

# THE ROOT OF EVIL

## Book 1 — The Seed

### 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.

The chatter of the sparrows, the shouts of children in the Square and the huckster's drawling call seemed the subtones of a strangely beautiful oratorio of nature into which every sound of earth had softly melted. Even the roar of the elevated trains on Sixth Avenue and the screech of their wheels as the cars turned the corner of the filthy street in the rear were music. A secret joy filled the world. Nothing could break its spell — not even the devilish incessant rattle of the machine hammers flattening the heads of the rivets on the huge steel warehouse of the American Chemical Company rising across the avenue. The music he