

THE ROOT OF EVIL

BY
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CHAPTER IX. The Storm Breaks.

THE sensation which the district attorney sprang in the sudden indictment of the president of the Ironclad company was profound and far-reaching. The day before the indictment was presented to the grand jury stocks began to tumble without any apparent cause.

When the warrant for the arrest of the great man had been served, and he was admitted to bail to await his coming trial, there was a feeble rally in the market, but the rats quickly began to desert a sinking ship. The president under indictment had ceased to be a power. There was a wild scramble of his associates who were equally guilty to save their own skins. The press, which at first denounced Stuart, now boldly demanded the merciless prosecution of all the guilty, and they hailed the brilliant young district attorney as the coming man.

For six consecutive days stocks had fallen with scarcely an hour's temporary rally. Every effort of the bull operators, who had ruled the market for the two years past, to stem the tide was futile. Below the surface, in the silent depths of growing suspicion and fear, an army of sappers and miners under the eye of one man were digging at the foundations of the business world—the faith of man in his fellow man.

Each day there was a crash, and each day the little financier and his unscrupulous allies marked a new victim. In the midst of the campaign for the destruction of public credit which Bivens and his associates, the Allied Bankers, were conducting with such profound secrecy and such remarkable results, when their profits had piled up into millions, a bomb was suddenly exploded under their own headquarters.

The Van Dam Trust company was put under the ban of the New York clearing house. The act was a breach of faith, utterly unwarranted by any known law of the game. But it was done.

When the president of the company walked quietly into Bivens' office and made the announcement for a moment the little dark man completely lost his nerve. Cold beads of sweat started from his swarthy forehead.

"There must be some mistake."

"There's no mistake. It's a blow below the belt, but it's a knockout for the moment. They know we are solvent, two dollars for one. But they know we have \$90,000,000 on deposit, and we have some big enemies. They know that the group we have supported have smashed this market, and they've set out to fight the devil with fire. They're determined to force a showdown and see how much real money is behind us. We can pull through if we stand together."

Bivens sprang to his feet, exclaiming fiercely:

"Until hell freezes over!"

The banker smiled feebly for the first time in a week.

"Then it's all right, Mr. Bivens. We'll pull through. They'll start a run on us tomorrow. Five millions in cash will meet it, and we'll win hands down. We have powerful friends. Our only sin is our association with your group. We must have that five millions in the safe before the doors are opened tomorrow."

"You shall have it," was the firm answer.

With a cheerful pressure of the hand the president of the Van Dam Trust company left, and Bivens called his secretary.

"We turn the market tomorrow—orders to all our men. Knock the bottom out of it until the noon hour, then turn and send it skyward with a bound."

When Dr. Woodman returned home that night from one of his endless stumps among the poor Harriet opened the door.

Something about the expression of his face startled her. For the first time in her life she saw in its gaunt lines the shadow of despair.

"What is it, papa, dear?" she asked tenderly, slipping an arm about his neck as she drew him down into his favorite chair.

"What, child?" he responded vaguely.

"You look utterly worn out. Tell me what's the matter. I'm no longer a child. I'm a woman now—strong and well and brave. Let me help you."

"You do help me, baby!" he laughed, with an effort at his old-time joyous

spirit. "Every time I touch your little hand you give me new life. Some day your voice will thrill thousands as it now thrills my heart. You'll win fame and wealth for your father. You shall care for him in old age. I'm not miserable. I've really had a good day. I've spent the whole afternoon superintending the distributing of flowers among the hospitals. I saved a kid's life with a flower. His father used to work for me in the old days. They asked me to come to see him. There was no hope. He had been given up to die. I gave him a fragrant white pink. His thin, feverish fingers grasped it eagerly. In all his life he had never held a flower in his hand before. He pressed it to his lips, his soul thrilled at its sweet odor, and the little tired spirit came staggering back from the mists of eternity just to see what it meant. He will live."

The girl's arms slipped around his neck in a tightening hold, and she pressed her cheek against his a moment in silence.

"Papa, dear, it's no use trying to deceive me. I've the right to know what is troubling you. I'm not a child. You must tell me."

"Why, it's nothing much, dearie," he answered gently. "I'm worried a little about money. I've a note due at the bank, and they've called on me unexpectedly to meet it. But I'll manage somehow."

"I'll give up my music, go to work and help you right away."

The father placed his hand gently over her lips, and the tears sprang into his eyes in spite of his effort to keep them back.

"Don't talk sacrilege, my child. Such words are blasphemy. God gave me a man's body for the coarse work of bread winning. He gave you the supreme gift, a voice that throbs with eloquence, a power that can lift and inspire the world."

"Promise me, dear—it's the one wish of my heart, the one thing worth working and struggling for—promise me that you will never stop until the training of your voice is complete; that no matter what happens you will obey me in this. It is my one command. You will obey me?"

"Yes, papa. I promise, if it will make you happy."

"It's the only thing I live for. All I ask is that you do your level best with the gift of God."

"I'll try, papa dear," was the quiet answer as she kissed him again and softly left the room.

Harriet had scarcely reached her room when Adams, the cashier of one of the allied banks, who owed the doctor for three months' rent, entered the library with quick, nervous tread.

"I've news, sir," he said excitedly.

"I've a big tip on the stock market."

The older man grunted contemptuously.

"Yes, that's what ails you, I know. You've been getting them for some time. That's why you owe me for your rooms. That's why there's something the matter with your accounts."

"I swear to you, doctor, my accounts are clean. I've bought a few stocks. I've made a little and lost a little. I've got the chance now I've been waiting for. I've a real piece of information from the big insiders who are going to make the market tomorrow. I got it from Bivens' private secretary. The little weasel has made millions on this break, and he has been selling the market short for two weeks. Tomorrow morning he is going to smash it for the last time and at noon throw his millions on the bull side. The market will go down three points on the break in the morning. It will jump five points in ten minutes when it turns the other way. There are stocks on the list that will recover ten points before the market closes."

"Bivens is going to do this?" the older man interrupted. "Then it's a trick. It's a lie. Take my advice and do just the opposite from what you understand. Bivens will sell out his partners in the deal."

"Mm, he can't sell out!" the cashier insisted. "It's his own deal. He's in it for all he's worth!"

The doctor rose with sudden excitement.

"Adams, this is the first time in my life I've ever been tempted to buy stocks. I'm in desperate need of money. I've a note for \$3,000 due. I've \$2,000 set aside to finish my little girl's musical studies. I've got to meet that note somehow, and I've got to have the money for her. It looks like a chance. I'll go in and watch the

market tomorrow."

"If it don't act exactly as I say don't touch it. If it does, go in for all you're worth. If stocks start down as I say they will, sell short, cover at noon and they buy for a rise. Don't listen to fools—just buy, buy, buy! You can sell before the market closes and make \$20,000."

"I'll drop into a broker's office and watch the market open, anyway, Adams. Thank you."

The next day the more optimistic traders on the stock exchange expected a change in the market. Stocks had declined for two weeks with appalling swiftness and fatality. Every hour had marked the ruin of men hitherto bulwarks of solidity. Experienced men reasoned and reasoned from experience that there must be a turn somewhere. The bottom surely had been reached. The time for a rally had come.

Stuart slept late. He was up until 1 o'clock writing a reply to a peculiarly venomous attack on his integrity which a morning paper had printed. The writer had boldly accused him of being the hired tool of the group of financial cutthroats who were coining millions out of the ruin of others in the destruction of public faith.

His reply was simple, and his concluding paragraph was unanswerable except by an epithet.

"My business is the enforcement of justice. I am the servant of the people. If Wall street cannot stand the enforcement of law so much the worse for the street. It is no affair of mine."

Dr. Woodman hurried downtown to the office of a friend on Pine street, an old-fashioned banker and broker whose



"If you've got a dollar, nail it up."

name had always stood for honesty and fair dealing and conservative business. It was half an hour before the stock exchange opened, but the dingy little office was packed with an excited crowd of customers.

The doctor followed old Dugro, the head of the firm, into his private office and asked his advice. He got it—sharp, short and to the point.

"Go home, doctor, and stay there. This market is no place for an amateur. It's all I can do to keep the wolf from my door in these days."

"But I've received some important information."

"Keep it dark," old Dugro scowled. "Don't tell it to your worst enemy. If you've got a dollar, nail it up and sleep on the box."

"But I've some information I think I'm going to act on and I want to open a small account with you."

"All right, I've warned you," was the grim answer. "I wish you good luck."

The doctor drew his check for \$2,000 and smilingly took his place among the crowd before the board.

The ticker would tell the story in the first hour. If stocks should sell off three points before noon, he would know. He determined to put this to the test first. He would not sell the market short. He would be content with the big jump the market would make upward when it started.

As the noon hour drew near the doctor's heart was beating like a sledge hammer. Bivens' program had been carried out to the letter. Stocks had declined for the first hour a point, and in the second hour suddenly smashed down two more points amid the wildest excitement on the exchange.

The moment to buy had come. The doctor was sure of it. Stocks had touched bottom. The big bear pool would turn bull in a moment and the whole market would rise by leaps and bounds.

He called old Dugro.

"Buy for me now Amalgamated Copper, the market leader, for all I'm worth!"

The broker glared at him.

"Buy! Buy in this market? Man, are you mad?"

"I said buy!" was the firm answer.

"What's the limit?"

"Not a share without a stop loss order under it."

"Well, with the stop?"

"I'll buy you 400 shares on a four point stop."

"And when it goes up five points?" the doctor asked eagerly.

"I'll double your purchase and raise your stop, and every five points up I'll keep on until you are a millionaire!"

The old broker smiled contemptuously, but it was all lost on the doctor.

"Do it quick!"

The order was scarcely given before it was executed. Dugro handed the memorandum to Woodman with a

grunt.

"It don't take long to get 'em today!" The words had scarcely left his lips when a hoarse cry rose from the crowd hanging over the ticker.

Copper had leaped upward a whole point between sales. A wild cheer swept the room. For ten minutes every stock on the list responded and began to climb.

The doctor's face was wreathed in smiles. Mer began to talk and laugh and feel human for the first moment in two weeks.

Dugro grasped the doctor's hand, and his deep voice rang above the roar:

"You're a mascot! You've broken the spell! For God's sake stay with us!"

Suddenly another cry came from the crowd at the ticker. The boy at the board sprang to the instrument with a single bound, his eyes blazing with excitement. His cry of "Down!" pierced every ear in the room with horror.

The panic had come.

In ten minutes stocks tumbled five points, and the doctor's last dollar was swept into space, while the whole market plunged down, down, down into the abyss of ruin and despair.

Men no longer tried to conceal their emotion. Some wept, some cursed, some laughed; but the most pitiful sight of all was the man who could do neither, the man with white lips and the strange, hunted expression in his eyes who was looking death in the face for the first time.

A full quarter of an hour of the panic had spent itself before the dazed crowds in the broker's offices read the startling news that caused the big break. The ticker shrieked its message above the storm's din like a little laughing demon.

"The Van Dam Trust Company Has Closed Its Doors and Asked For the Appointment of a Receiver!"

Bivens had not kept his solemn pledge. The great bank had stood the run for two hours and closed its doors. And the work of destruction had just begun.

At 3 o'clock the doctor walked out of Dugro's office without a dollar. He felt almost happy by contrast with the fools he left shuffling over the floors of Dugro's office.

His own sense of loss was merely a blur. The revelation he had just had of the mad lust for money which had begun to possess all classes was yet so fresh and startling he could form no adequate conception of his own position.

It was not until he entered his own door and paused at the sound of Harriet's voice that he began to realize the enormity of the tragedy that had befallen him.

(To Be Continued.)

LOYAL DAUGHTERS HOLD MOST DELIGHTFUL SOCIAL

From Wednesday's Daily.

The Loyal Daughters of the Christian church held a most delightful social gathering at the home of Rev. D. L. Dunkleberger on South Eleventh street last evening. The affair was in the nature of a "cobweb" social, the chief feature of the evening being a large spider web of twine, which the guests were asked to unwind, the first to finish being given a prize. In this contest Miss Sidenbottom was awarded the prize, having distanced all others in the unwinding of the web. During the course of the evening delicious refreshments were served to the guests and it proved to be one of the most enjoyable events that the young people of the church have had this winter and the members are looking forward to the future gatherings with great expectations. Every one of the thirty guests present enjoyed themselves to the utmost, and feeling that as entertainers Rev. and Mrs. Dunkleberger were certainly without rivals.

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PIONEER FARMING IN NEBRASKA

Joshua Murray of Pender Broke Prairie in Cass County in 1853.

PATIENTS AT THE HOSPITAL ARE DOING VERY NICELY

From Wednesday's Daily.

Mrs. Glen Rawls, who was operated on yesterday morning at Omaha at the Presbyterian hospital, spent a very easy night, and this morning her temperature was almost normal and the physicians in attendance are greatly pleased with the condition of the patient and the prospects for her recovery are very bright.

George Horn, Jr., who is recovering from the effects of an operation at the hospital there, is reported as getting along as well as could be expected so soon after the operation, and unless unforeseen complications set in the patient will soon be on the high road to recovery.

Itching, torturing skin eruptions disfigure, annoy, drive one wild. Doan's Ointment is praised for its good work. 50c at all drug stores.



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