

irritably. "You can't do better than you're doing here."

"I know it, not in service, sir, but I'm going into the livery business and I'm going to get married."

"Well, I congratulate you, Hagan," said Horton, a little ungraciously.

"Thank you, sir."

"You must have saved up a mint of money, though. How did you do it, Hagan?"

"Why, sir, it was that tip you gave me once about Oil Preferred. That netted me a thousand, and I saved up another thousand. And now I've got the two thousand in Mendip Consolidated, as you advised me, and I will have enough when it's doubled to start in in a little way."

Horton almost jumped in his chair. He watched Hagan pouring out his tea and his brain was whirling. It was true he had advised his servant to buy Mendip Consolidated, but that was before the pool was started to wreck one of the solidest stocks on the market. Now Hagan would be one of the sufferers.

It was awkward, because Horton was attached to Hagan, in a way, yet he knew that if he gave the tip to Hagan it would fly with amazing swiftness through the town. And then he wanted Hagan's two thousand. Had he a moral right not to take Hagan's two thousand when his partners were in the deal with him?

"Hagan," he said, as the man was about to retire, "have you told anybody else about Mendips?"

"Well, yes, sir," answered Hagan. "I told my young lady and she's putting \$500 into it. You see, sir, we know that your word is as good as gold. When you say a stock is going up—why, it's going up, sir."

He left the room and Horton sat in his chair, sipping his tea and thinking deeply. If he warned Hagan—well, the pool might as well be declared off. The slightest whisper would be reflected everywhere; it was the one essential point that no suspicion should be cast upon Men-

dip Consolidated until the time came to destroy it.

Oddly, the scent of tuberose still persisted, although there were no tuberose or any other flowers in the room. And Horton's mind wandered back to the days when, a young, ambitious lad, he planned with his sweetheart the career which had afterward become his.

"I don't like your going into that profession," the girl had said. "They say such dreadful things about Wall street men."

"But there are honest men," said Horton. "You see, dearest, it pays to be honest, even in Wall street."

"And I know you could never do anything dishonorable or I should not love you as I do," said Doris.

That was when she picked the tuberose and handed it to him.

Well, he had fought the fight, at first quite squarely, then not so squarely. He had done what most men had to do—he had compromised with life. But until the scheme for the pool was broached Horton had never tried to plunder the public.

He would have declined, and had at first declined to participate in the scheme. But the essence was this: He was one of the few men who understood what was behind Mendips. He knew the public confidence was justified. But he knew that the combine could destroy that confidence and reap in the money of the small investor.

And if he had fought the combine he would have been bankrupted, and to no purpose. However, he had to come in or oppose the deal; there was no alternative.

He sat there, thinking hard. He had never been so tempted. To back out now meant but one thing—to realize all he could get and retire from the game. His enemies would be implacable. But he might pay his obligations and retire with enough to live on.

As he sat there the scent of the tuberose seemed to become over-