



THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, Author of 'THE CURSE'

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

BLACKLOCK GOES INTO TRAINING.

I shall never forget the smallest detail of that dinner—it was a purely "family" affair, only the Ellerslys and I. I can feel now the oppressive atmosphere, the look as of impending sacrilege upon the faces of the old servants; I can see Mrs. Ellersly trying to condescend to be "gracious," and treating me as if I were some sort of museum freak or menagerie exhibit. I can see Anita. She was like a statue of snow; she spoke not a word. If she lifted her eyes, I failed to note it. And when I was leaving—I with my collar wilted from the fierce, nervous strain I had been enduring—Mrs. Ellersly, in that voice of hers into which I don't believe any shade of a real human emotion ever penetrated, said: "You must come to see us, Mr. Blacklock. We are always at home after five."

I looked at Miss Ellersly. She was white to the lips now, and the sparkles on her white dress seemed bits of ice glittering there. She said nothing; but I knew she felt my look, and that it froze the ice more closely in around her heart. "Thank you," I muttered.

I stumbled in the hall; I almost fell down the broad steps. I stopped at the first bar and took three drinks in quick succession. I went on down the avenue, breathing like an exhausted swimmer. "I'll give her up!" I cried aloud, so upset was I.

I am a man of impulse; but I have trained myself not to be a creature of impulse, at least not in matters of importance. Without that patient and painful schooling, I shouldn't have got where I now am; probably I'd still be blacking boots, or sheet-writing for some bookmaker, or clerking it for some broker. Before I got my rooms, the night air and my habit of the "sober second thought" had cooled me back to rationality.

"I want her, I need her," I was saying to myself. "I am worthier of her than are those mincing mannikins she has been bred to regard as men. She is for me—she belongs to me. I'll abandon her to no smirking puppet who'd wear her as a donkey would a diamond. Why should I do myself and her an injury simply because she has been too badly brought up to know her own interest?"

When this was clear to me I sent for my trainer. He was one of those spare, wiry Englishmen, with skin like tanned and painted hide—brown except where the bones seem about to push their sharp angles through, and there a frosty, winter aurore. He dressed like a Deadwood gambler, he talked like a stable boy; but for all that, you couldn't fail to see he was a gentleman born and bred. Yes, he was a gentleman, though he mixed profanely into his ordinary flow of conversation more liberally than did I when in a rage.

I stood up before him, threw my coat back, thrust my thumbs into my trousers pockets and stowily turned about like a ready-made tailor's dummy. "Monson," said I, "what do you think of me?"

He looked me over as if I were a horse he was about to buy. "Sound, I'd say," was his verdict. "Good wind—uncommon good wind. A good and a stayer. Not a lump. Not a hair out of place." He laughed. "Action a bit high perhaps—for the track. But a grand reach."

"I know all that," said I. "You miss my point. Suppose you wanted to enter me for—say, the Society Sweepstakes—what then?"

"Um—um," he muttered reflectively. "That's different."

"Don't I look—sort of new—as if the varnish was still sticky and might come off on the ladies' dresses and on the fine furniture?"

"Oh—that!" said he dubiously. "But all those kinds of things are matters of taste."

"Out with it!" I commanded. "Don't be afraid. I'm not one of those damn fools that ask for criticism when they want only flattery, as you ought to know by this time. I'm aware of my good points, know how good they are better than anybody else in the world. And I suspect my weak points—always did. I've got on chiefly because I made people tell me to my face what they'd rather have grinned over behind my back."

"What's your game?" asked Monson. "I'm in the dark."

"I'll tell you, Monson. I hired you to train horses. Now I want to hire you to train me, too. As it's double work, it's double pay."

"Say on," said he, "and say it slow."

"I want to marry," I explained. "I want to inspect all the offerings before I decide. You are to train me so that I can go among the herds that shy off from me if I wasn't on to their little ways."

He looked suspiciously at me, doubtless thinking this some new development of "American humor."

"I mean it," I assured him. "I'm going to train, and train hard. I've got no time to lose. I must be on my way down the aisle inside of three months. I give you a free hand. I'll do just what you say."

stand the truth from a man of his second-fiddle sort.

"Go on!" I commanded. "Speak out! Mowbray Langdon had on one twice as loud the other day at the track."

"But perhaps you'll remember, it was only his waistcoat that was loud—not he himself. Now, a man of your manner and voice and—you've got a look out of the eyes that'd wake the dead all by itself. People can feel you coming before they hear you. When they feel and hear and see all together—it's like a brass band in scarlet uniform, with a seven-foot, sky-blue drum major. If your hair wasn't so black and your eyes so steel-blue and sharp and your teeth so big and strong and white, and your jaw such a—such a—jaw—"

"I see the point," said I. And I did. "You'll find you won't need to tell me many things twice. I've got a busy day before me here; so we'll have to suspend this until you come to dine with me at eight—at my rooms. I want you to put in the time well. Go to my house in the country and then up to my apartment; take my valet with you; look through all my belongings—shirts, ties, socks, trousers, waistcoats, clothes of every kind. Throw out every rag you think doesn't fit in with what I want to be. How's my grammar?"

I was proud of it, I had been taking more or less pains with my mode of speech for a dozen years. "Rather too good," said he. "But that's better than making the breaks that aren't regarded as good form."

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The job's out of my line," he protested.

"I know better," said I. "I've always seen the parlor under the stable in you. We'll begin right away. What do you think of tea clothes?"

"Well—they're not exactly noisy," he said. "But—they're far from silent. That waistcoat—!" He stopped and gave me another nervous, timid look. He found it hard to believe a man of my sort, so self-assured, would

...and an original way of putting things, and common sense. Don't be afraid."

"Afraid!" said I. "I never! Jew what it was to be afraid."

"Your nerve'll carry you through," he assured me. "Nerve'll take a man anywhere."

"You never said a truer thing in your life," said I. "I'll take him whatever he wants, and, after he's there, it'll get him whatever he wants."

And with that, I thinking of my plans and of how sure I was of success, began to march up and down the office with my chest thrown out—until I caught myself at it. That stopped me, set me off in a laugh at my own expense, he joining in with a kind of heinious I did not like, though I did not venture to check him.

So ended the first lesson—the first of a long series.

VIII. ON THE TRAIL OF LANGDON.

I had Monson with me twice each week—early in the morning and again after business hours until bed time. Also he spent the whole of every Saturday and Sunday with me. He developed astonishing dexterity as a teacher, and as soon as he realized that I had no false pride and was thoroughly in earnest, he handled me without gloves—like a boxing teacher who finds that his pupil has the grit of a professional. It was easy enough for me to grasp the theory of my new business—it was nothing more than "be natural." But the rub came in making myself naturally of the right sort. I had—as I suppose every man of intelligence and decent instincts has—a disposition to be friendly and simple. But my manner was by nature what you might call abrupt. My not very easy task was to learn the subtle difference between the abrupt that injects a tonic into social intercourse, and the abrupt that makes the other person shut up with a feeling of having been insulted.

Then, there was the matter of good taste in conversation. Monson found, as I soon saw, that my everlasting self-assertiveness was beyond cure. As I said to him: "I'm afraid you might easier succeed in reducing my chest measure." But we worked away at

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ODD PRANKS PLAYED BY CUPID

Latter-Day Methods of the Little God of Love Are Truly Astonishing—Many Different Ways in Which Men and Women Have Done His Bidding "and Lived Happily Ever After."

See here, Cupid, what next will you do? Aren't you satisfied with the time-honored wedding, with its orange blossoms and its white satin, its wedding march and its expectant chatter, its solemn-looking ushers and timid bridesmaids, its conventional collation, hurried good-byes, rice, white ribbon and old shoes?

Apparently not! Haven't your pranks about reached the limit? Of course, one expects this latter-day craze for novelty to show itself in other ways, but now you've taken it up. The formal wedding is as old as the hills and here you're changing everything. From what has been happening lately it would seem that half the brides of this year of grace want to be married in some novel way.

Of course, those weddings in the ballroom or in the lion's den are only got up for advertisement of some, where a fair or some aspiring zoo, where an admission is charged to see the terrified couple become one. But here are brides, apparently conventional, who don't need the money, who are planning all sorts of strange weddings just for novelty's sake.

Here we have one pair marrying on roller skates and the next sending ashore for a person up the Hudson and being married on the bridegroom's yacht. One couple chooses an undertaker's shop, another a cemetery. Two are made one on horseback; two other have their wedding party on a train. Here is a telephone wedding and there a wedding under the

widened clergyman actually stopped the funeral, had the young couple join hands and made them husband and wife by the side of the open grave, while the mourners stood by as witnesses and wedding guests!

The bridegroom handed the clergyman a \$5 bill, the bride smiled and waved her hand at the mourners and off they sped, happy as larks, while the mourners turned again to the grave. Perhaps there never was such a wedding, but what will Cupid not do when he has a mind?

Equally novel was the double wedding of George Beauchamp and Miss Eva Stormaka and Roscoe C. Nelson and Miss Mary E. McCarthy. They chose Patrick McDonnell's undertaking shop, 37 Seventh avenue, New York, as the bridal place. McDonnell is a notary.

So at 8 o'clock one fine evening the two young men led their blushing brides into the front room of the undertaker's, past the rows of sample coffins, and so into the back room, where a couple of the lately deceased lay, waiting the final administrations of the undertaker.

And there among the dead Cupid lighted Hymen's torch! The beauty of the day, the lovely environment of hills and lawns and trees, the soft airs and the singing of many birds proved too much for Miss Annie Stone and Jose Burns, of Hopkinton, Ky., and Cupid turned an other trick.

Sentiment Inspired by Nature. The afternoon before the day of days the young couple, with the bride's mother and the clergyman, were driv-

ing in Cherokee park, Louisville. It was a lovely afternoon. All nature seemed to conspire to inspire sentiment.

"Oh, what a beautiful day!" sighed the bridegroom. "Wouldn't it be wonderful to be married right here?"

"Why not?" laughed the clergyman. "I have the license in my pocket."

The bride blushed, but her mother smiled.

"Then we will be married right now," announced the bridegroom.

The carriage was stopped, the party got out and climbed a little way up a flower-grown hillside, where they came to a natural grassy altar beneath a spreading beech tree, in whose branches sang innumerable birds.

And up in the trees the birds sang their sweetest, while that wicked rogue, Dan Cupid, looked on approvingly. It was an idyllic culmination of love's young dream.

Cupid whispered to pretty little Le-lu Broomfield, plighted to George Saries. They were engaged and had the consent of their families, though neither was 17.

"George," said the girl, "next to you I love my horse. Let's be married on horseback."

"Let's!" laughed the young man, only too glad to be married any way.

So they rode up to Squire Cunningham's house and told him what they wanted. He came out into the middle of the road and there the blushing youngsters sat on horseback and said their vows.

Cupid certainly went out of the beaten track that time.

But the most picturesque of all, perhaps, was the way our little god of love fixed it for Russell Hopkins, the wealthy young gallant of New York, Atlanta and Narragansett Pier. He

Over in Berlin swimming parties at night are all the vogue. Possibly Robert Lindenberg, a wealthy young man of Columbus, O., got his idea of an engagement party from there. He is to marry Miss Adele Woodworth.

There have been such parties before in Pittsburg and Milwaukee, but never as a wedding festivity. But you never can tell what Cupid will do.

Last of all—the divorce party. And even here Cupid has butted in.

Miss Sophia Diesinger bid twenty of her friends to her apartment in New York a few evenings ago to celebrate her divorce. There was nothing to mar the merriment of the occasion and to cap the climax Mrs. Diesinger blushing announced her engagement to Frank J. Tyler, with whom she hopes to have better matrimonial luck.

The guests were all in fancy dress and Mrs. Diesinger showed off her trained dogs. An elaborate supper ended the evening, at which there was "lobster a la South Dakota," terrapin with almondy sauce, cold shoulder of beef a la counsel fees, salad with lawyer's dressing, lemon ice cream and interludic cakes.

Indeed, Cupid, what things are not done in your name?

Miser a Workhouse Inmate. In some bedding belonging to an old woman who died in a workhouse the purchaser found a bag containing jewelry and a note for \$1,500 deposited in a Liverpool bank 35 years ago. The honest owner has informed the woman's relatives of the discovery.

Not Exactly What He Meant. Professor (to his class)—This is intolerable. Every time I open my mouth there's a fool who begins to talk.—Rire.

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