

up with debt, and there will be nothing left for me but a hand in Dacre's and Jennings's games. You ought to be glad of such an opportunity for me. It is a respectable business, and one that will give me fine profits."

"You are beginning it with Ratcliffe's money. I would rather you sold Briffault, if you want capital. I don't care how profitable a business is, if you have the devil for a partner in it. Nay, dear Ray, what shall it profit if you gain the whole world and lose—"

He would not let her finish the sentence. He rose in a passion, and Cassia, as yet undisciplined by sorrow, flung herself upon a couch in an abandon of grief and indignation.

But Ray's mind was fully made up. Though he respected her scruples in his inmost heart, he was angry at her for compelling him to scorn them.

"She need not have forced such an alternative on me," he thought, "she might have known that when I made plenty of money she could have all she desired for her chapel and her charities. Yes, indeed," he added in a little burst of self-deception, "If I could afford it I would gladly build the chapel that John was speaking about at Shallow Springs." And the infatuated man never perceived that he was precisely endorsing the action of the sinner who stole the leather and gave the shoes to God.

He left in two days for the West, and Cassia, in her distress went to see madam about the matter. Her pale face and red eyes irritated the old lady. She could not endure women who wept.

"If you did not want him to go," she said, scornfully, "you should have made his home more attractive. You could have invited Dacre and Jennings here, and given them an empty room, and a table, and a pack of cards. What *are* you crying for?"

"The sin of it! And the constant temptation to sin."

"Did you imagine that Raymund Briffault was a saint when you married him? The house and the land and Ray himself have all been doing badly enough for the past three years. It is quite time he began to make money in some way or other."

"I will—not—touch—a—dime—of such money. I will not, if I know it, madam."

"It is easy to be ignorant when one wants to be ignorant. I dare say you will find a way to touch it—without sinning."

"I will play no tricks with my conscience. I will try and manage the plantation to better purpose. I came to ask you to help me. When father and John were away I did very well with the Preston ranch. Every one says you may manage Briffault pay. Please, madam, assist me with your advice; then I think I can manage it."