

The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

"You can't accuse me of sharing that idea, anyway," said Michael quickly.

Patricia flushed. "Oh, you!" she said. "It's only pity that brings you here, I know that—pity and a sort of duty. You feel responsible for me, I know—Mr. Philips told me so."

Michael looked angry. "I object to that," he said. "You've no earthly right to say such a thing. I've tried to undo any mistakes I have made in the past and I was beginning to think I had succeeded, and now you—now you go and make an abominable statement like that. You really are enough to goad anyone beyond all endurance Patricia."

To his dismay she broke down into tears.

"Why do you come here, then?" she demanded sobbing. "I didn't ask you to come. I went away and I should never have troubled you again if you hadn't followed me. Why can't you leave me alone?"

"Good Heavens!" Michael was distressed. He paced the length of the room, coming to a standstill behind Patricia's chair. "Are you going to stop crying?" he demanded.

"Mrs. Flannagan will think I am ill-treating you."

"I don't care what she thinks!"

"Well, I do, Patricia!" He waited a moment; then a little determined smile crept into his eyes. "Very well, if you will behave like a baby you must expect me to treat you like one."

and, stooping, he raised her face, all flushed and tear-stained as it was, and kissed her.

There was a moment of absolute silence. Patricia sat quite still; then she rose to her feet, scattering the lapful of violets all about and, turning, faced him.

Michael was very flushed and defiant.

"Well—have I offended past forgiveness this time?" he asked. "I'm not going to say I'm sorry, anyway. I wish I'd done it before. Well—are you angry?"

Patricia looked at him helplessly. She wanted to be angry. She was quite sure that she ought to be angry, and yet somehow for the life of her no emotion would rise in her heart save a little fluttering fear.

She stammered out at last: "I'm angry with you for sneering at my friends—you've no right to do it—" She broke off, realizing the feebleness of her reply. She stamped her foot at him.

"Why don't you pick these flowers up, instead of standing there staring at me?"

Michael laughed outright as he went down on his knees to obey.

"I never sneered at your friends, anyway—unless you mean the Shackles," he said.

"And you are much better without people like them. They were never fit for you to know. I'm glad you've found them out in time and dropped them. They'll be sorry for the way they've treated you some day, you mark my word," he added darkly.

"I gathered the violets up up anyhow and put them on the table. Well, are we friends again?" he asked, smilingly.

"I suppose so—"

"And you'll let me take you out to dinner to-night, to make up for the lunch we missed this morning?"

"If you're quite sure you haven't got another engagement."

"As a matter of fact," said Michael coolly, "I have, but it can go. I told Chesney to come round to my rooms this evening, but he can wait."

"You're not very kind to Mr. Chesney," said Patricia slowly. "I thought he was such a great friend of yours."

"So he is—in a way—but you are not going to quarrel with me for putting you before him?"

"You would. Now, are you going to put your hat on? I've had enough of Mrs. Flannagan's front parlour for the present."

Patricia picked up her hat and coat hesitatingly.

"Well, what is it now?" Michael asked, reading the reluctance in her face.

She raised her eyes with sort of abashed pride.

"Are you taking me out just because you think it's kind—because you think it's your duty?"

"I am not."

"Why, then?"

He took a step towards her, opened his lips as if to speak, then closed them and laughed.

"I'm not sure that it will be good for you to have that question answered to-day."

Patricia raised her head a little.

"Then I am not at all sure that it will be good for me to have dinner with you," she said, with a touch of her old arrogance.

"Very well," said Michael coolly. "Just as you like."

But as she was turning from the room he followed and caught her by her shoulders.

"Oh, woman of little faith," he said in mock anger. "How can I to make you believe that, in spite of your abominable temper, I don't quite hate the sight of you?"

For a moment Patricia kept her head rigidly averted, then suddenly she turned and smiled at him with disarming friendliness.

"I'm afraid the dinner is going to cost you an awful lot, Michael," she said ruefully.

"I'm dreadfully hungry."

"I'm delighted to hear it," said Michael.

"Delighted also that for once in your life you are going to let me spend some money on you."

But afterwards, as he waited while she got ready, he realized

CHAPTER VIII

The dinner was a success; the room was bright and cheery, and there was a not too-obtrusive band.

"Do you remember this thing they are playing?" Michael asked suddenly.

Dinner was over, and he and Patricia were taking coffee in the lounge of the big restaurant.

He looked at her with smiling eyes as he asked his question.

Patricia listened for a moment, then she shook her head.

"They were playing it on the river that day the news came of my father's death," Michael said. "Don't you remember it? Some silly nonsense about a coon and a moon and being off with the old love—"

"Oh, yes, of course. It seems a long time ago," she said, smiling faintly.

"Not quite three months," he reminded her.

"Three months is an eternity," she declared. "When I look back and think of you as you were then—how rude you were to me—"

She caught her lip between her teeth.

"You deserved it," said Michael calmly. The color rushed to her face.

"You thought I was a detestable person," she accused him.

"I thought you had been abominably spoiled," he answered.

She raised her eyes quickly. "I suppose you knew who I was—even then?"

"I had a pretty good idea."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Why should I? It wasn't my business. I never expected things to happen as they did happen—"

"Neither did I." There was a faint sadness in Patricia's voice.

Michael watched her curiously.

"You would like to go back to those days?" he asked.

"I don't know—"

She leaned back in the big chair, and beat time with her foot to the haunting ragtime of the band.

Suddenly she sat up again, frowning.

"Mr. Rolf!"

Michael took the cigaret from between his lips.

"You called me Michael this afternoon," he said calmly.

"I didn't!"

Their eyes met.

"I assure you that you did," he answered. "However, it may have been a mistake. Well—what is it?"

Patricia spread her hands vaguely.

"All this—doesn't settle the question of my future. I can't go on living without money and letting you take me out."

"Why not? It seems quite an admirable arrangement."

She frowned.

"I am quite serious."

"So am I." He sat up and threw his cigaret away. "Well, what do you want to do?"

"I must work."

"You're no more fit to work than I am to—ride in a perambulator."

She laughed.

"I can make myself fit. Other women have done."

"Other women are not you," he insisted. "However, if you really want something to do I'll make you an offer here and now—come back to Clayton Wold as my wife!"

He did not look at Patricia as he spoke. His eyes were fixed across the lounge on a group of people standing there laughing and chatting. He spoke quite coolly and without visible emotion, but a third person might have noticed the tension about his lips and the strained expression of his eyes.

Patricia sat staring at him with wide eyes. Then suddenly she said blankly: "Why?"

He slightly shrugged his shoulders. "Why not? You were willing to marry Chesney for a home, and I can give you a far better home than he could have done. You like Clayton Wold, and I suppose you don't quite hate me or you wouldn't be here tonight."

"And you think that's—reason enough—for marrying you?"

"It would have been reason enough for marrying Chesney, wouldn't it?"

Patricia did not answer; she could not understand herself.

She was trembling, and she kept her hands clasped in her lap to hide the fact.

"Of course—you're not serious," she said.

"I am—I was never more serious in my life," said Michael. "It seems to be an admirable idea. We both like Clayton Wold—and there'll be enough money for us to go our separate ways—if we want to. Personally I can't see one reason against it."

"Except," said Patricia, not very steadily, "that you don't care for me."

Michael laughed rather ruefully.

"Do people always care for the people they marry?" he asked. "Somehow I should have thought you were too progressive to have raised a point like that, Patricia."

"Would you? Perhaps I should have been at one time. Lately I seem to have altered. Three months ago I should have thought anyone quite mad who suggested my living with Mrs. Smith—even for a day—and yet lately, since I've been so unhappy—it has been she I have thought of more than anyone else. Perhaps it's only when trouble comes that we begin to find ourselves and our real friends."

"Which isn't an answer to my question," said Michael.

"I think it is," she answered seriously. "Or at least I think I mean it to be. Anyway, whether you are serious or if you are only in fun, I can't do it, thank you."

"Why not?"

She shook her head, a painful streak of color in her face.

"For one thing, it isn't so very long since I told you, not knowing who you were, that I meant to try and marry you for your money. I am sure you have not forgotten it."

"No, I remember it quite well."

"Then—then . . . Well, you know that I don't love you."

Michael turned his head away.

"In that we should start on equal terms," he said. "Because you say that I don't love you either."

Patricia rose.

"We won't talk about it anyway," she said rather constrainedly. "I wish you hadn't said anything about it; and—and I think I should like to go home."

"I'll send for a taxi."

They drove away silently. Patricia was tired and her head ached; there was a curious little sense of loss in her heart, too.

Why hadn't she accepted this man when he asked her to marry him? As she sat back in the corner with closed eyes she could think of nothing but Clayton Wold, and the lofty, beautiful rooms and wide gardens.

He had asked her to go back to it as his wife, and she had refused. What madness had possessed her? She looked across at him angrily. Three months ago—a month ago—she would have been only too glad of the offer, what was the reason that restrained her?

"He doesn't love me." The reason seemed to grow in her mind without bidding of any kind.

As he had said, why need that make any difference? She had been prepared to marry Chesney, not loving him. In what way was this case so dissimilar? The taxi stopped at Mrs. Flannagan's, and Michael got out. He gave his hand to Patricia and followed her up the steps.

BUCK PRIVATES RUB ELBOWS WITH GENERALS

Legion Convention Opens With Blare of Bands—First Session Held

BY JOHN A. KENNEDY, Universal Service Correspondent.

San Francisco, Cal., Oct. 15.—San Francisco Monday raised the white flag of surrender to the Yankees who won the world's series of 1917 on the battle fields of France, and the fifth annual convention of the American Legion got under way.

Mayor Rolph turned the city over to the nation's defenders, National Commander Alvin Owsley made a homerun by pledging the legion to "constructive social, civic and fraternal service," and the Golden Gate city opened wide its hospitable civic center to the 150,000 visitors who throng this flagdraped city for the festival reunion.

A blaring band from Texas burst into the convention auditorium and at its head was a cow girl from the Lone Star state, astride the old gray mare. The Texas delegation followed, bearing Commander Owsley on their shoulders. He was placed on the platform, the usual prayer and patriotic service were held and the serious business of the convention was taken up.

Tell Vices of "loway." The meetings will close Saturday. Buck privates and generals, high government officials and hod carriers mingled in the good natured crowd which milled about the streets during the day. A dozen bands from as many states told of the virtues of their home commonwealths and the vices of "loway." Luther Burbank dispelled the new national theory regarding the shortage of bananas, and the north and south fought over the genealogy of Daniel Boone. But the convention started its business sessions notwithstanding.

There were cheers for Owsley and for other legion leaders and Senator Hiram Johnson was given a tremendous ovation when he pleaded with the boys for the perpetuation, in peace, of the same impelling motive and principles that actuated them during the war.

In other halls about the city various divisional and regimental units of the former service men planned for their annual meetings as did the American Legion auxiliary and the La Societe Des 40 Hommes et Chevaux, the "mystic shrine" of the legion who also convene here Tuesday.

To Condemn Klan. Monday night as the first day's proceedings were being brought to a close convention committees wrestled with issues and policies advocated to place the legion on a more practical basis.

Foremost among the moves before the convention will be three affecting the nation and its citizens. First, the American Legion will go on record condemning the Ku Klux Klan. This was decided at a resolutions committee meeting as news was brought forward that the issue could not be "straddled." The convention itself will not formulate any basis for warfare against the "invisible empire," however.

Second, the convention will repudiate the plea of Commander Owsley that a conference on limitation of air armament be called. The wording of this resolution will be worked out Tuesday.

Endorse Bonus Plan. Reiteration of its plea for enactment of a soldier bonus will be included in a resolution before the committee Monday night. The convention will endorse this principle but with some opposition.

Restriction of immigration, demanded by Secretary of Labor Davis, before the convention, will be asked by the former service men.

Selection of a national commander for next year received very little attention from delegates Monday but the various political factions are expected to resume their activity early Tuesday. Thompson of Pennsylvania, Drain of District of Columbia and Quinn of California seem to be the leading candidates.

Last minute arrivals included Special trains from Iowa, Southern California, Wisconsin, Nebraska, District of Columbia and Oregon.

Tuesday the annual parade of the legion, augmented by every marine, naval and army outfit in this section will be a feature attraction.

Filipino Elevated From Laborer to Lawyer

Universal Service

Washington, Oct. 15.—From sugar plantation laborer to lawyer is the proud record of Maximino M. San Diego, a Filipino youth, who was admitted to practice before the supreme court of the district Monday.

San Diego worked his way from the Philippines, graduated from Lowell high school at San Francisco, studied six months at the University of California and then came to Washington, where he entered the night classes of National University Law school. In the day time he worked in a cafeteria.

German Stores Plundered by Crowds of Unemployed

Berlin, Oct. 15.—(U. P.)—Unemployed stormed the public markets of Leipzig Monday morning and marched in great crowds throughout the city, breaking into stores wherever they could get past the cordons of police.

Many stores have bolted and barred their doors in an attempt to protect their dwindling supplies from the plunderers.

All available police have been called out to disperse the crowds.

MAYOR THOMASON PRAISES TANLAC

Judge George Washington Thomason, Mayor of Tarrant City, Ala., and one of the most highly respected citizens of the state, is still another man of prominence and unimpeachable integrity to give his unqualified endorsement to Tanlac.

"Chronic indigestion brought me to the verge of a general break-down three years ago and nothing seemed to afford much relief," said Judge Thomason. "I could hardly eat enough to keep going, and became so weak and nervous I could hardly attend to my duties."

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Apportioning the Time. "Do you believe in an eight-hour day?"

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(Continued Next Week.)

At 7 o'clock last night Germany was still quiet, with Dr. Gessler, minister of defense, in charge of everything as military dictator. No outbreak so far. None will come unless German workmen want it. They are all trained soldiers. Communists or others would need a powerful force to deal with a trained army of several millions that Gessler could call out on short notice. How long will the workmen, trained by the Social democratic party in thinking, trained by the kaiser as soldiers, hold out on nine cents a day?

More than 90 per cent of a blanket of new snow is sometimes made up of air.