

THE ROOT OF EVIL

(Continued from page 10)

"I've arranged a little trip to the country tomorrow, and I'm going to convince you before we return. Make the announcement tonight, dear! On my honor I promise to convince you tomorrow that we are ready. I've an argument that never fails—an argument no woman can resist."

"Not tonight, Jim," was the laughing reply. "Can't you trust me when I tell you that I've discovered something today that makes it necessary? I have seen Mr. Bivens."

"Nan leaped to her feet, her face flushed, her voice ringing with triumph. "Yes, have you said anything to Miss Nan yet?"

"Lord, no! Haven't dared. I'm kinder shyng up to the old lady to get her on my side. She seems awfully friendly. I think she likes me. Don't you think it a good plan to cultivate her?"

"By all means," was the dry reply. "See, Jim, help me. Take this attorneyship. It will please her and I'll make you rich. Come in with me and you'll never regret it. I know my folks were not your social equals in the old days down south. But you know as well as I do that money talks here."

"There was no mistaking the genuineness of Bivens' feelings. Stuart had but to accept the generous offer made

ways straight in speech and manners. The stammer small and weak in body, his movements sinuous, flexible, with eyes that never looked at the man he was talking to, yet always seemed to be taking in everything in the room.

"Well, Bivens, what can I do for you? I understand from your note that the matter is important."

"Of the gravest importance to us both, doctor," he answered, with a smile. "For a peculiar personal reason I want us to get together and settle our differences."

"Are there any differences between us? You go your way, and I go mine. You run your business to suit yourself, and I'll do the same. The world's big enough for us both."

"That's just the trouble," Bivens interrupted. "It isn't. We are entering a new era of combination, merger, co-operation."

"Compulsory co-operation!" the doctor laughed. "It may be so at last, the little man said soberly. 'Certainly the old idea of competition is played out. We no longer believe that business men should try to cut each other's throats.'"

"Oh, I see!" sneered the doctor. "They should get together, corral their customers and cut their throats."

"You must recognize the fact that the drug trade is a business enterprise, not a charity organization."

"Even so, still I happen to know that within a stone's throw of my store swarms a population of a quarter of a million human beings so poor that only 800 of them ever have access to a bathroom. You ask me to enter with you into a criminal conspiracy to suppress freedom of trade and use fraud and violence if necessary to win."

"I assure you," the little financier continued smoothly, "that my intentions were friendly and generous. My only desire was to help you and make you rich."

"I'm not clear yet how it is to be done," was the passionate answer, "but as sure as God lives we are going to do something. At present we are putting wreckers in charge of organization and famine producers in charge of production. It can't last. I believe in this republic. For the moment the people are asleep. But time is slowly shaping the issue that will move the last laggard. We are beginning dimly

to see that there is something more precious in our life than the tonnage of national wealth—the spirit of freedom and initiative in our people! Shall they become merely the hired men of a few moneyed kings? Or shall the avenues of industry and individual enterprise remain open to their children? The people will answer these questions!"

"Bivens merely shrugged his shoulders and answered in measured, careful tones: "Then suppose I'll have to fight you whether I wish it or not?"

"I assure you I had heard nothing of such a suit, and now that I have it does not even interest me."

"You may," was the cheerful response. "And I will answer frankly. I am engaged to be married to Miss Nan Primrose. The wedding is to occur in a few weeks. In some way she has learned of a possible conflict between your interests and mine and asked me to settle them."

"A woman's whim perhaps. Possibly because our mutual friend, Mr. Stuart, lives in your home, and she feared to lose his friendship in the conflict which might ensue."

"I'm sorry you can't see your way to listen to an proposition from me, doctor. I'm a practical man. I wish to incorporate your business into the general organization of the American Chemical company on terms that will satisfy you."

"Such terms can't be made, Bivens," the doctor said impetuously. "Your purpose is to squeeze money out of the people—the last dollar the trade will bear. That is your motto. I simply refuse. To you the city is merely a big flock of sheep to be sheared, while to me its myriad sounds are the music of a divine orator, throbbing with tears and winged with laughter. I call the people my neighbors—their hurrying

day I had a surprise for you. I have it's worth a day. You promised me one in the country before our foolish quarrel. I want it now. You will come?"

"She hesitated a moment and said: "Yes." "Within an hour they had reached the hill overlooking Gravesend bay, and the magnificent sweep of water below the Narrows had scarcely spoken on the way, answering Stuart's questions in friendly nods, smiles and monosyllables."

"Before we go farther," Stuart said when they had left the car. "I want to show you a model home a friend of mine has built out here. It's my ideal, and I think you'll like it."

"As they entered the gate, half hidden in the hedge, the girl exclaimed: "What a lovely little place!"

"A gardener who was watering some flowers on a sign from Stuart hastened up the gravel walk and opened the door."

"Every window commanded entrancing views of the bay and ocean. Every ship entering or leaving the harbor of New York must pass close and could be seen for miles along to sea."

"The devil must have laughed," "So did I—especially when he told me that he was engaged to be married."

"Engaged—to be married?" Stuart made a supreme effort to appear indifferent. "To whom?"

"To Miss Nan Primrose, a young lady I haven't the honor of knowing, and he said the lying audacity to say that he saw at her suggestion."

"I don't believe it," was the ringing answer which leaped to Stuart's lips. "I've had to face a crisis like this recently. I was beginning to hesitate and think of a compromise. You've helped me."

"Good luck, my boy," was the cheery answer. "I was a poor soldier tonight myself until the little wench told me obvious lies, and I took courage. He pretended to have come in a mood of generosity, his offer of settlement inspired by love."

"The devil must have laughed," "So did I—especially when he told me that he was engaged to be married."

IF...? Your income should stop today, yet your expenses will keep right on. Better save while the dollars come regularly. Into every life comes a time when READY MONEY would be welcome. 'Tis a fund you yourself can create—through a SAVINGS account with the Kandiyohei County Bank

worn bare by the feet of millions of forgotten fools whose bodies worms have eaten. Not one of them lives today even in a footnote of history."

"I think it wonderful, Jim!" never seen anything more nearly perfect. "Whose is it?"

"I'm sorry, but it must be goodbye. Your love has been a sweet and wonderful thing in my life."

"The spell of his millions is on me." "Yes, yes; I know," she gasped. "But I'm going to marry him. I can't help it. The spell of his millions is on me, and I can't shake it off."

State of Minnesota, County of Kandiyohi, In Probate Court. Estate of John William Carlson. Letters of Administration this day having been granted to Chr. Svenson of said County.



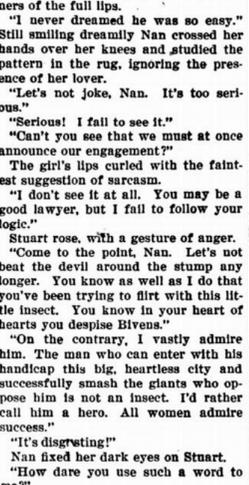
"Think it over. I'll see you again!"

In good faith, and every cloud between him and Nan would vanish! They could be married at once and the future was secure. All he had to do was to keep silent for the moment as to his real relations to Nan and compromise his sense of honor by accepting the wages of a man whose principles he despised. His decision was made without a moment's hesitation.

"I refuse the offer, Cal," he said firmly. Bivens rose quickly and placed his smooth hand on his friend's.

"I won't take that answer now. Think it over. I'll see you again." He turned and left the room before Stuart could reply.

"The lawyer drew a photograph from his desk and looked at it, smiling tenderly. "I wonder, Nan! I wonder!"



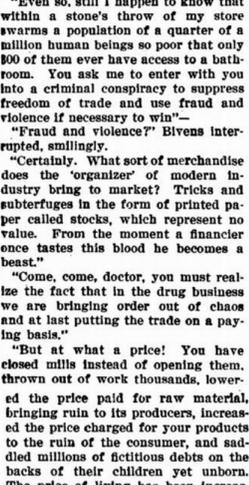
"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."

"Grant all their claims," he began impatiently, "for the trust—it's economy, its efficiency, its power, its success—this is a free country, isn't it?"



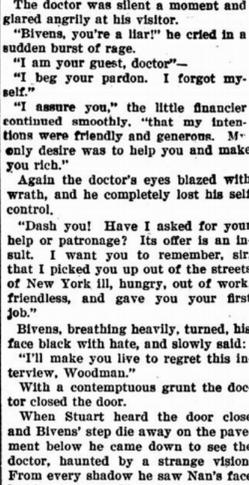
"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."

"Grant all their claims," he began impatiently, "for the trust—it's economy, its efficiency, its power, its success—this is a free country, isn't it?"



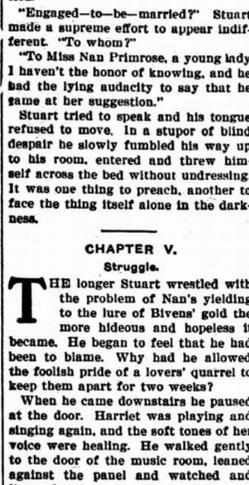
"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."

"Grant all their claims," he began impatiently, "for the trust—it's economy, its efficiency, its power, its success—this is a free country, isn't it?"



"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."

"Grant all their claims," he began impatiently, "for the trust—it's economy, its efficiency, its power, its success—this is a free country, isn't it?"



"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."

"Grant all their claims," he began impatiently, "for the trust—it's economy, its efficiency, its power, its success—this is a free country, isn't it?"



"The trust is here to stay."

"The trust is here to stay," the doctor exclaimed, wheeling her about for Stuart's inspection. "Run now, girl, and go to bed. I want to talk to Jim."

"Well, my boy," said the doctor when she had left, "I've just done a thing which I should not do. I do it! Your eyes are young, boy; your soul is fresh from God's heart. I'm just a little lonely and afraid tonight. See things for me—sit down a moment."

"There are several reasons why you couldn't have a more sympathetic listener tonight, doctor—go on."