

THE ROOT OF EVIL

BY
THOMAS DIXON



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CHAPTER XXI.

The Mockery of the Sun.

STUART refused to talk to Nan, went abruptly to his stateroom and spent a night of feverish dreams. His exhaustion was so acute that sleep was impossible. Through the night his mind went over and over the horror of the moment on that marsh when he had looked into the depths of his own soul and seen the flames of hell.

Between the times of dozing unconsciousness, which came at intervals, he wondered what had become of the two men in that disabled tender. He waited with dread the revelation the dawn would bring. He rose with the sun and looked out of his stateroom window. The bay was a solid sheet of glistening ice. The sun was shining from a cloudless sky, and the great white field sparkled and flashed like a sea of diamonds.

He dressed hurriedly, went into the galley, made a fire and called Nan. He rapped gently on the paneled partition which separated their staterooms. He could hear her low, softly spoken answer as if there were nothing between them.

"Yes, Jim, what is it? Are you ill?"

"No, hungry. You will have to help me get some breakfast."

"The cook hasn't come?" she asked in surprise.

There was a moment's hesitation, and his voice sounded queer when he quietly answered:

"No."

In ten minutes she appeared at the door of the galley, her hair hanging in glorious confusion about her face and the dark eyes sparkling with excitement.

"What on earth does it mean, Jim?" she asked breathlessly. "Cal could tell me nothing last night. Why hasn't the cook returned?"

"He may never come, Nan."

"Why, Jim?" she gasped.

"They started to tow us in, and the engine broke down. I think the carburetor probably froze, and they were driven before the wind, helpless."

"There's a chance in a thousand that they reached an oyster shanty and found shelter. We'll hope for the best. In the meantime you and I will have to learn to cook again for a few days."

"A few days?" Nan exclaimed.

"Yes. The bay is frozen. Our old guide is a good cook, but he's safe in harbor ashore. He had too much sense to venture out last night. He can't get here now until the ice breaks up."

Nan accepted the situation with girlish enthusiasm.

The doctor pronounced the meal better than he had tasted on the trip. Bivens was still in an ugly mood and refused to leave his stateroom or allow any one but the doctor to enter. He was suffering intense pain from his frostbitten fingers and toes and ears and still cherished his grudge against Stuart. He had carefully concealed from both the doctor and Nan just what had occurred between them on the trip that day.

On the second morning after the freeze a light dawned on the little man's sulking spirits. During the night the ice softened, and a strong southerly breeze had swept every piece of it to sea.

It was just 9 o'clock, and Nan was busy humming a song and setting the table for breakfast when Stuart heard the distant drubbeat of a tender's engine. The guide was returning from the shore or the lost tender had come. If it were the guide he would probably bring news of the other men. Stuart called:

"A tender is coming, Nan. Don't come on deck until I tell you."

In a moment he came back down the companionway and spoke in quiet tones:

"It's just as I expected. They are both dead. The guide found them on the marsh over there, frozen."

"The marsh you and Cal were on?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes. Both of them were kneeling. They died with their hands clasped in prayer."

"And you saved Cal from that?" she gasped and, turning, fled into her stateroom.

He went in to change his clothes and help lift the bodies on deck. Through the paneled wall he heard Nan softly sobbing.

Bivens refused at first to believe the doctor's startling announcement. He hurriedly dressed, came on deck and for five minutes stood staring into the white, dead faces.

Without a word he went below and

in parting and whispered:

"My soul and body will be yours tonight, dearie. Remember that! I've permission from the manager to meet you behind the scenes after the last curtain. Be sure to wait a moment before you go to your dressing room."

"No, I'll see you in my room. I shall be so proud of it—the star's room for one night at least! The maid will show you the way."

"I will be in the Bivens' box, the second from the stage on the right. Don't forget to glance that way, now and then."

A look of pain clouded the fair face, but he could not see it in the shadows, and with a last warm pressure of her hand he was gone.

"I wonder if he does think of me still as a child?" she mused. "I wonder if he never suspects the storm within? Well?"

She smiled triumphantly. "I'll tell him something tonight in my song!"

Nan was not in an amiable mood when Stuart led her to the box in the millionaire's playhouse which New York society built to exhibit its gowns, jewelry and beautiful women.

As the moment for Harriet's appearance drew near, Stuart's nervous tension became a positive agony. The people were in a friendly mood of expectancy. The fact that she was an American girl and from New York was greatly in her favor.

The audience greeted her appearance with a burst of applause and waited for the first note.

Stuart was charmed with the effect of her personality in the character, before she moved. The long, beautiful golden hair, the innocent young face and her simple girlish costume made an instantaneous impression.

With the first sweet note from her throat every fear vanished. She sang simply, quietly, exquisitely, without effort, as a bird sings because the song bubbles from within. A ripple of surprised comment swept the audience and burst into vigorous applause at the close of her song. From start to finish Harriet received a continuous ovation. The audience rose in their seats and greeted her with such a tribute of enthusiasm New York had rarely seen.

When Stuart had fought his way through the crowd and reached the stage he found her alone with her father in her room. Her head was resting on his breast, and he was stroking the fair young forehead with tender, caressing touch.

Stuart turned away from the scene and left them alone for a few moments. He found Nan and asked her to wait for him at the stage door in her automobile until he could give Harriet his congratulations.

She consented with a frown and begged him to hurry.

Her father was still there, and a crowd of musicians, singers and critics were waiting in a group outside to offer their congratulations. She was holding them back until his arrival.

"My glorious little pal!" he whispered, his voice choking with emotion. "I'm the proudest man in the world tonight."

"It's all your work, Jim," she said simply. "You suggested and willed it, and I've made good under your inspiration. I'd rather see the happiness on your face and hear your words of approval than all the applause of that crowd."

He turned and saw Nan standing in the doorway with a curious smile on her flushed face.

"May I, too, offer my congratulations, Miss Woodman?" she asked.

Harriet's little figure suddenly stiffened at the sight of Nan, but at the sound of her friendly voice relaxed and moved to meet the extended hand.

"Thank you, Mrs. Bivens," she replied cordially.

And then Stuart did something that sent a shock through every fiber of Nan's being.

As easily and naturally as a big brother he slipped one of his long arms around Harriet and looked down with frank admiration into her eyes.

"You see, Nan, she's mine. I raised her from a wee little mite. And this was such a cruel and dangerous experiment—she had no chance. It was impossible, but, God bless her, she did it!"

Nan made up her mind instantly to act on a plan that had been vaguely forming and tempting her for the past months. It was her trump card. She had hesitated to play it, but she would do it now without delay.

(To Be Continued.)

Returns From Short Visit.

From Tuesday's Daily.

Robert A. Bates, publisher of the Journal, and his wife, returned Sunday from a ten days' visit with relatives in different parts of Illinois, and they enjoyed the meeting with their relatives to the fullest extent, as it had been a number of years since either of them had visited their old home back east.

Case Against Brown Dropped.

From Tuesday's Daily.

This afternoon the case against William Jonas Brown was dismissed by the Singer Sewing Machine company and the bonding company and he was released, having made a settlement with the company over his shortage. It will be a matter of universal satisfaction that the affair has been settled, as it has, as there is great sympathy expressed for Mr. Brown and his family in their misfortune. It is understood that he will be employed by the sewing machine company in Omaha as a salesman in the future.

THE NEAR APPROACH OF EASTER

Gentle Reminder to the Ladies Who Are on the Lookout for That Handsome Easter Hat.

The early approach of Easter has turned the minds of everyone to the subject of spring articles of wearing apparel, and in view of that fact the millinery department of the big store of M. Fanger in this city has taken on great activity and the new trimmer, Miss Franke Starr, who has just arrived, is kept busy, as well as her assistants, in preparing the latest creations for the feminine trade in the line of the finest and most fashionable hats ever shown by this firm. Miss Starr is a trimmer whose experience in several of our metropolitan cities fits especially to furnish the patrons of this store with the most up-to-date hats and materials that money and skill can supply, and the public would do well to wait for the announcement of the opening of this enormous stock to pick out their spring head gear, as the line will embrace every one of the latest styles and at prices that would make one wonder how it was possible to sell them at such a low figure, but the manager, Mr. Zucker, has determined to give his patrons the opportunity to purchase their spring hats at a low figure in order to show his appreciation of their trade. As this store has always handled the largest line of this kind in the city and has had several very flattering seasons of sales, and it is this that makes them desire to supply the patrons of the store with the best on the market. Two large shipments have just been received of the latest styles and novelties in hats and the opening of the spring line will be one long remembered in this city, and it would pay purchasers to wait for the opening to secure their hats.

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RECEIVED HIGHEST AWARDS
World's Pure Food Exposition, Chicago, Ill.
Paris Exposition, France, March, 1912.

A VERY STRONG LOCAL INSTITUTION

Plattsmouth Loan and Building Association in Fine Shape and Enjoyed Successful Year.

From Tuesday's Daily.

The meeting of the stockholders of the Plattsmouth Loan and Building association was held last evening at Coates' hall and the condition of the association was most pleasing to the stockholders, who have invested their money in this home institution, which is one of the strongest in the state, and the stockholders embrace persons in every walk of life, and their investments under the careful management of the officers of the Plattsmouth Loan and Building association has steadily grown and they realize the wisdom of this form of saving their small sums, as they receive a handsome rate of interest for their money.

The year just closed has been the most successful in the history of the association, and under the skillful management of the secretary, T. M. Patterson the prospects are very bright for a great increase in the amount of business done. The loans for the year were \$96,340, an increase of about \$1,000 over the previous year's business, and the dividends of the association were also greatly increased. The thirty-fifth series of stock has been matured and paid off and the fifty-seventh series will be opened this month for subscribers, and those who fail to take advantage of the opportunity for investment will greatly regret it.

The stockholders, who number some 400, last evening elected Fred Range, Henry H. Goos and C. A. Johnson as members of the board of directors for three years, and they certainly showed good judgment in the selection of these gentlemen for the position, for they are all level-headed business men and their judgment in the conduct of the business of the association may be relied upon. The board of directors will elect the officers of the association at their meeting in the middle of the month.

Ed Clark and family came down from Sargent, Neb., Wednesday afternoon for a few days' visit at the J. F. Hoover and W. A. Clark homes.

Elmwood loses a most excellent family in the departure of Philip Stultz and his household for Abilene, Kas., on a farm near which place they are to reside and make their future home.

The Worley family is rejoicing over the birth of a fine ten-pound baby boy at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Worley, in Lincoln. This is the second son who will help perpetuate the name, and the little one arrived February 20. This is the reason you see Grandpa Worley stepping a little high these days.

ARE MOVING INTO ONE JUDGE TRAVIS' COTTAGES

From Tuesday's Daily.

Superintendent of City Schools W. G. Brooks and wife are having their household goods moved this week into the residence property of Judge H. D. Travis on Marble street, where they will make their residence in the future. This is one of the most desirable residence sections of the city and the house has been arranged by the judge with the view of giving his tenants the most modern conveniences and the superintendent and his wife are very fortunate in securing it.

You can say goodbye to constipation with a clear conscience if you use Chamberlain's Tablets. Many have been permanently cured by their use. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Journal for fancy Stationery.

Attend Funeral at Bellevue.

From Tuesday's Daily.

Quite a number from this city were passengers this afternoon for Bellevue, where they will attend the funeral of the late Mrs. Henry Myers, mother of Mrs. T. M. Patterson and Miss Emma Myers. Among the friends of the family going to pay their last respects to this worthy lady were: Mrs. Everett Eaton, Mrs. Frank J. Morgan, Mrs. William McCauley, Miss Mae Murphy, Mrs. William Schmidtman and Mrs. Joseph Feltzer and daughter, Miss Charlotte. The funeral was held at the church in Bellevue at 3 o'clock and interment made in the cemetery there.

Farmers, mechanics, railroaders, laborers, rely on Dr. Thomas' Eclectic Oil. Fine for cuts, burns, bruises. Should be kept in every home. 25c and 50c.

REV. C. C. ROLLIT OF MINNESOTA IN THE CITY

From Tuesday's Daily.

The Rev. C. C. Rollit of Red Wing, Minnesota, missionary for the sixth district of the Episcopal church, was in the city yesterday giving a lecture before the ladies in the afternoon, and delivered a most pleasing and powerful sermon at the evening Lenten services at St. Luke's church, which was much appreciated by the members of the church attending the services, as Rev. Rollit is one of the leading workers of the church and a most eloquent speaker.

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