

and put you out of your misery. You've got two things to do—just two, Hardwick. One of 'em is to clean house and make a good job of it, just like you let Evan believe you were going to do when you sent him out to tell the people of this State a lot of things that you didn't mean to have come true; cut out all the deals, all the private tariffs, all the little preferentials and palm-warmings. When you've done that, you'll find that the other thing will mighty nearly do itself."

"Name it," rasped the magnate.

"It's just merely to take your railroad out of politics in this State, and keep it out. We've had enough of you, McVickar, and more than enough. Is it a bargain?"

"It's a damned one-sided bargain thus far, Blount. What do we get for all this?"

Again the senator chuckled genially. "You may not believe it, but we're going to let you down easy. You do these two things that I've mentioned, and get rid of Kittredge and a few others that have been caught red-handed, and the Supreme Court investigation won't touch your railroad as a corporation—in other words, it'll go after individuals. But you've got to play fair, you know—and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, before the fact. How does that strike you?"

Again the vice-president got up to walk the floor, but this time the deliberative interval was shorter.

"What is the political programme, as you have it figured out, David?" he asked presently.