that milk re-measured, my man. Is this beautiful creature yours, madam? Are you Mrs. Lansing?"

Poor Katharine's face was scarlet; but a well-known voice replied for her—for she was dumb.

"Thank you, dear. You have filled my place bravely."

He lifted his hat to the assembly, drew her arm within his own, and led her away. In a dream, she suffered this masterful intruder to place her in his own carriage, and carry her out from the crowded, dusty place to the sweet and open country; and not till he drew rein before the gateway of a vine-embowered villa was silence broken.

"This is where I and 'Susan Nipper' live—waiting for you to come and make a home. Are you ready yet, sweetheart?"

The words were not much, but they roused her from her reverie. After all, it was quite natural, and in the old order of things, for Jack and her to be riding through green lanes and byways; and it was quite the old Kate who turned her tearful eyes, but smiling lips, towards him.

"I'm tired, John, and I guess—I am ready."

And the way he drew her head upon his shoulder—well, that was quite natural, too!

"But, sir," she cried, suddenly sitting erect, "that man is a cheat. You must discharge him."

"You shall have that privilege, darling—you have earned it."

Cousin Walter drove home very much astonished, and not a little wroth. Mrs. Emslie received his report calmly.

"There they come now—the impudent pair!" Kate sprang lightly out, and tossed a kiss to her frate relative; then whispered in his ear:

"Patience; you shall have the creature yet."

When the brief wedding-journey was over, and Mrs. Lansing was home at "The Meadows," she dispatched a note to Long Acre.

"FOR SALE—One Holstein-Friesian, 'Susan Nipper.' Price, \$8,500."

The millionaire whistled, laughed, and returned answer.

"Check ready when goods are delivered."

"But, little wife, you won't sell her—my wedding gift to you?"

"Indeed, and I will, sir. That money is better in bank than in a homely, awkward thing, that is likely to get the—the—I don't know what."

"But I am really attached to her."

"Exactly. That is why I hate her. She'll have to go."

And "Susan Nipper" went.

"There is no rule without an exception, my son."

"Oh, isn't there, pa? A man must always be present while he is being shaved."

"My dear hadn't you better send this child to bed. He's too clever!"

A DRAWN GAME.

Edgar Allen Johnson was sitting, on a May afternoon, in the private room of his office in Exchange Court, in the City of Liverpool.

In the eyes of the commercial world Mr. Johnson was a rich man. In the eyes of his confidential clerk and himself his firm was on the brink of ruin.

Nothing short of a miracle could save it, and Edgar knew that the days of miracles were past.

He advanced quickly towards the table and touched a small bell which stood thereon.

A clerk entered the room.

"Saunders, a hansom."

"Yes, sir," and the door closed again.

Mr. Johnson got into his light overcoat, drew on his gloves in the calm, gentlemanly way in which he did most things, took up his hat and stick, went down stairs, and leisurely entered the hansom, which he directed to a certain house in James street.

The most prosperous firms sometimes carry on their business in the dingiest of offices, and the firm of Levi, Dorrell and Co., brokers and shipowners, bore this out faithfully. It was a very prosperous firm, and had during the past year made some very lucky speculations.

Mr. Johnson having instructed the cabby to wait, threaded the tortuous maze of passages which led to the sanctuary where Levi and Co. transacted their business and made their piles of gold. He handed his card to the sunny-looking clerk, and, after a minute's delay, was shown into the room where sat the senior partner, Mr. Levi, and his colleague, Mr. Dorrell.

After a few preliminary remarks—in which as his name, calling, and place of business were chiefly concerned, Mr. Johnson did not find it necessary to employ his inventive talent—he proceeded to enter into the particulars of his projected business with Levi and Co.

"I have been in the habit of shipping cotton from Alexandria by the vessels of Jones & Co.; but if you, gentlemen, can see your way to make me the necessary advances on cargoes, I propose transferring my business to your firm. At present I have two thousand bales of cotton ready to ship here from Alexandria, for which I want an advance of twenty thousand pounds. This only, of course, on your receipt of the usual bills of lading from Alexandria; and, with a courtesy bow, 'should you desire to make any inquiries regarding the value of my firm, etc. I trust that you will find all things satisfactory.'"

"We know your firm well by reputation, Mr. Johnson," said Mr. Levi, "though we have not had the pleasure of knowing you personally until to-day."

"Then," said Mr. Dorrell, "after due inquiries—which in your case, Mr. Johnson, are a mere matter of form—we shall be pleased to make you the required advance on receipt of the formal bills of lading from our agents in Alexandria."

Mr. Johnson bowed gracefully, and took his departure.

That night Mr. Johnson had important business, which detained him in his private office until the which he lost no time in complying. The interview was brief, and conceded all he wished. The firm was willing to grant him the advance he required upon receipt of the duplicate bills of lading from Alexandria, which they now awaited.

Mr. Johnson took his leave, and repaired to his office, where he told one of his clerks, in a pre-occupied tone, to address an envelope to Messrs. Levi & Co. He subsequently placed in this envelope the forged bill of lading, and sealed it up. Then he wrote a long gossipy letter to a friend in Alexandria, who would suspect nothing—and in a postscript asked him, as a special favor, to post the inclosed letter for him in Alexandria on the day when the ship Estrella was cleared. Having dispatched this letter, he strolled along to Castle street, and gave orders at a certain shop where he was not in the habit of dealing for a small iron-bound box, to be made and sent to his rooms with as little delay as possible.

Three weeks later Mr. Johnson was again in Messrs. Levi & Co.'s office. The bills of lading had been received, and all preliminaries having been satisfactorily arranged, and the necessary documents as to interest having been duly signed, Mr. Levi drew his cheque-book towards him and signed a cheque for twenty thousand pounds.

The Estrella was signalled in due course, and Messrs. Levi and Co. despatched a clerk to the docks for the ship's papers.

The captain was on deck as the clerk—who, by the way, was named Davis—crossed the gangway.

"Good morning, Captain Marsh," he said, pleasantly.

"Good morning," returned the captain, gruffly.

"Had a fine passage?" pursued Davis.

"Middling."

"Rather a heavy cargo this time, haven't you?"

"No, lighter than usual."

"But," said Davis, with an air of surprise, "you have got two thousand bales of cotton on board, from Pinero & Co."

"Haven't a bale of cotton on board," returned the captain.

"What!" said the astonished clerk; "are you sure?"

"Sure? Of course I'm sure," answered the captain, in surly tones. "Who should know, if I don't?"

"Well, I may just go back again," said Davis.

"You'd better," observed Capt. Marsh, grimly; "you'll not find what you're looking for here."

Davis made his way back to his employers' office, and with considerable trepidation informed them of the non-arrival of the expected cargo. Dorrell turned pale, and Levi became perfectly green.

A hurried telegram was despatched to the agents in Alexandria; and in the course of a few hours the answer was flashed back:

"No such consignment despatched to you. Some mistake."

In five minutes Mr. Levi was driving furiously up to Exchange Court where, it is needless to say, he did not find Mr. Johnson; nor did he find any one connected with the firm. The door leading to the offices was locked and a card neatly tacked on it, bearing the inscription:

"On the Continent for an indefinite period."

Upon reading this announcement Mr. Levi burst into the next office with such sudden violence that the clerks jumped from their stools in dismay; but he learned, in answer to his almost inarticulate inquiries that the office of the Johnson and Co. had been closed for rather more than a week.

Upon arriving in James Street, Mr. Levi was in a state of agonized rage and excitement baffling description. He was a singularly choleric old gentleman, and he threw himself into his chair, flinging his hat upon the ground.

"We've been swindled!" he almost shouted, excitedly. "Swindled!"

Mr. Dorrell sat for a few minutes pale and silent; but in all firms of two or more partners there is usually one who talks, and one who acts, and in this firm Mr. Dorrell was always the one who acted.

"We had better send for Bolton," he said at last, and Bolton, the celebrated detective, was sent for.

The affair was placed entirely in his hands, and after some days' inquiry the firm of Levi and Co. found that they had been very successfully swindled, all the documents being forgeries. Mr. Levi's cheque had been cashed on the day it was received, all in Bank of England notes, none of which had been passed or changed in Liverpool. The inference was that Mr. Johnson had taken them with him to London with the intention of changing them into gold. It was for this purpose, Mr. Bolton said, that the previously mentioned iron-bound box had been ordered by the thoughtful and accomplished Mr. Johnson—twenty thousand pounds of gold being as the detective dryly remarked, rather an awkward sum to carry about on the person. It was also ascertained that Mr. Johnson had left his rooms more than a week ago at a late hour in the evening, and that a gentleman, answering his description, had, on that same evening, taken the night express for London.

"But how," said Mr. Dorrell, "did he get Pinero's signature to copy?"

"A simple matter," replied the detective. "He had some small shipping transactions with Pinero and Co. before, which enabled him to possess himself of one or two of their forms of bills of lading. This blot was not hatched in a few days, believe me."

"The scoundrel!" stormed Mr. Levi, with several strong and effective adjectives. "I'll trace him, I'll hunt him down, if I spend every penny I have in the world. Find him, Bolton, and I will make your fortune."

Two men were lounging, one hot August evening, on the verandah of the Fonda Alameda, at Malaga. Both were smoking, and from their conversation they were evidently recent acquaintances.

"Yes," the elder of the two men was saying, with a strong American twang, "I am travelling for pleasure. I've made a pretty tall sum in mining, and I mean to enjoy myself. I intend running pretty well over Europe during the next month. I don't take sudden fancies now, as a rule," he went on, "but I've taken a fancy to you. I like your sort. What did you say your name was?"

"I didn't say," answered the other, in clear, high-bred tones, "but my name is Frederick Steyne."

"Thank you. Mine is Kemp—Josiah Washington Kemp—at your service. Here's my card. You are an Englishman, I calculate?"

"Yes. You are an American, I presume?"

"That's so," returned the other, sticking his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat. Josiah Washington Kemp, of New York city, United States. I guess you are travelling for pleasure, too, Mr. Steyne?"

"Well, no," said the person addressed, carefully selecting a fresh cigar; "I am only here on a little matter of business. A relative of mine—an uncle, in fact—died here lately, and left me a small fortune. I thought of starting a business, either here or in Seville."

"You haven't been in England lately, I suppose?" said Mr. Kemp.

"Oh, no," replied the other. "I have not seen England since I left it six years ago. I hadn't the means, even if I had wished it. Besides, I have no longer any interests there."

As he spoke he flicked the ashes from off his cigar and sighed.

"Ah!" said the American.

They talked on indifferent subjects until the clock struck eleven, then they parted for the night.

As the days went on they became fast friends apparently, and the one was rarely seen without the other.