THE DELUGE

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

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CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

The first news I got was that Bill Van Nest had disappeared. As soon as the Stick 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, iron-clad, 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 it 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 mining properties, in wrecking coal railways, in ejecting American labor and substituting helots from eastern Europe; how they had swindled and lied 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 absorbed 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. "I will give bond 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 gratitude 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 distant 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 damned rascal want?" I asked.

"'FOOL!' SHE FLARED AT ME. 'OH, THE FOOLS WOMEN MAKE OF MEN.'"

The servant smiled. He knew as well as I how Monson, after I dismissed 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 despised him too much to dislike him, and I thought he might possibly be in want. But that notion vanished the instant I set eyes upon him. He was obviously 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 here 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, intoxicating 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?"

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

"Walt—please," came from her abruptly.

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 pen poised as if she were about to begin; but she did not begin—and I felt that she would not. With my mind shadowed with vague dread, I left that mysterious stillness, and went back to the library.

It was not long before Mrs. Langdon was announced. There are some women to whom a haggard look is becoming; she is one of them. She was much thinner than when I last saw her; 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 husman 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.)

Necklace From Thames

Lost for Year, Recovered by Workman Who Didn't Know Its Value.

A valuable pearl necklace lost in the Thames over a year ago by a lady of title has just been recovered by its owner, says the London Tribune.

Some months ago a Henley-on-Thames workman walking by the side of the river, near Shiplake Ferry, saw something glistening in the water, and getting the object out, he found that it was a pearl necklace. Thinking the gems, however, were only imitation, he casually carried the necklace home in his pocket and gave it to his wife.

She occasionally wore it, but never dreamed of its real value until some little time ago, when she broke the clasp and took it to a local jeweler to be repaired. The jeweler at once saw that the pearls were valuable, and, not satisfied with the woman's story, he sent for the police. The pearls were handed over to the custody of the police, and in due course were advertised by them as found.

A few days ago the necklace was identified and claimed by a lady well known in fashionable circles, who had dropped it into the river while staying at a Thamesside mansion near Henley.

The pearls are valued at £40 or £50, and the man who found them has received a check for five pounds sterling.

Thoughts Were Elsewhere.

Chancellor James R. Day, of Syracuse university, in a discussion of the craze for athletics that sometimes becomes too rampant in the universities of America, said with a smile:

"Why, I know a young clergyman—he had been an excellent first baseman at college in his time—who, after reading a portion of the scriptures, said solemnly as he closed the Bible one Sunday morning in the baseball season:

"'Here endeth the second inning.'"

ENGLISH METHOD IS GOOD.

How Wallpaper Is Cleaned "Across the Water."

An English method of cleaning wallpaper is one well worth knowing, for it is simple and better than any dusting. Make a paste by mixing four pounds of common wheat flour and two pints of cold water; knead this into a stiff dough and form into two or three balls. Wipe the paper all over with it, and as the dough becomes dirty work the soiled parts into the middle and the clean parts outside. This quantity will be sufficient to clean a very large room. Begin at the top of the paper and work downward till all is freshened.

It takes up the dirt like a charm and will not injure the most delicate color. Only the quantity required for one cleaning should be made, for the outside will harden if allowed to stand and this crust worked into the mass would scratch the paper.

Flatirons that are put away for a few weeks often get rusty, and the best way to prevent this is to rub a little warm grease over the surface and then wrap in brown paper. When taken out dip into hot water that has had a small piece of soda dissolved in it, rub dry, and then put them to heat in the usual way. When they are ready to be used on the ironing board have a piece of brown paper with a little powdered brick on it, and rub the surface of your iron with this. It seems rather a lengthy process, but it really does not take long to do, and housewives will be rewarded for the trouble they have taken by finding the irons delightfully smooth and easy to use, and when they are like this the work can be done twice as quickly.

CARE OF CUT GLASS.

Sensitiveness Makes Precaution a Matter of Necessity.

Owing to the deepness of the grooves made in cut glass, is is very sensitive to changes of temperature. Never hold a cut glass bowl that has contained cold salad or dessert under the warm water faucet to rinse. Do no even take a piece of good cut glass from a hot room into a cold one suddenly. Always temper a cut glass dish before filling it.

If it is to contain ice cream, have it previously filled with cold water, then cold water with ice, and do the same tempering in the opposite direction, when it is to contain hot things Be careful that chunks of ice in a punch bowl do not hit the sides of the bowl too hard. In cleaning cut glass wash with mild soap and saw dust, brushing the crevices with a brush procured for that purpose.

Never Dress in a Hurry.

Never let it be your boast that you can dress in five minutes, says a writer. No woman who has any respect for her appearance or her clothes will attempt to dress in even double that time. It is as true in dressing as in anything else that where there is the more haste there is the less speed. It is particularly trying for a woman to dress in a hurry. She gets flurried and in her attempt to fasten her brooch the pin sticks into her finger. She gets cross over this and then everything goes wrong. Buttons come off shoes or laces break, gloves and veil are not to be found until boxes and drawers have been turned upside down, and then the missing articles have been found on the dressing table. When she does at last get ready she is conscious of appearing at her worst, being hot and angry with herself and everybody else.

In the House.

Wall space is often added to a room by swinging the door to open into the hall instead of having it open back into the room. When the hallway is wide enough to admit of this plan it will be found to work satisfactorily In crowded quarters doors are a necessary evil, and the perplexed furnisher sometimes wishes that they could be slid back into the wall, as is often done with double doors. As time goes on, if houses keep on growing smaller, some such plan will probably be adopted, but at present no such general relief is available. It has come to be quite a custom to hang a portiere at the bedroom door so as to insure sufficient privacy without having the door shut. The portiere is raher an addition to the room than otherwise, and is easier to handle than a screen.

Home-Made Ointment.

An excellent remedy for eczema and other skin diseases may be made by working flower of sulphur into vaseline. This ointment may be easily manufactured at home by turning a plate bottom side up and putting upon it about half a spoonful of vaseline and then adding the sulphur, a little at a time, and working it into the vaseline with a broad-bladed knife, until of the right consistency. It will have the appearance of a bright yellow salve when the molding process is completed. It may be kept in one of those ordinary small glass boxes with metal tops to be found in every household, and will keep indefinitely.

Date Bread.

Make a sponge with one quart of lukewarm water, half a yeast cake, one teaspoon salt, one and one-half pints flour. Set it to rise in a warm place. When quite light and spongy add one-half cup each of sugar and molasses and sufficient flour to knead. Work in two heaping cupfuls of coarsely chopped dates, knead and set to rise again. When light mold into loaves, and when well risen bake for three-quarters of an hour in a good oven.

To Relieve Rheumatism.

Take half an ounce of pulverized saltpeter and mix with half a pint of olive oil. Bathe the affected parts and cover with warm flannel. Another remedy is to heat a flat iron and cover with a flannel which has been moistened with vinegar. Place as near as possible to affected part. Repeat two or three times a day.

"Jumper" Waist in Favor.

The little "jumper" waist is to be duplicated in linen next summer and girls who do fancy work are busily embroidering for themselves dainty examples of this mode.

SEE WHAT YOU BUY

DO NOT TAKE THE CATALOGUE STATEMENT FOR IT.

CASE OF A MAIL-ORDER BUGGY

The Purchaser Was Ashamed to Use It and Sold It to His Hired Man—It Pays to Buy at Home.

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The East End of London is an example of what the city does for humanity in creating poverty, misery, disease, drunkenness and crime. Jefferson was right when he said: "Great cities are great sores upon the body politic." Is it any wonder that lovers of their kind are horror-stricken at the grinding of these gigantic mills whose grist is the bodies and souls of men?

But there is another movement connected with this current setting cityward which, like it, is full of grave menace to the welfare of humanity. This is the dry rot now invading thousands of villages and towns. It is not lack of capital or business energy in the towns, or discrimination in freights or exhaustion of the soil in the surrounding country that is bringing about this change, but a new and dangerous form of competition, and the caprices of those who buy. Go into these towns and you will find them at a standstill or going backward. Inquire of their business men or commercial travelers and you will learn that business is not as good as formerly and that the prospect is for a continued shrinkage in trade. An observant commercial traveler said to the writer: "I believe the day of the village and town is over. The big fish are everywhere eating up the little fish. A few small lines of business that cannot be done by mail, such as barbering, blacksmithing or the serving of soft drinks and ice cream may survive, but such lines of trade cannot sustain a decent town." The cause of this widespread loss of business is the aggressive and destructive competition of the catalogue houses in the big cities. It has been possible for 40 years or more to buy of some houses in the cities, if one felt that the merchants of his town were exacting too much profit, but this effort of the mail order houses to cut the retailer altogether is a new thing, the growth of the past few years. Starting with a few lines of trade, this form of competition has come to cover almost everything that can be sold in a country town and it is even asserted that a savings bank department is to be added by one of the catalogue houses.

The claim that the mail order houses of Chicago are doing an annual business of over $200,000,000 may seem large, but one house alone has sold goods to the amount of $29,000,000 in the past six months and is now incubating a new plan to increase its enormous business by selling shares of stock to thousands of people in the hope of making them regular customers.

The skillfully worded advertisement and the big catalogue, with its pictures of articles in a hundred lines of trade, are very alluring to buyers, most of whom are not familiar with prices and qualities. Some of the articles below the usual prices are of an inferior quality, while the average price is usually fully up to what would be paid to the home dealer. As was shown last winter in a speech in congress, articles for the mail order trade are often misbranded at the request of the mail order people with deliberate intent to deceive. One of the instances given by this congressman was of some thousands of finger rings stamped "fourteen carats" when they were in reality only ten.

The buyer who orders from his catalogue, or from an advertisement, does not see the articles till they come and is often disappointed in the quality of the most of them, but there is no redress as there would be if he bought at home. He does not like to own that he is disappointed, so he makes the best of it and tries to persuade himself that he has saved money. In many instances he is not well enough informed in values to know that he could have bought as cheaply and selected much more satisfactorily at home. On a rural route with which I am familiar and over which most of the incoming letters are from mail order houses and the outgoing ones carry back money orders, lives a friend of mine who bought a watch from the catalogue at what he considered a rare bargain. The watch came, to be sure, but it did not go, that is at the right speed, and, although money enough was spent on it to bring the price up to a good figure, it was no better as a timekeeper than that famous watch of Capt. Cuttle's. Another friend bought a buggy at $34 and was elated over his purchase until it came and he saw that the top was a very ordinary article of oil cloth, instead of leather, and he was so ashamed of it that he sold it at a loss to his hired man and bought a better one in a neighboring town. A lady and her two daughters bought shoes from the catalogue and when asked why they had trouble with their feet said it was because of ill-fitting shoes. But such instances of the bad effects of buying "sight unseen" are daily occurring all over the country. It is only natural and inevitable that such things should happen.

Let us see what will be the effect of this formidable diversion of trade, if carried to its logical conclusion. Nearly all the business houses of the smaller towns will become bankrupt, the value of town property will decline, churches and schools will receive a feeble support and the towns, instead of being centers of business and social activity, will almost cease to exist. The country in general will become like many portions of the south where the large plantations, by getting their supplies in the cities, have kept the neighboring towns down to the cross-roads type—dreary, unpainted little places of a half dozen ramshackle houses. The evil effects of this loss of trade and destruction of the value of town property will react upon the value of farm property by cutting off the home market. They will add to the taxes on lands by reducing taxable values in the towns. Surely it is not to the interest of anybody, except the bloated corporations carrying on the mail order business, to see the towns and villages fall into decay. A live town is not only of value to the lands surrounding it, but its well stocked business houses are a convenience and a benefit to the buyer. Even if money could, in the long run, be saved by ordering everything from the city, the inconvenience and uncertainty of it would always make such shopping unsatisfactory Ordering from a catalogue is a leap in the dark, except in the case of a few articles whose color, shape and quality are always the same.

To the man who can soberly look on both sides of the question and who can put himself in the place of "the other fellow" the query will come: Is it best from mere whim, or even for a certainty of saving from one to half a dozen dollars in a year to turn my back on the old, convenient ways of doing business, and to do my part toward ruining the business of my old acquaintances and friends, and of destroying the value of property in the town where my friends live?

F. B. MILLER.

The mail-order habit will cut the limb of local prosperity from the tree of national life and drop you and your community into the bottomless pit of business stagnation. Are you wielding the saw that means certain disaster to you and your community?

RICHEST WOMAN IN BRITAIN.

Miss Emily Charlotte Talbot of Wales Has Distinction.

It will probably surprise most people to learn that at the present moment the wealthiest British woman living is a Welshwoman; more, that she is single. Miss Emily Charlotte Talbot was one of the three children of Mr. Christopher Talbot, a popular M. P. of the mid-Victorian era. The only son died in early youth, and Miss Talbot's sister, somewhat younger than herself, became the wife, just 40 years ago, of Mr. Fletcher of Saltoun.

Miss Talbot remained at home, keeping house for her father at beautiful Margam Abbey, Glamorganshire, and on his death, which took place some 16 years ago, his devoted elder daughter found herself left his sole executrix, and owner of all the Talbot real estate, valued at about a million and a half sterling, as also of a reversionary interest in a huge trust fund in consols.

Didn't Suit Him.

People who patronize the cars running out to Forest Hills are familiar with Conductor Crowley, the man who wears six service stripes on his sleeve, says a writer in the Boston Herald.

On the afternoon of election day in November one of his passengers was an old man who had been imbibing enough to make him go to sleep in the corner of the car.

Just before it reached Dudley street the conductor announced with his usual rich roll of the r, "Cir-r-cuit and Guild."

"Yer a liar! It's John B. Moran!" shouted the sleepy one, waking up suddenly.

New Metric Chart.

A new metric chart representing geographically measures of the international metric system of weights and measures has been prepared by the bureau of standards of the department of commerce and labor, and will be furnished free to any school teaching the system.