

# A GENTLEMAN FROM MISSISSIPPI

By THOMAS A. WISE

Novelized from the Play by Frederick R. Toombs

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...and the young fellow who had been so kind as to give me the money in Atlanta last night. He chuckled, "reckon Senator William H. Langdon won't see anything wrong with that same noble trait of mine when he comes to vote for the naval base. Senator Stevens will be pleased."

## CHAPTER IV

### "JUST THE MAN WE NEED"

As Bud Haines returned from young Langdon's room, where he had left the latter in bed, toward the door, he saw a familiar figure standing in a secluded corner of the lobby. They were talking earnestly in a low voice.

"Who?" whistled the newspaper man. "It must be something important that brings both the boss of the senate and Stevens of Mississippi here."

"Good afternoon, Haines. How are you?" Senator Stevens said cordially, as, looking up, he saw the newspaper man approaching. "Senator Peabody, you know Haines, don't you? The brightest young correspondent in Washington."

Senator Peabody of Pennsylvania, the leading power in the upper house, was a man of commanding character and of strong personality. The fact that these attributes to advance in the senate the financial interests of himself, of Standard Steel and other commercial organizations met with very little protest in Washington. That he deserved the title frequently used in referring to him, "boss of the senate," some would deny. He had knowledge of the inner workings of the senate and the various committees.

Senator Peabody was very affable to the reporters, especially to those of the Haines staff, who had never accepted any favors from him and who opposed his methods. He aimed to win the friendship of the correspondents; diplomacy as he had found that reporters of the Haines sort could not be influenced by money. He considered a reporter who would take a bribe as a constructive, conservative member of society and frequently regretted that so many of the correspondents sent to Washington could not be bought nor had bills they wanted passed or defeated. He extended his hand to Haines as Stevens concluded and said warmly:

"Of course I know the representative of the Morning Star! How do you do, Haines?"

"I wonder if we're not all here on the same errand," suggested the newspaper man.

Senator Peabody appeared to be all candor.

"We came to call on Senator Langdon, Senator Stevens' new colleague," he said.

Dud Haines opened his eyes wide. "By Jove, Langdon's going up. He's the chairman of the naval committee drops in to welcome him."

"Yes, of course," said Peabody. "With a keen sense of the dramatic, the congressman took the next words drawn out with full effect."

"I've got Senator Langdon interested—financially interested," he said.

"His two hearers exchanged a significant glance."

"How?" asked Peabody sharply.

"Not much," said Peabody. "Well, I just let him invest \$50,000 of the senator's money in Atlanta land. That ought to help some."

Stevens stared in amazement at his congressman, his eyes threatening to bulge out of his head.

"What?" he gasped. "You got Langdon's money in Atlanta, through his son?"

"I sure have, senator," he chuckled. "He's in the extent of fifty thousand, and I've promised that fifty shall make a hundred by spring."

"Well, he's a good fellow," said Stevens, "and I suppose you had better talk to Langdon about it."

"The reporter smiled."

"That's just what I came for, senator, but I have to go on to the war department now. When Senator Langdon comes will you be kind enough to tell him I want to interview him?"

Stevens bowed cordially.

"Indeed I shall. I'll tell him he's in luck to have the smartest young man in Washington on the job. He'll be here in a few minutes."

"All right," laughed Bud, "only don't make it so strong that he won't recognize me when he sees me. Good day." And he hurried away to keep a belated appointment.

"The boss boy," said Stevens as the newspaper man disappeared. "Yes, only I'm not sure it's a good thing for a newspaper man to be too clever. Spills his usefulness. Makes him ask too many unbecoming questions."

"Thank you, senator; thank you very much," and Norton bowed and left, rejoicing.

Peabody turned to Stevens.

"You see, even a congressman can be useful sometimes," remarked Stevens dryly.

"Keep your eye on that young man, Stevens. He's the most valuable congressman we've had from your state in a long while. Does just what he is told and doesn't ask any fool questions. This was good work. Langdon's on the naval committee now sure. Come, Stevens; let's go to some quiet corner in the smoking room. I want to talk to you about something else the Standard has on hand for you to do."

Hardly had they departed from the lobby when resounding commotion at the entrance, followed by the rushing of porters and bellboys and an expectant pose on the part of the clerk, indicated that the new senator from Mississippi had arrived.

closed to the body.

"I should like, and he knows it," he chuckled, "reckon Senator William H. Langdon won't see anything wrong with that same noble trait of mine when he comes to vote for the naval base. Senator Stevens will be pleased."

Langdon's colleague grasped the arm of the senatorial debator.

"He's just the man we want, senator. If some of those old fellows you just have to believe when he talks. He'll do what I suggest, and he can make the public believe what we think."

"You guarantee him?" snapped the boss.

"All right," said Peabody. "He goes on the naval committee. That ought to be enough honor for a man who a year ago was growing cotton on an old plantation miles away from civilization."

"We have control now of all the land about Atlanta that can be sold," said Stevens. "I have had Norton, the congressman from Langdon's district, working on it. There isn't a foot of land there which we do not now control under options, and," he added, with a chuckle, "the options were dirt cheap."

"Peabody granted approvingly."

"There won't be any New York fortune in it, but it ought to be a pretty tidy bit," he said.

"If we could only get Langdon interested, directly or indirectly, in a financial way, that would clinch everything."

The senator from Mississippi shook his head.

"It's too risky. He's as old fashioned, you know. His about as much idea about modern options, and," he added, with a chuckle, "he's got the Golden Rule. Fact is, he

was good to look on, an inspiration, particularly in Washington.

Following the senator were Miss Langdon and Hope Georgia, leading a retinue of hotel attendants staggering under a large assortment of luggage. Both beautiful girls, they caused a sensation all of their own. Carolina, a different type from the younger, had an austere loveliness denoting pride and little of the quality that has contrived so much to the fame of southern women. Hope Georgia, more girlish and a vivacious blond, was the special pet of her father and usually succeeded in doing with him what she chose.

A real and true young woman, however, had been chosen to take the old hotel back a score of years back to the times when such sights were of daily occurrence. The ancient greatness of the now dingy International lived again.

"Are you, senator?" Glad to welcome you, sir," was the clerk's greeting.

The senator held out his hand. Everybody was his friend.

"Glad to meet you, sir; glad to meet you," he exclaimed. "Must make you acquainted with my daughters. This is Miss Carolina, and this is Miss Hope Georgia Langdon."

The two girls, with their father's idea of courtesy, shook hands with the clerk, who was not at all taken aback by the unexpected honor.

Hope Georgia was thoroughly delighted and every minute, but Carolina looked at the worn and faded walls and furnishings with evident distaste.

"Oh, this is Washington," murmured Hope Georgia ecstatically, clasping her hands and gazing at a vista of artificial palms in a corridor.

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# People Will Talk You Know



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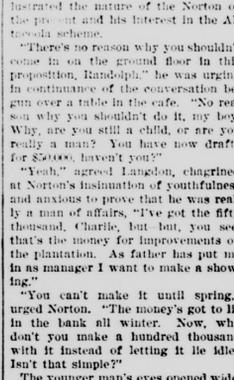
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"Though but few years older than Randolph Langdon, Charles Norton had long exercised strong influence over him because of his wider experience in the world's affairs. Like his father, young Langdon had stayed close to the plantation most of his life, particularly after leaving school, devoting his attention to studying the business of conducting the family's big estate. Norton brought him the atmosphere of the big outside world he yearned to see even as did his sister Carolina, and he imprinted Norton's manners, his dress and mode of speech. The congressman's habit of coughing in Randolph, a subtle compliment, was deeply appreciated by the lad, who unconsciously became a continual adherent of Norton's many virtues to Carolina and to his father, all of which the congressman knew."

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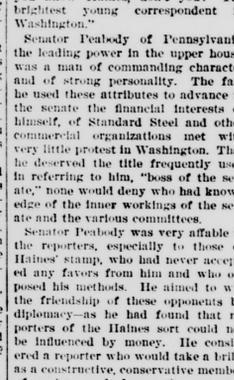
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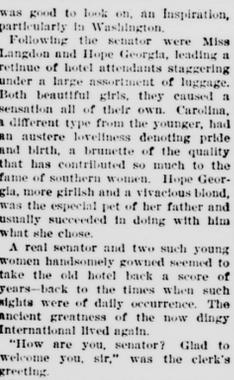
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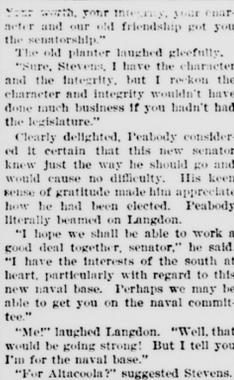
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