



THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, Author of "THE COSE" etc.
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CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"They're mamma's friends," Anita was answering. "Oldish and thirsome. When you leave I shall go straight on to bed."

"I'd like to see your room—where you live," said I, more to myself than to her.

"I sleep in a bare little box," she replied with a laugh. "It's like a cell. A friend of ours who has the anti-germ fad insisted on it. But my sitting-room isn't so bad."

"Langdon has the anti-germ fad," said I.

She answered "Yes," after a pause, and in such a strained voice that I looked at her. A flush was just dying out of her face. "He was the friend I spoke of," she went on.

"You know him very well?" I asked. "We've known him—always," said she. "I think he's one of my earliest recollections. His father's summer place and ours adjoin. And once—I guess it's the first time I remember seeing him—he was a freshman at Harvard, and he came along on a horse past the pony cart in which a groom was driving me. And I—I was very little then—I begged him to take me up, and he did. I thought he was the greatest, most wonderful man that ever lived." She laughed queerly.

"When I say my prayers, I used to imagine a god that looked like him to say them to."

I echoed her laugh heartily. "The idea of Mowbray Langdon as a god struck me as peculiarly funny, though natural enough, too."

"Absurd, wasn't it?" said she. But her face was grave, and she let her cigarette die out.

"I guess you know him better than that now?"

"Yes—better," she answered, slowly and absently. "He's—anything but a god!"

And the more fascinating on that account," said I. "I wonder why women like best the really bad, dangerous sort of man, who hasn't any respect for them, or for anything."

I said that she might protest, at least for herself. But her answer was a vague, musing, "I wonder—I wonder."

"I'm sure you wouldn't," I protested earnestly, for her.

She looked at me queerly. "Can I never convince you that I'm just a woman?" said she mockingly. "Just a woman, and one a man with your ideas of women would fly from."

"I wish you were!" I exclaimed. "Then—I'd find it so—so impossible to give you up."

She rose and made a slow tour of the room, halting on the rug before the closed fireplace a few feet from me. I sat looking at her.

"I am going to give you up," I said at last.

Her eyes, staring into vacancy, grew larger and intenser with each long, deep breath she took.

"I didn't intend to say what I'm about to say—at least, not this evening," I went on, and to me it seemed to be some other than myself who was speaking. "Certain things happened down town to-day that have set me to thinking. And—I shall do whatever I can for your brother and your father. But you—you are free!"

She went to the table, stood there in profile to me, straight and slender as a sunflower stalk. She traced the silver chasings in the lid of the cigarette box with her forefinger; then she took a cigarette and began rolling it slowly and absently.

"Please don't scent and stain your fingers with that filthy tobacco," said I rather harshly.

"And only this afternoon you were saying you had become reconciled to my vice—that you had canonized it along with me—wasn't that your phrase?" This indifferently, without turning toward me, and as if she were thinking of something else.

"So I have," I retorted. "But my mood—please oblige me this once."

She let the cigarette fall into the box, closed the lid gently, leaned against the table, folded her arms upon her bosom and looked full at me. I was as acutely conscious of her every movement, of the very coming and going of the breath at her nostrils, as a man on the operating table is conscious of the slightest gesture of the surgeon.

"You are—suffering!" she said, and her voice was like the flow of oil upon a burn. "I have never seen you like this. I didn't believe you capable of—of much feeling."

"I could not trust myself to speak. If Bob Corey could have looked in on that scene, could have understood it, how amazed he would have been!"

"What happened down town to-day?" she went on. "Tell me, if I may know."

I got up and stood looking down at her.

"Don't pity me!" I said. "My remark was a figure of speech. I want no alms. I wouldn't take even you as alms. They'll probably get me down, and stamp the life out of me—nearly. But not quite—don't you lose sight of that. They can't kill me, and they can't tame me. I'll recover, and I'll strew the street with their blood and broken bones."

She drew in her breath sharply. "And a minute ago I was almost liking you!" she exclaimed.

I retreated to my chair and gave her a smile that must have been grim.

"Your ideas of life and of men are like a cloistered nun's," said I. "If there are any real men among your acquaintances, you may find out some day that they're not so much like lapdogs as they pretend—and that you wouldn't like them, if they were."

"What—just what—happened to you down town to-day—after you left me?"

"A friend of mine has been luring me into a trap—why, I can't quite fathom. To-day he sprang the trap and ran away."

"A friend of yours?"

"The man we were talking about—your ex-god—Langdon."

"Langdon," she repeated, and her tone told me that Sammy knew and she answered. "But you are—"

"I studied her, but I couldn't puzzle her out."

"I've been thinking all along that you were simple and transparent," I said. "Now, I see you are a mystery. What are you hiding from me?"

Her smile was almost coquettish as she replied: "When a woman makes a mystery of herself to a man, it's for the man's good."

I took her hand—almost timidly. "Anita," I said, "do you still—dislike me?"

"I do not—and shall not—love you," she answered. "But you are—"

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"I wish you were!" I exclaimed. "Then—I'd find it so—so impossible to give you up."

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"I didn't intend to say what I'm about to say—at least, not this evening," I went on, and to me it seemed to be some other than myself who was speaking. "Certain things happened down town to-day that have set me to thinking. And—I shall do whatever I can for your brother and your father. But you—you are free!"

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"So I have," I retorted. "But my mood—please oblige me this once."

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"I have decided not to accept your release." I sprang to my feet. "Anita!" I cried, my arms stretched toward her.

But she only looked coldly at me, folded her arms the more tightly and said: "Do not misunderstand me. The bargain is the same as before. If you want me on those terms, I must—give myself."

"Why?" I asked. A faint smile, with no mirth in it, drifted round the corners of her mouth.

"An impulse," she said. "I don't quite understand it myself. An impulse from—from—" Her eyes and her thoughts were far away, and her expression was the one that made it hardest for me to believe she was a child of those parents of hers. "An impulse from a sense of justice—of decency. I am the cause of your trouble, and I don't want to be a coward and a cheat." She repeated the last words. "A coward—a cheat! We—I—have taken much from you, more than you know. It must be repaid. If you still wish, I will—will keep to my bargain."

"It's true, I'd not have got into the mess," said I, "if I'd been attending to business instead of darning after you. But you're not responsible for that folly."

She tried to speak several times, before she finally succeeded in saying: "It's my fault. I mustn't shrink."

I studied her, but I couldn't puzzle her out.

"I've been thinking all along that you were simple and transparent," I said. "Now, I see you are a mystery. What are you hiding from me?"

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"I could not trust myself to speak. If Bob Corey could have looked in on that scene, could have understood it, how amazed he would have been!"

"What happened down town to-day?" she went on. "Tell me, if I may know."

"I'll tell you what I didn't think, ten minutes ago, I'd tell any human being," said I. "They've got me strapped down in the press. At ten o'clock in the morning—precisely at ten—they're going to put on the screws." I laughed. "I guess they'll have me squeezed pretty dry before noon."

She shivered. "So you see," I continued, "I don't deserve any credit for giving you up. I only anticipate you by about twenty-four hours. Mine's death-bed repentance."

"I'd thought of that," said she reflectively. Presently she added: "Then, it is true. And I knew Sammy had given her some hint that prepared her for my confession."

"Yes—I can't go blustering through the matrimonial market," replied I. "I've been thrown out. I'm a beggar at the gates."

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TRADE AT HOME

Why Farmer Should Give His Support to the Local Merchant.

PRESERVES HIS OWN MARKET

Depreciation of Village Property Must Inevitably Mean Depreciation of Agricultural Property and Encouragement of Monopoly.

(Copyright, 1926, by Alfred C. Clark.)

The most serious problem that confronts the rural towns and villages of this country is the competition of the large cities. It is a problem for which a solution must be found if the prosperity and stability of the nation is to stand.

And the solution of this great problem lies in the hands of the people of the towns and villages and the farms, especially the farms.

The people of the rural communities have everything to lose and nothing to gain by sending their money to the catalogue houses and by so doing killing the local industries of your town?



Give your town a chance by patronizing your local merchants and you may confidently expect its growth in business and population and a raise in real estate valuation. Send your money to the catalogue houses and you may look for the reverse. The picture tells the story of the possibilities.

to gain by sending their money to the catalogue houses, by passing by their local merchants and sending their dollars to the concerns who have absolutely no interest in their communities.

These catalogue houses do not pay taxes in your town; the local merchant does. They do not build sidewalks in your town; the local merchant does. They do not help to build school houses for your children; the local merchant does. They do not assist in the support of your churches; the local merchant does.

But there are some things the catalogue houses do for you and the first and greatest of these is to assist materially in bankrupting your community. The dollars they take away never come back to you. They will never help to make a city of your village. They will never increase the value of your real-estate holdings by making local improvements.

Let us look at the subject from the standpoint of the farmer, for it is the farmer who is the greatest patron of the catalogue houses.

The town or village one, two or three miles from his home is his market for the butter and eggs and other produce of his farm. The half dozen or more merchants of the town, each anxious to obtain his full share of the business of the community, maintain a competition that affords to the farmer at all times top prices for the products of his farm. It is these half dozen merchants that make farm profits possible; the profits are in no way due to the catalogue houses of the cities.

But the farmer persists in sending his dollars to the city. He wants a buggy, or a set of harness, or a pair of stockings, or any of the necessities or luxuries of life, and to get them he takes out his mail order catalogue and looks at the finely printed cuts, reads the well written description, and, passing the local merchant by, the merchant who has purchased his produce at the best market prices, the merchant who has helped to build the community, he sends his dollars to the catalogue house in the city and takes what they choose to send him.

What is the result? One after another the doors of the local stores are closed, and where at one time there were half a dozen merchants, each bidding for his share of patronage by offering fair prices for that which the farmer had to sell, there is now but one merchant who has a monopoly, not only of the selling, but of the buying as well, and he pays what he pleases for the farmer's produce.

The farmer can continue to send his money to the catalogue house in the city for his supplies, but he cannot send his produce to the same place. In disposing of this he is absolutely dependent upon his local merchant, and by his patronage of the catalogue houses he has killed competition, and must now take whatever is offered for what he has to sell.

Mr. Farmer, are you helping to kill the goose that is laying your golden eggs? Are you sending your dollars to the catalogue houses and by so doing killing the local industries of your town? Are you putting your merchants out of business, and creating a monopoly that will pay you what it pleases for the products of your farm?

And seeing it was a hopeless case she meandered along on her lonely way.

Will you do it?

YANKEE IN DIAMOND FIELDS. Commissions to Study a Country Which Produces Such Men.

Mr. Alfred Mosely is an Englishman who admires American ways so much that he sends commissions here to study us.

Mr. Mosely does not admire us without a reason. It is not a very specific reason. Its name is Mr. Gardner F. Williams, and it is by way of being an American mining engineer. Mr. Williams directs the diamond output of the world.

Mr. Mosely made his fortune in South Africa. He watched Cecil Rhodes' dream of empire develop and knew the men who made it real. The one who took his imagination was Gardner Williams.

Here was a man who had left Michigan at the age of 15 to go with a pioneering father to California in the flush days of the early mining camps, had had a taste of California mining, had gone when still a young man to explore in South Africa and had become a general manager of the great monopoly of the diamond mines.

A fighter of financial battles and a manager of men, a writer, a scientist and one of the world's greatest engineers, he so stamped his personality on the people among whom he lived that he was feted and cheered by all South Africa when he retired last spring and came back to the United States to build a home for his leisure years in the land of his birth.—World's Work.

Reed's Unruly Tenant. There used to live in Portland Joseph Reed, an uncle of the late Speaker Reed. He was a very large man, and was never known to lose his temper. He had an office on Exchange street, up one flight of stairs.

One day he sent one of his tenants, who was behind in his rent, a five days' notice to move, which made his tenant very mad. He called on Mr. Reed boiling over with rage, using some very profane language.

Mr. Reed was sitting and writing at a desk. He replied in his quiet, easy voice: "Mr. Stevens, you are mad, and you must not come up here when you are mad."

Mr. Stevens kept right on, only worse, if anything, when Mr. Reed started to get up, saying in the same easy tone of voice: "Mr. Stevens, you must go right down stairs, or I will have to call you."

Mr. Stevens went quietly down stairs.

In After Years. Father Time had been swinging his scythe for 20 years when they accidentally met again. He was a bachelor of 45, bald and slightly disfigured, but still in the vigor. She a spinster, fat and 40, but not as fair as she used to be.

"Do you remember," she gurgled, "how you proposed to me the last time we met and I refused you?"

"Well, I guess yes," he replied. "It is by long odds the happiest recollection of my life."

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CARE OF THE FLOOR

USEFUL DIRECTIONS FOR THE CAREFUL HOUSEWIFE

Expert Tells of Methods He Uses in Keeping in Condition the Floors in a Large City Hotel.

Hardwood floors are becoming more and more of a necessity in the average home.

They are practical, sanitary and in the end less expensive than carpets, besides affording opportunities for artistic rugs.

In hotels and large houses the floors are under the supervision of a man who comes in once a month or so to refurbish and look them over.

Smaller households can attend to these details themselves.

The following directions given by a floor finisher may help some persons who can not have their floors taken care of by experts.

"The most important part of finishing a floor," says this man who attends to the large hotels in a city, "is to give it a smooth, soft appearance."

"It should be well planed, scraped and sandpapered to give it an even surface before any filling is applied."

"No. 1 sandpaper is best for this purpose. It is ruinous to a floor to finish it without properly preparing it in the beginning."

"Varnish should be seldom used on a floor. If I had my way I should never use it, but some persons prefer it for kitchens, bathrooms and floors that need wiping with water."

"If the floor is old the first step is to scrape it thoroughly, using a cabinet-maker's scraper. This is a rounded piece of sheet tin and does not scratch the floor while it will remove every particle of old dirt and fillings."

"If the varnish sticks badly to the hard places can be soaked with lye and water before using the scraper."

"A new floor will not have any holes, but an old floor may have many that will have to be puttied up before applying any finish."

"Care must be taken not to use much oil in doing this, as it spreads on the wood and when the hole is filled the surface must be smoothed with the scraper."

"The next step is to apply the coating."

"Its object is to bring out the grain of the wood and it should be rubbed in with a rag. Linseed oil is good for this."

"Let it lie about ten minutes before wiping for the last time. When the floor is dry I apply a coat of shellac. I thin this, so it will dry readily, and apply with a wide and pliable brush. Then I wax the floor with a prepared wax which I buy by the pounds and use a white cotton rag for the purpose."

"After the floor has remained in this state over night I polish it with the heaviest polishing iron I can use."

"Sometimes this iron weighs 50 pounds and the floor looks so well I am repaid for the effort. I always have success if I am allowed to finish a floor exactly in this manner."

If there are stains use a little turpentine on a rag to remove them unless they are ink stains, in which case a little oxalic acid will remove them.

The true secret of good looks in hardwood floors is never to wash them in soap and water.

If wax makes them too slippery the shellac alone can be supplied.

Soft wood floors can be finished like hardwood, and though they are more easily scratched they are to be preferred to carpets.

It is a mistake to put coloring matter on a floor.