

# "MASTER OF MONEY" BY ROY VICKERS



"But, my dear girl—surely—it cannot be that you took my letter at its face value?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

If the sight of Roger had surprised Shirley, his first words assuaged her.

"It's quite all right," he said reassuringly. "We don't run the slightest risk by meeting, but it would be just as well not to enter any building together. If we go ahead we can take a bench in the park. We can talk there."

"Why have you come—why—what is there to talk about? Obviously you will not take my word about anything," faltered Shirley.

"Fine!" said Kelson and chuckled. It was the first time she had ever heard him chuckle. "But there's no need really, I am pretty sure Brenaway is not having me watched. And we don't want to make ourselves the center of idle attention. Let us just talk about the weather until we're sure we're alone."

To Shirley his words were meaningless, though she knew they meant something. Roger's very presence was meaningless, his strange air of contentment when by everything that was sane—believing her to be another man's mistress—he should be angry or at least contemptuous. Through sheer inanition she walked by his side while he hoped that she had had a pleasant journey and revealed that he himself had been on the same train.

He was giving her details of how he had managed to follow her taxi. The details made no impression. But the tone in which he recounted them made a deep impression. He had the air of waiting for her congratulations of his cleverness.

Presently they had turned to a quiet corner of the Square, and sat down.

"Roger, please stop talking!" she exclaimed. "I don't know whether you have been talking for mere talking's sake. But I'm still waiting to know why you have spoken to me."

He stopped short and stared at her.

"But, my dear girl—surely—it cannot be that you took my letter at its face value?"

There was no doubt about the genuineness of his surprise.

"I don't know what you mean. Your letter seemed perfectly clear. I know you have a good case legally—and I don't ask you to believe my statement that actually there was no reason at all why you should divorce me."

"But of course I believe there's no reason!" he almost shouted at her.

"Oh!" It was a tiny moan and he had not heard it. It was drawn from her by nothing other than the sudden dread that the new life that was opening up before her should be cut off. At that moment of self-revelation she could admit to herself that she did not want to be—"forgiven" by Roger, above all, did not want to resuscitate their married life.

"I still don't understand," she said firmly. "If you believe that there is nothing between Alan and me that there ought not to be—why are you bringing this action for divorce?"

He drew his fingertips across his forehead—it was his gesture of exasperation.

"I must confess Shirley, that I thought you would take your cue from that letter. As it is, you have rather shaken me up. I don't know—that is, I'm not quite sure—how I stand. I had a touch of suspicion when Carter came back and said that your magnet was broken."

"Suspicion of what?" she asked desperately.

"That your spending the night there was an accident. I thought at first that it was the most brilliant piece of finesse imaginable. But in view of—"

"I understand now, thank you," snapped Shirley. "You need not go on explaining. You thought I had deliberately stayed the night

in order to give you a chance to blackmail Alan by threatening divorce."

"My dear, you stress the word blackmail because you are out of temper, that's all. With a little carefulness you can prove that any form of pressure put upon one human being by another is a form of blackmail. But need we quarrel over a metaphysical subtlety?"

"We need not quarrel over anything, Roger. But—nor need you talk about anything. I was going to keep an appointment when you stopped me."

Her words produced an unexpected effect.

"Shirley!" His voice broke and he caught her convulsively by the arm. "Shirley, you aren't going to desert me? You won't let Brenaway—oh, you couldn't!"

You're not successful. I never dreamed for a moment you would fall to read between the lines of that letter. As you read it, I've insulted you and I'm most desperately sorry."

Shirley looked at him with a contempt not far removed from pity. She disengaged her arm.

"Roger, I've given you all the money I had. I can't do any more for you. I want the few things I had that were of any value and I will send for them. If I can help you in any way I would still do so, but I cannot. If I had another fifty thousand dollars or could borrow it, I would give it to you. As it is I can do nothing."

"But Brenaway—you don't mean to say he's going to let the action come into court? Don't you see he'll take steps to prevent it in his own way if he thinks you are indifferent. You must beg him not to let your name be dragged through the mire, then I can make terms with him—I'm not going to blackmail him—I don't want to extort anything from him—I only want safety—in all conscience it's little enough to ask."

"You needn't be so frightened, Roger," she said, really wishing that she could comfort him a lit-

tle as well as save herself from the degrading spectacle of his fear. "Alan isn't at all spiteful. He won't take any steps against you."

That calmed him considerably.

"I don't want to parade my own misfortunes—and please don't think I'm nursing a grievance against you, Shirley," he said. "But you gave me the wrong cue by staying the night there. All this has so upset me that I find it very difficult to concentrate my attention." Shirley groaned at the oft repeated formula. "You must give me a lead. Do you think the best thing would be to write to Brenaway and say that I have seen you and accepted your explanation and—withdraw the threat of an action?"

Shirley felt as if her heart had missed a beat. Here was her crisis, she must tread with the utmost care. If she were to advise him to withdraw from the action in his present state of mind, he would almost certainly accept the advice.

On the other hand, she could never look Alan in the face again if at this stage of their relationship she were deliberately to strive for divorce.

"I can't advise you one way or the other about the action," she said shortly. "That is your own affair."

"You can at least tell me this, if you really wish to help me—does Brenaway intend to content himself with an ordinary defense in court?"

"No, he does not intend to defend it at all," she told him.

"Ah!" He clutched at his chin. "Why not?"

There was a short silence and then:

"Just a minute, Shirley. I feel as if mistis were clearing and, as it were, revealing fresh mists. When you stayed the night at the cottage you did not apparently expect me to take steps for a divorce. Why, then, did you stay the night at the cottage?"

Shirley hesitated. It would be easy enough to say that the magnet was broken and leave it at that. She could lie if the need arose—but it would have to be to a man like Alan, someone stronger than herself who was crushing her. She could not condescend to lie to Roger.

"I told you why I went to the cottage," she answered. "I went to pay your debts. Knowing that

my nerve would probably fail, I smashed the magnet so that I could not get back in the car. He did not want to debt paid like that—that is all."

"He didn't want to be made co-respondent," said Kelson, with a smile that showed his teeth and made him look like an animal. "I know well enough what he wanted. He thought he had got me under his thumb—the prince of commerce wanted a morganatic wife, he's going to have a fully legal wife when the decree is made absolute."

"I always suspected you two intended to fool me," he continued. His voice high-pitched and angry, "but I'm not quite so brainless as you imagine. He can put me in prison tomorrow but he can't stop my carrying on with the action—and if he does put me in prison he'll declare to the world that he bought his wife."

"Thanks for our little talk, my dear. It's probably the last we shall ever have, and I feel sure you will be gratified to know that it has been of such assistance to me. I think you said you had an appointment."

He was walking away and she watched his retreating figure

without the faintest flicker of emotion.

"He is vulgar at best. I wonder I have never recognized that." She stretched with vast relief, then hurried off to see her lawyer.

It took Shirley two days to put her financial affairs in order. During that time she felt the first definite need of Alan's society. But the lawyer had proved adequate and there was no point upon which she could legitimately ask Alan's advice. Business apart, it would be for him to seek her out if he wished to see her.

She was disappointed when the first day passed on and no message came from him, but was wholly convinced that it was in no sense a personal disappointment. She needed an antidote to her interview with Roger.

By the last post on the second day there came a letter in his handwriting.

"Dear Shirley," she read. "I have taken a furnished flat, address as above, and if you are still interested in Maccendon Developments I should be glad to go into the question with you at any time you care to come.—Alan." (To be continued tomorrow.)

By PIM

## "TELLING TOMMY"



AFTER MANY OTHER MEN HAD TRIED FOR YEARS THE NORTH POLE WAS LOCATED APRIL 6, 1909 BY COMMANDER ROBERT E. PEARY OF THE U.S. NAVY, TOMMY.



SINCE PEARY'S DISCOVERY, THREE FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE NORTH POLE BY EXPLORERS. ON MAY 9, 1926, COM. R.E. BYRD OF THE U.S. NAVY FLEW IN AN AIRPLANE FROM SPITSBERGEN TO THE POLE AND BACK IN 16 HOURS.



WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD TO GO TO THE POLE, TOMMY? AH! THEY CAN STILL HEAR THE RADIO!

By CLIFF STERRETT

## POLLY AND HER PALS



SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD. IS NOT I WAS RAISED ON!



THAT ACCOUNTS FOR YOUR PREHISTORIC NOTIONS ABOUT CHILD DISCIPLINE, SAMUEL!



LOOK AT ME, FOR EXAMPLE. I WAS NEVER PUNISHED IN MY LIFE!



IF IT'S JUST THE SAME TO YOU, COUSIN CARRIE, I'D RATHER NOT!

## "Unpicturesque Scenery"

## "Two of a Kind"



GOOD LANDS, TILLIE. IT'S ALMOST 12. IT'S LOCK. HOW DO YOU EVER EXPECT TO RUN A BUSINESS AND SPEND MOST OF THE DAY IN BED?



IF YOU'D COME HOME AND GO TO BED AFTER A DANCE INSTEAD OF SITTING IN A CAR IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE, YOU'D GET YOUR SLEEP AT THE PROPER TIME.



DON'T WORRY, MUMSY. MR. WHIPPLE CAN TAKE CARE OF THE OFFICE.



WELL, I'M GOING TO PHONE MR. WHIPPLE AND TELL HIM YOU'RE STILL IN BED. I'VE TRIED TO GET YOU UP.

By RUSS WESTOVER

## TILLIE, THE TOILER



YOU WASN'T AN ORPHAN WHEN YOU WAS LITTLE. WAS YOU, UNCLE PADDY? YOU HAD PARENTS AN' ANCESTORS AN' EVERYTHING DIDN'T YOU?



SURE! I HAD THE FINEST FATHER AND THE GRANDEST MOTHER AND MORE AND BETTER ANCESTORS THAN ANY MAN IN ALL IRELAND!



IT'S MESELF THAT'S DESCENDED FROM DERMOT O'FLYNN, HIMSELF, WHO WAS KING OF IRELAND WHEN IRELAND RULED THE WORLD—AND A FINE KING HE WAS—HE LIVED IN A CASTLE MADE OF GOLD—ALL THE FURNITURE IN THE CASTLE WAS MADE OF GOLD, EVEN GOLD SPRINGS IN THE BEDS—HE ATE OFF GOLD PLATES, AN—



HE HAD THOUSANDS OF SLAVES AND VASSALS AT HIS BECK AND CALL AND WHEN HE ROARED HIS COMMANDS ANYONE WHO DISOBEYED HIM HAD THEIR HEADS CUT OFF, AN—

By BEN BATSFORD

## LITTLE ANNIE ROONEY



LOOK AT THE DARLIN'—SHE'S SMILIN' IN HER SLEEP—THAT'S A SURE SIGN THE ANGELS ARE WHISPERIN' TO HER—SHE MAY BE JUST A POOR LITTLE MOTHERLESS ORPHAN TO THE REST O' THE WORLD BUT TO ME SHE'S AS GOOD AS ANY ROYAL PRINCESS—AND A— GREAT DEAL BETTER!



STOP YOUR BRAGGIN' AN' BOASTIN'—NO ONE HEARS YOU—THE POOR, TIRED LITTLE LAMB IS FAST ASLEEP.



IF YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME YOU CAN WRITE ME—I HAVEN'T TIME TO READ ANY LETTERS FROM YOU, AND IF I HAD THE TIME I COULDN'T MAKE OUT YOUR HANDWRITING ANYWAY!



I'LL BE GLAD TO SEE UNCLE EVERETT AND ELISE, BUT I HOPE WE'RE NOT INTERRUPTING YOU DIDN'T ASK UNCLE IF IT WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR THEM TO HAVE US; YOU SIMPLY TOLD HIM WE WERE COMIN'!

By JIMMY MURPHY

## TOOTS AND CASPER



SO LONG, COLONEL HOOPER! I'M ON MY WAY TO PRAIRIE JUNCTION! YOU WON'T SEE ME AGAIN FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS!



THAT'S FINE, CASPER! GOOD RIDDANCE! WHY DIDN'T YOU START SOONER AND STAY AWAY LONGER?



HERE'S THE KEY TO MY HOUSE! IT'S LIKE FOR YOU TO DROP IN AND AIR OUT THE PLACE OCCASIONALLY—AND DON'T WALK OFF WITH ANY OF OUR SILVERWARE! I COUNTED EVERYTHING BEFORE I LEFT!



SURE! I'M GLAD TO HAVE YOUR KEY! I'M GOING TO GIVE A WILD PARTY SOON, AND NOW I'LL KNOW WHERE TO HOLD IT! I WOULDN'T WANT MY OWN FURNITURE TO GET SMASHED UP!

By JIMMY MURPHY

## Today's Cross-Word Puzzle By EUGENE SHEFFER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10				11				
12				13				
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- HORIZONTAL.**
- 1—peel
  - 5—raggedly
  - 10—cotton-wood of Texas
  - 11—Hebrew high priest
  - 12—quote
  - 13—thin or strained soup
  - 14—hatreds
  - 15—honey-gathering insect
  - 17—pertaining to speech
  - 20—repasts
  - 22—save
  - 23—republic of west central Europe
  - 25—machine for sowing
  - 26—compel
  - 27—musical drama
  - 28—wield
- VERTICAL.**
- 1—seminocular rodent of South America
  - 2—in a living state
  - 3—measure of a thing
  - 4—sudden condition calling for immediate action
  - 6—men distinguished for valor
  - 7—unaccompanied
  - 8—small portions
  - 9—those who were the Sacred Scriptures
  - 15—land that has been tilled
  - 17—that which may be operated
  - 18—land measure
  - 19—insulted
  - 20—wed
  - 21—one-spot
  - 22—perceive
  - 24—spawn of fish
  - 25—water-sput
  - 27—evergreen trees having an oily fruit
  - 29—child's playing marble
  - 30—birds having short rounded wings and short tails
  - 31—wing-shaped
  - 32—river in Germany
  - 33—satiate
- Herewith is the solution to yesterday's puzzle.
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