

The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

CHAPTER V

Michael laughed afterwards when he thought of the dismay in Effie Shackle's face; for a moment she stared at him open-mouthed, then she turned and ran up stairs without another word.

Michael followed Mr. Shackle into the drawing room; he found himself rather liking the old man.

"He was honest and unaffected, and unfeignedly glad to meet the new owner of Clayton Wold."

"I knew your father, Mr. Rolf," he said. "I can't say that I knew him well, but we used to pass the time of day when we met. A very reserved gentleman, if I may say so without offence—a man it was difficult to make a friend of, so I'm told."

"You knew Miss Rolf, too, so your daughter tells me," Michael said. "I mean—Patricia." The old man nodded.

"Yes, we did—she used to come here when she felt inclined. I always keep open house for people who care to take advantage of it. I like people, especially young people, about the place. Miss Rolf was a friend of my daughter's—very kind she was to her, too, introducing her to people who hadn't taken any notice of us, you know, and women think a lot of a thing like that. Effie was very fond of Miss Rolf, I know, and I liked her myself: a very handsome woman she is. I'm sorry we shan't be seeing so much of her in future, though we are glad to have made your acquaintance instead, sir."

Michael thanked him formally. "Miss Rolf is leaving this neighborhood entirely to please herself," he said. "I have asked her to stay, but she does not wish it. I should be grateful if you and Miss Shackle would try and get her to change her mind."

Mr. Shackle looked faintly surprised.

"I am not very likely to be seeing her," he said awkwardly, "but if I do . . ." He broke off as his wife and daughter entered the room.

Mrs. Shackle was over-dressed and over-coiffured; she gushed over Michael, and thanked him for his great kindness to her "treasure" as she called Effie.

She urged him to stay to dinner, but Michael refused; some other time if he might, he said—he thought it would be rather a good idea to call at the house while Patricia was there. After a few moments desultory conversation, he said good-bye.

"Always pleased to see you any time," Mr. Shackle said as they shook hands. He would have followed Michael to the door but his wife restrained him, and Effie moved forward instead.

"I do think it was horrid of you, Mr. Rolf, not to tell me who you were," she said pouting, as they stood together by the car. "Whatever must you think of me for having chattered away so much nonsense?"

Michael laughed shortly. "The fact of my being who I am does not influence my opinion one way or the other," he said with a sarcasm which she entirely missed. "I think it was kind of you to have so much confidence in me."

"And you won't tell Patricia anything I said, will you?" she urged. "Do promise me that."

"I certainly will, if you will promise me something in return."

She flushed with pleasure. "I will—oh, of course, I will."

"Well, then, will you try and persuade Patricia to stay, if not in, at least somewhere near Clayton Wold? You will have plenty of opportunities I dare say while she is here, and I shall be everlastingly obliged to you."

There was a little silence, then Effie said blankly: "But Patricia is not coming here."

It was Michael's turn to look amazed. "Not coming! Why she told me only this evening that she was coming to you tomorrow to stay indefinitely! She said how kind you had been to her, and that she was sure of a welcome."

Effie's face changed subtly; a sort of shame filled her eyes. "Oh, then she can't have got my letter," she said aghast. "She was to have come, but some cousins of ours wired ask-

ing if we could have them, as one of their brothers was ill with scarlet fever and the doctor said they must go away; so I had to put Patricia off, of course! She will get my letter early in the morning, if she has not had it tonight."

Michael was very shrewd in some ways, and he knew instinctively that this girl was not speaking the truth. In a flash he remembered Patricia's tears and the letter she had picked up from the grass so hurriedly when he joined her, and his face hardened.

He did not believe in the story of the cousins and the scarlet fever; he believed it was all a fabricated excuse to put Patricia off; his blood boiled with anger for her sake.

But he was not going to let this girl see that he knew; he answered smoothly that of course Patricia would understand and sympathize, but he deliberately avoided shaking hands with Effie as he got into the car and drove away.

How hateful women could be to one another, he thought; no wonder Patricia had cried, because, of course, she had seen through the paltry excuse as well as he had been able to do.

He admired her pride for not having told him; he felt more kindly towards her than ever before, as he sped on towards London.

He was glad that chance had introduced him to the Shackles; he was glad that he had found out this thing, and yet in a way it made him ashamed of his own part in the affair with Chesney.

He had wished to save his friend, not to humiliate Patricia. He made up his mind that tomorrow he would go down and see her again and try once more to patch up some sort of truce between them. He was sorry for her—in a way he even liked her and admired her pride, but it filled him with impatience because he found her so difficult.

Why could she not be reasonable. Not one woman in ten thousand would have refused the offer he had made to her, he was sure.

As for the Shackles, he shrugged his shoulders and dismissed them from his mind. Patricia had been wrong ever to make friends with them; the old man was the only one of the family worth anything; Effie was an empty-headed doll, and the mother—well, one could not seriously consider her.

It was past midnight when he reached his rooms in town, and though the long drive had made him tired, he hardly slept at all.

The thought of Patricia worried him, and he was glad when morning came and he could start activities again.

He went round to see Mr. Philips and said that he was going to alter his offer to Patricia. "Five hundred a year isn't enough," he said. "Make it a thousand, and tell her she can choose her own house if she objects to the Dover House."

Mr. Philips shrugged his shoulders. "I am afraid it will be quite useless," he said dryly. "Miss Rolf is very determined."

Michael thrust out his chin obstinately. "So am I," he said, "and Miss Rolf will have to give in to me. I am going down to Clayton to-day to tell her so."

Mr. Philips smiled. "Miss Rolf will not be at Clayton," he said. "She leaves early this morning to stay with some friends of hers—the Shackles."

"I know—she told me; but she won't have gone. I met the Shackles last night, and—by the way, have you ever met them, Philips?"

"I know Mr. Shackle—a very decent old chap I always found him."

"He is; but the wife and daughter—" Michael told him in a few words of his experience of the previous night.

Mr. Philips listened sympathetically. He liked Michael and knew perfectly well that he was not happy in his mind with regard to Patricia.

ribly self-willed, she always has been. Why, I remember when she was quite a child that she was warned not to play near the mill stream at Clayton—you know the mill stream of course, and what a strong current there was? Well, she went merely because she was told not to, and fell in. One of the men working near got her out; half-drowned she was, but not in the least repentant. Your father sent for her and said he hoped she had been taught a lesson by the fright. 'Wasn't frightened,' she said. 'I liked it.' Now, what can you do with a girl like that?"

They both laughed. "Well, I'm going to see her again today, anyway," Michael said obstinately. "Hang it all, it's not very pleasant for me to feel that I've turned her out of Clayton and spoiled her life."

"That's rather an exaggeration, isn't it?" Mr. Philips asked smiling. "Miss Rolf will be all right. She is one of those people who were born to be lucky."

"I hope so, I'm sure," Michael said lugubriously. "I wish some decent chap would come along and marry her," he added boyishly.

Mr. Philips looked surprised. "I understand that your friend, Mr. Chesney—" he began.

Michael colored. "Oh, Chesney! But she never cared for him, and they wouldn't have been happy together," he said off-handedly.

"Well," said Mr. Philips, "there are plenty of men in the world, and Miss Rolf is young."

"She's the greatest worry I've ever had in my life," Michael said ruefully.

Mr. Philips smiled leniently, as he followed Michael to the door.

"And you will let me know how you get on?" he asked. "I shall be very interested."

"Oh, I'll let you know all right," Michael answered dryly. He had not got much faith in himself.

Until Patricia was comfortably settled he knew he should be able to make no plans for his own future, and he very much wanted to settle down. He had knocked about the world so much that there was something very pleasing in the thought of a home of his own, and perhaps a wife. But Patricia stood like the angel of the flaming sword at the gate of his Garden of Eden, and would not let him pass. "Confound her!" Michael thought as he raced through the sunny roads once more to Clayton Wold.

"She'll have to have lunch with me to-day, whether she likes it or not." He drew up at the old house with a fine flourish just as it was striking one o'clock.

The door was shut, and he rang the bell and waited impatiently. The maid who yesterday had told him of Patricia's distress opened the door after some little delay.

"Is Miss Rolf in?" Michael asked.

"Miss Rolf!" She stared at him. "No, sir; she went away this morning."

Michael had passed her and gone into the hall, but now he stopped dead and turned. "Gone away!" he echoed incredulously.

"Yes, sir."

"But I thought—" Michael began, then stopped. "She'll be home this evening, of course!" he added after a moment.

"No, sir." The girl shook her head rather sadly. "Miss Rolf said good-bye to us all, sir, and took all her luggage; she said she was not coming back to Clayton any more, sir."

"Not coming back any more!" There was utter incredulity in Michael Rolf's face and voice. He stared at the girl blankly for a moment; then he laughed.

"Oh, but that's absurd!" he said. "There must be some mistake! Why—why, she hasn't anywhere in the world to go."

The words escaped him before he was aware of it, and he hastened to retract them.

"Of course, she has friends—many friends, but—but—oh, there must be some mistake," he said again, impatiently.

The girl shook her head. She did not think there was any mistake; she knew Patricia very well in some ways, and she could understand the impulse that had prompted this flight.

"If you were to see her room, sir, you'd know that she didn't mean to come back," she said impulsively. "It's all upset—she's taken everything that was hers—all the things Mr.

Rolf gave her. 'They're mine, at least,' she said, when I asked if I was to pack them."

Michael turned on his heel and went into the dining-room.

Where in the world could she have gone? he was asking himself in anger. It was like her to further embarrass him. She probably knew how he would feel about it.

Had she gone to friends. He doubted it. From what he knew of Patricia she was not the girl to risk another snubbing such as she had received from Effie Shackle; and yet—how was it possible for her to live alone? What money had she? Very little, he was sure.

The maid followed him into the room.

"Can I get you some lunch, sir?" she asked diffidently.

"No—no, thanks, I don't want any." Michael swung round from the window. "How long is it since Miss Rolf left the house?"

"She went to London by the ten o'clock train, sir."

He must have passed her on the way. Why the dickens hadn't he come straight here instead of calling to see Philips? He ought to have guessed that she had some such mad brained scheme in her head. Of course, it was all done to annoy him.

"Who drove her to the station?" he asked. "Did she have the car? Which of the men drove her?"

"Miss Rolf hired a cab from the village," the girl told him hesitatingly. "I ordered the car, but she refused to use it."

There was a touch of anxiety in her voice. "I hope Miss Rolf is all right, sir," she added timidly.

"All right! Of course she's all right," Michael answered. "She'll come back in a day or two. Of course, she's all right."

"Miss Rolf said she should never come back," the girl insisted.

Michael laughed. "She will," he said.

He went out again and drove away. He was at his wits' ends what to do or where to look for Patricia. He fully realized how difficult it would be to trace her once she had got to London.

him.

"They might do worse—both of them," he thought as he looked at Michael's wrathful face. "And they'd make a handsome couple."

"If you will leave it to me—" he said again.

Michael cut in brusquely. "But there's no time to be lost if we're going to find her. It's hours now since she left Clayton. She may be out of the country for all we know."

"I hardly think it likely," said Mr. Philips, smoothly. "You will probably find that she is with friends . . ."

Michael laughed ruefully. "She won't find she has many friends now she's lost her money," he said. "It's the same all the world over . . ."

But he agreed to leave it in Mr. Philips' hands, knowing all the time that he should do nothing of the sort, and as soon as he got out of the office he began evolving schemes in his own mind for means of finding Patricia.

As he drove slowly back to his rooms he found himself staring at every woman he passed. Once he chased a taxicab for a couple of miles because it was piled with luggage, and because he had caught a glimpse of a girl at the window who faintly resembled Patricia. Finally, he gave it up in disgust and took the car to the garage.

He felt horribly helpless and beaten. He wished he could take Mr. Philips' philosophical view and tell himself that Patricia would be all right, but this he could not do. He could only think of her as he had found her crying in the garden yesterday morning; only remember her with that air of unexpected helplessness.

Michael stood still for a moment; then he turned and followed. He caught his friend up at the outer door and called to him. "Don't be a fool, Chesney; we shall find her all right. I've done my best, I give you my word. Wait a minute and I'll walk along with you."

He ran back for his hat, and a moment later the two men were walking down the road.

Chesney was inclined to be sulky still. He really blamed Michael for Patricia's disappearance. If only he had gone to see her when she asked him; if only he had answered that letter in the way in which his heart longed to answer it, how different things might have been!

At the corner of the road he stopped.

At the corner of the road he stopped.

"Look here," he said, doggedly, "I give you fair warning that when I find Patricia again—and I shall find her—I shall marry her if she'll have me, in spite of anything you can say. Good-night!"

He turned, struck out across the road, and was lost in the darkness.

Michael turned and began to retrace his steps.

"Quixotic young fool!" he said, exasperatedly, under his breath.

He walked on quickly; it was nearly midnight, and it was beginning to rain a little.

He had reached the block of buildings in which his rooms were situated, when a girl came running towards him. He could hear her quick breathing as she came up to him, saw that she faltered a little and looked back hurriedly over her shoulder as if afraid of someone or something that was following her.

Then suddenly he gave a stifled exclamation: "Good heavens! Patricia!"

FRENCH SUSPECT GERMAN AIR PLOT

Fear Saboteurs of Ruhr Are Guilty of Setting Fire To Their Airplanes

Paris—The spectre of another destructive German invasion, with German incendiaries, draft from the ranks of the Ruhr saboteurs, carrying burning brands and setting fire to France's military aviation fields, has been raised by Colonel Rousset, of the French army. This officer, in an appeal in the Petit Parisien, believes he sees an enemy's hand in the recent epidemic of fires which have devastated French aviation grounds.

"Fire destroyed the hangars of Paris' great airport, Le Bourget; within a few days a second fire on the same field burned a number of planes," Colonel Rousset writes. "And now we learn that at Bron, near Lyons, a hangar, 100 yards long by sixty wide, burned like a straw heap, demolishing 27 Nieuport planes valued at more than 3,000,000 francs."

"The Germans, as everyone knows, are counting entirely upon a war in the air to avenge their defeat, and they wouldn't shrink from any tactics to prevent France from surpassing them in the air. They know that the only obstacle they have to fear would be a powerful and large force of French airplanes, which would be ready to bar Germany's way in case of a sudden attack and return blow for blow. To hinder the development of French aviation the Germans certainly would not recede before any act; they would accept opprobrium gracefully provided they secured a benefit from it."

Colonel Rousset demands that the causes of the fires—Dwight, flaming French counter-espionage service make a thorough investigation into the causes of the fires to make sure that a German hand is not behind the destruction.

Southern Delegates. From the New York Post. They aren't what they used to be. Time was when they made up a fourth of a national Republican convention. In 1916, however, a new rule of apportionment went into effect, by which the number of delegates to which a Congressional district was entitled depended somewhat upon the size of its Republican vote. This cut the Southern contingent by one-third, reducing the number from 252 to 174. Next year the number will be somewhat larger, owing to the huge Republican vote in 1920.

The reduction in the number of Southern delegates is given as a reason why President Coolidge's friends will not go after them. It is a reason which does credit neither to their hearts nor to their heads. Republican candidates for President who have tried to win any considerable number of Southern delegates in recent years have had their fingers burned. President Coolidge is independent of them. If he makes good it will be hard to prevent his nomination for President. If he does not, possession of every delegate south of Mason and Dixon's line will not help him.

Driving Fitness. Minnesota Sparks. Isn't it about time that something is done toward inquiring into the fitness of people who are driving automobiles upon our congested streets and highways?

e venture the belief that not more than 75 per cent of the people who are driving should be allowed to do so. Of course, we do not believe there would be a falling off in the number of our drivers if we undertook to wake them, all pass an examination as to their fitness, as some of the unfit would naturally escape. We do believe, however, that there are many thousands of drivers today whom not only do not know of the provisions of our state and local laws and ordinances, but haven't the slightest idea of road practice or courtesy.

We have long hesitated recommending putting to which they are now subjected or the establishing of any more "bureaus," but automobiles are becoming so numerous and the consequent increase of accidents and drivers so large that we feel, in justice to themselves, there should be some test to which every driver of a car should be subjected before being allowed to drive.

Investigations of a number of recent accidents seem to prove that they were caused in a large measure through inexperienced drivers, either they didn't know what to do at the right time or didn't know at all; lost their heads, so to speak. Of course, it would be difficult to legislate against losing one's head, but this rarely happens to an experienced or capable driver.

And the sort of punishment that should be meted out to the idiotic parent who teaches young hopeful how to drive at the age of 7 and declares it is all right for him to do so as long as he is seated behind the wheel, we would leave to those of our readers who aren't fond parents, and thus be assured he would get his just deserts.

Origin of Famous Hymn. From the Chicago Journal. The first man to sing the immortal hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light," was a boatman, the place an orange boat becalmed on the Mediterranean off the island of Capri, the time 90 years ago.

John Henry Newman, afterward the great cardinal, was a passenger on the boat. Ill in body and mind, he was idling in the Mediterranean in the hope of recovering his health. He was especially depressed on that day when the orange boat was becalmed and sought to soothe his spirits by composing a hymn. The result was "Lead, Kindly Light."

The composition occupied but a few hours, and the boatman, who spoke English and was possessed of a fine voice, was asked to sing it. As the day melted into darkness a breeze sprang up and the becalmed voyagers were guided by the "kindly lights" along the Capri shore into a safe harbor. The composer, with health restored, soon returned to England and became a leader in the Oxford movement, until in 1845 he went over to the Catholic church, which later rewarded his ability and devotion by the bestowal of the red hat.

BRIDE PROTESTS JAIL HONEYMOON

Perjury Charges Brought By Father Says She Fibbed About Her Age

Cleveland, Ohio—A solitary picture of a woman after the fourth day of her honeymoon, Mrs. Kathleen Paul, 18-year-old bride, tearfully declared that "the County Jail was no place to spend a honeymoon!"

Mrs. Paul's honeymoon abruptly hit a snag when, after she had declared she was 21 at the marriage bureau and married Joseph Paul, 19, in the face of parental opposition, she was placed under arrest on a charge of perjury, at her father's instigation.

Meanwhile the youthful Joseph scurried around to raise the \$500 ball to liberate his bride, pending grand jury action on the charge.

The whole trouble arose from the law passed by the last session of the State legislature and recently put into effect, which requires a prospective bride to be 21, or have the consent of her parents.