

# A GENTLEMAN FROM MISSISSIPPI

By THOMAS A. WISE

Novelized From the Play by Frederick R. Toombs

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Here is a story of an epoch making battle of right against wrong, of honesty against corruption, of simplicity and sincerity against deceit, bribery and intrigue. It is the story of today in this country. It vitally concerns every man, woman and child in the United States, so far-reaching is its influence.

The warfare is now going on—the warfare of honest men against corrupt political machines.

The story tells the "inside" of the political maneuvers in Washington and of the workings of bosses there and elsewhere—how they shapemen and women to their ends, how their cunning intrigues extend into the very social life of the nation's capital. You will find inspiration in the career of the honest old southern planter elected to the United States senate and the young newspaper reporter who becomes his private secretary and political pilot. Your heart will beat in sympathy with the love of the secretary and the senator's youngest daughter.

You will read of the lobby, and find that not all of them are men. You will see how avarice causes a daughter to conspire against her father. You will hear the note of a gripping national tragedy in the words of Peabody, the "boss of the senate." But cause for laughter as well will not be found lacking in this truly many sided narrative.

## CHAPTER I PRACTICAL POLITICS.

That bids him flout the law he makes; That bids him make the law he flouts.

—Kipling.

IN buoyant spirit the Hon. Charles Norton rode up the bridge path leading through the Langdon plantation to the old antebellum homestead which, on a shaded knoll, overlooked the winding waters of the Pearl river. No finer prospect was to be had in all Mississippi than greeted the eye from the wide southwest porch, where on warm evenings the Langdons and their frequent guests gathered to dine or to watch the golden splendor of the dying sun.

The Langdon family had long been a power in the south. Its sons fought under Andrew Jackson at New Orleans, under Zachary Taylor in the war with Mexico, and in the civil war men of that name left their blood on the fields of Antietam, Shiloh, the Wilderness and Gettysburg. But this family of fighting men, of unselfish patriots, had also marked influence in the ways of peace, as real patriots should. Generations of Langdons had taken deepest pride in developing the hundreds of acres of cotton land, whose thousands of four foot rows planted each April spread open the



Hon. Charles Norton, M. C.

silvery lined bolts in July and August, and the ripened cotton fiber, pure white beneath the sun, gave from a distance the picture of an expanse of driven snow.

The Hon. Charles Norton had reason for feeling well pleased with the world as he fastened his bay Virginia hunter to a convenient post and strode up the steps of the mansion, which was a characteristic survivor of the "old south," the south of glided romance and of gripping tragedy. Now in this second year of his first term as congressman and a promising member of the younger set of southern lawyers, he had just taken active part in securing the election of Colonel William H. Langdon, present head of the family, to the United States senate, though the ultimate action of the legislature had been really brought about by a lifelong friend of Colonel Langdon, the

senior senator from the state, James Stevens, who had not hesitated to flatter Norton and use him as a cat's paw. This use the Hon. Charles Norton seemed to consider an honor of large proportions. Not every first term congressman can hope for intimacy with a senator. Norton believed that his work for Langdon would win him the family's gratitude and thus further his ambition to marry Carolina, the planter's oldest daughter, whose beauty made her the recipient of many at tent.

A gleam of light shone in Norton's eyes as they swept over the fertile acres of the plantation. He thought of the material interest he might one day have in them if his suit for the hand of Carolina progressed favorably. Suddenly his reverie was interrupted by the voice of young Randolph Langdon, a spirited lad in his early twenties, who had just been made plantation manager by his father.

"Well, how is the honorable today?" said Randolph, approaching from the doorway. "I didn't think a congressman could be spared from Washington but rarely, especially when the papers say the country needs such a lot of saving."

"Oh, this 'saving your country' talk goes all right in the story books," re-



The senator's hands back the job.

plied Norton, who exercised considerable influence over the youth through a long acquaintance and by frequently taking him into his confidence, "but this country can take pretty good care of itself. In congress we representatives put the job of saving it over on the senate, and the senate hands back the job to us. So what's every body's business isn't anybody's, a fine scheme so long as we have a president who keeps his hands off and doesn't."

"But how about the speeches and the bills?" broke in Randolph. "I thought—"

"Yes, yes; to be sure," the congressman quickly added. "Nearly all of us introduce these so called reform bills. When they're printed at government expense we send copies, carried free by the postoffice department, to our constituents, and when we allow the bills to die in some committee we run always blame the committee. But if there's a big fight by our constituents over the bill we let it pass the house, but arrange to kill it in the senate. Then we do the same thing for the senators. Like in every other business, my boy," continued Norton as he led the way into the house. "It's a case of 'you tickle me and I'll tickle you' in politics. And don't let any one fool you about the speeches either. They are pretty things to mail to the voters, but all the wise boys in Washington know they aren't meant seriously. It's all play acting, and there are better actors in the senate than Henry Irving or Edwin Booth ever were."

"I don't think my father looks at things the way you do, Charlie."

"No? Well, maybe he doesn't now, but he will later on when he takes his seat in the senate. If he isn't wise enough to play around with the rest of the senators he won't get any bills passed, especially any bill carrying an appropriation or of any other particular importance."

"What?" ejaculated the planter's son. "Do you mean to say that if father won't do what the other senators want him to do they will combine against him and destroy his usefulness, make him powerless—a failure?"

The congressman smiled patronizingly on the youth. "Why, of course they will. That's politics, practical politics, the only kind that's known in Washington. You see—"

"But the leaders of the great parties!" cried the young plantation manager in amazement. "Why don't they prevent this?"

"Because they invented the system and because political party differences don't amount to a whole lot much of the time in Washington. The politicians do most of their criticizing of the other party away from Washington, where the voters can hear them. But when circumstances sometimes force a man to rise to assail the other side in congress he afterward apologizes in secret for his words. Or sometimes he apologizes beforehand, saying: 'I've got to hand out some hot stuff to you fellows just to please a crowd of sovereign voters from my district who have come up to Washington to see me perform. So, of course, I've got to make a showing. Don't mind what I say. You know I don't mean it, but the old fogies will go back home and tell their neighbors what a rip snortin' reformer I be.'"

"Is that the way you represent your district, Norton?" asked Planter Langdon, who at this juncture entered the room.

"Honor can't bear patching. My poverty, not my will, consents."

"No, no, Mr. Langdon—I should say senator now I suppose. I was merely telling Randolph how some legislators conduct themselves."

The senator elect paused momentarily, gazing at the congressman, who, dark visaged, tall, black haired, broad shouldered and athletic, was visibly uneasy at having his conversation with Randolph overheard by the father.

"No doubt it won't be all plain sailing in Washington for an old fashioned man like me, but I believe in the American people and the men they send to congress," slowly spoke the planter. "There's Senator Stevens, for instance. He has always stood for the rights of the people. I've read all his speeches. Just why he brought about my election it is hard to tell, for I've been a planter all my life except when I fought under Beauregard. I feel that he did it out of friendship, and I simply can't say how much I appreciate the honor. I am indebted to you, too, congressman."

Tactfully disclaiming any credit for his work, only Norton's congressional training in repression enabled him to refrain from smiling at Langdon's innocence, his belief in Stevens' sincerity and his wonder over his election. Stevens, the keen, cold and resourceful, who forced his officeholders to yield him parts of their government salaries; Stevens, who marketed to railway companies his influence with the department of justice; Stevens, who was a Republican in the committee room in Washington and a Democrat on the platform in Mississippi; Stevens, who had condemned the deal with Martin Sanders, boss of seven counties, to elect Langdon because of the planter's trustfulness and simplicity of character, which should make him easy to influence and to handle in the all important matter of the grist naval base project.

The entry of Carolina Langdon and her younger sister, Hope Georgia, gave Norton a welcome opportunity to shift the trend of conversation.

"You ladies will have a gay time in Washington," he began, after directing a particularly enthusiastic greeting to Carolina. "You will be in great demand at all the big affairs, and I don't think you will ever want to come back to old Mississippi, forty miles from a railroad, with few chances to wear your New York gowns."

Carolina spoke quickly, her face flushing at the thought of the new vista of life now opening. "Yes, I have always longed to be a part of the real life of this world, the life of constant action—meeting new people every day, and prominent people. Balls, receptions, teas, theater parties, afternoon drives, plenty of money and plenty of gayety are what I want. I'm not a bit like Hope Georgia, who thinks these ideas are extravagant because she has not seen real life yet."

"Carolina, you must not think me 'only your little sister' now. I have seen life. Haven't I spent a week in Jackson?"

"That's enough proof. You know all about life, I'm sure, Miss Hope Georgia," smilingly remarked Norton. Later, rising to join Planter Langdon on the veranda, where he had gone to smoke, the congressman gazed intently at Carolina. "You will probably forget your old friends when you enter the dizzy social race in Washington."

"No, Charlie, I couldn't forget you anyhow. You will be there too. I shall depend on you a great deal to take me about, unless you are too busy making speeches and fighting your opponents."

Again it was Norton's turn to be inwardly amused at the political ignorance of the Langdon family. Speeches? The first term congressman doesn't make speeches in Washington because no one cares what he thinks—except the lobbyists, whose business it is to provide new members with a complete set of thoughts. Neither does he have opponents—he is not considered important enough by the veterans to be opposed.

Skillfully approaching the subject which next to Carolina Langdon had been uppermost in his mind during his visit, Norton asked the senator elect on joining him if he did not believe that the entire south would benefit if the plan to establish a naval base on the gulf was successfully carried through.

"Most certainly I do, and, as I said during the senatorial fight, the whole country as well will be the gainer," responded Langdon.

"Don't you think the people who want Altacoola chosen as the site have the best arguments?" was the visitor's next question, the reply to which he anxiously awaited.

"Yes, I do, from what I've already heard, but I haven't heard very much of what the folks who advocate other sites have to say. So until I've heard all sides and made my own examination I couldn't give any one my final answer, but Altacoola seems to have the necessary qualifications."

"Senator Stevens is in favor of Altacoola," eagerly suggested Norton.

"Yes, and that's a pretty good argument in its favor," responded Langdon.

Norton now excused himself, pleading an appointment with a client at a neighboring village. Waving farewell to Carolina and Hope Georgia, who stood at a window, he rode away. "The old man is sure to be all right," he muttered. "He leans toward Altacoola and believes in Stevens. He'll lean some more until he falls over—into the trap. There's a fortune in sight, within reach. Langdon has faith in his friends. He won't suspect a thing."

Still another thought occurred to the Hon. Charles Norton. "Stevens elected Langdon out of friendship," he chuckled gleefully. "That will be well worth telling in Washington."

## CHAPTER II THE WARS OF PEACE.

"BIG BILL" LANGDON was the term by which the new senator from Mississippi had been affectionately known to his intimates for years. He carried his 230 pounds with ease, bespeaking great muscular power in spite of his gray hairs. His rugged courage, unswerving honesty and ready belief in his friends won him a loyal following, some of whom frequently repeated what was known as "Bill Langdon's Golden Rule."

"There never was a man yet who didn't have some good in him, but most folks don't know this because their own virtues pop up and blind 'em when they look at somebody else."

At the reunions of his old war comrades Langdon was always depended on to describe once again how the Third Mississippi charged at Crawfordsville and defeated the Eighth Illinois. But the stirring events of the past had served to increase the planter's fondness for his home life and his children, whose mother had died years before. At times he regretted that his unexpected political duties would take him away from the old plantation even though the enthusiastic approval of Carolina and Hope Georgia proved considerable compensation.

Although not sworn in as senator, Colonel Langdon's political duties were already pressing. A few days after Congressman Norton's visit he sat in his library conferring with several prominent citizens of his county regarding a plan to ask congress to appropriate money to dredge a portion of the channel of the Pearl river, which would greatly aid a large section of the state.

During the deliberations the name of Martin Sanders was announced by Jackson, the colonel's gravely decorous negro bodyguard, who boasted that he "wuz brung up by Cuneel Mars-Langdon, sub, a fightin' Mississippian, sub, sence long befo' de wah and way befo' dat, sub."

"Show Mr. Sanders right in," commanded Colonel Langdon.

"Good day, senator," spoke Sanders, the boss of seven counties, as he entered. Glancing around the room, he continued, bending toward the colonel and muttering his low whispering voice with his hand: "I want to speak to you alone. I'm here on politics."

"That's all right, but these gentlemen here are my friends and constituents," was the reply in no uncertain voice. "When I talk politics they have a perfect right to hear what I, as their senator, say. Out with it, Mr. Sanders."

As Sanders was introduced to the members of the conference he grew red in the face and stared at Langdon amazed. At last he had discovered something new in politics. "Say," he finally blurted, "when I talk business I—"

"Are you in politics as a business?" quickly spoke Colonel Langdon.

"Why—I—er—no, of course not," the visitor stammered. "I am in politics



Carolina Langdon has an austere loveliness.

for my party's sake, just like everybody else," and Sanders grinned suggestively at his questioner.

"Have you anything further to say?" asked Langdon in a tone hinting that he would like to be rid of his caller.

"Well, since you are so very new in

(To Be Continued.)

## Are Drugs Necessary? Do Drugs Cure Disease? Can Nature be Assisted?

If people were born right and afterwards lived right, there would be no use for medicine. Every doctor knows this. So do other well-informed people. One thing more. When a person lives wrongly, or acquires bodily weakness by heredity, medicine can do only very little. Medicine cannot cure him. Only charlatans claim that medicines will cure disease. Medicines may palliate symptoms. Medicines may urge the powers of Nature to resist disease. Medicines sometimes arouse the efforts of the human body to right itself against derangements. This is the most that medicine can do.

A man accidentally puts his finger in the fire. Instinctively he wets his finger in his mouth, then blows on it for the cooling effect. This is no cure. He knows it very well. But it makes it feel better for the time being.

People eat unwisely. This produces dyspepsia or indigestion. The only rational cure is to eat correctly. Yet if a palliative is at hand the pains of indigestion can be mitigated, the throes of dyspepsia assuaged. The medicine cannot be said to have cured. It simply palliates disagreeable symptoms. The cure must come through right living.

Take Peruna, for instance. No one claims Peruna is a cure for dyspepsia. But Peruna will stimulate the stomach to perform its function properly. Peruna will increase the flow of digestive fluids, without which digestion cannot be carried on at all. It will increase the relish of food, the appetite.

It is admitted that all this can be accomplished by right living, but there are so many people who either will not or do not know how to eat correctly that a tremendous amount of good can be done by the wise use of Peruna.

A stomach that has been frequently abused performs the function of digestion very lazily. Such a stomach allows the food to remain undigested for some time after it is swallowed. This leads to fermentation of the food. Sour stomach is the result. This goes on week after week, until the blood is poisoned with the products of fermentation. This condition is very apt to produce rheumatism.

It is not claimed that Peruna will cure rheumatism. Nothing will cure rheumatism but correct living. But it is claimed that Peruna will assist a badly abused stomach to perform its work.

If a person would correct his habits, persist in right eating and temperate ways, undoubtedly the stomach would right itself, the blood would rid itself of the poison, and everything would be right. But as said before there are a multitude of people who will not or cannot adopt right methods of living. To such people Peruna is a boon. A dose before meals will assist the stomach to do its work. This prevents fermentation of the food, brings about normal digestion, and all the train of ills that follow indigestion disappear.

In other words, Peruna is helpful to those who live badly, or those who have acquired some chronic weakness. Peruna does not cure, but it assists the powers of Nature to bring about a cure.

The whip does not increase the power of the horse to pull a load, but judiciously used it stimulates the horse to use his powers at the right time, without which he could not have pulled the load.

This illustrates the effect of Peruna, or any other good remedy upon the system. Taken at the right time, it calls forth the powers of the human system to meet the encroachments of disease, and thus cuts short, if not entirely ends, the diseased action.

No one should ever attempt to substitute medicine in the place of right living. In the end such an attempt will prove a disaster. But an occasional use of the right medicine at the right time is a godsend, and no reasonable person will undertake to deny it.

Those who know how to use Peruna find it of untold value. By and by the world will get wise enough so that through correct living no medicine at all will be needed. But that time has not arrived. In the meantime, while the world is approaching that perfection in which all medicine will be eliminated, Peruna is a handy remedy to have in the house.

Slight derangements of the stomach; slight catarrhal attacks of the liver, the throat, bronchial tubes, lungs or bowels; these attacks are sure to lead to grave diseases, and can be averted by the judicious use of Peruna.

Wouldn't you like to read a few unsolicited testimonials from people who have used Peruna, and who stand ready to confirm the above statements concerning it. If so, address the Peruna Drug Manufacturing Co., Columbus, Ohio, and we will send some prepaid.

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