

change to the power the little, heavily figure today incarnated. It had become more difficult of and carried himself with a conspicuous pride.

Stuart was scarcely prepared for the old fashioned cordial way in which he went about the business for he had asked him to come.

Jim, this is your day; those who are out there in the reception hall. You and I must have the man to man, heart to heart. I will talk plainly and I'll answer you.

Stuart made a proposition to make to you've got to hear it, so big that I get away from it, because I'm a fool. You're a man of genius. There is no height to which you can climb when once your feet are on the ladder. And I'm going to put you on it.

Stuart's insurance in Bivens' voice and his enthusiastic with which he impressed Stuart.

Stuart was quick to recognize it and he said:

"I present my plans I want you that I can make good my word. I have caused these reporters to be here today for the purpose of giving the widest publicity to the facts of my fortune. Another man has placed tomorrow on one of my papers. I have placed my money and in the next room, so arranged that you can verify my statements, and at any moment I shall ask these men to place and let them see their own eyes. There can be no rumors in Wall street about my status. Come in here."

Stuart led the way into the room which was the meeting place of the directors of his many corpora-

Stuart had scarcely passed the door when he stopped, struck dumb with amazement. In the center of the great room a slight that held him spell-bound. An immense vermilion wood table, six feet wide and fifty feet in length, stood in the center. On it the wizard placed his fortune of ninety millions of dollars. Twenty millions of gold, its heavy weight sustaining the stanchions. The coin, appearing all new from the national mint, was carefully arranged around the table in a solid building two feet high.

Stuart's gleaming yellow pile of gold had placed his stocks and bonds, each pile showing on its top the rich green, gold or purple of its issue, each pile marked with a tag which showed its total value. The effect was stunning.

Stuart approached the table softly, as a priest approaches an altar, and touched the gold with the tips of his slender little fingers.

"Just begun?"

"Just begun?" Stuart interrupted laughingly.

"You'll understand what I mean when I've finished the day's work."

"Why?" the young lawyer asked curiously. "Such a purpose seems



The Wizard Had Placed His Fortune of Ninety Millions.

In view of this stunning revelation sheerest insanity. Life, the dearest thing we possess, is too short for me to see you shoveling coal all eternity."

"I happen to be going to the bank," Bivens broke in good nature.

Stuart looked at the pile of gold and then at Bivens and said:

"If you do get there, Cal, I want you to be certain, the angels will have to sleep with their pocket under their pillows."

Stuart's eyes sparkled and a smile about the hard lines of his face. In spite of its doubtful nature he enjoyed the tribute to his genius beneath the banter of Bivens' joke. With a gesture of dignified dignity he turned to the man and quietly said:

"You will find on this table exactly \$90,000,000. Within an hour you can have each division of coin, stocks and bonds and bear witness to the truth of my assertions. I'm going to that door and leave you here for a moment."

"What with all that?"

"There's only one way out," Bivens mused. "through my little reception room, and I'll be there. I'll meet you and the gentlemen who are wait-

ing. When you are satisfied of the accuracy of my account, just tap on my door and I'll join you immediately. Do the inspection carefully. It's of grave importance. I shall call on you as a witness by and by before that group of newspaper men."

When Stuart had satisfied himself of the accuracy of the count, he stood gazing at the queer looking piles of yellow metal and richly tinted paper, stunned by the attempt to realize the enormous power over men which it represented. When the huge pile should thrill with life at the touch of the deft fingers of the master who could grasp its stunning force in human affairs, who could tell its possibilities?

The age of materialism had dawned, and the new age knew but one god, whose temple was the market place. A wave of bitterness swept his spirit, and for the first time he questioned for the briefest moment whether he had missed the way in life. Only for a moment, and then the feeling passed, and in its place slowly rose a sense of angry resentment against Bivens and all his tribe. When the little swarthy figure suddenly appeared in the doorway his soul was in arms for the struggle he knew coming.

"Well, you found I've not made a mistake?"

"No. To put it mildly, you will not be forced to apply to the charity bureau for any outside help this year."

"You have counted \$90,000,000 there. As I told you awhile ago, I've just begun. I've schemes on foot that circle the globe. I've made up my mind to have you with me. We won't discuss terms now—that's a mere detail—the thing is for us to get at the differences between us. Now say the meanest and hardest things you can think. I understand."

"My opinion, Cal, of your business methods are known to every one. They say that the warriors of the Dakota Indians used to eat the heart of a fallen foe to increase their courage. Your business methods haven't made much progress beyond this stage, so far as I can see."

Bivens stroked his silken beard with a nervous, puzzled movement and said:

"The passion for money, money for its own sake, right or wrong, is the motive power of the modern world. That's why I laugh at my critics and sneer at threats. I am secure because I've built my career on the biggest fact of the century."

"But," Stuart broke in, "you don't live. You are engaged in an endless fight, desperate, cruel, mercenary—for what?"

"The game, man, the game!"

"Game? What game? To crush and kill for the mere sake of doing it, as a sheep killing dog strangles fifty lambs in a night for the fun of hearing them bleat?"

"But, Jim," the little financier protested, "I don't make men as they are, nor did I make conditions."

"You are a wrecker and not a builder."

"But is that true?" Bivens interrupted eagerly. "I'm organizing the industries of the world. I have furthered the progress of humanity."

"Yes, in a way you have. And if the price of goods continues to rise for another ten years as it has during the past ten under your organizing the human race will be compelled to make still further progress. They will have to move to another planet. Nobody but a millionaire can live on this one. A day of reckoning is bound to come. But a millionaire dies every day. Nobody knows. Nobody cares. Is such a life at its best worth living? And yours is never at its best. You can't eat much. You don't sleep well and you can't live beyond fifty-five."

"Don't talk nonsense, Jim; I'll live as long as you."

"And yet you turn pale when I speak of death."

Bivens suddenly drew his watch and spoke with quick, nervous energy:

"I must call those reporters and get rid of them as soon as possible."

He gave the order, and in a few moments walked back into the room followed by the newspaper men, a half dozen young fellows with clean cut, eager faces. Not one of them showed a pencil or a note book, but not a feature of the startling exhibition escaped their intelligence. Every eye flashed with piercing light, every nerve quivered with sensitive impressions.

They looked at Bivens with peculiar awe. Stuart noted with a smile that not one of them spoke loudly in the presence of ninety millions of dollars. When Bivens led them out at last and returned to the room, he was in high spirits.

"Now, Jim," he began hastily, "if you have said all the bad things you can possibly think about me, we'll get down to business and I'll present the big proposition you can't resist."

CHAPTER XII. Temptation.

WHEN Stuart had seated himself on a luxurious leather covered chair in the little sitting room he gazed into the flickering fire with a feeling of strange excitement.

He could hear Bivens giving orders to his employees about the removal of his millions to the vaults below. It would take hours to complete the task. He could hear the deep vibrant ring of the gold, as the men dumped it into bags.

As he listened to the curious sound he began dimly to realize that the foundations of his life and character were being undermined. There could be no mistake about it, although he had made some brave talk to Bivens' face as he stared at the daring display of his money.

He lifted his eyes from the fire and

they rested on an exquisite miniature of Nan which had been painted just after her marriage. He forgot the ten black years of loneliness and struggle. He was standing before her again in all the pride and strength of those last days of passionate longing and bitter rebellion. His heart gave a throb of fierce protest against the fate that had robbed him of the one thing on earth he had ever really desired. He tried in vain to separate her from the struggle of character and principle he was fighting with Bivens.

When Bivens entered he found his tall figure bent low in the chair and a scowl on his face. The little black eyes sparkled with the certainty of victory. He knew the poison was at work and its wine had found the soul.

"Now, Jim, down to business! You can see that I have the cash. What I must have to do the big thing I've dreamed is a right hand man whom I can trust with my money, my body and my soul. He must be a man with brains and farseeing eyes. A man who will fight to the death and be loyal with every breath, who will work day and night, a man of iron nerve, iron muscle and a heart of steel. Come in with me, Jim, for all you're worth, with all your brain and will and personality, without a single reservation and I'll give you a partnership of one fourth interest in my annual income and I'll guarantee that it shall never be less than a million a year."

Stuart sprang to his feet and stared at Bivens, gasping.

"You mean this—are you serious? I expected the offer of a generous salary, Cal, but this is simply stunning."

"I told you I'd make you a proposition so big and generous you couldn't get away from it. But mind you, I've the best reasons for making it. We are entering the last phase of a world struggle for financial supremacy. This country is to be the real center of modern power. We must become and will become quickly the economic masters of the world. When that happens somebody is going to be master here."

Bivens rose and paced back and forth a moment.

"Somebody's going to be master here, Jim," he repeated, "and it's not going to be a mob, the stupid, howling, slobbering thing that clutched at your throat that day in front of my bank."

"No."

"Nor will it be a clumsy soulless corporation called a 'trust,' either, a thing that can be badgered and hounded by every hungry, thieving politician

who gets into office. The coming master of masters, the king of kings will be a man—a man on whose imperial word will hang the fate of empires. I met the king of America the other day in this parlor. He sent for me. You can bet I answered the call. He made me eat dirt and swear that I liked the taste of it. But I'll get even with him yet!"

Two livid spots suddenly appeared on the swarthy cheeks and he choked into silence for a moment, continuing:

"The world is waiting for its real master—not a multi-millionaire, but the coming billionaire. The king of kings is yet to come. If I had been ready in this parlor with the capital I have today I could have made a billion. With the power and experience I now have and one such man as you on whom I can depend I'd double my fortune every year. That means that in five years I will be a billionaire, and only forty-two."

"A billion dollars will double itself in seven years. At forty-two I'd be worth a billion. At forty-nine I'd have two billions. At fifty-eight I'd be worth four billions—and just old enough to really begin to do things."

"Give me one billion answerable to my will alone and I can rule this nation. Give me four billions and no king or emperor, president or parliament on this globe dare make peace or war without consulting me."

"How long could this republic stand if such a man should see fit to change its form? Even now our petty millionaires buy courts and legislatures, and the control of great cities. But the new king would know no limitations to this power. If Europe now cringes at the feet of our present millionaire king of Wall street, emperors beg his favor and princes wait at his door, what could the real ruler of the world do?"

Bivens' voice again sank into low, passionate whispers, while his black eyes again became two points of fierce gleaming light.

When the crucial moment came for Stuart's manhood to answer, the speech of brave denunciation died on his lips. At the door of this yellow empire, mightier than kings in purple robe, his conscience halted, hesitated and stammered. He found himself, in spite of honor and character, for the moment measuring himself with Bivens in the struggle for supremacy which would sooner or later come between them if he should enter such an alliance.

"You needn't rush your decision. (To be continued.)"

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