

The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

"Perhaps you'll send a wire for Miss Rolf? She can easily catch the seven train if she hurries. You know the address?"

"Yes," Chesney sped away, and Milward looked again at Patricia.

She was regarding him with burning anger in her dark eyes, and she broke out tremblingly—

"I don't know what right you have to arrange my affairs. I think it is great presumption. If I go to-morrow morning it will be time enough. I can do no good; Mr. Rolf is dead."

A little flame of anger filled her eyes.

"You will go to-night, do you hear?" he said almost roughly. "You will catch that seven o'clock train and your things can be sent on." He paused then added: "Try and think about somebody besides yourself—for once."

She gave a little choking cry. "How dare you speak to me like this? What right have you?"

He laughed; her anger was nothing to him.

"I am Chesney's friend, and that gives me the right," he answered. "And from what I know of you, I can thank God for his sake that you have been called away now."

A wave of crimson flushed her face from brow to chin.

"I don't understand. What do you mean?" she stammered. For once her composure had deserted her.

Milward's face seemed unwillingly.

"I mean," he said more quietly, "that because Chesney is my friend I do not intend you to play the devil with him and ruin his life; he's too good for that. Now—will you go and get ready?"

For a moment it seemed as if she were going to defy him, then without a word she turned and walked towards the Retreat.

Milward followed; his brows almost met in a heavy frown.

Could she really be so heartless he was wondering, with that face, with that smile! How could Nature make so perfect a face and form, and forget to endow it with a heart!

"We must leave here in fifteen minutes, Miss Rolf," he called after her, but she did not answer, and he crossed the lawn again and went down the road to a neighboring garage to fetch his car.

Chesney was at the gate when he returned; he asked an agitated question:

"Miss Rolf! Where is she?"

"I'm going to drive her to the station—to catch the seven train up to town."

Chesney stared. "But she can't be ready! There's only a quarter of an hour—"

"She'll be ready," Milward answered; he was filling the tank with petrol. "Sorry we can't take you along as well, old chap," he said without looking up. "There's no room, you see."

Chesney grunted; Milward had never paid Patricia the slightest attention before, and Chesney was inclined to be jealous.

"I say, you know," he broke out boyishly, "it's rotten luck; whatever will she do? She hasn't anyone in the world but old Rolf—rotten luck, breaking up her holiday like this!"

"Yes, I thought that was the chief trouble," said Milward dryly.

Chesney's face flamed.

"What do you mean?" he asked sharply.

The other man shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, nothing! What relation was she to Rolf?"

"None—adopted daughter, that's all."

"I see."

"She'll get all the old man's money," Chesney said with a note of constraint in his voice.

Milward did not seem impressed, and at that moment Patricia came down the garden and joined them.

She still wore her white frock with a long coat over it, and she was followed by a maid carrying a dressing-case. She ignored Milward and spoke to Chesney.

"I am so sorry to have to run away like this, but you do understand, don't you? I can't find Mrs. Chesney anywhere, but you will tell her how it is, won't you? I shall write, of

course."

Young Chesney flushed up to his eyes.

"I'm sorry, too," he said in a low voice, "very sorry."

He gripped her hand hard.

"Good-bye, and if there is anything I can do for you, please don't hesitate to ask or send for me."

And the next moment the little car was racing away through the warm evening.

"You'd better take the rug," Milward said impartially. "It's dusty down the road and you'll spoil your frock. You'll find it behind me."

Patricia looked at him icily.

"Thank you, but it's not worth while."

She was furious with him for having made her leave, and furious with herself for having obeyed him.

Milward kept one hand on the wheel and, half turning, dragged the rug from behind him and flung it lightly across her lap.

"There is no sense in spoiling an expensive frock like that," he said tolerantly.

She bit her lips; tears of angry mortification in her eyes.

"You are not very sympathetic," she said, in a quivering voice. "I think you might at least be a little—sorry for me. Mr. Rolf was the only friend I had in the world."

Milward looked down at her dispassionately.

"I would sympathize with you I would be sorry for you, if I thought you really wished it," he said, "but I know you do not."

She gave a stifled cry, and he went on quickly:

"Miss Rolf, why won't you be honest with me? I know that Mr. Rolf's death means little or nothing to you; I know that unless you had appearances to consider you would infinitely rather stay here than go back home. Isn't it rather—rather petty in the circumstances, then, to ask me to be sorry for you?"

There was a little silence; then she said, in a changed voice—

"I wonder why you hate me so much? I don't think anybody has ever really hated me before."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't hate you; I haven't any feeling one way or the other except that—"

He hesitated, and she looked up quickly, "Yes?"

"Except that I should like to appeal to you for Chesney," he went on firmly. "He's only a boy—he doesn't understand that it's quite possible for a woman to pretend to care for a man when she cares nothing at all. Don't you think it's rather cruel of you to deliberately lead him on, at you have done, and then show him that such a thing is possible?"

She drew in her breath hard, her hands clenched under the light rug.

"Nobody has ever so insulted me before," she said quivering.

"The truth is not an insult," he maintained. "If you choose to consider that it is, I am sorry, but—"

He broke off, catching Patricia's arm in a rough grip.

They had turned in at the little station yard, and Patricia had thrown open the low door of the car and tried to get out before he had brought it to a standstill.

"Do you want to break your neck?" he asked angrily.

She turned stormy eyes on him.

"You wouldn't care if I did," she said. "I believe you'd be glad."

Milward laughed outright.

The car was at a standstill now, and he took her dressing-case and followed her into the station.

"You'll have to hurry—the train is in," he said.

He found a carriage for her and deposited the case on the rack.

There was only a moment before the train started.

Milward stood at the open door, a little breathless with his hurry.

"Good-bye, and try to forgive me," he said. Patricia ignored his offered hand.

CHAPTER II

"But it's monstrous—monstrous!" said Patricia. She leaned forward, her hands clutching the arms of the big chair in which she sat, and stared at the man who had just finished reading from the pile of papers on the table before him.

Her face was colorless and her beautiful eyes blazed.

"He must have been mad," she said again hoarsely. "He always told me that everything would be mine—everybody knew it!" She tried to laugh. "Oh, there's some mistake, of course; there must be another will."

Mr. Philips shrugged his shoulders.

"I am afraid there is no mistake," he said, with unwonted gentleness. "This will was only made a month ago, and Mr. Rolf knew quite well what he was doing. It was a surprise to me, I admit. I always looked upon you as his heiress—everybody did. I had no idea that Mr. Rolf ever intended to change his will. I most certainly had no idea that his son was still living."

Patricia leaned back again in her chair; she felt faint and giddy.

"I don't believe he is alive," she forced herself to say. "I believe it's all some cruel joke—he was always cruel! He told me himself that his son had died years ago. He never spoke of him. Oh, I am sure that it cannot be true."

Mr. Philips did not answer. He felt very sorry for this girl. He had done his best to persuade his client to leave her at least a small income. He recalled his own indignant words now as he looked at Patricia's stunned face.

"You have brought her up in luxury; you have encouraged her in extravagant tastes for fourteen years, and now you leave her without a penny! What will become of her! What can she do?"

And a little shiver of distaste shook him as he remembered Peter Rolf's mirthless laugh as he had answered:

"She can go back to where she came from; it will do her good. She never showed me any affection—I owe her no consideration. Now, then, are you going to draw up that will, or shall I get someone else to do it?"

Peter Rolf had always been a determined man and even while he made his protest, Mr. Philips had realized its hopeless futility. So the will had been made, leaving everything to this son whom everybody had believed to be dead.

It seemed a gross injustice. Mr. Philips thought, as he looked at Patricia. He wondered what she would say if she could know how Peter Rolf had chuckled to think of her discomfort when the terms of his will became known.

He said again, gently—

"I hoped to be able to make him change his mind, or at least, to leave you something, Miss Rolf, but—"

Patricia turned on him furiously.

"Don't call me Miss Rolf—don't call me by his name; I won't have it. He must always have hated me—I am sure now that he did." Her voice trembled suddenly. "What do you suppose will become of me? What in the wide world can I do?"

The lawyer cleared his throat nervously.

"You will probably marry," he said courteously. "And of course young Mr. Rolf will see that something is done to provide for you; I am sure that he will do so."

She laughed scornfully.

"If he is anything like his father, he will hate me, too," she said. "Do you know him? Where is he now? And does he know GGalley Five."

"I have not seen him or heard anything of him since he went away, fifteen years ago. I always understood that he was dead. I can assure you that it was as much of a surprise to me as—"

She interrupted impatiently: "But now—where is he now?"

"In Australia."

"And he knows—about this?"

Mr. Philips shook his head.

"I wrote—at Mr. Rolf's wish—as soon as this will was made, but he cannot have got the letter. I have sent a cable, of course. He will probably sail for England at once, but even then it will be six or seven weeks before he can possibly get here."

"And in the meantime what am I to do? Where am I to go?"

"You will stay here, natural-

ly. I am sure it will be his wish that you should stay here for the present, at all events."

Patricia did not answer. She felt as if she were caught in a trap from which there was no possible escape.

She looked down at her slim white hands lying in her lap and a wave of bitterness swept through her.

What would become of her? If she had to earn her own living she would starve! She had never been taught to do anything—she had always had a maid to wait upon her.

There was only one way out of the tangle—marriage!

She thought of Chesney; she did not care for him, but he was fairly well off, and anything would be better than having to walk out of her present luxury to face an unknown future in which poverty seemed the overwhelming factor.

There were other men who had wished to marry her, but somehow at the moment Chesney seemed to stand above them all.

His boyish admiration had touched her heart as well as appealing to her vanity; she liked to read the adoration in his eyes whenever he looked at her; she was glad now to recall his last words—"If there is anything I can do for you please don't hesitate to ask or send for me."

A desire to laugh seized her. Supposing she sent for him and asked him to marry her! Milward would be furious, anyway, and it would be some sort of satisfaction to know that she had angered him.

She thought again of the way he had treated her when they last met; no man had ever dared to speak to her in such a manner before. A little choking sob of anger rose in her throat.

Mr. Philips looked up from the papers which he was stowing away in his dispatch case, and his eyes were very kind.

"Don't worry too much," he said. He laid his hand for a moment on hers. "Don't worry too much, my dear young lady; things will turn out all right for you in the end, I am sure."

She raised her tragic eyes to his face.

"All right for me!" she echoed. "With not a shilling in the world, and nowhere to go."

He did not answer, perhaps he did not know how to answer, and present he went away leaving her alone in the silent room.

Patricia sat quite still, staring before her.

She looked back over the years, and their memories seemed to mock her.

Everything she had wanted in the world she had had! Nothing had ever been denied to her, and now—

A servant came to the door: "If you please, miss, a gentleman to see you."

A wild hope flashed through Patricia's mind that it might be Chesney. She would have been thankful for his presence then, grateful for the love with which today she had only intended to amuse herself.

"Who is it?" she asked eagerly.

The maid came closer; she held a tray with a card on it.

Patricia took it up eagerly—it was Milward's.

She flung it down again with petulant anger and disappointment.

"I will not see him," she said. "Tell him I will not see him."

The maid turned to go. Patricia sat drumming her fingers on the chair arms. How dared he come after what had happened? And why had he come? She had not asked him to visit her; had he certainly not wished it. Why, then, had he come? She turned quickly.

"Marie, wait! Ask Mr. Milward to come in."

He should not think she was afraid of him at all events.

She did not rise when Milward entered, and he had to walk the length of the room to her.

"I hope I am not intruding," he said, a little uncertainly. "but I was driving past this way and so—I ventured to call."

He looked at her pale face. "I am afraid you have been ill," he said gently.

Patricia laughed.

"No!" She looked away from him, then suddenly she rose to her feet and swung around.

"The other day," she said passionately, "you taunted me with being utterly heartless and selfish. You said that I had everything in the world I wanted and so I never troubled to consider anyone else. Well, perhaps, it will please you to know that I have nothing any more! Nothing! Mr. Rolf has not even

left me the proverbial shilling! Even this frock, which I am wearing for him, it not mine and I cannot pay for it. He has cut out of his will and left everything to his son—"

She stopped breathlessly. "Well are you pleased?" she demanded.

Milward had fallen back a step. His eyes looked distressed and incredulous.

"Oh, but there must be some mistake," he said earnestly. "I always understood that you—"

She made a gesture of impatience.

"It doesn't matter what we understood, any of us! When I walk out of here it will be with nothing in the world belonging to me and nowhere to go unless—"

—a little gleam lit her eyes— "unless I marry Bernard Chesney."

That roused him, as she had known it would do. He broke out angrily:

"You wouldn't—you couldn't be so unjust—when you care nothing for him—he would be miserable. To marry him just for a home—"

She laughed recklessly.

"Well, and what else can I do? You showed yourself so very interested in my affairs the other day, perhaps you may have some better suggestion to offer."

She looked at him mockingly. "I am not going to ask for your pity or sympathy—a second time."

Milward's eyes met hers gravely.

"It is more a case for congratulation, don't you think?" he asked. "All this money and luxury have been the ruin of you. I know that you—"

He stopped.

Patricia was laughing hysterically.

(Continued Next Week)

+ THE NURSERY BORDER +

By Anne Campbell

The nursery figures on my wall do not behave themselves at all. Each night when in my bed I lie, they leave their places on the sky. The Dutch boy is the first to come! You ought to see his windmill hum! And then he makes a little bow And helps her down—the old Dutch frau.

Then darling little Wooden Shoes Steps down, as gaily as you choose And through the night they speed away, And don't come home till break of day.

The old Dutch frau calls to her man To run as fast as ever he can. He jumps down from the border high. They search for them while hours go by.

Soon, by the patter on the pane, I know these two are home again. They stole out while they had the chance.

To join the fairies in their dances. The old Dutch frau just spansks them good. And scolds them as a mother should. And makes them hurry back so fast They're on my wall again at last!

When sunbeams through my window stream, My mother says it's all a dream. But I am certain it is so! I saw them, so I ought to know! (Copyright, North American Newspaper Alliance, 1923.)

What is the Freight on Apples?

From the Chicago Daily Journal.

This spring the agricultural agent of the American Railway Association bought some northwest coast apples from a retailer in New York City and paid from 10 to 15 cents each for them. He found on investigation that the grower received about one cent each for that quality of apples. The freight from the shipping point to New York was a cent and a quarter, and the cost of distribution in the city by truck about the same. With a reasonable wholesaler's profit added, the cost of such apples to the retailer should be about five cents each.

The railways present this instance as proving the injustice of the complaint that high prices are due to high freight rates—and in a wide range of articles, perhaps in all, the railways are right. If the apples in question had been carried free from Washington or Oregon to New York the consumer never would have known the difference. Somebody would have "taken up the slack," whether wholesaler or retailer, the agent who made the investigation does not indicate.

The dealers from whom that agent bought, sell many things beside fruit. They sell service and convenience. Even with those items added, the "spread between producer and consumer is far too great; but is not a part of the remedy, at least, in the consumer's own hands?"

The average American likes to take an attitude of "dam the expense." He wants what he wants when he wants it, and even when being stung on small items, counts it beneath his dignity to haggle. Naturally, he pays for this illusion of grandeur. The primitive rule of business is to charge what the traffic will bear, and there is a considerable group of American buyers who will bear anything.

There are signs, however, that this lordly attitude is changing, indications that the American buyer is growing more concerned to get the worth of his money, and more ready to resist hidden charges. Such a change—if it lasts—will be to the advantage of progressive retail business, as well as to the consumer; and, meantime, don't blame the railroads for everything.

One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives.—Mark Twain.

ASK THE FARMERS.

So much conflict has existed recently in reports on what the farmers want the government to do for them that someone had an inspiration. As a result, farmers in several sections of the middle west have recently had an opportunity, perhaps for the first time in a long while, to tell just what they want and expect the government to do for them. Their replies might prove surprising to most of the self-nominated champions of agricultural interests.

To the question whether the farmers themselves have formed any concrete idea as to how present conditions may be improved practically every farmer replied in the negative. Asked whether conditions on the farms were worse this year than in any previous year the older farmers were practically agreed that they were not so bad as in the period from 1893 to 1897. Most of them declared conditions are no worse this year than last.

No farmer was found who had any legislation to suggest that would bring relief. Practically none of them considered any more credit needed or desirable. A large majority declared a government guarantee of a price on wheat undesirable, though a few substantial farmers said it would be helpful. Practically all were agreed that the farmers themselves are not looking to legislative action as a way out of whatever difficulties they now face.

Most important, perhaps, of all the questions asked was "What can the farmer do to help himself out of the present difficulty?" To this the answers varied in detail; but the theme of all of them was that the farmer must buckle down to the job of farming; reduce his expenses to the minimum; utilize the dairy cow and the hen, diversify his farming operations and sit tight until the storm blows over.

These questions were propounded in various sections of the country by a newspaper man sent out for that purpose. They may not represent an accurate cross section of agricultural thought all through the middle west, but in the absence of more accurate information that might be assumed with comparative safety, it is respectfully suggested that those who are doing so much demanding of government action in the name of the American farmers try at least as careful an investigation before declaring these findings are not representative of farmer sentiment.

LABOR AND POLITICS.

An interesting event took place the other day in Minnesota, the state of Senator Magnus Johnson. The Minnesota State Federation of Labor in convention assembled went on record without a dissenting vote in favor of a national farmer-labor party. Further it instructed its delegates to the convention of the American Federation of Labor to do their utmost to swing the national body around to that view. Clearly it is not alone embattled farmers who fill the ranks of the Minnesota revolutionaries.

If the Minnesota delegates succeed in persuading the American Federation of Labor to indorse a national farmer-labor party, they will have brought about an abandonment of the federation's historic policy. That organization has stood firmly against direct participation in politics, striving always to gain legislative ends by means of one or the other of the old parties.

In following this course the American Federation has shown its vision and patriotism, two qualities for which it sometimes has not received sufficient credit. A labor party, whether linked with a farmer party or not, would exaggerate class strife in America—a development which, if persisted in, could end only in national disaster. In these times of unrest, when good judgment seems suspended upon occasion, the federation should be encouraged to stick to its traditional stand.

Records recently compiled show that Missouri farmers bought more motor cars last year than ever before, and are out to break that record this year if the present demand keeps up. Election of a recruit to the LaFollette-Brookhart bloc from that state seems doubtful, in the face of this report.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.—Revelations XIV.13.

What qualities must a president have? What qualities of daring and recklessness, admirable on the battle field, must a president lack, or suppress, to keep the nation out of trouble?

First of all, as trustee, he must know the value of things already accomplished, and preserve them.

If he builds he must do it without tearing down—not easy, although it can be done.

He must have respect for law and for precedent. At the same time must realize that the law of today is the will of the people of today, within constitutional limits.