

THE TALENTED MR. TAVERNAKE

A TALE OF LOVE, MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

SYNOPSIS.

Leonard Tavernake, Englishman to the bone, presents Beatrice Burrow, an American girl, to the world in her boarding house and he follows her, persisting, against her will, in befriending her. At a restaurant he has a "blow" but she shrugs her own past in mystery.

CHAPTER VIII. WOMAN'S WILES.

At 11 o'clock the next morning, Tavernake presented himself at the Milan Court and inquired for Mrs. Wenham Gardner. He was sent at once to her apartments in a charge of a page. She was lying upon a sofa piled up with cushions, wrapped in a wonderful blue garment which seemed somehow to deepen the color of her eyes. By her side was a small table on which was some chocolate, a bowl of roses and a roll of newspapers. She held out her hand toward Tavernake, but did not rise. There was something almost spiritual about her pallor, the delicate outline of her figure so imperfectly concealed by the thin silk dressing-gown, the faint, tired smile with which she welcomed him.

"You will forgive my receiving you like this, Mr. Tavernake," she begged. "To-day I have a headache. I have been anxious for your coming. You must sit by my side, please, and tell me at once whether you have seen Beatrice."

Tavernake did not rise. He was hidden. He turned toward which she had pointed. It was quite close to the sofa, but there was no other unoccupied in the room. She raised herself a little on the couch and turned toward him, her forehead slightly wrinkled, her voice tremulous with eagerness.

"You have seen her?" "I have," he admitted, looking steadily into the lining of her coat. "She has been cruel," Elizabeth declared. "I can tell it from your face. You have had news for me."

"I do not know," Tavernake replied, "whether she has been cruel or not. She refuses to allow me to tell you her address. She begged me, indeed, to keep away from you altogether."

"Why? Did she tell you why?" "She says that she is her sister, that you have no money to pay her, and that your husband has left you," Tavernake answered, deliberately.

"No, it is not all," he continued. "As to the rest, she told me nothing definite. It is quite clear, however, that she is very anxious to keep away from you."

"But her reason?" Elizabeth persisted. "Did she give you no reason?" Tavernake looked her in the face.

"What is it?" he asked with clumsy ungraciousness.

"Come and see me, every now and then, and let me know how my sister is. Perhaps you may be able to suggest some way in which I can help her."

Tavernake considered the question for a moment. He was angry with himself for the unaccountable sense of pleasure which her suggestion had given him.

"I will bring you a list," he answered heavily, "on tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow morning," she begged. "As soon as I am able," he promised. "Then he escaped. Outside in the corridor, the man who had interrupted his leisurely walk, waiting backward and forward, Tavernake passed him without responding to his bland greeting. He forgot all about the lift and descended five flights of stairs."

"I must go," he insisted almost roughly. "I am keeping you waiting. Excuse me, please, you must promise me one thing. You must come back, say within a week, and let me know how my sister is. I am not half so brutal as you think. I really am anxious about her. Please?"

"I will promise that," he answered. "Wait one moment, then," she begged, turning to the letters by her side. "There is just something I want to ask you. Don't be impatient—it is entirely a matter of business."

All the time he was acutely conscious of that restless stare, so taken the woman's white arms, from which the sleeves of her blue gown had fallen back, were stretched toward him as she lazily turned over her pile of correspondence. They were very beautiful arms and Tavernake, although he had had no experience, was dimly aware of the fact. Her eyes, too, seemed always to be trying to reach some part of him which was dead, or as yet unborn.

"She held out her fingers," she declared, smiling at his discomfiture. "If you must go."

"It is a young man from the house agent's," she announced indifferently, "come to see me about a flat."

"In that case," he suggested amiably, "I am, perhaps, not in the way."

"Why did you come to the office at all?" "Do you really want to know that?" she whispered softly.

"I will tell you," she went on suddenly. "It sounds foolish in a way, and yet it wasn't really because you see," she smiled at him—"I was anxious about Beatrice. I saw you come out of the office that morning, and I recognized you at once. I knew that it was you who had been with Beatrice. I wanted to excuse about the house to come and see whether I could find you out."

both sullen and awkward, but he was for the moment tongue-tied. His habit of haphazard self-analysis had once more asserted itself. He could not understand the curious nature of his mistrust of this woman, nor could he understand the pleasure which her suggestion gave him. He wanted to refuse, and yet he was glad to be able to tell himself that he was, after all, but an employee of his firm and not in a position to decline business on any whim.

"You seem to know a great deal about my sister," Elizabeth declared reflectively. "You call her by her Christian name and you appear to see her frequently. Perhaps, even, you are fond of her."

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"I am always so foolish about money," she declared, "so ignorant that I never know how I stand, but really I think that I have plenty, and a hundred or two more or less for rent didn't seem to matter much."

"I wish that I had gone myself," he declared. "She obviously wished me to, but it happened to be inconvenient. By-the-by, Tavernake, close the door, will you? There is another matter concerning which I should like to speak to you."

Tavernake did as he was bidden at once, without any disquietude. His own belief that he had no misgiving whatever as to the employer's desire for a private interview.

"It is about the Marston Rise estate," Mr. Dowling explained, arranging his price per acre. "I believe that the time is

coming when some sort of overtures should be made. You know what has been in my mind for a very considerable time."

Tavernake nodded. "Yes," he admitted, "I know quite well."

"I did hear a rumor," Mr. Dowling continued, "that some one had bought one small plot on the outskirts of the estate. I dare say it is not true, and in any case it is not worth while troubling about. But it shows that the public is beginning to nibble. I am of opinion that the time is almost—yes, almost ripe for a move."

"Do you wish me to do anything in the matter, sir?" Tavernake asked.

"In the first place," Mr. Dowling declared, "I should like you to try to find out whether any of the plots have really

been sold, and, if so, to whom, and what would be their price. Can you do this during the week?"

"I think so," Tavernake answered. "Ray Monday morning," Mr. Dowling suggested, taking down his hat. "I shall be playing golf tomorrow and Friday, and of course Saturday. Monday morning you might let me have a report."

Tavernake went back to his office. After all, then, things were to come to a crisis a little earlier than he had thought. He knew quite well that that report, if he made it honestly, and no other idea was likely to occur to him, would effectually sever his connection with Messrs. Dowling, Spence & Co.

Continued Tomorrow.

STORE OPENS 8:30 A. M. CLOSES AT 5:30 P. M. HATS TRIMMED FREE OF CHARGE. Lit Brothers. Double Yellow Trading Stamps With Every 10c Purchase Until Noon: After That, Until Closing Time, Single Stamps. Market Eighth Filbert Seventh. IN OUR BIG RESTAURANT—BEST OF EVERYTHING AT LOWEST PRICES—FIFTH FLOOR.

Men's Overcoats \$8 Men's Suits \$8.75. \$12.50 to \$16.50 Values. \$15 to \$16.50 Values. They Lead the List in This Great and Unreserved Clean-Up of Our Entire Winter Clothing Stocks. We Have Marked Them Without Regard of Cost or Profits, in Order to Make Quick and Sure Work of Their Dismissal During the Next Week.

Other Overcoats for Men \$20 to \$22.50 \$11 Values. \$25 to \$26.50 \$14.50 Values. Other Suits for Men \$20 and \$22.50 \$11 Kinds. \$25 and \$28 \$15.50 Kinds. Boys' \$4.50 to \$6 Overcoats, \$2.85. Boys' \$6.50 Norfolk Suits, \$4.40. Boys' \$2.50 Regatta Wash Suits, \$1. Oliver Twist, Sailor and Russian styles (sizes 2 1/2 to 10).

Two Great Clothing Specials in Subway. Boys' \$1.98, \$2.50 and \$3.98 Suits \$1.39 and Reefers. Men's \$6.50 to \$7.50 Overcoats \$3.50. Lot 2—Smartest styles and all sizes. Limited lot.

Advance Spring Showing and End-of-the-Winter Clearance in Misses' and APPAREL Women's. Just a little windfall of good luck has brought us the new things to sell so reasonably, while the other stocks are being dismissed at but a fraction of their earlier prices.

Misses' \$15 Coats \$7.50. Misses' \$20 Coats \$10. Misses' New Spring Suits, Splendid \$20 Values at \$15. Women's Fine Spring Suits, Regular \$27.50 Values, \$18.50.

Once in a Lifetime a Trip Like This. There are two wonderful Expositions in California this year and railroad rates will be much reduced. You can get the most out of your trip in California by including the marvelous ride through Colorado and Utah on the way out. There are several ways of making it all in, but only one best way, without extra expense and inconvenience.

Continuing Collar Sale. Regular 12 1/2c Values, 4 for 25c Dozen, 75c. Men's \$1.50 Neglige Shirts. 98c. \$2.00 Pongee \$1.10 Boys' 50c "Puri- tan" Blouses. 39c.

LETTER'S BEST COAL. Egg \$7, Stove \$7.25, Chestnut \$7.50. Large Round Pea Coal \$5.50. Largest Coal Yard in Philadelphia. OWEN LETTER'S SONS. Treason Ave. & Westmoreland St.

Furniture Sale. Most Every One Can Have a Nicely Furnished Home. If they take advantage of such opportunities as this, which involves the most artistic and permanently beautiful kinds of furniture at but a trifle more than is regularly charged for much inferior sorts.

Day After Day the Manufacturers' Sale gives forth manifold bargains. Leading makers all over the land have co-operated with us splendidly by the contribution of generous portions of their choicest stocks, to sell at about the customary wholesale price—or maybe less.

\$3.50 \$2 Waists. In Four Delightful New Fashions for Spring. Illustration Shows Two. These are charming voile blouses, beautifully all-over embroidered and made in a quaint, winsome Louis XVI yoke fashion with long sleeves and Latest Style Military Flaring or Novel Fan-Like Plaited Collars.

Women Who Know Just How Fine and How Beautiful a \$3.50 Blouse Should Be Will Not Be at All Disappointed in These at \$2 Only. Second Floor.