

who can be sure? When I came here I thought that if I found the man with the shares I could get them for a song. I may yet, but my dear child tells me that he has seen here a man from Grass Valley named Barclay, who is a friend of that shareholder, and," she added, bitterly, "perhaps he has got ahead of me. I must see the man at once and make him an offer. What do you think?"

"I think you might as well save yourself further trouble. By this time the shareholder has been apprised of his good fortune."

"What!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet and transfixing me with her eyes. "Am I, then, too late?"

"Yes," I said, "you are too late. Forbes—that is the man's name—knows of his good fortune and I do not believe he would sell now at any price."

The woman gazed at me with the concentrated hate of a thousand furies. Her great eyes no longer bore an expression of pleading tenderness—they seemed to glint and expand and to shoot fierce flames from their depths. They no longer charmed, they terrified me! How I wished I had left the door open.

"Ah!" she screamed. "I see it all. I have been betrayed—sold out. You have broken my confidence."

"I have done nothing of the kind. I have never repeated to a soul what you told me."

"Then who could have done it?" she exclaimed, bursting into a fit of hysterical tears. "I have come all this way to secure the property and now find that I am too late. Shame! shame!"

"I will tell you. Barclay is really here. He knew of the strike as soon as you did. He is in love with Miss Forbes and followed the family here to tell them the good news. He is with the man at this moment."