

hand-and-glove partners in every game. Dacre was a tall, swarthy man, with a fierce, swaggering air; Jennings was an Englishman, with the sharp, red face of a fox, and a perpetual snarl in his voice.

"Good morning, Briffault."

"Good morning, sir."

"Briffault, if you will put ten thousand dollars down, I will put ten thousand dollars, and Jennings will put five thousand dollars, and we will buy that cavallard of horses at Dilke's Station. The government have proposals out for double the number. They can be driven to Forts Ware and Ringold, and we shall make dollar for dollar. It is a good thing, Briffault."

"I have no doubt of it. Why, then, don't you and Jennings work it without me? You could, you know?"

"Yes, sir-r! we could. But we have other plans. Neither of us care to leave the cards when we have so much gold to handle them with. We'll go it equal—half for trade and half for play; and I'll bet you one hundred dollars that playing pays the best."

"I will think over it, gentlemen, and let you know to-morrow."

"No, to-night. We must buy to-morrow, or else I reckon we'll be after time. Slatey is running the old shop; you can call in there. Say seven o'clock?"

"Very well."

Briffault was apparently calm, but he was really full of excitement. This was the very opening he had been longing for. He would go with the cavallard himself, and employ his own servants. He had felt terribly stupid and dull, and here was the very work he could do. Then the enormous profits! It was safer, also, than gambling, and he felt that he must do something with his money. His money! Yes, he had fully accepted it; and at seven o'clock he met Dacre and Jennings, and the compact was made and signed. The men had hardly expected that Briffault would go himself to the frontier, but they were well pleased when he proposed it. The following day Raymund went home. He was anxious to tell Cassia of the fortune that had come to him, and yet at the bottom of his heart there was the conviction that she would regard the legacy as unacceptable. It was late in the evening when he reached Briffault, and the moment he saw his wife he perceived that something had greatly annoyed her. She was walking restlessly about the parlour, and there was a scarlet flush on her cheeks, very unusual to their delicate tint. She gave him no time to ask her any question. As soon as she had greeted him she cried out, in a voice trembling with emotion:

"O Ray, my dear, Mrs. Dacre called here to-day, and she says Ratcliffe left you twenty thousand dollars. You! Put you on a level with Dacre and Jennings! Forgive me, Ray,