

THE SOCIAL PIRATES

The Newest Kalem Picture Now Being Presented at the Leading Motion Picture Theatres in Greater New York

Plot by George Bronson Howard
Novelization by Hugh C. Weir

Story No. 5

THE MILLIONAIRE PLUNGER

Two American girls, Mona Hartley and Mary Burnett, set about punishing the "Wolves of Society" through their check books. This is the story of their fifth adventure.

Copyright by Kalem Company

YOU needn't try to argue with me, you know, dear," said Mary. "I think I'm even more firm than you are! And his isn't what you started to say, is it? If it's time for us to resume our campaign—why, I'm ready!"

Mary had finished her breakfast and she went now to the window in the next room and looked out, while Mona, with a smile, took the paper. She glanced through it while she sipped her second cup of coffee. And suddenly she exclaimed, under her breath, as her eyes fell on a certain headline. She read the story beneath it—and then read it again. And then, very slowly, her brows knitted in thought, she went to Mary.

"I wonder," she said, half to herself. "Mary—did you see this?"

Mary took the paper and looked at the article Mona pointed out to her. "Tomlinson Gerry," she said, surprised.

"We've got it!" said Mona. "Do you see what it says? That he hired of the bright lights—tired of being talked and written about just as a spend-or? That he's going to work—Tomlinson Gerry, with his millions, is going to work!"

"As an architect?" said Mary, reading on. "He's opened offices in the Starling Building! Mona—I believe you're right!"

Gerry, before he had inherited his uncle's millions, had been the principal in some rather shady transactions, and the girls were more than ever determined to go after him when they learned that he had swindled their laundress out of her paltry savings. The fact that, since he had come to money he had tired of being a profligate and had settled down after six years of riotous living to a decent occupation, the girls decided, should not save him.

As always, Mona and Mary worked rapidly and two days later, Mona sent her card in to the architect.

"Miss Hartley?" said Gerry, inquiringly, rising, and glancing at Mona's card.

"So good of you to see me—when I came without an appointment, Mr. Gerry," said Mona, holding out her hand, which Gerry took, delightedly. "You see—oh, I'm just like every other woman, I suppose! When I get an idea I want to carry it out at once!"

"I'm very much at your service," said Gerry.

"I want to build a home, Mr. Gerry," said Mona, "and I haven't the least idea of how to go about it! But I suppose the first thing to do is to get an architect—and so here I am!"

"My wants are ever so modest," continued Mona. "I have got one or two general ideas, but I think you'll find that they don't interfere at all with your conceptions. I want a

light. I don't see how we can do it all alone."

The thought was an unwelcome one. She and Mona, she felt, ought, so far as possible, to play a lone hand. But—the help of some man seemed necessary. And suddenly Mary saw both the man and the inspiration she was looking for. It was the man who gave her the great idea. He was across the street, and at first he did not notice her at all. But, though he had changed a good deal since she had last seen him, and for the worse, Mary knew him; at once. He was Jack Deering, a telegrapher.

Some time before Mary had been employed in the office of a great telegraph company, in another city. Deering had been one of the few men among her fellow workers in whom Mary had seen any signs of chivalry and decency. He had been kind to her, and, apparently, without thought of any reward. She knew him exactly for what he was; a weak, pleasant chap, who never meant to do wrong, and seldom, as a matter of fact, did right; a man who was always an easy victim of a stronger will, and could, therefore, in all probability, be used in the vague plan she was already forming.

She crossed the street and walked



"WE'LL TRY IT TO-MORROW," BURNETT SAID. "I'LL SLIP MARY HERE THE WORD ON ONE RACE, AND YOU CAN PUT DOWN A SMALL BET, IF YOU LIKE. IF IT GOES ALL RIGHT WE'LL PULL OFF A BIG ONE THE NEXT DAY."

"I didn't think I'd ever go crying to a woman," he said, bitterly. "But you're right, Mary! What's the use of living? They've got me pretty nearly down and out!"

"Here," said Mary. She slipped him, very quietly, a bill. "Take it!" she said furiously, when he tried to refuse. "What—'ood's a friend if you won't let them help? Besides—this isn't a gift. It's an advance. I'm going to need your help. I want you to go to some place where I can reach you at any time. You're ready for pretty nearly anything, aren't you?"

"For anything at all!" he said. "God bless you, Mary!"

"I'll give you a chance to prove it," she said.

"All right," said Mary. "I'll give you a chance to prove it," she said.

"I've been thinking that myself, Mona. Suppose you let him take you to lunch to-morrow. He asked you, didn't he?"

"Yes—and I said I'd telephone to him in the morning."

"All right. Tell him to make it the San Marco at one o'clock. I'll be there—and you can notice me, after you get comfortably settled at your own table. You know what to do? We've rehearsed it often enough."

"I'll be there," said Mona, after a moment's thought. "It's dreadfully early, but we don't want to leave too little time, if we really decide we can start something to-morrow."

"All right. I think that's a good idea, Mona. I'll let Jack Deering know to-night then. Well—the great adventure is really going to begin at last. The preliminary skirmish is over. Not nervous, are you?"

"Not even a little bit! There's no reason to be! I know Gerry, you see!"

"Nothing more? Are you sure?" asked Gerry. They were finishing their lunch at the San Marco. Mona had accepted very few invitations from him; it was her desire that he should regard her company at lunch or dinner as an event, and she had been thoroughly successful in this regard. He was all attention; he was ready to meet, to anticipate, indeed, her slightest wish. Certainly he was reduced to exactly the condition that Mona and Mary wanted him to be in.

"This coffee is delicious—no, nothing else, thanks," said Mona. "You ordered a heavenly lunch, Oh!" Her exclamation was caused by the sight of Mary, who sat at a table on the opposite side of the room. She bowed delightedly.

"Who is that?" asked Gerry naturally.

"Mary Burnett," answered Mona. "She was at school with me and I haven't seen her for years. I didn't know she was in town. Mary's terribly proud, and her people haven't much money, so she has rather avoided me and some other old friends. I'm afraid, because."

"I'd like you to meet her," said Mona. "I wonder if she'd come over and have some coffee with us?"

"It proved that Mary would—which wasn't surprising, since the whole episode had been carefully planned, down to the last detail, the night before. Gerry smiled as he looked at the girl who was so glibly expressing their delight at seeing one another again, which seemed to him to be entirely unfeigned. He admired Mona's tact in talking to this girl who was less fortunate than herself; it seemed to him that it was exquisite.

"Did?" said Mary. Her eyes became troubled. "Oh, I don't know."

Mona, dear—I'm afraid he's bothering about something! You know, he's been with the Union Telegraph for years, and they don't treat him well at all. They're just as mean and stingy as they can be. And he says that, if he wanted to, he could make over and over so much money!"

"He ought to do it," said Gerry. "I'm glad to see a mean outfit like that stung any old time!"

"That's what I say!" said Mary. "But he doesn't like the idea—and besides, he says it would take some money, and he hasn't got enough to make it worth while."

"I could lend him some," said Mona impulsively.

"If that isn't just like you!" said Mary. "Listen to her, Mr. Gerry! She doesn't even know what it is—and she's willing to take a chance!"

"It's people who do that who get the big rewards, though," said Gerry. He was convinced of the influence of the two girls, but he himself thought he had an inkling of what was in the wind. He was decidedly interested, and quite glad that Mona had seen her old schoolmate.

"Oh, I don't know, Mona!" said Mary, at last. "But I'll tell you what we can do. We might go down and see Dad! Then you could talk to him."

"Splendid!" said Mona. "Let's start at once!"

"I'd like to come, too," said Gerry. "I'll get my car and take you down. How about that?"

"That would be splendid!" said Mona. "Are you willing, Mary?"

Mary was. And so it was arranged. Gerry, of course, did not see Deering, who was waiting outside the restaurant, spring into a taxicab when Mary dropped her handkerchief. But that was what happened. And when, a little later, they came to the Union Telegraph Building, far downtown, and went up in the elevator, it was Deering, in alpaca office coat and green shade, who encountered them, and he was standing outside a door marked "Private Wires." And at the sight of Mary he started, in great dismay.

"Mary, you shouldn't bring people to see me here!" he exclaimed. "You might make all sorts of trouble."

"I thought—"

"Go away now, but meet me around the corner," said Deering, or Burnett, as he was henceforth to be known. "You can wait in the restaurant there. I'll be off duty in half an hour."

Then he dashed into the room. And of course, as they were in the elevator, she said, "Oh, I'll get even with them some day, if it's the last thing I ever do! Twenty years I've worked for them—and to-day they gave me two weeks' notice!"

"Father!" cried Mary, and burst into tears. "Whatever are you going to do?"

"Live better than we ever have!" he snarled. "I've got a way to get even with them, to handle the wires! By the arrangement with all the pool-rooms we hold the results back for ten minutes. But I know them. I'll find some one to go and bet, and give them the winnings. I'll telephone him the winner and he'll place his bet. His horse will have won already—but the poolrooms won't know it! There's enough to make up for all I've done in one big killing!"

"By Jove! Sounds good!" said Gerry. "I might take a flyer myself, you know."

Then there had to be explanations. Burnett was distrustful, but he weakened when Mona, his daughter's friend, vouched for Gerry.

"We'll wait till to-morrow," he said. "I'll slip Mary here the word on one race, and you can put down a small bet, if you like. If it goes

Gerry, before he had inherited his uncle's millions, had been the principal in some shady transactions, and the girls were more than ever determined to go after him when they learned that he had swindled their laundress out of her paltry savings.

"Are you really going to make big bets?" asked Mary tearfully.

"This isn't any game for pikers," said Gerry. "A chance like this only comes about once in a lifetime. You see, and you want to jump on it hard when it does come! No, you can rest easy about this! I've made arrangements to get hold of a good deal of cash—a good deal more than I can usually command in a hurry! And it's going down when your father gives the final word!"

"Oh, Mary, don't let anything go wrong! I'd be in the most perfectly dreadful hole if we lost!"

"We can't lose," said Gerry confidently. "There's no chance of that. All I'm afraid of is that we won't have the chance to win. I'd think that was pretty nearly as bad as losing myself, after our hopes have been raised this way."

And just then a waiter came up. "Miss Burnett?" he said. "You're wanted on the telephone, Miss Gerry and Mona were ready to leave when she came back, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes."

"Dad says it's all right," she said. "We've just got time to hurry over and make a bet. I'll do it to-day, you see, I've got enough."

"Oh, we'll all risk a fiver or so," said Gerry. "What odds will we get?"

"Not very big; this is just for a try-out, you see," said Mary. "But hurry, hurry, or we'll be too late."

In the pool-room, however, they found there was plenty of time since the clock there was slower than Gerry's watch.

"Dad's had that fixed," she whispered. "That gives us even more of a margin, you see."

Gerry smiled reassuringly at her. It certainly looked good. Then came the closing of the window and the exciting few minutes in which the man at the wire read off the description of the race. They had bet on Teste, at even money, in the fourth event, and at last came the final announcement:

"In the stretch—Blue Kid ahead—Teste being ridden out—Teste leads—Teste wins!—Teste a length—Teste wins!"

They cashed in the small bets they had made, and Mona was almost hysterical with delight. She managed to repress her enthusiasm until they were outside, but it was with difficulty.

"Oh, I can't wait until to-morrow," said Gerry. "We're sure to be all right!" she said. "Mary, isn't it wonderful?"

"I really think we needn't worry any more!" said Mary, her belief plain in her voice.

"Of course not!" said Gerry, heartily. "Now—about to-morrow—"

"Need we wait until to-morrow, even?" asked Mary, suddenly. "I think Dad might have something more, even to-day!"

"We'd have to get some real money," said Gerry. "The banks haven't closed yet," said Mona.

"You telephone again, Mary," said Gerry. "I'll drop Mona at her bank, and then go to my own. When we come back, if you've got another good thing—why, we'll make the big plunge!"

So it was arranged. They dropped Mary at a drug store, and then Mona stopped at her bank—which wasn't hers at all, since, until the next day at all events, she couldn't help to indulge in the luxury of a real bank account. But when Gerry came back for her she emerged from the bank, holding her hand bag, which was bulging, precisely as if she had filled it with bills. Gerry tapped his coat pocket significantly, and they drove on to the drug store where they had left Mary.

She came rushing out.

"Oh, you're just in time!" she cried, hysterically. "Dad's just given me the word on the fifth race—hurry—hurry—"

She handed Gerry the slip of paper she had held in her hand as she came, and he took it, glancing at the



THE STATE OF GERRY'S FEELINGS TOWARD MONA WAS NO LONGER A SECRET.

bungalow, you see—a nice, rambling sort of a place, and I thought—can't you help me with the land, too?"

"I'll do my best," said Gerry. "I'll tell you what—it just happens that I have an option, right now, on some suburban property. If you like it, I'll turn the option over to you. Why don't you let me drive you out to have a look at the land right now? My car is downstairs." She consented.

Mona had gone alone, according to the plan the two girls had arranged, for her visit to Gerry. But Mary had followed, and she waited anxiously across the street from the building that housed Gerry's office. When she saw Mona and Gerry come out together, chatting eagerly, she smiled, and when Gerry put Mona into his roadster, with the utmost solicitude, tucking a robe about her, and making sure that she was comfortable, Mary smiled again.

The thing now, it seemed to Mary, was to prepare a way to turn Gerry's very obvious interest in Mona to account. He must be brought completely under control.

"We're going to need help," she said to herself, frowning slightly, after she had watched Mona and Gerry out of

along behind Deering, studying him. It was plain that he was seeing bad days. His clothes were shabby. His elbows were shiny; his heels were run down. There was a dispirited sag to his shoulders. His whole bearing spoke eloquently of discouragement, of a ready surrender to adversity. Mary's eyes brightened. She caught up to him.

"Why—Jack Deering?" she said, heartily. "Whoever would have thought of seeing you here?"

He responded instantly to the warm friendliness of her tone. And he made an instant effort, too, to brace up; to prevent her from seeing how hopeless he really was.

"Hello, Mary!" he said. "It's good to see you! How's every little thing?"

But the gaiety of his voice was forced.

"Come into the park and we'll have a talk for old times' sake," said Mary. He went with her willingly, and when they were seated on a bench Mary turned on him frankly.

"Now, Jack," she said, "feas up! You're up against it, aren't you? You needn't be ashamed to tell me—I've been to you for help!"

He broke down quite suddenly,

THE SIXTH ADVENTURE OF
"THE SOCIAL PIRATES"
WILL BE PUBLISHED SATURDAY, APRIL 29



DESPERATELY GERRY PRODUCED HIS CHECK BOOK.