

THE ROOT OF EVIL



BY THOMAS DIXON

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SYNOPSIS

Stuart, southern lawyer in New York, is in love with Nan Primrose. His friend, Dr. Woodman, who has a young daughter, is threatened with the loss of his drug business by Bivens, whom he befriended years before. Stuart visits the Primroses.

Nan wants Stuart to accept a place with Bivens' chemical trust. He dislikes Bivens' methods and refuses. Bivens caoms him.

Bivens is in love with Nan. Stuart refuses the offer, and Nan breaks her engagement with the lawyer. Bivens asks Woodman to enter the trust.

Woodman will not yield and joins Bivens' company. The promoter tells the doctor he and Nan are engaged. Harriet Woodman is studying music. Stuart takes Nan for a day in the country.

Stuart pleads with Nan to give up Bivens, but the spell of millions is on her and she yields to it.

Nan becomes Mrs. Bivens. Harriet loves Stuart, but he does not know it. Nine years pass. Stuart becomes district attorney. He investigates criminal trusts. Nan asks him to call.

Stuart wants Woodman to end his suit against Bivens, but the doctor stands firm. Bivens aids Stuart in his investigation of crooked financiers.

Bivens' revelations aid in bringing on a crisis. Bivens promises to aid the Van Dam Trust company, which is in trouble. Woodman needs money badly.

In the stock market slump engineered by Bivens, Woodman and many others lose all. The trust company falls because Bivens, at command of the money king, breaks his word. Stuart faces his critics in front of Bivens' bank.

The mob attacks Stuart and injures him slightly. Nan sees it and reveals her love. Bivens piles \$50,000,000 on a table and calls Stuart to see the money to refute rumors of his financial weakness.

Stuart is tempted to join Bivens as his confidential man. He accepts an invitation to visit the Bivens house and is received by Nan.

At a meeting of the discontented, at which Bivens is denounced, a bomb thrower is killed by his own missile. Woodman decides to continue his fight against Bivens.

CHAPTER XIII

An Aftermath—Confession.

THE day following Bivens' offer to Stuart was made memorable by a sinister event in Union square. A mass meeting of the unemployed had been called to protest against their wrongs and particularly to denounce the men who had advanced the price of bread by creating a corner in wheat.

On his way down town Stuart read with astonishment that Dr. Woodman would preside over this gathering. He determined to go. As he hurried through the routine work of his office, giving his orders for the day, he received a telephone call from Nan, asking him to accompany her to this meeting.

"I don't think you ought to go," he answered emphatically. "There might be a riot."

"I'm not afraid."

"And you might hear some very plain talk about your husband."

"That's exactly why I wish to go! I'll send one of my cars to the office for you immediately."

An hour later when Stuart, seated by Nan's side, reached Union square, the automobile was stopped by the police and turned into Seventeenth street.

Every inch of space in the square seemed blocked by a solid mass of motionless humanity. Stuart left the car in Seventeenth street and succeeded finally in forcing a way through the crowd to a position within a hundred feet of the rude platform that had been erected for the orators. The scene about the stand bristled with policemen.

Besides the special detail of picked men who moved about the stand, occasionally clubbing an inoffensive man, a battalion of 300 reserves was drawn up in serried lines about a hundred yards to the north on the edge of Fourth avenue. Between these reserves and the crowd about the stand an open space was kept clear for their possible assault in case of any disturbance.

When the speaking began Stuart pressed his way as close as possible, drawing Nan with him. He was astonished at the genuine eloquence and power with which the first speaker, evidently of anarchistic leanings, developed his theme, a passionate plea for freedom and the highest development of the individual man. His concluding sentences roused his crowd to a pitch of wild enthusiasm.

"In the old world, from which your fathers and mothers fled in search of freedom, men enslaved their fellow men by becoming lords, dukes or

knights, murdering or poisoning their way to a castle or a throne. The methods of your modern masters are more subtle and successful. You vote to make them your masters, and still imagine that you are free."

A cheer like the roar of an angry sea swept the crowd. Again and again it rose and fell, increasing in volume as its contagious spirit set fire to the restless minds of the thousands who had packed the square, but could not hear the man who was voicing their faith.

In the deep roar of their cheers there was no sudden despair. As Stuart looked into the faces of the crowd he saw no trace of the degeneracy and loss of elemental manhood which make the sight of a European mob loathsome and hopeless. These men were still men, the might of freemen in their souls and good right arms.

When the last echoes of the cheers had died away there was a stir near the stand and Stuart saw the stalwart figure of Dr. Woodman suddenly rise. He lifted his arm over the crowd, demanding silence.

The doctor plunged at once into the message with which his heart was quivering:

"Let no man tell you, my friends, that the God of our fathers is a myth. You can't lose faith in God because you have not lost faith in eternal justice. This faith is just coming into conscious existence in the hearts of millions. By this sign we know that a new age is born. Poets and artists no longer gaze into heaven. Their eyes are fixed on earth. Men have ceased to long for another world, therefore their hope is now for this one. To bring justice and beauty to pass on this earth in wisdom and fearlessness of death—this is the new creed of the people!

"My friends, the workingman of today lives better than the kings of the middle ages. Have patience, my friends, the workingman of tomorrow will be the heir of all the knowledge, of all the pain and all the glory of the centuries. We should not be so impatient, we should not be discouraged. The progress of the world has really just begun. And so I, who watch the darkness pass and see the eastern sky begin to glow—I cry to you who may still be below: 'Be of good cheer, the day dawns!'"

A feeble cheer rose from the hundred or more who knew the doctor personally. It was the only response the sullen crowd gave to his burst of feeling. They were not in sympathy with his optimism. The anguish of the present moment of bread hunger and cold was too keen.

When the doctor sat down Stuart saw Harriet suddenly lean over, draw his big shaggy head down and kiss him. He hadn't recognized her before.

The next speaker made his attack on the corruption and graft of our system of government with brutal frankness. He assailed the foundations of the republic, and at last the principles which underlie civilized society itself. Undoubtedly he was a madman, driven insane by the fierce struggle for bread, but none the less a dangerous maniac.

With scathing, bitter wit he flayed the corruption of our system of democracy. The speaker closed his tirade with a fierce personal attack on the man who had made five millions in a corner on bread and flouted his ill gotten gains in the face of starving men and women.

Nan's face flashed with sudden rage. "Take me to my car, Jim. I've an idea—I'm going to execute it at once."

"Wouldn't you like to meet the doctor and his daughter before you go?"

"Thanks. Hardly. You know he is on Mr. Bivens' black list."

"I'd forgotten that," he answered regretfully. "I'd like awfully for you to meet Harriet. I'm sure you'd like her."

Nan smiled. "I could see she likes you. I don't think she took a fancy to me, however."

"Nonsense, Nan," he said, with annoyance. "She couldn't have seen you. I didn't know she was here until she kissed her father."

"Perhaps my eyes are keener than yours."

The captain of the district brushed rudely past and sprang into his automobile. He waved his hand to his chauffeur. His gesture was mistaken by a pair of keen, restless eyes for a command to his reserves to disperse the crowd.

A pale, shabby young fellow leaped past the line of police into the open space and rushed straight for the reserves. His long, thin arm was lifted

high in the air clutching a black thing with a lighted fuse sparkling from its crest.

A murmur rippled through the crowd, the police stood still and stared, and the next moment the bomb exploded in the boy's hand, and his body lay on the stones a mangled heap of torn flesh and blood soaked rags.

The police charged the crowd and clubbed them without mercy. The people fled in confusion in every direction, and in five minutes the square was cleared.

Stuart had hurried Nan to her car and rushed back to the scene of the tragedy. He readily passed the lines of the police, who recognized him as the district attorney.

The doctor reached the spot and Harriet was holding the dying boy's head in her lap.

Stuart bent over her curiously and slowly asked:

"You were not afraid to rush up here with your father and take that poor mangled thing in your arms?"

"Of course not," she replied simply. "Papa says he's dying—nothing can be done for him. They've sent for an ambulance."

The doctor pressed Stuart's arm, and spoke in low tones:

"I've made some big mistakes in my life, boy. I'm just beginning to see them. I've read a new message in the flutter of this poor fellow's pulse. I'll not be slow to heed it."

When the doctor reached home the face of the dying boy haunted him. He began to fear his struggle with Bivens in his long drawn and fiercely contested lawsuit was an act of the same essential quality of blind physical violence. He began to see that the real motive back of his struggle was hatred of the man—this little counter jumper who had destroyed his business. It was the irony of such a fate that sank its poisoned dagger into his heart. He faced the fact at last without flinching.

He rose and paced the floor of his library for a half hour with measured tread. He stopped suddenly and clinched his big fists instinctively.

"I do hate him—with undying, everlasting hatred, and I pray God to give me greater strength to hate him more!"

He rose with sudden determination. He would not surrender. He would fight it out with this little swarthy scoundrel, win or lose. His house was mortgaged; the last dollar of his savings he had spent in helping others, and the money set aside to finish Harriet's course in music had been lost in the panic. He would fight it out somehow and win. But the one thing that must not fall was the perfection of his girl's voice. The court

of appeals would certainly render its decision before her next term's work would begin. She could rest during the summer. It would do her good. If he could be firm with his tenants and collect his room rents promptly from every one, the income from his house was still sufficient to pay the interest on the mortgage and give him a little to eat. It would be enough. Food for the soul was more important. He resolved to ask Stuart to collect his rents.

He looked up and Harriet stood at his side.

"What have you been crying about?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, nothing much," was the low answer. "I really don't know—perhaps the thing that makes the birds out there in the square chirp while the snow is still on the ground, the feeling that spring is coming."

"You're keeping something from me, dearest," he whispered, slipping his arm about her waist. "Tell me."

"You really believe in my voice, don't you?" she asked slowly.

"Believe in it? Do I believe in God?"

"Could I go abroad right away and finish my work there?"

She asked the question with such painful intensity, the father looked up with a start.

"Why do you wish to go now, child?" he asked.

"I've a confession to make, papa, dear. I'm in love, desperately and hopelessly."

A sob caught her voice, and the father's arms drew her to his heart and held her.

"But why hopelessly, my baby?" he asked. "Your hair is beaten gold, your eyes are deep and true, your slender little form has all the symmetry and beauty of a sylvan. You are young,

fresh, bright, and your voice the angels would envy."

"But the man I love doesn't realize all that yet, papa, dear. He is bound by the memories of the past to a woman he once loved, a woman who is evil at heart, and though she betrayed him for the lust of money is determined to hold him still her slave. But she shall not. I'll fight for him! And you'll help me, papa, won't you?"

The father drew her close.

"Won't I—just wait and see! But you haven't told me his name? I've been very blind, I fear."

"You've never guessed?"

She lifted her face to his in surprise.

"No."

"Jim."

"Our Jim Stuart?"

She nodded. Her voice wouldn't work.

"Oh, I see, I see!" the father mused. "The first love of a child's heart grows slowly into the great passion of life."

Again the little head nodded.

"You understand now why I wish to get away, to finish my work abroad. I'll be nearer to him with the ocean between us. He'll miss me then. I feel it, know it. When I return he will be proud of my voice. I shall go mad if I stay here and see him dangling at that woman's heels. I shall sing when he hears me as I never sang before, and I shall say to him then all the unspoken things I dare not put in speech."

The father kissed the trembling lips and answered firmly:

"I'll raise the money for you right away."

And then for half an hour she lay in his arms while he whispered beautiful thoughts of her future. When he sent her to bed he had kissed the last tear away.

"And now I've got to surrender," he said to himself.

(Continued in Tuesday's Issue.)

LAKE COMO.

Lake Como, June 18.—Miss Jane Gilchrist is spending a few weeks with friends in New York City.

Sydney Hughes, of Scranton, is spending a few days at J. T. Jaycox's fishing.

Miss Conner, of Poyntelle is assisting Mrs. Jones with her house work.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Stoughsburg of Deposit, are visiting friends in town.

Miss Louisa Ford is visiting friends in Binghamton.

Mrs. Genther entertained her sister, Mrs. A. Little of New York city and her cousin, Miss Jane Lumley, of Binghamton, last week.

WOMEN IN BURNING AUTO.

Dresses of Mrs. Thorley and Sister Afre as They Escape.

Poughkeepsie, N. Y., June 18.—With flames bursting from beneath their motorcar and enveloping it as it was running at high speed two miles north of Hopewell Junction, J. E. Thorley and wife and Mrs. Thorley's sister, a Mrs. Ellison, and the chauffeur narrowly escaped serious burns before they were able to abandon it. The big machine, of French make and valued at \$13,000, was destroyed.

The Thorleys were en route from New York to Albany. Soon after leaving Hopewell Junction smoke began to issue from beneath the car, and suddenly there was a burst of flame, and the gasoline tank, leaking badly, furnished a fierce blaze. Some of the light wraps of the occupants caught fire and Mr. Thorley's hands burned.

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Whereas, There exists an appropriation of \$15,000 made by the Highway Department of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for Wayne county, which appropriation is available for paying purposes in the borough of Honesdale; and Whereas, In order to obtain and secure this appropriation the said borough must, "a." Connect the paved street with an existing State Highway. "b." Have the pavement completed before the first of June 1914. And WHEREAS, The State Highway engineers have made a survey and draft of the streets proposed to be paved, to wit: Main street from the south side of Fourth street to Weaver's crossing forty feet in width, and from Weaver's crossing to the north line of the

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