THE DELUGE

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

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CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

The first news I got was that Bill Van Nest had disappeared. As soon as the Stock Exchange opened, National Coal became the feature. But, instead of "wash sales," Roebuck, Langdon and Melville were themselves, through various brokers, buying the stocks in large quantities to keep the prices up. My next letter was as brief as my first philippic:

"Bill Van Nest is at the Hotel Frankfort, Newark, under the name of Thomas Lowry. He was in telephonic communication with President Melville, of the National Industrial bank, twice yesterday.

"The underwriters of the National Coal company's new issues, frightened by yesterday's exposure, have compelled Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Mowbray, Langdon and Mr. Melville themselves to buy. So, yesterday, those three gentlemen bought with real money, with their own money, large quantities of stocks which are worth less than half what they paid for them.

"They will continue to buy these stocks so long as the public holds aloof. They dare not let the prices slump. They hope that this storm will blow over, and that then the investing public will forget and will relieve them of their load."

I had added: "But this storm won't blow over. It will become a cyclone." I struck that out. "No prophecy," said I to myself. "Your rule, ironclad, must be—facts, always facts; only facts."

The gambling section of the public took my hint and rushed into the market; the burden of protecting the underwriters was doubled, and more and more of the hoarded loot was disgorged. That must have been a costly day—for, 10 minutes after the Stock Exchange closed, Roebuck sent for me.

"My compliments to him," said I to his messenger, "but I am too busy. I'll be glad to see him here, however."

"You know he dares not come to you," said the messenger, Schilling, president of the National Manufactured Food company, sometimes called the Poison Trust. "If he did, and it were to get out, there'd be a panic."

"Probably," replied I with a shrug. "That's no affair of mine. I'm not responsible for the rotten conditions which these so-called financiers have produced, and I shall not be disturbed by the crash which must come."

Schilling gave me a genuine look of mingled pity and admiration. "I suppose you know what you're about," said he, "but I think you're making a mistake."

"Thanks, Ned," said I—he had been my head clerk a few years before, and I had got him the chance with Roebuck which he had improved so well. "I'm going to have some fun. Can't live but once."

My "daily letters" had now ceased to be advertisements, had become news, sought by all the newspapers of this country and of the big cities in Great Britain. I could have made a large saving by no longer paying my sixty-odd regular papers for inserting them. But I was looking too far ahead to blunder into that fatal mistake. Instead, I signed a year's contract with each of my papers, they guaranteeing to print my advertisements, I guaranteeing to protect them against loss on libel suits. I organized a dummy news bureau, and through it got contracts with the telegraphic companies. Thus insured against the cutting of my communications with the public, I was ready for the real campaign.

It began with my "History of the National Coal company." I need not repeat that famous history here. I need recall only the main points—how I proved that the common stock was actually worth less than two dollars a share, that the bonds were worth less than twenty-five dollars in the hundred, that both stock and bonds were illegal; my detailed recital of the crimes of Roebuck, Melville and Langdon in wrecking existing properties, in wrecking coal railways, in electing American labor and substituting helots from eastern Europe; how they had swindled and fled and bribed; how they had twisted the books of the companies, how they were planning to unload the mass of almost worthless securities at high prices, then to get from under the market and let the bonds and stocks drop down to where they could buy them in on terms that would yield them more than 250 per cent on the actual capital invested. Less and dearer coal; lower wages and more ignorant laborers; enormous profits taken without mercy into a few pockets.

On the day the seventh chapter of this history appeared, the telegraph companies notified me that they would transmit no more of my matter. They feared the consequences in libel suits, explained Moseby, general manager of one of the companies.

"But I guarantee to protect you," said I. "You will get back in any amount you ask."

"We can't take the risk," Mr. Blacklock," replied he. The twinkle in his eye told me why, and also that he, like every one else in the country except the clique, was in sympathy with me.

My lawyers found an honest judge, and I got an injunction that compelled the companies to transmit under my contracts. I suspended the "History" for one day, and sent out in place of it an account of this attempt to shut me off from the public. "Hereafter," said I, in the last paragraph in my letter, "I shall end each day's chapter with a forecast of what the next day's chapter is to be. If for any reason it fails to appear, the public will know that somebody has been coerced by Roebuck, Melville & Co."

XXX.

ANITA'S SECRET.

That afternoon—or, was it the next?—I happened to go home early. I have never been able to keep alive anger against any one. My anger against Anita had long ago died away, had been succeeded by regret and remorse that I had let my nerves, or whatever the accursed cause was, whirl me into such an outburst. Not that I regretted having rejected what I still felt was insulting to me and degrading to her; simply that my manner should have been different. There was no necessity or excuse for violence in showing her that I would not, could not, accept from her the what only love has the right to give. And I had long been casting about for some way to apologize—not easy to do, when her decent manner toward me made it difficult for me to find even the necessary commonplaces to "keep up appearances" before the servants, on the few occasions on which we accidentally met.

But, as I was saying, I came up from the office and stretched myself on the lounge in my private room, adjoining the library. I had read myself into a doze, when a servant brought me a card. I glanced at it as it lay upon his extended tray. "General Monson." I read aloud. "What does the demned rascal want?" I asked.

The servant smiled. He knew as well as I how [illegible] missed him with a present of six months' pay, had given the newspapers the story—or, rather, his version of the story—of my efforts to educate myself in the "arts and graces of a gentleman."

"Mr. Monson says he wishes to see you particularly, sir," said he.

"Well—I'll see him," said I. I dozed, he went out, I dozed on. My anger against Anita had long ago died away, and I [illegible] impossible to be in a rage with her. But that notion vanished the instant I set eyes upon him. He was unofficially at the very top of the wave. "Hello, Monson," was my greeting, in it no reminder of his treachery. "Howdy, Blacklock," said he. "I've come on a little errand for Mrs. Langdon." Then, with that nasty grin of his: "You know, I'm looking after things for her since the bust-up."

"No, I didn't know," said I curtly, suppressing my instant curiosity. "What does Mrs. Langdon want?"

"To see you—for just a few minutes—whenever it is convenient."

"If Mrs. Langdon has business with me, I'll see her at my office," said I. She was one of the fashionables that had got herself into my black books by her treatment of Anita since the break with the Ellerslys.

"She wishes to come to you here—this afternoon, if you are to be at home. She asked me to say that her business is important—and very private."

I hesitated, but I could think of no good excuse for refusing. "I'll be home an hour," said I. "Good day."

He gave me no time to change my mind. Something—perhaps it was his curious expression as he took himself off—made me begin to regret. The more I thought of the matter, the less I thought of my having made any civil concession to a woman who had acted so badly toward Anita and myself. He had not been gone a quarter of an hour before I went to Anita in her sitting room. Always, the instant I entered the outer door of her part of our house, that powerful, interesting fascination that she had for me began to take possession of my senses. It was in every garment she wore. It seemed to linger in any place where she had been, for a long time after she left it. She was at a small desk by the window, was writing letters.

"May I interrupt?" said I. "Monson was here a few minutes ago—from Mrs. Langdon. She wants to see me. I told him I would see her here. Then it occurred to me that perhaps I had been too good-natured. What do you think?"

"TOOL! SHE PLAYED AT ME. OH, THE FOOLS WOMEN MAKE OF MEN."

I could not see her face, but only the back of her head, and the loose coils of magnetic hair and the white nape of her graceful neck. As I began to speak, she stopped writing, her pen suspended over the sheet of paper. After I ended there was a long silence.

"I'd not see her," said I. "I don't quite understand why I yielded." And I turned to go.

"Wait—please," came from her in a rapture.

Another long silence. Then I: "If she comes here, I think the only person who can properly receive her is you."

"No—you must see her," said Anita at last. And she turned round in her chair until she was facing me. Her expression—I can not describe it—I can only say that it gave me a sense of impending calamity.

"I'd rather not—much rather not," said I.

"I particularly wish you to see her," she replied, and she turned back to her writing. I saw her lips moved as if she were about to speak—but she did not begin—and I felt that she would say [illegible] with vague dread. [illegible] our cousins stillness, and we went to the library.

It was not long before Mrs. Langdon was announced. [illegible] the whole women to whom she had [illegible] thinner than when I [illegible]; instead of her former restless, petulant, suspicious expression, she now looked tragically sad. "May I trouble you to close the door?" said she, when the servant had withdrawn.

I closed the door.

"I've come," she began, without seating herself, "to make you as unhappy, I fear, as I am. I've hesitated long before coming. But I am desperate. The one hope I have left is that you and I between us may be able to—to—that you and I may be able to help each other."

I waited.

"I suppose there are people," she went on, "who have never known what it was to—really to care for some one else. They would despise me for clinging to a man after he has shown me that—that his love has ceased."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Langdon," I interrupted. "You apparently think your husband and I are intimate friends. Before you go any further, I must disabuse you of that idea."

She looked at me in open astonishment. "You do not know why my husband has left me?"

"Until a few minutes ago, I did not know that he had left you," I said. "And I do not wish to know why."

Her expression of astonishment changed to mockery. "Oh!" she sneered. "Your wife has fooled you into thinking it a one-sided affair. Well, I tell you, she is as much to blame as he—more. For he did love me when he married me; did love me until she got him under her spell again."

I thought I understood. "You have been misled, Mrs. Langdon," said I, gently, pitying her as the victim of her insane jealousy. "You have——"

"Ask your wife," she interrupted angrily. "Hereafter, you can't pretend ignorance. For I'll at least be revenged. She failed utterly to trap him into marriage when she was a poor girl, and ——"

"Before you go any further," said I, coldly, "let me set you right. My wife was at one time engaged to your husband's brother, but——"

"Tom?" she interrupted. And her laugh made me bite my lip. "So she told you that! I don't see how she dared. Why, everybody knows that she and Mowbray were engaged, and that he broke it off to marry me."

All in an instant everything that had been confused in my affairs at home and down town became clear. I understood why I had been pursued relentlessly in Wall street; why I had been unable to make the least impression on the barriers between Anita and myself. You will imagine that some terrible emotion at once dominated me. But this is not a romance, only the veracious chronicle of certain human beings. My first emotion was—relief that it was not Tom Langdon. "I ought to have known she couldn't care for him," said I to myself. I, contending with Tom Langdon for a woman's love had always made me shrink. But Mowbray—that was vastly different. My respect for myself and for Anita rose.

"No," said I to Mrs. Langdon, "my wife did not tell me, never spoke of it. What I said to you was purely a guess of my own. I had no interest in the matter—and haven't. I have absolute confidence in my wife. I feel ashamed that you have provoked me into saying so." I opened the door.

"I am not going yet," said she angrily. "Yesterday morning Mowbray and she were riding together in the Riverside drive. Ask her groom."

"What of it?" said I. Then, as she did not rise, I rang the bell. When the servant came, I said: "Please tell Mrs. Blacklock that Mrs. Langdon is in the library—and that I am here, and gave you the message."

As soon as the servant was gone, she said: "No doubt she'll lie to you. These women that steal other women's property are usually clever at fooling their own silly husbands."

"I do not intend to ask her," I replied. "To ask her would be an insult.

She made no comment beyond a scornful toss of the head. We both had our gaze fixed upon the door through which Anita would enter. When she finally did appear, I, after one glance at her, turned—it must have been triumphantly—upon her accuser. I had not doubted, but where is the faith that is not the stronger for confirmation? And confirmation there was in the very atmosphere round that stately, still figure. She looked calmly, first at Mrs. Langdon, then at me.

"I sent for you," said I, "because I thought that you, rather than I, should request Mrs. Langdon to leave your house."

At that Mrs. Langdon was on her feet, and blazing. "Fool!" she flared at me. "Oh, the fools women make of men!" Then to Anita: "You—you —— But no, I must not permit you to drag me down to your level. Tell your husband—tell him that you were riding with my husband in the Riverside drive yesterday.

I stepped between her and Anita. "My wife will not answer you," said I. "I hope, Madam, you will spare us the necessity of a painful scene But leave you must—at once."

She looked wildly round, clasped her hands, suddenly burst into tears. If she had but known, she could have had her own way after that, without any attempt from me to oppose her. For she was evidently unutterably wretched—and no one knew better than I the sufferings of unreturned love. But she had given me up; slowly, sobbing, she left the room I opening the door for her and closing it behind her.

"I almost broke down myself," said I, to Anita. "Poor woman! How can you be so calm? You women in your relations with each other are—a mystery."

(To be Continued.)

STATE AS LIQUOR SELLER

An Experiment in Gwalia, West Australia, Results Successfully.

The West Australian state government's experiment in liquor business control at the mining center of Gwalia has managed to live through criticism, and now appears to be a firmly established institution.

Within the last few days the new chairman of committees of the senate, Senator Pearce, has come forward with first hand testimony. He had stayed a week end at the state hotel at Gwalia, and has now told a public meeting in this city how he found prevailing conditions, says a Melbourne letter to the London Chronicle.

Senator Pearce found that the manager of the hotel was paid a good salary and had no interest in adulterating drink or trading during prohibited hours. The hotel was strictly for public convenience, and there was no more incentive to make men drink beer than there was for a station master at a railway station to sell tickets. The result was that there was no sign of drunkenness about the town. When a man was disposed to drink more than he could afford or was good for him there was machinery for exercising control over him. All that had to be done was for the man's wife or relative to speak to the manager of the hotel, and then the barman received instructions that he was to be served with only two long beers a day—one when going on to his morning "shift" and one coming off. The miners called this being placed under the Dog act." No one, however, outside the complainant, the manager, or the barman need be informed as to who was on the list—except, said Senator Pearce with a sly smile, when the proscribed man himself lectured his fellows on their disgusting intemperance in calling for more than two drinks a day. On Sunday not a drink was sold or asked for.

The Gwalia State hotel, after paying all expenses and supplying a splendid table and excellent bedroom accommodation, now cleared a profit of $15,000 per anaum out of pure liquors. The manager regarded himself as a guardian of the people, who would not give them poison to drink nor allow them to abuse the privilege of obtaining pure liquor.

Earthquake Philosophy.

Poverty has its compensations in some matters. Thus the Mexican peons who live in one-story adobe huts suffer little from earthquakes as compared with their richer neighbors who live in more pretentious houses of stone. The earthquake shock reduces the sun-dried adobe to harmless powder, but it piles stone houses upon the heads of those who live in them. "Poor and content," says the poet, "is rich and rich enough." It is probable, however, that the peon would be willing to exchange houses with the caballero even at the risk of earthquakes. It is the disposition of mankind to set small value on those things we have and to place a high estimate on these that we have not.

A Four-Decker Sea Pie.

A huge sea pie was served to a party of 50 guests at a feast at Gorleston, England, at which the member for Yarmouth was present.

It was made by an old trawl skipper and weighed a hundredweight and a half. It was a four decker and was boiled in a vast cauldron for several hours. The keel was laid with beef bones and there was a triple bulkhead of short crust, the bunkers being filled with beefsteak and ox kidneys.

There were holds also stored with meat, onions, carrots, turnips and potatoes, and the hull was constructed of a substantial short crust that alone took a stone and a half of flour.

To Mine Russian Copper.

According to advices from St. Petersburg to the London Times, a syndicate has been formed there for the exploitation of the rich copper mines in Russian Turkestan. The syndicate has acquired rights over 15,000 acres of territory. The district is said to comprise the finest copper producing area in the whole of the Russian empire. The company will shortly be formed with an initial share capital of 1,500,000 rubles ($750,000).

Historic Ground May Be Park.

The historic plains of Abraham will be dedicated as a national park at the celebration next year of the three-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Quebec, provided those most prominent in the commemoration are able to have their way. At present the plains are marred by a rifle factory, and instead of listening to the demand that they remove to another site, the owners of the plant demand more room.

Received the Same Way.

"And I went to her window and poked my face in."

"And she!"

"She did the same."

"She did the same?"

"Yes—poked my face in."

The Drama in New York.

There is no dearth of dramatic variety in New York city, when the books of the theaters show that there is an average of 15 new plays produced each month in the year.

Twelve Inches?

"Say, pa?"

"Well, what?"

"Is a man who has one foot in the grave dying by inches?"

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Profit by the Experience of One Who Has Found Relief.

James R. Keeler, retired farmer, of Fenner St., Cazenovia, N. Y., says: "About fifteen years ago I suffered with my back and kidneys. I doctored and used many remedies without getting relief. Beginning with Doan's Kidney Pills, I found relief from the first box, and two boxes restored me to good, sound condition. My wife and many of my friends have used Doan's Kidney Pills with good results and I can earnestly recommend them."

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No man is a thousand descents from Adam.—Hooker.

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Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Cured This Woman and Have Cured Many Hundreds of Other Cases of Common Ailments

Loss of appetite, coated tongue, bad taste in the mouth, heavy dull headache and a dull, sluggish feeling—these are the symptoms of stomach trouble. They indicate that the stomach is on a strike; that it is no longer furnishing to the blood the full quota of nourishment that the body demands, hence every organ suffers.

There are two methods of treatment, the old one by which the stomach is humored by the use of predigested foods and artificial ferments, and the new one by which the stomach is coaxed up to do the work which nature intended of it. A recent cure by the tonic treatment is that of Mrs. Mary Stackpole, of 81 Liberty street, Lowell, Mass. She says:

"I suffered constantly for years from stomach trouble and terrible backaches and was confined to my bed the greater part of three years. I was under the care of our family physician most of the time, but did not seem to get better.

"I was completely run-down and was not able to do my work about the house. My blood was impure and my complexion pale. I suffered from flashes of heat, followed suddenly by chills. I had awful headaches, which lasted from three to four days. I could get but little rest at night, as my sleep was broken and fitful. As a result I lost several pounds in weight and became very nervous.

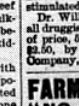
"I was in a wretched condition when I heard about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I started to take the pills at once and began to gain in weight and health. I was encouraged by this to keep on until I was cured. My friends and neighbors often remark what a changed woman I am and I owe it all to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

These wonderful pills are useful in a wide range of diseases such as anæmia, rheumatism, sciatica, neuralgia, nervous headaches, and even locomotor ataxia and partial paralysis.

The great value of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills lies in the fact that they actually make new blood and this carries health and strength to every portion of the body. The stomach is toned up, the nerves are strengthened, every organ is stimulated to do its work.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold by all druggists, or sent, postpaid, on receipt of price, 50 cents per box, six boxes for $2.50, by the Dr. Williams Medicine Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

FARMS THAT GROW "NO. I HARD" WHEAT



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Mention this paper.

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