

had taken off her hat and Clay was hanging it on a hook.

"Come in," she said cordially, but faintly.

Kitty did not quite understand. The atmosphere was less electric than she had expected. She stopped, taken aback at certain impressions that began to register themselves on her brain.

"Johnnie was tellin' me — "

"About how he abducted me. Yes. Was n't it dear of him?"

"But — "

"I've decided to make the best of it and go along."

"I — your father, Mr. Whitford — " Kitty bogged down.

Beatrice blushed. Little dimples came out with her smile. "I think I'd better let Clay explain."

"We were married two days ago, Kitty."

"What!" shouted the Runt.

"We intended to ask you both to the wedding, but when Johnnie proposed to abduct Miss Whitford, I thought it a pity not to let him. So we — "

Johnnie fell on him and beat him with both fists. "You daw-goned ol' scalawag! I never will help you git married again!" he shouted gleefully.

Clay sat down on the seat and gave way to mirth. He rocked with glee. Beatrice began to chuckle. She, too, yielded to laughter. Kitty, and then Johnnie, added to the chorus.

"Oh, Johnnie — Johnnie — you'll be the death of me!" cried Clay. "It'll never be a dull old world so long as you stay a bandit."