

# Nobody's Man by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

INSTALLMENT NO. 6.

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY.

**ANDREW TALLENTE, M. P.**, defeated at Hellesfield, losing his seat through a speech made by **MILLER, Socialist M. P.**, whom Tallente meets at the station on his way to his country estate, where

**TONY PALLISER**, his secretary, is discovered in collusion with his wife. Tony disappears mysteriously.

**STELLA TALLENTE** asks her husband what he has done to Tony. Tallente orders her out of the house.

**LADY JANE PARTINGTON** of Woodhanger, daughter of the Duke of Marminster, calls to find Tallente in the deserted house. She remains for tea. They are interrupted by the arrival of a police inspector.

The inspector from Scotland Yard demands to know what has become of Tony Palliser. Tallente divulges no information, but at midnight descends the cliff to search for the body. Police hiding on the grounds suspect Tallente of foul play.

Tallente lunches with Lady Jane. She is strangely attractive to him and encourages his political career.

**STEPHEN DARTREY** exponent of higher Socialism, hermit politician, but leader of the Democratic Party, offers Tallente an opportunity to represent them in the House of Commons.

**HORLICK**, Prime Minister of England, confers with Tallente and reports that a peerage has been obtained for him. Tallente refuses and is surprised to learn that Tony Palliser, as his secretary, had written letters to the Prime Minister, soliciting the title. Against all protest, Tallente announces that he is going with the Democratic Party.

A WIFE'S WILES.

TALLENTE, obeying an urgent telephone message, made his way to Claridge's and sent his card up to his wife. Her maid came down and invited him to her suite, an invitation which he promptly declined. In about a quarter of an hour she descended to the lounge, dressed for the street. She showed no signs of confusion or nervousness at his visit. She was hard and cold and fair, with a fraudulent smile upon her lips, dressed to perfection, her maid hovering in the background with a Pekinese under one arm and a jewel case in her other hand.

"Thank goodness," she said, as she fluttered into a chair by his side, "that you hate scenes even more than I do! You have the air of a man who has found out no end of disagreeable things!"

"You are observant," he answered dryly. "I have just come from the Prime Minister."

"Well?"

"I find that Palliser has been conducting a regular conspiracy behind my back, with reference to this wretched peerage. He has practically forged my name and has placed me in a most humiliating position. You, I suppose, were his instigator in this matter?"

"I suppose I was," she admitted.

"What was to be his reward—his ulterior reward, I mean?"

"I promised him twenty thousand pounds," she answered, with cold fury. "It appears that I overvalued

your importance to your party. Tony apparently did the same. He thought that you had only to intimate your readiness to accept a peerage and the thing would be arranged. It seems that we were wrong."

"You were doubly wrong," he replied. "In the first place, there were difficulties, and, in the second, nothing would have induced me to accept such a humiliating offer."

"How did you find this out?" she inquired.

"The Prime Minister offered me the peerage less than an hour ago," he answered. "I need not say that I unhesitatingly refused it."

Stella ceased buttoning her gloves. There was a cold glitter in her eyes.

"You refused it?"

"Of course!"

She was silent for a moment.

"Andrew," she said, "you have scarcely kept your bargain with me."

"I am not prepared to admit that," he replied. "You held a very considerable social position at the time when I was in office. It was up to you to make that good."

"I am tired of political society," she answered. "It isn't the real thing. Now you are out of Parliament, though, even that has vanished. Andrew!"

"Well?"

She leaned a little toward him. She began to regret that he had not accepted her invitation to visit her in her suite. Years ago she had been able

to bend him sometimes to her will. Why should she take it for granted that she had lost her power? Here, however, even persuasions were difficult. He sat upon a straight, high-backed chair by her side and his face seemed as though it were carved out of stone.

"You have always declined, Andrew, to make very much use of my money," she said. "Could we not make a bar-

"They could be changed." "Impossible!" "You might be forced to change them." "By whom?" The smile maddened her. She had meant to be subtle. She became flamboyant. She leaned forward in her chair.

"What have you done with Tony Palliser?" she demanded.

faltered. "Supposing I go to the police?" "Don't be melodramatic," he begged. "In the first place, what have you to tell? In the second place, in this country, at any rate, a wife cannot give evidence against her husband."

"You admit that something has happened?" she asked eagerly.

"I admit nothing," he replied, "except that Anthony Palliser has disappeared under circumstances which you and I know about, that he has forged my name and entered into a disgraceful conspiracy with you, and that he has stolen from my wife a political document of great importance to me."

"I knew nothing about the political document," she said quickly.

She sat looking down on the floor for several minutes. She had promised Tallente that she would watch her, some way of suffering in secret, all the more terrible because of its repression. When she looked up, her face seemed pinched and older. Her voice, however, was steady.

"I am not sentimental," she said coldly. "I know what I want and I am not afraid to own it. I want to be a peeress."

"In that respect I am unable to help you," he replied.

"This is your last word?" she demanded.

"Absolutely!"

"Then I demand that you set me free."

He was a little staggered.

"How on earth can I do that?"

"You can allow me to divorce you."

"And spoil any chance I might have of re-entering political life," he remarked quietly.

"I have no further interest in your political life," she retorted.

He looked at her steadfastly.

"There is another way," he suggested. "I might divorce you."

Her eyes fell before the steady light in his. She did her best, however, to keep her voice steady.

"That would not suit me," she admitted. "I could not be received at Court, and there are other social penalties which I am not inclined to face. In the case of a disagreement like ours, if the man realizes his duty, it is he who is willing to bear the sacrifice."

"Under the circumstances, yes," he agreed. "In our case, however, there is a certain consideration upon which I have forborne to touch—"

"Andrew, you are detestable!" she exclaimed. "Let us end this conversation. You have said all that you wish to say?"

"Everything."

"Please go away, then," she begged.

"I am expecting visitors. I think that we understand each other."

**COMPROMISE.**

TALLENTE met the Prime Minister walking in the park.

"I thought of writing to you, Tallente," he said, "I cannot bring myself to believe that you were in earnest on Wednesday morning."

"Absolutely," the other assured him. "I have an appointment with Dartrey in an hour's time to close the matter."

The Prime Minister was shocked and pained.

"You will dig your own grave," he declared. "The idea is perfectly scandalous. You propose to sell your political birthright for a mess of pottage."

"I am afraid I can't agree with you, sir," Tallente regretted. "I am at least as much in sympathy with the programme of the Democratic Party as I am with yours."

"In that case," was the somewhat stiff rejoinder, "there is, I fear, nothing more to be said."

There was a brief silence. Tallente would have been glad to make his escape, but found no excuse.

"When we beat Germany," Horlock ruminated, "the man in the street thought that we had insured the peace of the world. Who could have dreamed that a nation who had played such an heroic part, which had imperilled its very existence for the sake of a principle, was all the time rotten at the core!"

"I will challenge you to repeat that statement in the House or on any public platform, sir," Tallente objected.

"The present state of discontent throughout the country is solely owing to the shocking financial mismanagement of every Chancellor of the Exchequer and lawmaker since peace was signed. We won the war and the people who had been asked to make heroic sacrifices were simply expected to continue them afterward as a matter of course. What chance has the man of moderate means had to improve his position, to save a little for his old age, during the last ten years? A third of his income has gone in taxation and the cost of everything is 50 per cent. more than it was before the war. And we won it, mind. That is what he can't understand. We won the war and found ruin."

"Legislation has done its best," the Prime Minister said, "to assist in the distribution of capital."

"Legislation was too slow," Tallente answered bluntly. "Legislation is only playing with the subject now. You sneer at the Democratic Party, but they have a perfectly sound scheme of financial reform and they undertake to bring the income tax down to 2 shillings in the pound within the next three years."

"They'll ruin half the merchants and the manufacturers in the country if they attempt it."

"How can they ruin them?" Tallente replied. "The factories will be there, the trade will be there, the money will still be there. The financial legislation of the last few years has simply been a blatant burning of the profiteer."

"I need not say, Tallente, that I disagree with you entirely," his companion declared. "At the same time, I am not going to argue with you. To tell you the truth, I spent a great part of last night with you in my thoughts. We cannot afford to let you go. Supposing, now, that I could induce Watkinson to give up Kendal? His seat is quite safe and with a little reshuffling you would be able to slip back gradually to your place among us!"

Tallente shook his head.

The Prime Minister held out his hand a little pettishly.

"Politics," he said, "is the one career in which men seldom recover from their mistakes. I hope that even at the eleventh hour you will relent. It will be a grief to all of us to see you slip away from the reputable places."

The Right Honorable John Augustus Horlock stepped into his motor-car and drove away. Tallente, after a glance at his watch, called a taxi and proceeded to keep his appointment at

Demos House, the great block of buildings where Dartrey had established his headquarters.

"Sit down, Tallente," Dartrey invited. "We are both of us men who believe in simple things and direct action. Have you made up your mind?"

"I have," Tallente announced. "I have broken finally with Horlock. I have told him that I am coming to you."

"You will help us to set the world to rights," he said. "Alas! that is only a phrase, but you will help us to set in the light. Remember," he went on, "that there may be moments of discouragement. Much of the material we have to use, the people we have to influence, the way we have to travel, may seem sordid, but the light is shining there all the time, Tallente. We are not politicians. We are deliverers."

"I am your man, Dartrey," Tallente promised simply. "Make what use of me you will."

Dartrey smiled, once more the plain, kindly man of affairs.

"To descend then, very much to the earth," he said, "to-night you must go to Bradford. Odames will resign tomorrow. This time," he added, with a little smile, "I think I can promise you the Democratic support and a very certain election."

(To Be Continued.)



"SHE LEANED A LITTLE TOWARD HIM. SHE BEGAN TO REGRET THAT HE HAD NOT ACCEPTED HER INVITATION TO VISIT HER IN HER SUITE."

## The Sheik

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# The V That Vanished Continued

more precious than gold—self-respect."

"It's why I came to them and have stayed here, Just Jim. I was hoping that I could train the children, encourage the older folks and help them get back what the timberland owners have stolen."

"I wonder how much land has been stolen up here, along with self-respect," he said, looking hard at her.

She returned his look with long and searching scrutiny. "Have you any reason for thinking that any land has been stolen from real owners?"

"Not a very definite reason, I'll admit. But I have been doing some guessing."

"Are you speaking the truth—that you have only guesses?"

"That's all!"

She turned away.

"Do you have any special interest in stolen lands?" he pressed.

"Let's drop the subject," she pleaded.

"Very well. I'll keep on with the other subject which I brought up. I've been pretty selfish all my life. Miss Ambrose. But up here I have learned a lesson. I'm going in with your folks as a pal and a friend, with all the grit that's in me, and we'll see what can be done."

She put out both her hands to him enthusiastically. "Consider yourself mustered in, Just Jim!"

THE work of Attorney Shaw among the scattered squatters of the region had begun to show itself along the river in the movements of the populace. Daily new arrivals came and hung up and used the conveniences which had been left behind at Misery when the driving crew went on down the river.

Nearly all of these involuntary nomads lingered on day after day. For-

ing to square yourself," averred the old man, twisting his fingers nervously.

"Sure thing!" declared Jim. "DON'T know what sort of a lesson was taught you," faltered the strange old man, "but whatever your lesson was, you have been acting in a way to teach me my lesson. Will you come with me where nobody can overhear?"

The next morning Just Jim did not appear. Later in the day somebody noticed that the strange old man was no longer in the community.

The poor folks were distracted by the loss of Jim. The men would not



"OH, YOU HAVE NOT BEEN BABBLING IN DELIRIUM. BUT WHEN YOU GAVE YOUR NAME TO THE BRUTE YOU SAID 'JUST JIM,' AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU DESERVE TO BE CALLED JUST. YOU STOOD UP FOR THESE POOR FOLKS WHO ARE PERSECUTED."

have gone on with their work if the Ambrose girl, hiding her doubts, her grief, and her worry behind the mask of her white face, had not set herself at their head.

The poor folks were leaderless, except for the girl, when the dreaded day came and Attorney Shaw arrived. He brought officers; his aids for the

moving their belongings from the houses.

Bessie Ambrose sat on the porch of the new log house, waiting for Shaw's order to depart. Somebody had attempted to pull down the little flag, but she prevented the act.

Jim's whistle, that had been the clarion of the morning in the past,

You knew I'd be back not later than this day, didn't you?"

"Yes!" she cried bravely, though she had been hoping against hope.

The settlers dropped all and came running. Shaw led his forces to the spot, apprehending interference with his plans; he had recognized a well-known lawyer as one of Jim's companions.

When Jim turned to face the crowd he looked directly into Benson's flaming eyes.

"Glad to see you here, boss! I know you relish little plays. You staged a very good one, using me as hero. I'm putting on one of my own to-day. Curtain goes up! Act One!" He bowed to the man whom Shaw recognized.

The lawyer addressed directly the attorney for the Great Onawa:

"BROTHER SHAW, I know you remember Caleb Blish, who was Register of Deeds in this county in the old days. Yes! Of course you do. Well, Caleb didn't go away and die, after all. Caleb has found himself and his conscience. Caleb and I, and this young man and an expert with a microscope, have been over the county registry of deeds books, and we have verified what Caleb pointed out as the changes and the forgeries he perpetrated when he was in the pay of boundary shifters and title jumpers."

"Caleb is perfectly willing to take his medicine—but it won't be a very bitter dose, I trust, because I shall defend him and lay the real blame where it belongs."

"You don't accuse the Great Onawa or me, do you?" demanded Shaw hotly.

"Certainly not. The 'G O G' folks were fooled into buying land from men who did not own it. It's too bad, because those lands will now be given

to the rightful owners—too bad from Jim's standpoint, I mean—excellent only heir is very much alive—and from ours. For instance," he bowed to the girl on the porch, "Miss Ambrose will receive the lands from her grandfather's estate. I congratulate you!" he assured her, smiling into her amazed countenance.

Again the lawyer addressed Shaw, taking all the crowding listeners into his confidence:

"You'll be interested to know that a mystery which stirred up the Governor and the Legislature and all the newspapers has been solved. The famous gore of Rangé 19 was peeled off in slivers by the pirates. It has all come back in a bunch. The V that vanished is visible again. Brother Shaw, one of these officers is about to serve an injunction which protects all these lands and the settlers on the lands until the court can take due cognizance of the evidence. And we're right in the heart of that V, standing where we are."

"The man who bought it from the State is dead," stated Shaw, as if that fact modified conditions.

The lawyer clapped his palm on

Jim's shoulder. "But his nephew and your standpoint, I mean—excellent only heir is very much alive—and claims the property that his uncle owned—the only property left, by the way. Allow me to present Mr. James Austin March, second."

THE young man raised his arms and stilled the rising tumult.

"That's about all there is to the little play of this day and its date. Be happy, folks! It will all come out right when we get our heads together. Stick around! There'll be jobs. As the duly elected Mayor of Misery, I bid all of you a most hearty welcome."

"You dam' fool, that was only a joke," roared Benson.

Young March pushed the knapsack to one side and sat down beside the flushed girl and took her hand and patted it between his tender palms.

"Benson, I have made a job of this joke," he said. "To the girl he whispered: 'I came up here looking for something that was lost—fifty thousand dollars' worth of land. But what I have found is so much bigger than I don't dare to speak of it just yet!'"

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Action—Romance—Love at First Sight—  
A Dream That Came True

## The Town That Wasn't

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS  
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