

# THE ROOT OF EVIL

BY  
THOMAS DIXON



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## PROLOGUE.

This remarkable tale, in which each character is sketched from life by a master hand, goes beneath the surface of modern society and lays bare the canker at the root. Like all Mr. Dixon's work, it is a tale of American life, essentially true in the picture it draws and done with a swinging power which brings its dramatic scenes home to us. The splendid strength of the tale lies in the conflict between James Stuart and Nan, in which love and greed of wealth struggle for mastery.

## CHAPTER I.

### A Star Boarder.

AT the end of a warm spring day in New York, James Stuart sat in the open window of his room on Washington square smiling. With a sense of deep joy he watched the trees shake the raindrops from their new emerald robes and the flying clouds that flecked the western sky melt into seas of purple and gold.

A huckster turned into Fourth street crying:

"Straw—berries, straw—berries!"

And the young lawyer laughed lazily. A flood of tender memories stole into his heart from the sunlit fields of the south. He had gone hunting wild strawberries with Nan Primrose on the hills at home in North Carolina the day he first knew that he loved her.

How beautiful she was that day in the plain blue cotton dress which fitted her superb young figure to perfection! How well he remembered every detail of that ramble over the red hills—be could hear now the whistle of a Bob White sitting on the fence near the spring where they lunched, calling to his mate. As Nan nestled closer on the old stile they saw the little brown bird slip from her nest in a clump of straw, lift her head and softly answer.

"Look!" Nan had whispered excitedly. "There's her nest!"

He recalled distinctly his tremor of sympathetic excitement as her warm hand drew him to the spot. With peculiar vividness he remembered the extraordinary moisture of the palm of her hand trembling with eager interest as he counted the eggs—twenty beauties. But above all memories stood out one. As he bent close above her he caught for the first time in his life the delicate perfume of her dark rich hair and felt the thrill of its mystery.

"It's their little home, isn't it, Jim?" she exclaimed.

"I hope I can build as snug a nest for you some day, Nan!" he whispered gravely.

And when she stood silent and blushing he made the final plunge. Looking straight into her dark eyes he had said:

"I love you, dear Nan!"

As she stood very still, looking down in silence, with a throbbing heart and aching tenderness he dared to slip his arm around her waist and kiss the trembling lips. And then he noticed for the first time a deep red strawberry stain in the corner of her mouth. In spite of her struggles he laughingly insisted on kissing it away.

And then as a dreamy smile stole into her face she suddenly threw her arms around his neck in passionate tenderness, returning with interest every kiss he had taken.

"Straw—berries!"

The man looked up and drew his familiar cry.

"Yes, yes!" he shouted. "Two boxes put them on the stoop—and keep the change!"

He threw the man a silver dollar, and the white teeth of the Italian signaled a smile of thanks as he bowed low, lifting his dirty cap in acknowledgment.

Nor was Nan's beauty merely a memory; it was the living presence, the source of the joy that filled his soul to overflowing today, for she had grown more beautiful than ever since her mother had moved to New York.

He had always believed that the real reason in the back of Mrs. Primrose's shallow head for this move to the north had been the determination to break his engagement and make a more brilliant marriage for Nan. And so when they left he followed.

The mother had always professed for

him unbounded loyalty and admiration, but he had never been deceived. He knew that Mrs. Primrose lied as she breathed—politely, but continuously by her involuntary muscles. Day and night since they had reached New York she had schemed for Nan.

She had leased a house in the fashionable neighborhood of Gramercy park, and to meet the extraordinary expense began a careful and systematic search for rich young men to whom she could let two floors.

Stuart was sure in his heart that Nan had never joined in those plans of her mother, though he had wished that she might have shown a little more strength in resisting them.

Well, he was going to win at last, and the world was full of music! He had the biggest surprise of life in store for Nan, something no true woman's heart could resist. He had succeeded after incredible difficulties in secretly building a cottage by the sea in Brooklyn. Its lawn sloped to the water's edge, and a trim boat lay nodding at the dock. Neither Mrs. Primrose nor Nan had the faintest suspicion of what he had been doing.

Tomorrow he would lead his sweetheart into this holy of holies of life, the home love had built. He could see now the smile of tenderness break over her proud face as he should hand her the keys and ask her to fix the wedding day.

His reveries were broken by a timid knock on the door and a faint call:

"Jim!"

"Come in!" he cried.

"You're not a bit glad to see me," the soft voice said. "I've been standing out there for ages."

"Forgive me, Sunshine. I must have been dreaming." Stuart pleaded, leaping from his seat and seizing her hand. "I'm awfully glad to see you."

"Then don't call me that name again," she pouted.

"But isn't it beautiful?"

"It would be if my hair wasn't red and I didn't have freckles and was older," she protested, looking away to hide her emotion.

"But your hair isn't quite red, Harriet. It's just the color of the gold in honeycomb," he answered, gently touching her disheveled locks. "Besides, those few little freckles are becoming on your pink and white skin, and you are nearly fifteen. Well, I'll just say, 'little pal.' How's that?"

"That's better," she said, with a smile and sigh.

"Oh, Jim, I've been so dreadfully lonely since you were away! I declare, Jim, I'll die if you go away again. I just can't stand it."

Stuart smilingly took her hand.

"Lonely, Miss Chatterbox, when that big father of yours worships the very ground you walk on!"

"Yes, I know he does, Jim, and I love him, too, but you've no idea how dreadfully still the house is when you are gone. Oh, say, I want you to be a real boarder and eat with us. Of course you will."

"That would be very nice, dear, but I'm sure your father would draw the line at a real boarder. I'd never have got this beautiful room with that big old fashioned open fireplace in your home if it hadn't happened that our fathers fought each other in the war and became friends one day on a big battlefield. It's been a second home to me."

"Be our boarder and I'll make it a real home for you, Jim," she pleaded.

"Ah—you'll be making a real home some day for one of those boys I saw at your birthday party—the tall, dark one, I think?"

"No. He doesn't measure up to my standard."

"What ails him?"

"He's a coward. My hero must be brave, for I'm timid."

"Then it will be that fat blond fellow with a jolly laugh?"

"No; he's a fobber. My prince, when he comes, must be truthful. It's so hard for me always to tell the truth."

"Then it will be that dreamy looking one of fifteen who danced with twice?"

"No, he's too frail. My hero must be strong, for I am weak. And he must have a big, noble ideal of life; for mine is very small—just a little home nest and a baby and the love of one man."

"I'm not sure about that being such a very small ideal, girlie."

"But, oh, my! I've forgotten what I came running home for. Papa sent me to ask you to please come down to the factory right away. He wants to see you on a very important matter. It

must be awfully important. He looked so worried. I don't think I ever saw him worried before."

"I'll go at once," Stuart said.

He strode rapidly across town toward the Bowery, through Fourth street, wondering what could have happened to break the accustomed good humor of the doctor.

The doctor had long since retired from the practice of medicine as a profession and only used it now as his means of ministering to the wants of his neighbors. His neighbors were a large tribe, however, scattered all the way from the cellars and dives of Water street to the shanties and goat ranges of the upper Harlem. Stuart had never met a man so full of contagious health. He was a born physician. There was healing in the touch of his big hand. Healing light streamed from his brown eyes, and his iron gray beard sparkled with it. His presence in a sickroom seemed to fill it with waves of life, and his influence over the patients to whom he ministered was little short of hypnotic.

Stuart found the doctor standing at the door of his factory, shaking hands and chatting with his employees as they emerged from the building at the close of a day's work. A plain old fashioned brick structure just off the Bowery was this factory, and across the front ran a weatherbeaten sign which had not been changed for more than fifty years: "Henry Woodman Manufacturing Chemist."

The doctor's father had established the business fifty-two years ago, and the son, who bore his father's name, had succeeded to its management on his death, which occurred just after the return of the younger man with his victorious regiment from their last campaign with Grant before Petersburg and Appomattox.

He took Stuart's hand in his big, crushing grip and handed him a letter, which he opened and read hastily:

No. 66 Gramercy Park.

To Dr. Henry Woodman:  
Dear Sir—I must have an answer to the proposition of the American Chemical company before noon tomorrow. After that hour the matter will be definitely closed. JNO. C. CALHOUN BIVENS.

April 2, 1898.

Still looking at the letter he asked:

"What does it mean?"

"An ultimatum from the chemical trust. I'll explain to you when you've seen something of my work tonight. The first hour I want you to put in with me at the dispensary."

Stuart's eye rested on the embossed heading of the letter, "No. 66 Gramercy park," and he slowly crushed the paper. It was the Primrose house, Nan's home. Her mother had succeeded.

Bivens, the new sensation in high finance, she had established as her star boarder in Stuart's absence; Bivens, his schoolmate at college; Bivens, the little rascal scion of poor white trash from the south who had suddenly become a millionaire!

His blood boiled with rage. As he turned and followed the doctor he laughed with sudden fierce determination.

The dispensary was Woodman's hobby. The old fashioned drug store stood on a corner of the Bowery, and in the rear extension, which opened on the side street, he had established what he laughingly called his "life line," a free dispensary where any man needing medicine or a doctor's advice could have it without charge if unable to pay.

For two hours Stuart saw him minister with patience and skill to the friendless and the poor; for each a cheerful word and the warm grasp of his big hand and the prescription. The young lawyer watched with curious interest the quickened step with which each one left. The medicine had begun to work before the prescription was filled.

When the last applicant had gone Stuart turned to the doctor:

"And what is the proposition which the distinguished young head of the chemical trust has made you?"

"That I sell my business to them at their own valuation and come into the trust or get off the earth."

"And you wish my advice?"

"Yes."

"What figure did he name?"

"More than its cash value."

"Then you will accept, of course?"

"I would if there were not some things that can't be reckoned in terms of dollars and cents. If I take stock in the American Chemical company I am a party to their methods, an heir to their frauds."

"Yet isn't the old regime of the small manufacturer and the retailer doomed? Isn't combination the new order of modern life? Will it pay you to fight a losing battle? Bivens is not a man of broad culture, but he is a very smooth young gentleman!"

"He's a contemptible little scamp!" snapped the older man. "When I took him into my drug store six years ago he didn't have a change of clothes. Now he's a millionaire. How did he get it? He stole a formula I had used to relieve nervous headaches, mixed it in water with a little poisonous coloring matter, pushed it into the soda fountain trade, made his first half million, organized the American Chemical company and blossomed into a magnate. And now this little soda fountain tip threatens me with ruin unless I join his gang and help him rob my neighbors. It happens that I like my neighbors. My business is to heal the sick, not merely to make money. Thousands of children die at my very door every summer who could be saved by a single prescription if they could get it. That's the thought that grips me when I begin to figure the profits in this trade. I'm making a fair living. I don't want any more out of my neighbors. I've shown you some of them tonight."

"I'll never forget them," Stuart broke in.

"We used to cry over Uncle Tom's woes," the doctor continued. "And yet there are more than 5,000,000 white people in America today who are the slaves of poverty, cruel and pitiless. The black slave always had food and shelter, clothes and medicine. My business is to heal the sick—mind you! Shall I give it up to exploit them?"

"But could you not use your greater wealth for greater good if you joined the trust?" the lawyer asked. "Won't they make drugs more economically than you do and drive you to the wall at last? Isn't this new law of co-operation the law of progress—in brief, the law of God?"

"That remains to be proved. I don't believe it."

"Well, I do, and I think that if you fight it will be against the stars in their courses!"

"I'm going to fight," was the firm response. "The law is on my side, isn't it?"

"The written law, yes. But you are facing a bigger question than one of statutory law."

"So I am, boy, so I am! That's why I gave you a glimpse tonight of the

world in which I live and work and dream."

"Bivens has put up to you a cold blooded business proposition"—

"Exactly. And there are things that can't be bought and sold. I am one of them!" The stalwart figure rose in simple dignity, and there was a deep tremor in his voice as he paused.

"But I'm keeping you. It's 9 o'clock and somebody's waiting—eh, boy?"

"Yes," Stuart answered apologetically. "I'm afraid I've not been of much use to you tonight."

The doctor bent closer, smiling:

"I understand—of course. The angels are singing in your heart this evening the old song of life that always makes the world new and young and beautiful. And yet—it couldn't be measured in terms of barter and sale, could it?" The doctor gripped his hand tenderly in parting.

The smile died from the younger man's face, and his answer was scarcely audible:

"No."

(To Be Continued.)

Attention, Farmers!

My Dear Farmer—Have you your own farm or are you renting? I have land in Minnesota, cut over timber, from \$10 to \$15 per acre. One-third cash, balance at 6 per cent. I have good, smooth land in Stevens county, Minnesota, from \$45 to \$65 per acre. This land is sold direct from the owner of the land. No land company in this deal. I also handle the best land in eastern Oklahoma. Corn runs from sixty to seventy bushels to the acre. Now if you want land try me and see. I deal with no agent. If you come with an agent you must pay him yourself. Write or call,

Henry Hummels,  
1421 North 26th St.,  
Lincoln, Neb.

Accepts Resignation.

From Tuesday's Daily.

The school board held a special meeting last evening formally accepted the resignation of Superintendent Abbott, to take effect the first of the year, and although very sorry to lose the services of the superintendent, they recognized the difference in the positions and gave the superintendent his release. The board has not selected a successor as yet.

Farm for Sale.

135-acre farm, four miles from town, between 50 and 60 acres under plow, 7 acres hay land, balance pasture. Running water. Seven-room house and other improvements.

Inquire at the office of Bawls & Robertson. 10-10-11-wkly

# Grand Mask Ball

Given by Cosmopolitan Club  
Tuesday Evening, Dec. 31

## Coates' Hall, Plattsmouth

Dance the Old year out and the New year in

### 5 Big Cash Prizes

Music by M. W. A. Orchestra

Admission, Gents 50c, Ladies' 25c, Spectators 25c, Children 10c

## HEADS OF TWO ROADS INDICTED

Charged With Violating Sherman Anti-Trust Law.

### AGREEMENT BASIS OF CHARGE

Officials of New Haven and of Grand Trunk Roads Accused of Trade Restraint—Purpose of Combine Alleged to Be to Prevent Extensions.

New York, Dec. 24.—Charles S. Mellen, president of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad; E. J. Chamberlain, president of the Grand Trunk railway of Canada, and Alfred W. Smithers, chairman of the Grand Trunk board of directors, were indicted by the federal grand jury here, charged with violating the Sherman anti-trust law in the alleged monopoly agreement between the two roads.

The indictment avers Mellen, Chamberlain and Smithers were engaged on Aug. 3, 1912, and "have since engaged in an unlawful combination to prevent the construction and completion of certain extensions of the Grand Trunk railway in New England."

It is also charged they conspired to prevent the operation of steamships between Providence and New York.

### HORSE PLAGUE IN KANSAS

#### Symptoms of Disease Noted at Albert Differ From Summer's Scourge.

Albert, Kan., Dec. 24.—A new and mysterious horse disease has developed near here which is baffling all efforts of veterinarians, according to A. C. Wagner, a wheat man. Seven of Wagner's horses have been sick several weeks. The ailment differs from the horse plague this fall as the animals eat, though they mope around in dazed condition and lie down as did those stricken with the plague. Though subjected to constant treatment, no change has been noted in any of the cases during the last month. Mr. Wagner says the horses of several farmers in his vicinity also are affected.

#### New Variety of Durum Wheat.

Washington, Dec. 24.—A new variety of durum wheat, which promises to be valuable for the cereal growers of the northwest, has been imported by the department of agriculture. It comes from Bezenhook, southeastern Russia, where it was originated at the Russian government's experiment station. Frank N. Meyer, agricultural expert of the foreign seed and plant division of the department, discovered the new wheat last summer during his trip through central Asia.

#### Schooner Sinks; Fifteen Lives Lost.

Mobilie, Ala., Dec. 24.—The British schooner Georgiana, with ten passengers and a crew of five, foundered off Lucea, Jamaica, in trying to make that port during the November gulf storm and all on board were lost, according to dispatches received here. The British schooner Cartagena has not been heard from since Nov. 17, and it is believed that vessel with its crew of seven also has gone down.

#### Railroad Held Responsible.

Zanesville, O., Dec. 24.—Coroner A. F. Walters held officials of the Pennsylvania railroad responsible for the wreck at Dresden on Dec. 3, when a train on the Cleveland, Akron and Columbus division collided with a Cincinnati and Muskingum Valley division train and eleven persons were killed. He says that the trains were running too closely together.

#### Formoso Farmer Gored to Death.

Formoso, Kan., Dec. 24.—J. J. Lowe, one of the early settlers of Jewell county, was gored to death by a bull. Mr. Lowe went into the cattle yard with a rope to catch the bull and the animal attacked him, knocking him down and crushing him with its head.

## For Sale!

The following desirable town properties:

A fine 8-room, modern residence, with three lots; could not be duplicated for less than \$5,000.00. Our price for a short time, \$2,650.00.

Another fine 8-room residence, all modern with the exception of furnace; convenient to business, churches and schools, for \$2,100.00. Could not be duplicated for less than \$5,000.00.

Another nice seven-room residence, in good locality, only two blocks from business, and can be bought for \$2,300.00, but will submit offers.

We have for sale what is known as the Coates' property, a fine modern home of 8 rooms, heated by hot water and arranged most conveniently, together with three lots, and with it, just across the street, a five-acre park with a large and fine variety of trees. This all goes for \$5,000. Will submit offers.

## WINDHAM

### Investment and Loan Co.

Plattsmouth, Nebraska

Frank Lorenz of Sheldon, Iowa, arrived this morning and will visit here with his brothers over Christmas.

Herman Tiekotter was a passenger this morning for Bartley, Neb., where he will visit relatives for a few days.

Safety razors, all kinds, \$1.00 to \$5.00, at Eastwood's.

## Real Estate

### Bought and Sold ON COMMISSION!

Insurance Placed in Best Companies!

Farm Loans and Rental Agency

### - Virgil Mullis -

## Wilkinson & Hall

### - AUCTIONEERS -

The holding of successful sales is our line. Our interests are with the seller when it comes to getting every dollar your property is worth. For open dates address or call either of us at our expense by phone. Dates can be made at the Journal office.

ROBERT WILKINSON L. J. HALL  
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