



THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, Author of "THE COST," "COPYRIGHT 1925 by the BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY"

CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

She gazed at me without flinching. "And I suppose," she said satirically, "you wonder why I—why you are repellent to me. Haven't you learned that, though I may have been made in to a moral coward, I'm not a physical coward? Don't bully and threaten. It's useless."

I put my hand strongly on her shoulder—taunts and jeers do not turn me aside. "What did you mean?" I repeated.

"Take your hand off me," she commanded.

"What did you mean?" I repeated sternly. "Don't be afraid to answer."

She was very young—so the taunt stung her. "I was about to tell you," said she, "when you began to make it impossible."

I took advantage of this to extricate myself from the awkward position in which she had put me—I took my hand from her shoulder.

"I am going to leave," she announced.

"You forgot that you are my wife," said I.

"I am not your wife," was her answer, and if she had not looked so childlike, there in the moonlight all in white, I could not have held myself in check, so insolent was the tone and so helpless of ever being able to win her did she make me feel.

"You are my wife and you will stay here with me," I reiterated, my brain on fire.

"I am my own, and I shall go where I please, and do what I please," was her contemptuous retort. "Why won't you be reasonable? Why won't you see how utterly unsuited we are? I don't ask you to be a gentleman—but just a man, and be ashamed even to wish to detain a woman against her will."

I drew up a chair so close to her that to retreat, she was forced to sit in the broad window-seat. Then I seated myself. "By all means, let us be reasonable," said I. "Now, let me explain my position. I have heard you and your friends discussing the views of marriage you've just been expressing. Their views may be right, maybe more civilized, more 'advanced' than mine. No matter. They are not mine. I hold by the old standards—and you are my wife—mine. Do you understand?" All this as tranquilly as if we were discussing fair weather. "And you will live up to the obligation which the marriage service has put upon you."

She might have been a marble statue pedestaled in that window seat.

"You married me of your own free will—for you could have protested to the preacher and he would have sustained you. You tacitly put certain conditions on our marriage. I assented to them. I have respected them. I shall continue to respect them. But—when you married me, you didn't marry a dawdling dude chattering 'advanced ideas' with his heat full of libertinism. You married a man. And that man is your husband."

I waited, but she made no comment—not even by gesture or movement. She simply sat, her hands interlaced in her lap, her eyes straight upon mine.

"You say let us be reasonable," I went on. "Well, let us be reasonable. There may come a time when woman can be free and independent, but that time is a long way off yet. The world is organized on the basis of every woman's having a protector—of every decent woman's having a husband, unless she remains in the home of some of her blood-relations. There may be women strong enough to set the world at defiance. But you are not one of them—and you know it. You have shown it to yourself again and again in the last forty-eight hours. Your bringing-up has kept you a child in real knowledge of real life, as distinguished from life in that fashionable hothouse. If you tried to assert your so-called independence, you would be the easy prey of a scoundrel or scoundrels. When I, who have lived in the thick of the fight all my life, who have learned by many a surprise and defeat never to sleep except with the sword and gun in hand, and one eye open—when I have been trapped as Roebuck and Langdon have just trapped me—what chance would a woman like you have?"

She did not answer or change expression.

"Is what I say reasonable or unreasonable?" I asked gently.

"Reasonable—from your standpoint," she said.

She gazed out into the moonlight, up into the sky. And at the look in her face, the primeval savage in me strained to close round that slender white throat and crush and crush until it had killed in her the thought of that other man which was transforming her from marble to flesh that glowed and blood that surged. I pushed back my chair with a sudden noise; by the way she trembled I gaged how tense her nerves must be. I rose and in a fairly calm tone, said: "We understand each other?"

"Yes," she answered. "As before."

I ignored this. "Think it over, Anita," I urged—she seemed to me so like a sweet, spoiled child again. I longed to go straight at her about that other man. I stood for a moment with Tom Langdon's name on my lips, but I could not trust myself. I went away to my own rooms.

I thrust thoughts of her from my mind. I spent the night gnawing upon the ropes with which Mowbray Langdon and Roebuck had bound me, hand and foot. I now say they were ropes of steel—and it had long been broad day before I found that weak strand

which is in every rope of human make.

XXV.

THE WEAK STRAND.

No sane creature, not even a sane bulldog, will fight simply from love of fighting. When a man is attacked, he may be sure he has excited either fear or cupidity, or both. As far as I could see, it was absurd that cupidly was inciting Langdon and Roebuck against me. I hadn't enough to tempt them. Thus, I was forced to conclude that I was unaware, and which stirred even Roebuck's fears. But what could it be?

Besides Langdon and Roebuck and there were six principals in the proposed coal combine, three of them richer and more influential in finance than even Langdon, all of them expert navigators of the combine, more formidable figures than I. Yet none of these men was being assailed. "Why am I singled out?" I asked myself, and I felt that if I could answer, I should find I had the means wholly or partly to defeat them. But



THE PRIMEVAL SAVAGE IN ME STRAINED TO CLOSE ROUND THAT SLENDER WHITE THROAT AND CRUSH AND CRUSH.

I could not explain to my satisfaction even Langdon's activities against me. I felt that Anita was somehow, in part at least, the cause; but, even so, how had he succeeded in convincing Roebuck that I must be clipped and plucked into a groundling?

"It must have something to do with the Manasquale mines," I decided. "I thought I had given over my control of them, but somehow I must still have a control that makes me too powerful for Roebuck to be at ease so long as I am afoot and armed."

And I resolved to take my lawyers and search the whole Manasquale transaction—to explore it from attic to underneath the cellar flooring.

"We'll go through it," said I, "like ferrets through a ship's hold." As I was finishing breakfast, Anita came in. She had evidently slept well, and I regarded that as ominous. At her age, a crisis means little sleep until a decision has been reached. I rose, but her manner warned me not to advance and try to shake hands with her.

"I have asked Alva to stop with me here for a few days," she said formally.

"Alva?" said I, much surprised. She had not asked one of her own friends; she had asked a girl she had met less than two days before, and that girl my partner's daughter.

"She was here yesterday morning," Anita explained. And I now wondered how much Alva there was in Anita's firm stand against her parents.

"Why don't you take her down to our place on Long Island?" said I, most carefully concealing my delight—for Alva near her meant a friend of mine and an advocate and example of real womanhood near her. "Every-thing's ready for you there and I'm going to be busy the next few days—busy day and night."

She reflected. "Very well," she assented presently. And she gave me a puzzled glance she thought I did not see—as if she were wondering whether the enemy was not hiding new and deeper guile under an apparently harmless suggestion.

"Then I'll not see you again for several days," said I, most businesslike. "If you want anything, there will be Monson out at the stables where he

at peace for five years, and most considerate and polite about each other's "rights." But while our country's industrial territory is vast, the interests of the few great controllers who determine wages and prices for all are equally vast, and each plutocrat is tormented incessantly by jealousy and suspicion; not a day passes without conflicts of interest that adroit diplomacy could turn into ferocious warfare. And in this matter of monopolizing the coal, despite Roebuck's earnest assurances to Galloway that the combine was purely defensive, and was really concerned only with the labor question, Galloway, a great manufacturer, or, rather, a huge lever of the taxes of dividends and interest upon manufacturing enterprises, could not but be uneasy.

Before I rose that morning I had a tentative plan for stirring him to ac-

Why He Wanted to Know

Had a Reason for His Request for Information.

The steamer Morning Star, commanded by Capt. Brown, in the summer of 1904, while on a trip up the Maine coast with a party of excursionists, was caught in a severe storm, and the waves washed the decks repeatedly. The captain assured the passengers that there was no immediate danger. Most of the passengers were satisfied with this answer, but a little gentleman with an excited face stepped forward and asked the captain, time and time again, the same question: "Do you think we shall be wrecked?"

After the captain answered many times, he at last became tired at the persistent passenger, and said: "Don't you hear what I say? Look at the other passengers, they do not seem at all disturbed. If there should be danger, I will inform you in time."

The passenger, in reply, said: "I want to know in time, if we are going to be lost, because there is a friend of mine on board."

"Do you want to say good-by to him?" inquired the captain.

can't annoy you. Or you can get me on the long distance. Good-by. Good luck."

And I nodded carelessly and friendly to her, and went away, enjoying the pleasure of having startled her into visible astonishment. "There's a better game than icy hostility, you very young, young lady," said I to myself, "and that game is friendly indifference."

Alva would be with her. So she was secure for the present and my mind was free for "finance."

At that time the two most powerful men in finance were Galloway and Roebuck. In Spain I once saw a fight between a bull and a tiger—or, rather the beginning of a fight. They were released into a huge iron cage. After circling it several times in the same direction, searching for a way out, they came face to face. The bull tossed the tiger; the tiger clawed the bull. The bull roared; the tiger screamed. Each retreated to his own side of the cage. The bull pawed and snorted as if he could hardly wait to get at the tiger; the tiger crouched and quivered and glared murderously, as if he were going instantly to spring upon the bull. But the bull did not rush, neither did the tiger spring. That was the Roebuck-Galloway situation.

How to bait Tiger Galloway to attack Bull Roebuck—that was the problem I must solve, and solve straightaway. If I could bring about war between the giants, spreading confusion over the whole field of finance and filling all men with dread and fear, there was a chance, that in the confusion I might bear off part of my fortune. Certainly, conditions would result in which I could more easily get myself entrenched again; then, too, there would be a by no means small satisfaction in seeing Roebuck clawed and bitten in punishment for having plotted against me.

Mutual fear had kept these two

tion. I was elaborating it on the way down town in my electric. It shows how badly Anita was crippling my brain, that not until I was almost at my office did it occur to me: "That was a tremendous luxury Roebuck indulged his conscience in last night. It isn't like him to forewarn a man, even when he's sure he can't escape. Though his prayers were hot in his mouth, still, it's strange he didn't try to fool me. In fact, it's suspicious. In fact—"

Suspicious? The instant the idea was fairly before my mind, I knew I had let his canting fool me once more. I entered my office, feeling that the blow had already fallen; and I was surprised, but not relieved, when I found everything calm. "But, when I will within an hour or so—before I can move to avert it," said I to myself.

And fall it did. At eleven o'clock, just as I was setting out to make my first move toward heating old Galloway's heels for the war-path, Joe came in with the news: "A general lock-out's declared in the coal regions. The operators have stolen a march on the men who, so they allege, were secretly getting ready to strike. By night every coal road will be tied up and every mine shut down."

Joe knew our coal interests were heavy, but he did not dream his news meant that before the day was over we would be bankrupt and not able to pay fifteen cents on the dollar. However, he knew enough to throw him into a fever of fright. He watched my calmness with terror. "Coal stocks are dropping like a thermometer in a cold wave," he said, like a fireman at a sleeper in a burning house.

"Naturally," said I, unruffled, apparently. "What can we do about it?" "We must do something!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, we must," I admitted. "For instance, we must keep cool, especially when two or three dozen people are watching us. Also, you must attend to your usual routine."

"What are you going to do?" he cried. "For God's sake, Matt, don't keep me in suspense!"

"Go to your desk," I commanded. And he quieted down and went. I hadn't been schooling him in the fire-drill for fifteen years in vain.

I went up the street and into the great banking and brokerage house of Galloway and Company. I made my way through the small army of guards, behind which the old beast of prey was entrenched, and into his private den. There he sat, at a small, plain table, in the middle of the room without any article of furniture in it but his table and his chair. On the table was a small inkstand, perfectly clean, a steel pen equally clean, on the rest attached to it. And that was all—not a letter, not a scrap of paper, not a sign of work or of intention to work. It might have been the desk of a man who did nothing; in fact, it was the desk of a man who had so much to do that his only hope of escape from being overwhelmed was to despatch and clear away each matter the instant it was presented to him. Many things could be read from the powerful form, bolt upright in that stiff chair, and from the cynical, masterful old face. But to me the chief quality there revealed was that quality of qualities, decision—the great power a man can have, except only courage. And old James Galloway had both.

He pierced me with his blue eyes, keen as a youth's, though his face was seamed with scars of seventy tumultuous years. He extended toward me over the table his broad, stubby white hand—the hand of a builder, of a constructive genius. "How are you, Blacklock?" said he. "What can I do for you?" He just touched my hand before dropping it, and resumed that idol-like pose. But although there was only repose and deliberation in his manner, and not a suggestion of haste, I, like every one who came into that room and that presence, had a sense of an interminable procession behind me, a procession of men who must be seen by this master-mover that they might submit important and pressing affairs to him for decision. It was unnecessary for him to tell any one to be brief and pointed.

"I shall have to go to the wall to-day," said I, taking a paper from my pocket, "unless you save me. Here is a statement of my assets and liabilities. I call to your attention my coal holdings. I was one of the eight men whom Roebuck got round him for the new combine—it is a secret, but I assume you know all about it."

He laid the paper before him, put on his nose-glasses and looked at it. (To be Continued.)

Zebra Would Be Useful.

Of all wild animals the zebra would be most useful to man if domesticated. It is not liable to horse fever or tsetse fly.

No, not exactly that," answered the frightened man. "You see, the thing of it is, he has shamefully deceived me, and if we are going to the bottom I just want to tell him what I think of him."

To Cure Neuralgia.

Here is a simple method of curing facial neuralgia: If the neuralgia is in the right side of the face the left hand should be placed in the basin of water as hot as can be borne. Or if neuralgia is in the left side of the face then the right hand should be placed in the hot water. It is asserted that in this way relief may be obtained in less than five minutes.—Indian Review.

Memorial to Irish Novelist.

A centenary memorial in honor of Charles Lever, the Irish novelist, will be in the form of a chance building erected at Ardurchurch church, Moore's County Westmeath, of which Rev. John Lever, the author's brother, was the rector from 1844 till his death there in 1864. Charles Lever paid long visits there, worshiped in the church and found material for some of his books in the vicinity.

FEUD IS RESULT OF A REFUSAL TO KISS BABY

Whole Section in Trouble Because of Unappreciative Man with Grouch.

COMMUNITY TAKES SIDES

Bill Dunham Open in His Declaration That Ollie Kebler Shall Yet Beg for Privilege He Scornfully Refused—Kebler Had Loved Pretty Little One's Mother, and There is the Root of the Whole Trouble—Fight So Far Has Been Interesting, with Further Developments Expected.

Cynthiana, O.—Four hundred and sixty-three persons have kissed little Miss Margaret Dunham, aged four months and three days. The tally includes Dave Downing, who travels for McKeehan, Heistand & Company's grocery, and the five candidates for office in Pike county, Ohio, who visited during the recent campaign, which are about all the visitors the little hamlet, set down in the beautiful Brush creek hills, has had recently, or at least as recently as the coming of Miss Dunham into the world that has welcomed her with kisses. But despite the fact that she has been kissed by more persons than any girl in Pike county (and most of them are kissable), the fact that Ollie Kebler has not kissed her has started trouble, divided the town into two factions and almost caused a feud between the Dunhams and the Kebler family.

Everybody in Cynthiana, over the age of five months excepting Kebler, has kissed Miss Dunham; Kebler alone has refused to fall in love with her. How Kebler can refuse to kiss her no one else in town can understand, for she is the prettiest, plumpiest, sweetest baby ever born. That is what her mother says, and besides that 463 persons, including Dave Downing, who ought to be unprejudiced, being a bachelor, have said the same thing. She is so soft and satiny, and so pink and white, and her blue eyes open with such amazed and delighted stares, and her dimples evolve such unexpected and wonderful smiles, and her soft, little rosy hands flutter so confidently into even the horny hands of the loggers, that any person, it seems, who has any human blood in his veins wants to grab her right into his arms and just squeeze her and kiss her—and then look ashamed and say "I always liked babies," and sneak away and wish he had one just like it.

Where Ollie Kebler Lost Out.

That is the way little Miss Dunham has affected everybody except Ollie Kebler. He has not kissed her and will not kiss her.

Therefore, there is trouble.

It appears, from the facts that are ascertainable, that Miss Margaret Shannon, who was better known as Madge, was the belle of the entire district around Cynthiana by the time she was 18 years old. Not only that, but the young men from Bainbridge drove down to call on her, and once it was rumored that she was engaged to a wealthy young man up at Waverly, the county seat. Everybody knew that Fred Cravens, from Sinking Springs, was wildly in love with her. Almost all the town boys were and especially Ollie Kebler, who owns a big farm over Cameron's mountain, besides his house in Cynthiana.

Then Bill Dunham, big, hearty, good natured, and with a laugh that could be heard over half the town fell a victim to the prettiness of Margaret Shannon—and that settled it. They were married and Ollie Kebler became a sort of woman hater. People with college educations would have called him misanthropic, but Cynthiana simply referred to it as grouch, except Uncle Billy Newell, who said Ollie was peevish.

At any rate, Ollie ceased to be the Beau Brummel of Cynthiana and settled down to business and was as hard as flint, and, as Uncle Billy Newell vowed, "as cross as his paw was, and 14 shoemakers couldn't have got a bristle between his fingers and a dollar."

Story About the Baby.

All those things happened years ago, possibly ten. Bill Dunham got along pretty well in the lumber business, running a sawmill over Newell Mills way, and hauling to Bainbridge, and his wife was just as pretty as when she was a girl, although in a different sort of way. They were happy, but until a few months ago their happiness was incomplete.

Bill Dunham's friends said he hadn't an enemy on earth. He was one of the most popular men in Pike county and a lot of the Republicans up at

mine was worked by various Spaniards and later acquired for the crown of Spain. It was extensively worked, barring certain periods during Apache wars, until the epoch of the French intervention, when the shafts and tunnels are said to have been concealed by the administrator, Don Juan Moreno, an imperialist, who was forced to seek safety in flight. After the restoration of peace Tarasaca was looked for in vain, and to the present time no one is certain of its location, though the mine now known as Ubaro had been extensively worked when rediscovered years ago, and the shafts and tunnels concealed under earth and brush.

But the mine about which tradition gathers thickest is Talopa, supposed to be located in the Shahuaripe district in Sonora. Little documentary evidence exists to prove Talopa's reality, and that has evidently been manufactured by unscrupulous manipulators. A wealthy Mexican recently made a trip to Madrid, and after minute search at great expense found absolutely no data to prove that such a mine was worked for the crown of

RICH MINES LOST TO HUMAN GREED

Forgotten Drifts, Known to Be Valuable, That Keep the Gold Seeker Constantly on Edge—Locality of Famous Talopa Mine a Secret Hidden in the Breast of Uncommunicative Indians.

Spain and no reliable data in the Mexican archives or elsewhere to prove that such a mine was ever known. But quite as trustworthy as most written documents are the traditions gathered from the Pima Indians.

They stoutly maintain that Talopa exists and a few claim to know its locality. Small quantities of very rich ore are occasionally sold at the mountain mining camps and all attempts to follow the Indians to the spot where it is found or bribe them to reveal it have failed. Wanting but little in addition to the corn they grow, they are imbued with a superstition that if they reveal the locality of a mine they will instantly drop dead. To one unacquainted with the Indian character this statement may seem incredible, but any prospector or miner in the Sierra Madre will affirm its truth. Large sums of money have been offered the Pimas to tell where the lost mine is. They scorn money and the only open sesame is mescal, by the liberal use of which the Indian may be made to disclose many things, but so far he has held inviolate his vow to reveal to no man the famous Talopa.

Cynthiana wanted Bill to run for county supervisor and try to wrest the control of old Pike county from the Democrats, but Bill said he didn't care for politics and refused to run, although he let them make him an alternate to the state convention, which was quite an honor. He took his wife with him to Columbus and Lay visited the penitentiary and the blind asylum and—but that is another story. This story is about the baby.

When the baby arrived everybody said it would be a pretty baby, for its father was big and handsome, and its mother so pretty. Grandma Shannon said it took after the Shannons and Grandpa Dunham vowed it favored the Dunhams, but almost everybody said it resembled both. Its eyes were blue like its father's and the upper part of its face was his—one could see that by putting a hand over the mouth. But its nose and mouth were just like its mother's, only prettier, she said, although, of course, Bill denied that.

Anyhow, it was the prettiest baby that ever came to Cynthiana. Everybody conceded that, but no one suspected that it was going to cause so much trouble.

The First Great Event.

When it—or she rather (her mother gets mad when anybody calls her "it")—was just one month old they took her to the Campbellite church and christened her Margaret, after her mother and her mother's Aunt Mag, who sent the little turquoise ring and the knit jacket for the baby.

Bill and Ollie came near fighting and would have fought if Mr. Wick-ersham hadn't told them to dry up or else go out in the street and fight it out.

The trouble grew serious at once. Half the people in town declared that Ollie ought to be tarred and feathered. A few said that the Dunhams oughtn't to be so touchy. The rest just kept quiet.

A few days later Bill came out as a candidate for township trustee on the Republican ticket, just to beat Ollie, who was a Democrat. He only had three weeks to campaign in, but he swept the township and it went Re-



The real trouble didn't start until Margaret was over two months old. Her mamma had her out riding in her new go-cart (the one with the front that lets down, and the blue silk parasol, with a robe to match, all covered with blue ribbon) when, right in front of Wickersham's store, they met Ollie Kebler. He was standing there talking to Nate Giddings, from over at Paint.

Kebler Refused Precious Boon.

Nate never had seen the baby, so, of course, he spoke to it, and began playing with it, and when it cooed and laughed and wrinkled up its dimpled little face he didn't do a thing but stoop down and kiss her. Nate is a family man himself and has three or four kids at home and likes them. But Ollie never moved. He just stood there and looked disgusted and Nate and Mrs. Dunham talked baby end she asked how Mrs. Giddings was. Then Nate, not meaning to make any trouble, laughed and said, "Ollie, come and kiss the baby. Ye ain't afraid, are ye?" Ollie said something about not making a fool of himself over any slobbery brat and walked away.

Nate said afterwards he was so mad he could have kicked Ollie, and Mrs.

Bill didn't boast much. He simply repeated his assertion that Ollie would beg to kiss the baby before he got through with him. Then he went up to Bainbridge on business and caught the train for Waverly, and what did he do but buy a tax claim on a piece of land that belonged to Kebler. Ollie had neglected to pay the taxes and it was advertised among the delinquents, so Bill bought it, just to spite Ollie and make him spend money. People began to say that Bill Dunham could be just as bad an enemy as a wife was a good friend, but they didn't know him until he had two of Ollie's stray cows that were feeding along the roadside taken to the pound. When Ollie had to pay one dollar each fine he was so mad he threatened to lick Bill.

That's the way the feud stands now. Bill still vows that Ollie must kiss his baby and ask his wife's permission to do it. But Ollie swears he'll law Bill out of Pike county before he'll do it.

As for little Miss Dunham, she is growing prettier each day and from present signs about the time she gets to be 17 Ollie or any other human being will beg for the chance.