



# THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, Author of "THE COAST" etc.

CHAPTER XXVI—Continued.

"Possibly," said I, with no disposition to combat views based on I knew not what painful experience. "But I don't care for that sort of liking—from a woman, or from a dog."

"It's the only kind you'll get," retorted he, trying to control his agitation. "I'm an old man. I know human nature—that's why I live alone. You'll take that kind of liking, or do without."

"Then I'll do without," said I. "Give her an income, and she'll go. I see it all. You've flattered her vanity by showing your love for her—that's the way with women. They go crazy about themselves, and forget all about the man. Give her an income and she'll go."

"I doubt it," said I. "And you would, if you knew her. But, even so, I shall lose her in any event. For, unless she is made independent, she'll certainly go with the last of the little money she has, the remnant of a small legacy."

The old man argued with me, the more vigorously, I suspect, because he found me resolute. When he could think of no new way of stating his case—his case against Anita—he said: "You are a fool, young man—that's clear. I wonder such a fool was ever able to get together as much property as report credits you with. But—you're the kind of fool I like."

"Then—you'll indulge my folly?" said I, smiling.

He threw up his arms in a gesture of mock despair. "If you will have it so," he replied. "I am curious about this niece of mine. I want to see her. I want to see the woman who can resist you."

"Her mind and her heart are closed against me," said I. "And it is my own fault—I closed them."

"Put her out of your head," he advised. "No woman is worth a serious man's while."

"I have few wants, few purposes," said I. "But those few I pursue to the end. Even though she were not worth while, even though I wholly lost hope, still I'd not give her up, couldn't—that's my nature. But—she is worth while." And I could see her, slim and graceful, the curves in her face and figure that made my heart leap, the azure sheen upon her petal-like skin, the mystery of the soul lurking from her eyes.

After we had arranged the business—or, rather, arranged to have it arranged through our lawyers—he walked down to the pier with me. At the gangway he gave me another searching look from head to foot—but vastly different from the inspection with which our interview had begun. "You are a devilish handsome young fellow," said he. "Your pictures don't do you justice. And I shouldn't have believed any man could overcome in one brief sitting such a prejudice as I had against you. On second thought, I don't care to see her. She must be even below the average."

"Or far above it," I suggested.

"I suppose I'll have to ask her over to visit me," he went on. "A fine hypocrite I'll feel."

"You can make it one of the conditions of your gift that she is not to thank you or speak of it," said I. "I fear your face would betray us, if she ever did."

"An excellent idea!" he exclaimed. Then, as he shook hands with me in farewell: "You will win her yet—if you care to."

As I steamed up the Sound, I was tempted to put in at Dawn Hill's harbor. Through my glass I could see Anita and Alva and several others, men and women, having tea on the lawn under a red and white awning. I could see her dress—a violet suit with a big violet hat to match. I knew that costume. Like everything she wore, it was both beautiful in itself and most becoming to her. I could see her face, could almost make out its expression—did I see, or did I imagine, a cruel contrast to what I always saw when she knew I was looking?

I gazed until the trees hid lawn and gay awning, and that lively company and her. In my bitterness I was full of resentment against her, full of self-pity. I quite forgot, for that moment, her side of the story.

## XXVII. BLACKLOCK SEES A LIGHT

It was next day, I think, that I met Mowbray Langdon and his brother Tom in the entrance of the Textile Building. Mowbray was back only a week from his summer abroad, but Tom I had seen and nodded to every day, often several times in the day, as he went to and fro about his "respectable" dirty work for the Roebuck Langdon clique. He was one of their most frequently used stool-pigeon detectors in banks and insurance companies whose funds they staked in their big gambling operations, they taking almost all the profits and the depositors and policy holders taking almost all the risk. It had never once occurred to me to have any feel-

ing of any kind Tom, or in any way to take him into my calculations as to Anita. He was, to my eyes, too obviously a pale understudy of his powerful and fascinating brother. Whenever I thought of him as the man Anita fancied she loved, I put it aside instantly. "The kind of man a woman really cares for," I would say to myself, "is the measure of her true self. But not the kind of man she imagines she cares for."

Tom went on; Mowbray stopped. We shook hands, and exchanged commonplaces in the friendly way—I was harboring no resentment against him, and I wished him to realize that his assault had bothered me no more than the buzzing and battering of a summer fly. "I've been trying to get in to see you," said he. "I wanted to explain about that unfortunate Textile deal."

This, when the assault on me had burst out with fresh energy the day after he landed from Europe! I could scarcely believe that his vanity, his confidence in his own skill at underground work could so delude him. "Don't bother," said I. "All that's ancient history."

But he had thought out some lines he regarded as particularly creditable



"BUT I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST INTEREST IN CROOKED ENTERPRISES NOW!"

to his ingenuity; he was not to be deprived of the pleasure of telling them. So I was compelled to listen; and, being in an indulgent mood, I did not spoil his pleasure by letting him see or suspect my unbelief. If he could have looked into my mind, as I stood there in an attitude of patient attention, I think even his self-complacency would have been put out of countenance.

With his first full stop, I said: "I understand perfectly, Langdon. But I haven't the slightest interest in crooked enterprises now. I'm clear out of all you fellows' stocks. I've reinvested my property so that not even a panic would trouble me."

"That's good," he drawled. I saw he did not believe me—which was natural, as he knew nothing of my arrangement with Galloway and assumed I was laboring in heavy weather, with a bad cargo of Coal stocks and contracts. "Come to lunch with me. I've got some interesting things to tell you about my trip."

A few months before, I should have accepted with alacrity. But I had lost interest in him. He had not changed; if anything, he was more dazzling than ever in the ways that had once dazzled me. It was I that had changed—my ideals, my point of view. I had no desire to feed my new-sprung contempt by watching him pump in vain for information to be used in his secret campaign against me. "No, thanks. Another day," I replied, and left him with a curt nod. I noted that he had failed to speak of my marriage, though he had not seen me

since. "A sore subject with all the Langdons," thought I. "It must be very sore, indeed, to make a man who is all manners, neglect them."

"I am strong and secure," said I to myself as I strode through the wonderful canyon of Broadway, whose walls are those mighty palaces of finance and commerce from which business men have been ousted by cormorant "captains of industry." I must use my strength. How could I better use it than by fluttering these vultures on their roosts, and perhaps bringing down a bird or two?

I decided, however, that it was better to wait until they had stopped rattling their beaks and claws on my shell in futile attack. "Meanwhile," I reasoned carefully, "I can be getting good and ready."

Their first new move, after my little talk with Langdon, was intended as a mortal blow to my credit. Melville requested me to withdraw mine and Blacklock and Company's accounts from the National Industrial Bank; and the fact that this huge and powerful institution had thus branded me was slyly given to the financial reporters of the newspapers. Far and wide it was published; and the public was expected to believe that this was one more and drastic measure in the "campaign of the honorable men of finance to clean the Augean Stables of Wall Street." My daily letter to investors next morning led off with this paragraph—the first notice I had taken publicly of their attacks on me:

"In the effort to discredit the only remaining uncontrolled source of financial truth, the big bandits have ordered my accounts out of their chief gambling-house. I have transferred the accounts to the Discount and Deposit National, where Leonidas Thornley stands guard against the new order that seeks to make business a synonym for crime."

Thornley was of the type that was dominant in our commercial life before the "financiers" came—just as song birds were common in our trees

But I believe evil of no man. Even when he has been convicted, I see the mitigating circumstances.

How Thornley did stand by me! And for no reason except that it was as necessary for him to be fair and just as to breathe. I shall not say he resisted the attempts to compel him to desert me—they simply made no impression on him. I remember when Roebuck himself, a large stockholder in the bank, left cover far enough personally to urge him to throw me over, he replied steadily:

"If Mr. Blacklock is guilty of circulating false stories against commercial enterprises, as his enemies allege, the penal code can be used to stop him. But as long as I stay at the head of this bank, no man shall use it for personal vengeance. It is a chartered public institution, and all have equal rights to its facilities. I would lend money to my worst enemy if he came for it with the proper security. I would refuse my best friend, if he could not give security. The funds of a bank are a trust fund, and my duty is to see that they are employed to the best advantage. If you wish other principles to prevail here you must get another president."

That settled it. No one appreciated more keenly than did Roebuck that character is an indispensable in its place as is craft where the situation demands craft—and is far harder to get.

I shall not relate in detail that campaign against me. It failed not so much because I was strong as because I was weak. Perhaps, if Roebuck and Langdon could have directed it in person, or had had the time to advise with their agents before and after each move, it might have succeeded. They would not have let exaggeration dominate it and venom show upon its surface; they would not have neglected to follow up advantages, would not have persisted in lines of attack that created public sympathy for me. They would not have so crudely exploited my unconventional marriage and my financial relations with old Ellersly. But they dared not go near the battle field; they had to trust to agents whom their orders and suggestions reached by the most roundabout ways; and they were busier with their enterprises that involved immediate and great gain or loss of money.

When Galloway died, they learned that the Coal stocks with which they thought I was loaded down were part of his estate. They satisfied themselves that I was in fact as impregnable as I had warned Langdon. They reversed tactics; Roebuck tried to make it up with me. "If he wants to see me," was my invariable answer to the intimations of his emissaries, "let him come to my office, just as I would go to his, if I wished to see him."

"He is a big man—a dangerous big man," cautioned Joe.

"Big—yes. But strong only against his own kind," replied I. "One mouse can make a whole herd of elephants squeal for mercy."

"It isn't prudent, it isn't prudent," persisted Joe.

"It is not," replied I. "Thank God, I'm at last in the position I've been toiling to achieve. I can't have to be prudent. I can say and do what I please, without fear of the consequences. I can freely indulge in the luxury of being a man. That's costly, Joe, but it's worth all it could cost."

Joe didn't understand me—he rarely did. "I'm a hen. You're an eagle," said he.

## CHAPTER XXVIII. A HOUSEWARMING.

Joe's daughter, staying on and on at Dawn Hill, was chief lieutenant, if not principal, in my conspiracy to drift Anita day by day further and further into the routine of the new life. Yet neither of us had shown by word or look that a thorough understanding existed between us. My part was to be unobtrusive, friendly, neither indifferent nor eager, and I held it by taking care never to be left alone with Anita; Alva's part was to be herself—simple and natural and sensible, full of life and laughter, mocking at those moods that betray us into the absurdity of taking ourselves too seriously.

I was getting ready a new house in town as a surprise to Anita, and I took Alva into my plot. "I wish Anita's part of the house to be exactly to her liking," said I. "Can't you set her to dreaming aloud what kind of place she would like to live in, what she would like to open her eyes on in the morning, what surroundings she'd like to dress in and read in, and all that?"

Alva had no difficulty in carrying out the suggestions. And by harassing Westlake incessantly, I succeeded in realizing her report of a dream to the exact shade of the draperies and the silk that covered the walls. By pushing the work, I got the house done just as Alva was warning me that she could not remain longer at Dawn Hill, but must go home and get ready for her wedding. When I went down to arrange with her the last details of the surprise, who should meet me at the station but Anita herself? I took one glance at her serious face and, much disquieted, seated myself beside her in the little trap. Instead of following the usual route to the house she turned her horse into the hayshore road.

"Several days ago," she began, as the bend hid the station, "I got a letter from some lawyers, saying that an uncle of mine had given me a large sum of money—a very large sum. I have been inquiring about it, and find it is mine absolutely."

"I mean it," said he, looking at me with eyes as straight as a well-brought-up girl's. "How could my mind be judicial if I were personally interested in the enterprises people look to me for advice about?"

And not only did he keep himself clear and his mind judicial but also he was, like all really good people, exceedingly slow to believe others guilty of the things he would soon have thought of doing as he would have thought of slipping into the teller's cage during the lunch hour and pocketing a package of banknotes. He gave me his motto—a curious one: "Believe in everybody; trust in nobody."

"Only a thief wishes to be trusted," he explained, "and only a fool trusts. I let no one trust me; I trust no one."



# GATHERED SMILES

## QUITE ELIGIBLE.

A big, burly-looking fellow, a per-walked into the office of a prominent accident insurance company the other day, and applied for a policy.

"Certainly," said the secretary. "Are you engaged in any hazardous business?"

"Not in the least," replied the applicant.

"Does your business make it necessary for you to handle loaded firearms or weapons of any kind?"

"No, sir."

"Would your business ever require you to be where there were excited crowds—for instance, at a riot or a fire?"

"Very seldom."

"Is your business such as to render you liable to injury from tram-cars or runaway horses?"

"No, sir."

"Does your business throw you in contact with the criminal classes?"

"Very rarely, indeed, sir."

"I think that you are eligible. What is your business?"

"I am a policeman."

"Way to Choose a Husband. Women should choose husbands as they do their gowns," says the oracular Nikola Greeley-Smith.

Which reminds us that a young lady in our neighborhood was heard to say that she wants a husband full of bustle.—Chicago Journal.

WHAT FRIGHTENED HIM.

Polly—Whatever the matter with you, James? You look as if something had frightened you.

James—You'll get a fright, too, when you turn your head round and see your mother.

Then He Melted Away. Count Hickoff—You refuse me so one kiss! Why, at Newport I was lovinized.

Miss Tabasco—I thought perhaps were galvanized.

Count Hickoff—Galvanized? How extraordinary you do speak. Why?

Miss Tabasco—Because you have such a hard cheek.—Chicago Daily News.

A Sign Which Failed. Young Husband—Seems to me, my dear, this chicken is pretty tough.

Young Wife—I know it is, and I can't understand it at all. I picked it out myself.

Did you examine it closely? Indeed I did. I looked in its mouth the first thing and I could see it hadn't even cut its first teeth yet.—N. Y. Weekly.

Disappointed. Nan—You told me he was a young man with an established reputation.

Fan—Well?

Nan—I find he is a young man with a reputation, but no establishment.—Chicago Tribune.

OF COURSE.

Hilly—Wot's that lady got that thing on her head for and them shoes on 'er feet?

Milly—W'y, yo' silly—to keep her head and feet dry o' course.

Preparing for the Future. "So you want more wages?" said the warden of the penitentiary.

"That's what I do," answered the cook. "This talk of punishing trust magnates is getting me more nervous every day. If I've got to learn to cook terrapin and lobster a la Newberg, I want more pay. And what's more I want to be called a 'chef'."—Washington Star.

Guaranteed. Diggs—There's one good thing about self-made men.

Higgs—What is that?

Diggs—A manufacturer's guaranty goes with every one of them.

## From Start to Finish.

"Be mine," he implored. "Certainly," she replied. And so they were married and—"Beware!" he cried. "Oh, fudge!" she exclaimed. So they were divorced and lived happily ever after.—Chicago Daily News.

## WORSE THAN AUTOS.

Mermaid—What in the world is the matter? You look like you had been up against a buxaw.

Neptune—Yes, confound it! Since those motor boats are flying around here no one is safe.—Chicago Daily News.

Advice to Married Men. Although your wife is far from here believe as though she still were near.—Detroit Free Press.

Had Wrecked the Machine. Owner of motor car (to chauffeur)—Have you a recommendation from your last employer?

Chauffeur—No, sir; but I can get one in the course of a month or so.

Owner of Motor Car—Why the delay? Chauffeur—He's in hospital.

More Pity. Wife (during the spat)—I only married you because I pitied you.

Husband—Well, everybody pities me now.—Chicago Daily News.

## NO LIE.

Poker—Figures never lie!

Game—No; but they're sometimes placed in mighty awkward positions by the people who do!

Sufficient Credentials. Careful parent—Before I can give consent to your proposed marriage to my daughter, I must know something about your character.

Suitor—Certainly, sir. Here is my bank book.

Careful Parent (after a glance)—Take her, my son, and be happy.—N. Y. Weekly.

Explained. "Say dad, what does uptity mean?"

"The same as persnickety, my son."

"Well what does persnickety mean?"

"The same as uptity. Run along now."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

STUDIES IN SENSE.

Wife—A man is the most sensible of all animals, is he not?

Hubby—Certainly.

Wife—Then I wonder why he doesn't wear a loose, comfortable collar like a dog's.