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little square bits. Elwood Buckbee smiled genially, but his roving eye rested fitfully on Mary Fortune. He was a dashing young man of the Beau Brummel type and there was an ease and grace in his sinuous movements that must have fluttered many a woman's heart. But now he, too, sat silent and his appraising glances were disguised in a general smile.

"Well, let's get down to business," began Rimrock, after the preliminaries. "The first thing is to elect a new Director. Mr. Buckbee here has been retired and I nominate Mary Fortune to fill the vacancy."

"Second the motion," rapped out Stoddard and for a moment Rimrock hesitated before he took the fatal plunge. He knew very well that, once elected to the directorship, he could never remove her by himself. Either her stock or Stoddard's would have to go into the balance to undo the vote of that day.

"All in favour say 'Ay!'"

"Ay!" said Stoddard grimly; and Rimrock paused again.

"Ay!" he added and as Mary wrote it down she felt the eyes of both of them upon her. The die had been cast and from that moment on she was the arbiter of all their disputes.

THEY adjourned, as stockholders, and reconvened immediately as Directors; and the first matter that came up was a proposition from Buckbee to market a hundred million shares of common stock.

"You have here," he said, "a phenomenal property—one that will stand the closest of scrutiny; and with the name of Whitney H. Stoddard behind it. More than that, you are on the eve of an enormous production at a time when copper is going up. It is selling now for over eighteen cents and within a year it will be up in the twenties. Within a very few months, unless I am mistaken, there will be a battle royal in the copper market. The Hackmeister interests have had copper tied up, but the Tecolote Company can break that combine and at the same time gain an enormous prestige. There will be a fight, of course, but this stock will cost you nothing and you can retain a controlling share. My proposition is simply that you issue the common and divide it pro rata among you, your present stock then becoming preferred. Then you can put your common on the market in such lots as you wish and take your profits at the crest. In conclusion let me say that I will handle all you offer at the customary broker's charge."

He sat down and Rimrock looked out from under his eyebrows at Stoddard and Mary Fortune.

"Very well," said Stoddard after waiting for a moment. "It's agreeable to me, I'm sure."

"I'm against it," declared Rimrock. "I'm against any form of reorganization. I'm in favour of producing copper and taking our profits from that."

"But this is plain velvet," protested Buckbee, smilingly. "It's just like money picked up in the road. I don't think I know of any company of importance that hasn't done something of the kind."

"I'm against it," repeated Rimrock in his stubborn way and all eyes were turned upon Mary Fortune. She sat very quiet, but her anxious, lip-reading gaze shifted quickly from one to the other.

(To be continued.)

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