

# The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

Patricia tried to thank him for the evening.

"It's been such a real treat," she said, trying to smile. "It seems—oh, such ages since I really enjoyed myself."

"It's not my fault that you are here," he answered with a rueful smile. "I've just offered you Clayton Wold and all my worldly self and all my worldly goods."

"And if I'd taken you at your word and said 'Yes, please,'" she told him, trying to speak lightly, "you'd be busy now thinking what a worldly heartless creature I am, and wishing to goodness you had never asked me."

"Should I?" He looked at her wonderingly. "Do you mean me to understand then that you are not worldly and heartless?" The sensitive color flushed her face.

"You told me—ever so long ago—that I was," she answered. Michael turned away without answering.

Why had he asked her to marry him he wondered. It had been far enough away from his intentions when they started out. He did not care for her, he was positive that he did not care for her, and yet he was conscious of a very definite sense of disappointment because she had refused him.

It would have been such a satisfactory ending from both their points of view—such an eminently sensible arrangement, and yet—did he want his marriage to be just a "sensible arrangement"—he knew that he did not.

Patricia had taken a letter from the shelf and had opened it.

She read it through quickly, then laughed, a little excited laugh.

"It's telepathy! That's what it is! Oh, how wonderful! This is a letter from Mrs. Smith!"

Michael's heart gave a thud of excitement.

"Mrs. Smith!" he echoed blankly.

"Yes—I was telling you about her only this afternoon, you remember? And saying that I should like to go and live with her. And now she has written to ask me! Oh, I think it's too wonderful! She says she has got my address from Mr. Phillips—Mr. Rolf's lawyer—and is writing to ask if I won't go and live with her till I'm more settled. Oh, isn't it kind of her! If you knew how comforting it is, to know that someone really wants you after all, when you've been so lonely and miserable that you could just have died!"

She gave the letter to Michael to read; there were tears of happiness and excitement in her eyes.

"And shall you go?" Michael asked.

"Shall I go! Why, of course, I shall! It will be like going home after this place. And she'll help me. She was always so kind. Oh, I don't know anything that could have made me happier."

Michael looked at her with a curious expression in his eyes.

"Not even coming back to Clayton—with me!" he asked ironically.

Patricia returned his gaze steadily.

"That's different," she said. "There's something about this letter that makes me feel as if I'm really wanted—as if she really cares what becomes of me."

"I see; and you mean that I didn't make you feel like that?"

She did not answer, and he turned to the door.

"I may still come and see you sometimes. I suppose?" he asked, looking back at her.

"If you care to," said Patricia. "You have been very kind; thank you very much—I don't deserve that you should have been so kind to me at all, I know."

He hesitated a moment, then he came back and took one of her hands in a hard grip.

"If I had asked you to marry me this evening for the good, old-fashioned reason," he said, "because I love you, and could not be happy without you, what would your answer have been?"

She tried to look away from him, but his eyes compelled her, and her heart was beating so fast that it seemed to be choking her. Then she forced herself to smile.

"I don't think that you're the sort of man who would ever find it impossible to be happy without any woman, are you?"

Michael's face hardened; he turned away.

"I hope not," he said almost roughly. "I've other things to do with my life."

## CHAPTER IX.

Michael went out into the night feeling angry and ruffled. Her complexity irritated him. He walked away with angry strides, and had just reached the corner of the road when a hand was laid on his arm, and turning sharply, Michael looked into Bernard Chesney's white face.

"I saw you at Marnio's with Patricia; I followed you home," Chesney explained hoarsely. His eyes looked their fury into Michael's. "I suppose you think you've been clever—lying to me and keeping her to yourself. But you can't do it any longer; I've found her, and nothing you can say or do will keep me away from her."

Michael shook his friend's hand away; this encounter was the last thing he was in the mood to meet; he did not really care at all that Chesney had found Patricia; in his heart he did not believe that anything Chesney could say or do would have any weight with her, but his own sense of implication irritated him.

"Do what you like, only don't come pestering me," he said shortly. "You know where she is living—go and call by all means. The bell doesn't ring, but if you knock long enough you'll be let in, I dare say."

And he strode off and disappeared into the darkness.

Chesney stood looking after him uncertainly; he had waited up and down for half an hour for Michael to leave Mrs. Flannagan's and he was burning with jealousy.

How long had Michael known where Patricia was? And why did he allow her to live in such a neighborhood, he asked himself indignantly.

The best was but a poor best for Patricia, to his way of thinking. How dared Michael allow her to be in such squalid surroundings.

He looked at his watch in the light of the street lamp—not yet half past nine—not too late to call and see her.

He knocked at Mrs. Flannagan's with an agitated hand. When at last the door opened and Patricia herself stood there, he could find no words. But he was quick to see the eagerness die from her face when she recognized him, and to hear the little note of disappointment in her voice as she said:

"I did not expect to see you. Won't you come in?"

Chesney followed her in silence. As soon as they were in the sitting room with its bright fire and scent of violets, he caught her by both hands.

"Patricia—it's too good to be true! I've hunted for you everywhere. It's the purest luck I saw you at Marnio's tonight with Rolf. I followed you home and waited for him to leave. Oh, Patricia, can't you say that you are just a little glad to see me?"

She let her hands lie passively in his.

"I think you are forgetting the way in which you answered my last letter," she said proudly, and the color rushed to her face. "I think everything was said between us then."

He bent and pressed his lips to her hands.

"I love you! I've always loved you," he stammered. "I was mad when I sent that letter. It was not really I who sent it—I wanted to come to you—you don't know what I've suffered since, knowing what you must think of me. Marry me, Patricia, and let me take you away from all this..."

He looked round the room with a little shiver of distaste.

"What in Heaven's name is Rolf thinking about to let you stay here for a single day?" he demanded passionately. "Doesn't he care at all if you are unhappy, or how you have to live? With all his money, surely it would be a little thing to see that you were comfortable."

Patricia looked round her with a faint smile. Somehow during the last two days this room had not seemed quite so bad and impossible; Michael had been

there, and had looked at home and almost comfortable in it. She realized he had been right when he had said that she might have come to many a worse place.

"I am not staying anyway," she said after a moment. "Tomorrow I am going to live with some friends. They have offered me a home till something definite can be decided upon. Oh, please don't look so tragic! I'm really not unhappy."

"How long has Michael known you were here?"

"The day I came he found me—two days ago."

Chesney's face darkened.

"He told me he did not know where you were. Just a lie, I suppose, to keep you from me."

She did not answer, and he went on again passionately.

"I shall never let you go again. Patricia, when will you marry me? We've wasted too much time. I'll make you so happy, my queen—all the past shall be forgotten."

She listened apathetically. A few weeks ago she would have given her soul for his kind presence and protection, but now it seemed to count as a very small thing that he was offering her everything for which she had once almost asked him.

She smiled faintly, shaking her head.

"I haven't any money now, Bernard," she said gently. "I haven't anything in all the world except just a few clothes, and a few little things which I brought away from Clayton with me. I'm not the Miss Rolf you knew any more—"

"But you can be," he urged eagerly. "We can wipe out all the past. I'll give you everything you want. Only marry me, Patricia, and you'll soon forget this nightmare, and be happy again."

She shook her head.

"But I don't think I want to," she said slowly, as if in some wonderment at herself. "I'm not really unhappy—and I've learned, oh, I've learned such a lot of things since I lost my money."

"You shall be happier than you've ever been if you'll be my wife," he urged.

But she would give him no answer, and she sent him away, unhappy and puzzled.

He had Michael to blame for the change in Patricia, he was sure, and he hated Michael for it.

Michael cared for her himself—that could be the only explanation—in a fever of jealousy he rushed off to Michael's rooms.

He stormed up and down and accused him of having taken Patricia from him.

"You've always pretended to despise her," he raved. "You said she was selfish and worthless, and yet you thought it worth while to take her away from me, and keep me from ever seeing her again."

He stopped and looked at Michael with furious eyes. "Is that what it is?" he demanded, chokingly. "Are you going to marry her yourself?"

Michael turned in his chair and looked up at his friend with a frown.

"I most certainly am not!" he said, emphatically. "My dear chap, if you don't believe me, ask Patricia yourself. She'll tell you."

Chesney answered stormily that he did not believe anybody. He considered that he had been treated abominably; made a complete fool of.

Michael yawned.

"Oh, shut up!" he said, irritably. "Don't come here and treat me to all these heroics. You know where she is; you've seen her, and you can see her every day of your life for the next 40 years for all I care."

Chesney looked at him with sulky suspicion.

"I don't believe you. You always were deep. I believe you always have cared for her, and cause she won't look at you."

Michael took up a paper.

"Go on! You won't annoy me if you talk till you're black in the face," he said, imperturbably.

Chesney paced the room.

"Very well, then," he said suddenly. "If what you say is true, will you undertake not to go near her again? Not to see her at all?"

Michael read on steadily.

"She's going to stay with some people at Kensington," Chesney went on eagerly. "She's given me their address, and told me I may go to see her there. Well, will you keep out of the way—give me a chance. She used to like me—I know she did."

It was all very boyish and rather pathetic, but Michael was only conscious of a sense of disgust.

"I won't go near her—unless she sends for me," he said, grimly. "And as that's extremely unlikely we need say no more."

"You'll give me your word on it?"

"Yes, if you think it's worth anything."

Chesney took his departure, and Michael sent the paper spinning across the room.

It was all a storm in a teacup. Patricia did not want a boy like Chesney hanging round.

But the next day seemed an eternity, and the next a lifetime. Michael could settle to nothing. He felt all the time as if he were waiting for something to happen—something that would alter the whole rather weary aimlessness of his existence.

Twenty times he almost broke his word to Chesney and went to Kensington.

It Patricia wanted him she could send, was his argument, and as she had not sent, presumably she did not want him.

But he went round to Mrs. Flannagan's to assure himself that she was no longer there.

Mrs. Flannagan grieved to say that she had lost her lodger; such a nice lady and all! She called upon the saints to witness that she had done her best to make the pretty lamb as comfortable as if she had been her own child.

Michael said he was sure she had, and gave her a sovereign. Three days later a letter came from Patricia.

It was written from her mother's, and seemed a little depressed, he thought as he eagerly read its contents.

It began, "Dear Mr. Rolf," and in it she told him that she was quite comfortably settled and that he need no longer worry about her.

"I wish I had thought about coming here sooner, nobody could be kinder to me than Mrs. Smith is. She could not do more for me if she were my own mother."

Michael smiled as he read the words.

Already he was vaguely jealous of Mrs. Smith. He could have found it in his heart to wish that she was not making Patricia quite so comfortable.

Patricia added: "I give you my address in case you might want it—Yours sincerely, Patricia Rolf."

Michael wrote a reply at once. He said he was glad that she was happy and that he had heard Chesney had been to see her. He himself was very busy, and more out of devilment than because it was the truth, he added that he was going to dine at the Shackles the following night.

(Continued Next Week.)

There is a country where the thrushes sing  
Their very hearts away in melody;  
Where dryads have a home in every tree,  
And fauns dance down the meadows, murmuring  
Fantastic spells; where golden lilies swing  
Their fragrant bells, and bees hum busily  
And breezes woo the sky anemone  
With wistfulness that breathes the soul of spring.

Here summer may not burn, nor autumn rot  
His chilling touch, nor winter's winds hold sway,  
Beneath its boughs the wonder of the May  
Shall never fade, nor Love tire of his quest  
Of happiness, nor beauty lose its truth:  
Since Arcady is but eternal youth.

Charlotte Becker, in the New York Herald.

POLICE AND STRIKES.  
From the New York Times.

The New York police department is far from perfect, but it can always be counted upon for efficient service in such troubles as the newspapers have been having for the past week. In a labor dispute of that kind the police do not take sides. They are absolutely impartial. But they resolutely do their duty to keep order, to prevent or punish violent assaults upon men engaged in lawful business, and to safeguard property threatened with injury or destruction. These were the animating purposes of the policemen detailed to the various newspaper offices, and they did their work beyond all praise. They were vigilant, foresighted, prepared for every emergency, and saw to it that full protection was given to the men printing and delivering newspapers. The whole was done with the finest organization and effectiveness. It was merely one proof more that the police force of this city, whatever its defects may be, is prompt and spirited in upholding the law in any crisis where the safety of life and property is endangered.

Between Quarrels.  
From the New York Globe.

Mrs.—How well I remember the night you proposed to me! You looked like a fool.

Mr.—Appearances are not always deceptive, my dear.

problem. The government cannot continue indefinitely to operate the ships at a heavy loss, as it is now doing. The business community hesitatingly recommends the sale or lease of the ships to responsible firms under reasonable guarantees of service and of maintenance of new routes deemed necessary by the department of commerce and other authorities.

The Lasker-Farley plan presents difficulties, and the attorney general does well to call attention to them. But the general objection of "illegality" should not be regarded as fatal if the plan is basically sound, since the power which congress has withheld it can grant to the shipping corporation, provided such action is desirable.

A New Gasoline Substitute.  
From the Kansas City Star.

Dynalcol, a new motor fuel, has been specified in instructions of the ministry of defense of Czechoslovakia for use in the operation of motor-driven vehicles under the direction of the ministry and other departments of the government are being urged to adopt similar regulations.

Dynalcol is the commercial name given to a composite motor fuel consisting of 60 parts benzol and 40 parts alcohol. It is being manufactured by Czechoslovak refineries and sold by a newly organized alcohol distributing company. In favor of its use is the argument that domestic products (including molasses from the beet sugar factories) are utilized in its manufacture, and also that it is considerably cheaper than gasoline. It has been selling at 3.50 crowns per kilo against 5.40 crowns asked in Prague for gasoline. In view of its endorsement by the government it promises to become an important product for the motor-fuel and alcohol industries.

Tax-Exempt.  
From the Lincoln State Journal.

A London journalist with a large salary tells an American writer that it takes five months' income each year to pay his taxes. A few farmers in school districts where school taxes are very high might claim an equal distinction. A few American millionaires whose supertaxes reach to the upper levels would pay nearly as large a proportion of their income in taxes had they not thought to invest their wealth in tax-exempt bonds. The average American is probably not spending more than three of his twelve months' income in taxes. The prevalence of indirect taxes in this country makes a calculation on this point difficult.

A Job for the Politicians.  
From the Springfield Republican.

Mayor Curley of Boston, with his accustomed energy, not to say vehemence, has taken up the demand for legislation that would remove the tax exemption from all future issues of federal, state, city and town bonds. If other politicians, similarly credited with zeal for the welfare of the great mass of the people, will lend their aid, the movement will have a much better chance of success than if it is left to independent publicists and tax experts.

A Lesson From Rome.  
From the New York Herald.

In ancient Rome there were those who kept saying, from one generation to another, that the empire was doomed unless its people returned to the good old ways, and the government quit wasting money. They hated Veepasian's colosseum. They considered it a sign of social illness that the populace, noble and plebeian alike, should rush to see the Nubian giant slung the herculean Goth, while the temples remained deserted.

When these disagreeable persons spoke in the street they were hooted down. Rarely could they get the politicians in the senate to listen to their diatribes; usually the members rushed away toward the toga rooms. All the Babbitts of growing Rome called these disturbers "old fogies." They were, in truth, dull, tiresome and fond of statistics. Nevertheless they were right. The empire sagged, slumped, tumbled.

History repeats itself. On the same day that 35,000 persons crowded themselves into the Polo Grounds to see the Dempsey-Firpo fight, Lewis E. Pierson, president of the Merchants' Association, addressed the annual convention of the American Society of Certified Public Accountants on the subject of government extravagance.

With elaborate citations from the record Mr. Pierson showed how this city is getting head over heels in debt. New York is traveling faster than other municipalities toward ruin, but all large American cities are on their way. Most of the states and the federal government are moving in the same direction. Tax-free securities, representing the borrowings of state and municipalities, increase at the rate of about \$1,000,000,000 a year, and total more than \$10,000,000,000 at present.

No city makes any pretense of desire to get out of debt. It pays its maturing debts with the proceeds of new loans. When it gets ahead a little the treasury is almost sure to be raided by advocates of some plan to bring on the millennium by having the city chase private enterprise out of some public service. Whereupon the surplus melts away and presently another loan is needed.

The meeting adjourned in time to let the certified public accountants, who are really quite human persons, get to the fight in time. Probably Cato the censor went to the gladiatorial combats after trying to save Rome from her follies. Nevertheless Rome fell.

Business Sense Barred.  
From the Chicago News.

Attorney General Daugherty, in an opinion furnished to the president, affirms that the so-called Lasker-Farley plan for dividing the government's merchant fleet among several corporations organized under state charters and paying in stock for the ships instead of in cash or notes is illegal.

The Rural Smoak.  
From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

So far as President Coolidge is concerned, we are off the high plane which marked our earlier purview of the administration. We shall, from time to time, offer advice and make suggestions. The first suggestion is that he call in and destroy all pictures—motion and otherwise—which depict his romping about on his father's of the farm vote on which a republican candidate must depend in the west. Mr. Coolidge should not deliberately offend it. No western farmer has a smock in his wardrobe or would wear one to a dog fight.

## MERCHANT GIVES MORE EVIDENCE

W. F. Penny, prominent merchant of Hendersonville, N. C., and a leader in the civic and business affairs of his section, gives unstinted praise to Tanlac, which, he states, has restored his health and overcome troubles that had defied treatment for years:

"For many years," stated Mr. Penny, "I was a great sufferer from indigestion and stomach trouble. Ulceration set in and necessitated an operation. Utter lack of digestive power over a long period so weakened me that I was hardly able to attend to my business."

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Sincerely,

Jud Tunkins says it's impossible to be absolutely sincere all the time, otherwise you'd often have to think up something besides "Dear Sir" in starting a letter.

Mrs. Eliza Teeter



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Goshen, Ind.—"I had coughed night and day for a whole year and had lost so much flesh I began to look like a walking skeleton. Two of my sisters had died from tuberculosis and I felt certain that my time had come. Finally, a friend recommended Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery to my husband, and it made me feel new strength and vitality right from the start and in a year's time I was just as strong and hardy as ever. I have never suffered with a deep, hacking cough since (that was about 20 years ago) and have always felt very grateful to Dr. Pierce."—Mrs. Eliza Teeter, 413 Middlebury St.

Whenever you feel the need of good confidential medical advice, address Dr. Pierce, president Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., and answer will be returned without charge of any kind.

Why He Stopped.

"I thought McMisser had taken up golf. He doesn't seem to be playing now." "Yes, he started, but he has given it up. He lost his ball."—Boston Transcript.

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Telegraph Wires in Uganda.  
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