

"How about that, Norton?" Peabody asked, turning to the congressman, who had followed Stevens.



"I corroborate all you've said," remarked Norton. "I can state positively that Senator Langdon knew that his

"I'm likely to meet you some time in the Carroll hotel."

money was going into Altacoola land. I will swear to it if necessary," he glared bitterly at Carolina's father, feeling certain that the girl would cling to him as opposed to her parent. Langdon made a threatening move at the congressman.

"I consider my riddance of you mighty cheap at the price," he cried. "Come, come, Langdon," fumed Peabody, "I must get away from here to catch the midnight train. Let's get through with this matter. You must realize that you cannot fight me in Washington. You must know that men call me the 'king of the senate.' I can beat any measure you introduce. I can pass any measure you want passed. I can make you a laughing-stock or a power."

"Why, my friend from Mississippi, I can even have your election to the senate contested, have a committee appointed to investigate the manner of your election, have that committee decide that you bought your way into the honorable body, the senate of the United States, and on the strength of that decision have you forfeit your seat! What a pretty heritage to hand down to posterity such a disgrace will be! Why, the very school children of the future will hear about you as 'Looter Langdon,' and their parents will tell them how particularly degrading it was for a man of your reputation to drag into your dishonest schemes your son, sir, and your daughter. For who will believe that this money was not put in these lands without your consent, without your direction, your order? Did you not sign the mortgage on which this \$50,000 was raised?"

Senator Langdon waved his hand deprecatingly. "I'm learning the underhanded ways of you professional politicians. I'm getting wise. I'm learning 'the game,' so I know you're bluffing me, Peabody. But you forget that the game of poker was invented in Mississippi—my native state."

Pressing a button, Langdon summoned a servant and said: "Send in Mr. Haines. I guess I've got to have a witness for my side."

"It's no bluff," spoke Stevens as Haines entered. "Peabody can and will break you like a pipstem; he's done it to other men before you who— who tried to dispute his power. But I'll try to save you. I'll ask him to be merciful. You are not of any importance in the senate. We do not need to deal with you!"

"Then why do you both spend so much time on me?" asked Langdon innocently. "Why doesn't Peabody go to Philadelphia?"

"Langdon," said Peabody, "you know my control of the senate is no piece of fiction. But I will forgive your obstinacy, even forget it. I!"

"Look here," cried Langdon, "just because I'm a fat man don't think that I can't lose my temper." He stopped and gazed at his two colleagues.

"Now, you two men stay still one moment, and I'll tell you what really

"Because I'm fat don't think I can't lose my temper."

will happen tomorrow," he exploded, "and I'm only a beginner in the game that's your specialty. The naval base is going to Altacoola!"

"Good!" simultaneously cried both Peabody and Stevens. "You're coming

# A Gentleman From Mississippi

By THOMAS A. WISE

Novelized From the Play by Frederick R. Toombs

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in with us?"

"No, I'm not, but I'll pass the bill so that nobody makes a cent, just as I said I would. I'll fool you both and make you both honest for once in spite of your natural dispositions."

Stevens and the Pennsylvaniaian started at each other in disgust.

"Furthermore," continued Langdon, "Altacoola must have the base because I've known for some time that Gulf City was impossible. But some crooked senators would have made money if they'd known it, so they didn't learn it. Altacoola, that proud arm of our great gulf, will have those battleships floating on her broad bosom and the country will be the better off, and so will the sovereign state of Mississippi—God bless it—but neither Senator Peabody nor Pennsylvania nor Senator Stevens of Mississippi is going to be any better because of it. No, and if you men come to my committee room at 12:30 tomorrow noon you'll have a chance to hear how all that's coming about. If you are not there by that time I'll bring in a minority report in favor of Gulf City just to show you that I know how to play the game—this Washington game!"

"Come, let's go. We can do nothing with him," said Peabody to the senator from Mississippi.

"Well, senator, in the name of goodness, what are you going to do? How can you win for Altacoola without letting these grafters make money out of it?" asked Haines in astonishment as the other two walked away. "What are you going to do at 12:30 tomorrow?"

Langdon turned to him and rolled his eyes toward the ceiling despairingly.

"I'm blamed if I know!" he exclaimed.

## CHAPTER XXII.

LOBBYISTS—AND ONE IN PARTICULAR.

WASHINGTON HAS KNOWN MANY lobbyists in its time, and it keeps on knowing them. The striking increase in legislation that aims to restrict unlawful or improper practices in business, the awakening of the public conscience, has caused a greater demand than ever for influence at the national capital, for these restrictive measures must be either killed or emasculated to a point of uselessness by that process which is the salvation of many a corrupt manipulator, the process of amendment.

Predatory corporations, predatory business associations of different sorts and predatory individuals have their representatives on the field at Washington to ward off attack by any means that brains can devise or money procure and to obtain desired favors at a cost that will leave a profitable balance for the purchaser. When commercial tricksters, believing in the lobbyist's favorite maxim, "The People Forget," feel that they have outlived the latest reform movement and see "the good old days" returning, the professional politicians introduce a few reform measures themselves, most stringent measures. They push these measures ahead until somebody pays up, then the bills die. The lobbyist knows all about these "strike" bills, but does not frown on them. No, no. Perhaps he helped draw up one of these bills so that, with the aid of his inside knowledge of his employer's business, the measure is made to give a greater scare than might otherwise have resulted. The bigger the scare the bigger the fund advanced, of course, for the lobbyist to handle. All this also helps the lobbyist to secure and retain employment.

Not all the Washington lobbyists are outside of congress. The senator or congressman has unequalled facilities for oiling or blocking the course of a bill. Sometimes he confines himself to the interests of his own clients, whoever they may be. But sometimes he notices a bill that promises to be a pretty good thing for the client of some other member if it passes. Then he begins to fight this bill so actively that he must be "let in on the deal" himself. This is very annoying to the other member, but the experience is worth something. He has learned the value of observing other people's legislation.

The outsiders (members of the "third house") and the insiders have a bond of freemasonry uniting them; they exchange information as to what members of both houses can be "reached," how they can be "got to" (through whom) and how much they want. This information is carefully tabulated, and now prices for passing or defeating legislation can be quoted to interested parties just as the price of a carload of pork can be ascertained at a given time and place. Perhaps it is this system that leads grafting members of short experience to wonder how knowledge of their taking what is termed "the sugar" got out and became known to their associates. Did they not have pledge of absolute secrecy? Yes, but the purchaser never intended to keep the information from those of his kind. Lobbyists must be honest with each other.

Not all lobbyists are men. The woman legislative agent has been known to occupy an important position in Washington, and she does yet. She is hard to detect and frequently more unprincipled than the men similarly en-

gaged, if that is possible.

A woman with a measure of social standing would naturally prove the most successful as a lobbyist in Washington because of the opportunities her position would afford her to meet people of prominence. And just such a one was Mrs. Cora Spangler, with whom the Langdons had been thrown in contact quite intimately since their arrival at the capital.

Pretty and vivacious, Mrs. Spangler bore her thirty-seven years with uncommon ease, aided possibly by her makeup box and the modiste. Her dinners and receptions were attended by people of acknowledged standing. Always a lavish spender of money, this was explained as possible because of a fortune left her by her late husband, Congressman Spangler of Pennsylvania. That this "fortune" had consisted largely of stock and bonds of a bankrupt copper smelting plant in Michigan remained unknown, except to her husband's family, one or two of her own relatives and Senator Peabody, who, coming from Pennsylvania, had known her husband intimately.

He it was who had suggested to her that she might make money easily by cultivating the acquaintance of the new members of both houses and their families, exerting her influence in various "perfectly legitimate ways," he argued, for or against matters pending in legislation. The Standard Steel corporation kept Mrs. Spangler well supplied with funds deposited monthly to her account in a Philadelphia trust company.

She avoided suspicion by reason of her sex and her many acquaintances of undisputed rank. Senator Peabody was never invited to her home, had never attended a single dinner, reception or musicale she had given, all of which was a part of the policy they had mutually agreed on to deaden any suspicion that might some time arise as to her relation to the Standard Steel company. It was well known that Peabody had been put into the senate by Standard Steel to look after its interests.

He had found Mrs. Spangler chiefly valuable thus far as a source of information regarding the members of congress, which she obtained largely from their families. He was thus able to gain an idea of their associations, their particular interests and their aspirations in coming to congress, which proved of much use to him in forming and promoting acquaintances, all for the glory of Standard Steel.

Senator Holcomb of Missouri told Mrs. Spangler at an afternoon tea confidentially that he was going to vote against the ship subsidy bill. Senator Peabody was informed of this two hours later by a note written in cipher.

When the vote was called two days later Senator Holcomb voted for the bill. Standard Steel supplies steel for ocean liners, and their building must be encouraged.

Mrs. Windsor, wife of Congressman Windsor of Indiana, remarked to Mrs. Spangler at a reception that she was "so glad Jimmie is going to do something for us women at last. He says we ought to get silk gowns ever so much cheaper next year."

Jimmie Windsor was a member of the house committee on ways and means and was busily engaged in the matter of tariff revision. When President Anders of the Federal Silk company heard from Senator Peabody that Windsor favored lowering the tariff on silk a way was found to convince the congressman that the American silk industry was a weakling and many investors would suffer if the foreign goods should be admitted any cheaper than at present.

President Anders would be willing to do Senator Peabody a favor some day.

Sometimes Cora Spangler shuddered at the thought of what would become of her if she should make some slip, some fatal error, and be discovered to her friends as a betrayer of confidences for money. A secret agent of Standard Steel! What a newspaper story she would make—"Society Favorite a Paid Spy"; "Woman Lobbyist Flees Capital." The sensational headlines flitted through her mind. Then she would grit her teeth and dig her finger nails into her palms. She had to have money to carry on the life she loved so well. She must continue as she had begun. After all, she reasoned, nothing definite could ever be proved regarding the past. Let the future care for itself. She might marry again and free herself from this mode of life, who knows?

So reasoned Cora Spangler for the hundredth time during the last two years as she sat in her boudoir at her

home. She had spent part of the day with Carolina and Hope Langdon and in the evening had attended the musicale at their house. But she had been forced to leave early owing to a severe headache. Now, after an hour or two of rest, she felt better and was about to retire. Suddenly the telephone bell rang at a writing table near a window. She had two telephones, one in the lower hall and one in her boudoir—to save walking downstairs unnecessarily, she explained to her woman friends. But the number of this upstairs telephone was not in the public book. It had a private number, known to but two people except herself.

Taking down the receiver, she asked in low voice, "Hello, who is it?"

"Mr. Wall."

It was the name Senator Peabody used in telephone conversation with her.

"Yes, congressman," she responded. She always said "Yes, congressman," in replying to "Mr. Wall," a prearranged manner of indicating that he was talking to the desired person.

"I will need your services tomorrow," Senator Peabody said, "on a very important matter, I am afraid. Decline any engagements and hold yourself in readiness."

"Yes."

"I may send my friend S. to explain things at 10:30 in the morning. If he does not arrive at that time, telephone me at 10:35 sharp. You know where. Understand? I have put off going to Philadelphia tonight."

"Yes."

"That is all; goodbye."

"Something very important," she murmured nervously as she turned from the desk.

"I don't like his tone of voice; sounds strained and worried—something unusual for the cold, stinty gentleman from Pennsylvania. And his 'friend S.' of course, means Stevens! Great heavens, then Stevens must now have knowledge of my—my—business!"

She calmed herself and straightened a dainty, slender finger against her cheek.

"It must be something about that naval base bill, I'm sure. That's been worrying Peabody all session," she mused as she pressed a button to summon her maid.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

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