

so assiduously that in time he and Dede beguiled many a happy hour playing together after night had fallen.

So all went well with this well-mated pair. Time never dragged. There were always new wonderful mornings and still cool twilights at the end of day; and ever a thousand interests claimed him, and his interests were shared by her. More thoroughly than he knew, had he come to a comprehension of the relativity of things. In this new game he played he found in little things all the intensities of gratification and desire that he had found in the frenzied big things when he was a power and rocked half a continent with the fury of the blows he struck. With head and hand, at risk of life and limb, to bit and break a wild colt and win it to the service of man, was to him no less great an achievement. And this new table on which he played the game was clean. Neither lying, nor cheating, nor hypocrisy was here. The other game had made for decay and death, while this new one made for clean strength and life. And so he was content, with Dede at his side, to watch the procession of the days and seasons from the farm-house perched on the cañon-lip; to ride through crisp frosty mornings or under burning summer suns; and to shelter in the big room where blazed the logs in the fireplace he had built, while outside the world shuddered and struggled in the storm-clasp of a south-easter.

Once only Dede asked him if he ever regretted, and his answer was to crush her in his arms and smother her lips with his. His answer, a minute later, took speech.

"Little woman, even if you did cost thirty millions, you are sure the cheapest necessity of life I ever indulged in." And then he added, "Yes, I do have one regret, and a monstrous big one, too. I'd sure like to have the winning of you all over again. I'd like to go sneaking around the Piedmont hills looking for you. I'd like to meander into those rooms of yours at Berkeley for the first time. And there's no use talking, I'm plumb soaking with regret that I can't put my arms around you again that time you leaned your head on my breast and cried in the wind and rain."