

you. I might have understood . . . But I hurt you more."

"Please don't, Sheila — it is n't true. Oh, — *damn* my poems!"

This made her laugh a little, and she got up and dried her eyes and sat before him like a humbled child. It was quite terrible for Dickie. His face was drawn with the discomfort of it. He moved about the room, miserable and restless.

Sheila recovered herself and looked up at him with a sort of wan resolution.

"And you will stay here and work the ranch and write, Dickie?"

"Yes, ma'am." He managed a smile. "If you think a fellow can push a plough and write poetry with the same hand."

"It's been done before. And — and you will send me back to Hilliard and — the good old world?"

Dickie's artificial smile left him. He stood, white and stiff, looking down at her. He tried to speak and put his hand to his throat.

"And I must leave you here," Sheila went on softly, "with my stars?"

She got up and walked over to the door and stood, half-turned from him, her fingers playing with the latch.

Dickie found part of his voice.

"What do you mean, Sheila, about your stars?"

"You told me," she said carefully, "that you