

"I know there's nothing *you* could do would make any difference in Frank Rickart's friendship and respect for you." After that the brush went on with steady, even strokes in silence.

And in the end it was a very little thing that brought them around the corner. One of Elwood's options expired and was not renewed by him. The giver of it, a poor soul whose struggle with the soil had robbed him of much that gave him title as a man, met Brent in town the day he heard that Elwood was no longer interested in his property, and took out his disappointment in cursing Kenneth. Peters, who heard it and had to be restrained, told Addie, who told Ellis, who drove the car in alone that afternoon to tell Anne.

It was wonderful, she said, the way Kenneth had taken it. He said that the man had a right to feel disappointed; that it was probably true that Rickart was waiting now until prices, under the menace of his water steal, dropped to the breaking figure; said that he'd always been afraid that if the ranchers did n't adopt his plan of selling out together, they'd all be sold separately, but that it was up to them. Said he knew just how the man felt and he was sorry if his own efforts to help had turned out badly.

"A hell of a lot of good that'll do me, you — —."

It was at this point that Peters had to have his manners reinforced by the bystanders.

Anne heard it out, leaning her chin upon her hand, — she was still in her office and the day's work was lagging to a close, — and then, without raising her voice at all, or any hesitation, she wanted to know if Ellis was too tired to run the car over to the station and reserve a berth for her on the express passing through about midnight to