A Gentleman From Mississippi

By THOMAS A. WISE

Novelized From the Play by Frederick R. Toombs

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CHAPTER VII.

LANGDON LEARNS OF THINGS UNPLEASANT.

HAINES quickly walked over and touched the southerner on the arm.

"Well, my boy, what can I do for you?" asked the new senator, turning, with a pleasant smile.

"My name is Haines. Senator Stevens was to speak to you about me. I'm the first of the newspaper correspondents come to interview you."

Langdon's familiar smile broadened.

"Well, you don't look as though you'd bite. Reckon I can stand for it. Is it very painful?"

"I hope it won't be, senator," Haines said, feeling instinctively that he was going to like this big, hearty citizen.

"All right, Mr. Haines, just as soon as I've said goodby to my old friend, Colonel Stoneman, I'll be with you."

And to his continued amazement Haines saw the senator walk away with the old Union colonel, slap him on the back, cheer him up and finally bid him goodby after extending a cordial invitation to come around to dinner, meet his daughters and talk over old times.

The antiquated Federal soldier marched away more erect, more brisk, than in years, completely restored to favor in the eyes of the hotel people. Langdon turned to the reporter.

"All right, Mr. Haines; my hands are up. Do your worst. Senator Stevens spoke to me about you; said you were the smartest young newspaper man in Washington. You must come from the south."

Bud shook his head.

"No, just New York," he said.

"Well, that's a promising town," drawled the southerner. "They tell me that's the Vicksburg of the north."

"I suppose you haven't been to New York of late, senator?" suggested the newspaper man.

"Well, I started up there with General Lee once," responded Langdon reminiscently, "but we changed our minds and came back. You may have heard about that trip."

Haines admitted that he had.

"Since that time," went on Langdon, "I've confined my travels to New Orleans and Vicksburg. Ever been in New Orleans about Mardi Gras time, Mr. Haines?"

"Sorry, but I don't believe I have," confessed the reporter reluctantly.

The senator seemed surprised.

"Well, sir, you have something to live for. I'll make it my special business to personally conduct you through one Mardi Gras, with a special understanding, of course, that you don't print anything in the paper. I'm a vestryman in my church, but since misfortune has come upon our state I have to be careful."

Haines searched his brain. He knew of no grave calamity that had happened recently in Mississippi.

"Misfortune?" he questioned.

Senator Langdon nodded.

"Yes, sir, the great old state of Mississippi went prohibition at the last election. I don't know how it happened. We haven't found anybody in the state that says he voted for it, but the fact is a fact. I assure you, Mr. Haines, that prohibition stops at my front door, in Mississippi. So I've been living a quiet life down on my plantation."

"This new life will be a great change for you, then?" suggested the reporter.

"Change! It's revolutionary, sir! When you've expected to spend your old days peacefully in the country, Mr. Haines, suddenly to find that your state has called on you"—

A flavor of sarcasm came into Haines' reply.

"The office seeking the man?" He could not help the slight sneer. Was a man never to admit that he had sought the office? Haines knew only too well of the arduous work necessary to secure nominations for high office in conventions and to win an election to the senate from a state legislature. In almost every case, he knew, the candidate must make a dozen different "deals" to secure votes, might promise the same office to two or three different leaders, force others into line by threats, send a trusted agent to another with a roll of bank bills—the recipient of which would immediately conclude that this candidate was the only man in the state who could save the nation from destruction. Had not Haines seen men who had sold their unsuspecting delegates for cash to the highest bidder rise in the convention hall and in impassioned, dramatic voice exclaim in praise of the buyer, "Gentlemen, it would be a crying shame, a crime against civilization, if the chosen representatives of our grand old state of —— did not go on record in favor of such a man, such a true citizen, such an inspired patriot, as he whose name I am about to mention!" So the reporter may be forgiven for the ironical tinge in his hasty interruption of the new senator's remarks.

Langdon could not suppress a chuckle at the doubting note in Haines' attitude.

"I think the man would be pretty small potatoes who wouldn't seek the office of United States senator, Mr. Haines," he said, "if he could get it. When I was a young man, sir, politics in the south was a career for a gentleman, and I still can't see how he could be better engaged than in the service of his state or his country."

"That's right," agreed the reporter, further impressed by the frank sincerity of the Mississippian.

"The only condition in my mind, Mr. Haines, is that the man should ask himself searchingly whether or not he's competent to give the service. But I seem to be talking a good deal. Suppose we get to the interview. Expect your time is short. We'd better begin."

"I thought we were in the interview?" smiled the correspondent.

"In it!" exclaimed Langdon. "Well, if this is it, it isn't so bad. I see you use a painless method. When I was down in Vicksburg a reporter backed me up in a corner, slipped his hand in his hip pocket and pulled out a list of questions just three feet four inches long.

"He wanted to know what I thought concerning the tariff on aluminium hydrates and how I stood about the opening of the Tento Pu reservation of the Comanche Indians, and what were my ideas about the differential rate of hauls from the Missouri river.

"He was a wonder, that fellow! Kinder out of place on a Mississippi paper. I started to offer him a job, but he was so proud I was afraid he wouldn't accept it. However, it gives you my idea of a reporter."

"If you've been against that, I ought to thank you for talking to me," laughed Haines.

"Then you don't want to know anything about that sort of stuff?" said Langdon, with a hugh sigh of relief.

"No, senator," was the amused reply, "I think generally if I know what sort of a man a man is I can tell a great deal about what he will think on various questions."

Langdon started interestedly.

"You mean, Mr Haines, if you know whether I'm honest or not you can fit

"My hands are up. Do your worst."

me up with a set of views. Is that the idea? Seems to me you're the sort of man I'm looking for."

The other smilingly shook his head.

"I wouldn't dare fix up a United States senator with a set of views," he said. "I only mean that I think what a man is is important. I've been doing Washington for a number of years. I've had an exceptional opportunity to see how politics work. I don't believe in party politics. I don't believe in parties, but I do believe in men."

Langdon nodded approvingly, then a twinkle shone in his eyes.

"We don't believe in parties in Mississippi," he drawled. "We've only one—the Democratic party—and a few kickers."

Haines grinned broadly at this description of southern politics.

"What was this you were saying about national politics?" continued the Mississippian. "I'm a beginner, you know, and I'm always ready to learn."

"This is a new thing—a reporter teaching a senator politics," laughed Haines.

Senator Langdon joined in the merriment.

"I reckon reporters could teach United States senators lots of things, Mr. Haines, if the senators had sense enough to go to school. Now, I come up here on a platform the chief principle of which is the naval base for the gulf. Now, how are we going to put that through? My state wants it."

"You're probably sure it will be a wonderful thing for the country and the south," suggested Haines.

"Of course."

"But why do you think most of the congressmen and senators will vote for it?"

The southerner took off his hat, leaned back and gazed across the lobby thoughtfully.

"Seems to me the benefit to the south and country would be sufficient reason, Mr. Haines," he finally replied.

The newspaper man's brain worked rapidly. Going over the entire conversation with Langdon and what he had seen of him, he was certain that the Mississippian believed what he said—that, moreover, the belief was deeply rooted. His long newspaper training had educated Haines in the ways of men, their actions and mental processes—what naturally to expect from a given set of circumstances. He felt a growing regard, an affection, for this unassuming old man before him, who did not know and probably would be slow to understand the hypocrisy, the cunning trickery of lawmakers who unmake laws.

"Sufficient reason for you, senator," Haines added. "You have not been in politics very long, have you?" he queried dryly.

A wry smile wrinkled the Mississippian's face.

"Been in long enough to learn some unpleasant things I didn't know before." He remembered Martin Sanders.

"Will you allow me to tell you a few more?" asked Haines.

Langdon inclined his head in acquiescence. "Reckon I'd better know the worst and get through with it."

"Well, then, senator, somebody from Nebraska will vote for what you want in the way of the naval base because he'll think then you'll help him demand money to dredge some muddy creek that he has an interest in.

"Somebody in Pennsylvania will vote for it because he owes a grudge and wants to hurt the Philadelphia ship people.

"You'll get the Democrats because it's for the south, but if your bill was for the west coast they might fight it tooth and nail, even with the Japanese fleet cruising dangerously near.

"And the Republicans may vote for it because they see a chance to claim glory and perhaps break the solid south in the next presidential campaign. You catch the idea?"

"What!" exclaimed the astounded Langdon.

"Well, who in hades will vote for it because it's for the good of the United States?" he gasped.

"I believe you will, senator," replied Haines, with ready confidence.

(To be Continued.)

Carelessness Leads to Tangled Titles

Do you know a piece of land for which you received a deed, but which you have not now got? Do you hold a mortgage against some other fellow's property but haven't got the mortgage? Perhaps not. Perhaps so. At least there must be a lot of people in Marshall county who belong to one of these classes, judging by the large number of deeds, mortgages and other papers which, at one time, if not now, were of value, but which now are filed in a case in the office of the county recorder.

The papers do not belong there, but the county is taking charge of them without pay and every once in a while some one who has lost a valuable document of the kinds described comes in, and the missing deed or mortgage, as the case may be, is found in this case.

How did they come there? They were left in the office to be recorded, but after they had been recorded they were never called for.

And then in another box there are perhaps 100 or more documents that have been left in the office but never recorded because the recording fee was never paid. For years, some of them more than a quarter of a century, these papers have laid there. The list includes not only deeds to real estate and real estate mortgages, but also releases of mortgages, promissory notes and an insurance policy or two.

No doubt some of those who own the deeds are in possession of the land covered by the document, but when they come to sell, and have to furnish an abstract, the abstractor is the one they will have to pay for their carelessness before the title can be made good.

This vast mass of papers, representing several thousand in number, simply illustrates the careless business methods of many, many people.

UNION WOMAN VERY ILL.

Mrs. William Watson, Taken Ill at Eldora, Brought Here for Surgery.

Mrs. William Watson, daughter-in-law of E. B. Watson, of Eldora, was brought to the city this morning from Eldora, and removed to St. Thomas hospital, where, as soon as she is able to withstand the ordeal, she will undergo a surgical operation. Mrs. Watson was taken ill while visiting in Eldora. Her father-in-law, husband, and sister-in-law, Mrs. Charles Nold, accompanied her to the city. Mrs. Watson's condition, while serious, is not believed to be critical.

A guaranteed cough remedy is Bees Laxative Cough Syrup. For coughs colds, croup, whooping-cough, hoarseness and all bronchial affections. Best for children because it is quick to relieve and tastes good. Gently laxative. Sold at B. A. Morgan's drug store.

Rare and Antique Books in Library

[By Grace King Haviland]

A part of what must have been a private library dear to the heart of the collector, has recently been given to the public library. Little is known of the history of the books as a library, whether they were the purchases of a single man or an inheritance of the one from whose hands they passed to ours, but the personality of the one who originally gathered the treasures, much may be deducted from the books themselves.

That he was fond of travel the various guide books show; that he was interested in politics, law, history and above all in the classics, the authors and titles of these silent witnesses bear testimony. Not only that he was a lover of books but of fine editions, the handsome solid leather bindings prove. In a hundred years these show the ravages of time both to bindings and paper, (in many instances foxed), but the beauty of a work well done could not be wholly destroyed, and what a contrast they form to the cheap, badly sewed bindings of today!

It is a pleasure to pick up one of these attractive calf-bound volumes to find it James Montgomery's "World Before the Flood," third edition, published in London by Longman, whose house exists today, doing an immense business in both England and America. This bears the date 1814. Another, equally interesting, proves to be from the pen of the famous George Crabbe; sixth edition of his poems published in 1812. It contains "The Parish Register," one of his best known works. We remember that Horace Smith dubbed Crabbe "Pope in worsted stockings," but no less a critic than Lord Jeffreys says he has "that sweet and seldom-sounded chord of lyrical inspiration—which exalts him to a level with the most energetic and inventive poets of his age."

Much less well known is "The Salamandrine," greatly admired in its day, the work of the popular poet and journalist, Charles Mackay, for some years editor-in-chief of the London Illustrated News, and known as the poet of happiness, beauty and hope.

Then we find a copy of Dr. Wolcott's "The Beauties of English Poetry" of date 1804. Dr. Wolcott, better known as Peter Pindar, was an artist with brush as well as pen, but did not illustrate his little volume. He was fond of innovations, defiant of the proprieties after he was ordained clergyman, amusing himself by shooting pigeons on Sundays, and in his writings libeling kings, lords and commons without mercy. Sir Walter Scott characterizes him as "the most unsparing calumniator of his time," but Robert Burns approves him as a "glorious fellow, first favorite of mine."

Another volume bears the title, "Bidcombe Hill," with other rural poems by Rev. Francis Skurray, fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, perpetual curate of Horningsham, whom we find was born in 1774. This volume was published in 1808, and is a first edition embellished by fine steel cuts of the rural scenery. Inside the cover is a beautiful book plate with the name Jesse Curling, the name being found in one or two other books, but nothing could be learned as to the identity of this person. The very oldest book in the collection is a tiny volume yclept "Visions in Verse for the Entertainment and Instruction of Younger Minds," published in 1756 in Fleet street and with an elaborate steel plate for frontispiece, some of the "younger minds" evidently worshipping at the shrine of the Muse of Poetry.

The 1814 edition of Dr. Buchan's New Domestic Medicine edited by Nesbit, with a life of the Scotch physician, is another treasure.

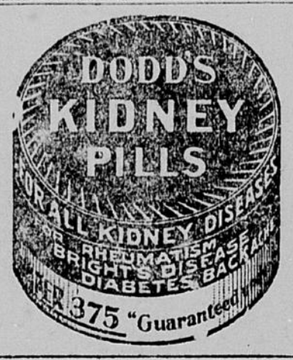
For this work, the author was presented with a gold medal by no less a person than Catherine, Russia. In running thru it, our attention is attracted to a plate of a large electrical machine invented by Lowndes, with an insulated chair very similar to those found in a physician's office today. This is spoken of in the preface as one of the valuable engravings with which the book is enriched.

Space will not permit mentioning all the interesting specimens. There is a history of the civil war in the United States, written in 1863 by an enterprising Englishman, going back to 1816 for causes, but only covering two years of the war period; a small copy of Johnson's dictionary, (too bad it was not published in Fleet street!) beautifully bound in black morocco, with engravings of Dr. Johnson in his study and of his house in Litchfield, containing, so says the preface an abridgement of Lindley Murray's grammar, tables of the most remarkable historical events arranged in order of time, concise notices of the most important geographical studies, a table showing the population of Great Britain and directions for addressing persons of every rank, beside the usual items to be found in a dictionary.

At the top of every page is a proverb beginning with the letter used on the page. Surely a large undertaking to crowd all this between the covers of a little volume less than 24mo. in size.

The Church Liturgy Explained is given a quaint look by having the title written on paper and pasted on the cover.

These volumes, most of which will be placed in the museum as they are valuable from the antiquarian's point of view, were the property of Mr. George Smith and are the gift of Mrs. Frances Smith, his widow, and her daughter, Mrs. James Bricker.



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Harris.

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For Sale—Good milch cow; fresh. 614 West Nevada street.

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For Sale — Two Cyphers 390 egg incubators. 1104 West Church street, Marshalltown, Iowa.

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For Rent—Nice front room modern; gentleman. 9 North [illegible] avenue. Phone 470-Y.

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