The Reformer

By CHARLES M. SHELDON,

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"I will arrange to have my things taken over to Barton's. I am going to stay with him until I arrange for my permanent quarters."

He left the room and went upstairs, where he busied himself with packing the few possessions he had brought home with him from abroad. During it all his lightly imaginative and even poetical nature took account of the pensive and matter of fact way in which he was taking leave of the home which he was born and of the home to which he had been restored. There had been no melodramatic distinctions of him for his father, although he knew him well enough to know that the life he had chosen, despite contempt in his father's lifelong wishes, peculiarly savage him outside the immediate thought, so far as Rufus Gordon was concerned. The impossibility of staying in a home with all its lack of disharmonies to the greatest rule of life was later with the renewal of John Gordon absolutely imperative. That this renewal was taking place without the interest upon people of strength made the real action no less painful.

When he finally came downstairs, he found a maid (by name). At first he felt strongly opposed. Afterward he felt relieved. He had chosen his life, as he had said, and his choice had seriously begun. As he laid his hand on the door to open it the consciousness of his uncertainty regarding Luella Marsh swept out of his thought over the sense that he was actually bidding goodby to the home he had known for thirty years. Would this woman, he loved as never in all his life before, would she choose the life he had chosen? She was rich, or her father was. She was gifted, an aristocrat by birth and training, a woman of strong and original personality, with many impulses not yet known even to John Gordon. He was almost startled at the sudden realization that he was in ignorance concerning her actual character so far as the present crisis was concerned. Yet he knew that according to her answer now would depend the shaping of his own future. They had become engaged while he was in his last year at the university. Then he had gone abroad, and their correspondence had evidently deepened their respect and affection. He had written her of his religious experience—not in detail, but her answers had apparently satisfied him. His choices, ambitions, longing for service, had all followed so quickly on the event of his religious crisis that he had not ventured to say to her in letters what he had begun to experience as a profound conviction. Every moment now, therefore, he felt with growing astonishment confronted him with an unknown problem, although the woman in all the world to him was at the heart of all that was great and possible.

He opened the door and stepped out. The roar of the city smote his senses with new meaning as he went down the steps and entered the stream of the city's life. He [illegible] at once to Luella Marsh. "I believe it was to be for him, everyone was not bearable. Hitherto he had emphasized his own love for me. Therefore he must know to what extent she loved him, for he must [illegible] become a part of the [illegible] the woman who [illegible] with him must love [illegible] as—himself. The [illegible] one of them now. [illegible] him as such, or would [illegible] traditional selfishness [illegible]

[illegible] Gordon, as he turned his [illegible] house, faced his [illegible] as the human current bore him on, his destiny irrevocably woven into his own.

CHAPTER II.

"I thought [illegible] and [illegible] Luella?"

[illegible] question [illegible] at [illegible] yet. He had [illegible] Luella [illegible] for [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] it is the [illegible] her head toward her lover.

"I think so—yes," she said slowly.

"In other words, you mean no," said John Gordon, smiling slowly.

Luella Marsh returned the smile and then became instantly grave again.

"I would like to ask you a few more questions. May I?"

"Of course."

"Then I don't know that I am quite clear in my mind as to your exact reasons for leaving your own home. Will you try to make me understand that?"

"Luella"— He paused, and for the first time a fear grew upon him that he was going to fail to make her understand the real crisis in his life. Was this the attitude of the woman who could prove to be the companion he would need? Would she hesitate and demand all these proofs and reasons, all those explanations? And yet he felt the need of her. She had thus far satisfied him, and as he faced her now there was only one prayer in his heart, and that was that she would finally cast in her lot with his and say: "Whose thou goest I will go. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

He began his explanation while Luella leaned her chin on her hand and watched him with deepening seriousness.

"I am thirty years old. From the time of my birth I have been used to every luxury. I have enjoyed all the elegant comforts of a rich, exclusive, proud family. My father's ambition, as you know, has always been the ambition of a man who has lived a life as a man from the common people as if he had been born in some other world. I have grown up in this atmosphere. I have known as little of the people and their real life as my father. Up to the time of my religious experience I cared as little for the people as I knew about them. Since that experience my whole object in living has changed. I find myself longing to know the people as much as I already love them. It is not enough that I love them at a distance. I must know from close personal experience their daily life. As soon as possible I must partake of their sorrows, their privations, their misery. Do not answer me yet," John Gordon eagerly restrained a movement on Luella's part to interrupt with a word. "Why should I not do this, I who have all my life tasted the luxury of soft and easy physical living? There is only one thing for me to do if I accomplish my life's ambition now, and that is to leave the surroundings that are so completely opposed to all the life of the people I have come to love in order that I may know, if possible, as well as love, with intelligent power to help."

"And you ask me to leave my home as you leave yours?"

She did not look at him while asking the question, but in the silence that followed before he replied she turned her face full toward him. His answer came very calmly, but his voice in spite of him trembled a little.

"The woman who becomes my wife will make her home with me. We shall share alike whatever the future contains."

It was perhaps at this moment that Luella Marsh had her first glimpse into John Gordon's real character. She had never given him credit for much imagination or poetic feeling. In reality he had a great deal of both. But she did not change her position of serious thoughtfulness. She only turned her head a little as she said:

"Where do you intend to make your home? Will you tell me in detail?"

"I have not fully decided, probably in Hope House."

"And you expect me to live with you there?"

"If you marry me, yes." John Gordon spoke with effort. His fear had grown with every word she uttered, with every new question she put to him.

"I will never"— she began and rose to her feet. Gordon rose instantly.

"Wait a moment!" She sat down and motioned him to be seated. "Wait! I want to think awhile."

She put her hands over her face, and John Gordon watched and waited. His heart was hungry for her love, but his soul trembled for what he thought was to be her decision. As the minutes went by and she still made no motion his conviction deepened that his knowledge of her character and motives was superficial. All that he really knew was to some degree the strength of her personality. He knew she could not be moved by pleading. If she would not come with him out of a love that pleaded his own cause, John Gordon knew that no other motive would prevail.

When she finally lifted her head, she put her hands behind her and looked full and frank into his face. But what she said surprised him at first until he saw its bearing on her final answer.

"You used the word 'people' a good many times in what you said about your reasons for leaving your father's house. Tell me what you mean by it."

"By the word?" He was doubtful as to her meaning.

"Yes, just what do you mean by saying you are moved by a love for the people?"

"I mean the masses, the multitudes, the people, the humanity that works with its hands for a living, the humanity that toils at the furnace and the loom and the machine, the humanity that lives on daily wages and lives to produce the things that give persons like you and me pleasure, the things we can not have for our luxurious lives, Luella!" John Gordon spoke for the first time with the same passion he had used in the interview with his father, a passion that aroused the [illegible] of his reluctant manhood.

"What have we known or cared for humanity? Our days have been wasted in useless and foolish gratification of our senses, while these, our brothers and sisters, have been not only neglected by us, but actually robbed. Of what value are our boasted culture, our costly houses, our fine silks, our exquisite dinners, our fastidious habits, if in the refinement of a civilization that is veneered selfishness we play our little plays like children and never wake to the power of usefulness as grownup men and women who have giants' work to do for the weak and less fortunate?"

Luella Marsh listened in genuine surprise. This was another new phase of her lover's character. But there were things said by him that angered her, although while John Gordon was talking she was saying to herself, "I did not know he had any gifts as a speaker that would bear developing."

Looking up at him, noting the flush of feeling on his generally pale face, she spoke the first impulsive thought roused by what he said.

"Do you really classify lives like yours and mine as 'useless?' Are the people, then, the only useful beings? Or is it true that the people as you have defined them are such a needy and suffering quantity as you say? Are they not as selfish in their way as we are in ours?"

He heard her in surprise. It was quickly becoming more clear to each of them that they had much to learn of each other's personality. Still, he was resolved not to argue matters. He had come with one clear, simple purpose in his mind. He did not wish to have it obscured or put into second place. If Luella Marsh would go with him into the life he had chosen, he knew enough of her to feel certain that both their lives would be strengthened and beautified; that if she once cast in her lot with him she would never look back, but would go on clear to the end and bear all things with growing joy and peace. If she decided to reject him and his career because of doubts in it that were unknown or questionable, then he had no calm answer to his own heart as to the result on himself except to say that his path would be a lonely one. But he was of determination not to leave the matter unsettled. They were not children, but grown man and woman, and should be able to know their own minds.

"Luella, I did not come here to argue with you"—he spoke with great gentleness in reply to her questions—"I want you. I love you. That means I would not hide one particle of the truth from you. If you marry me, it will be a life of burden bearing. It will be a future full of pain in many ways, it will mean very largely a total breaking away from all the soft, easy, pleasant social relations we have both known since we were born. All this is true. I would not try to soften it for you. But it will be a joyful life, a life of satisfaction, a life full of the consciousness of helping to make a better world, of doing something besides playing, Luella!" He forgot in his feeling what he had said ever since he knew her, that she could not be moved by pleading, and, rising suddenly, he went over and kneeled beside her. "Luella! Tell me this simply: Do you love me enough to share the unknown future with me? Will you not come with me, trusting in our love for each other, to bear us over hard places and explain new experiences as fast as they become real to us?"

She trembled and hesitated. She had but to reach out her hand and put it in John Gordon's and say one word. She did not move nor speak for almost a minute. Then she said, looking straight in front of her:

"Must I give an answer now?"

"Luella, you have already given me answer! You have promised to be my wife!" The words were spoken by him in a moment of great longing as he saw her indecision and foresaw her inevitable answer.

Her eyes darkened a little.

"I never promised to be the wife of"—

"The wife of"— John Gordon repeated after a silence so long that its suspense was not bearable to him.

"I hardly know how to finish!"— She uttered a short laugh, and John Gordon rose at once to his feet. "I can never live in Hope House," she added in a low tone.

"Is that your answer, then?" He stood looking at her calmly, but she did not look up.

"Yes," she finally replied.

"Then we must go our separate ways, so help us God!" he exclaimed in a sudden burst of passion, for his heart was hot within him.

He paused a moment irresolutely and then started to go out. She had not made any motion nor lifted her head to look at him. At the door he turned for an instant and saw, to his astonishment, that her proud head lay on her arms, which were outstretched on the table near which she had been sitting.

He was back by her side, kneeling again and calling her name. When she lifted her head, there were tears on her glowing cheeks.

"John, I cannot bear to have it so!"

"Then do you love me, Luella, enough to share all with me?" he cried.

"Yes, I love you, John," she said slowly. But even as she said it she drew back from him a little. "At the same time I do not see why it is necessary to live at Hope House."

"Not necessarily there, but somewhere among the people. Luella, do you not understand my reasons for wanting to know the people?"

"I am not sure," she replied in a troubled tone, and then suddenly she turned away from him and put her head down on her arms again.

John Gordon rose and walked up and down the room. Twice as he went past the table he paused irresolutely, his hand at a throat, his heart uncertain. The third time he stopped, with a decision in his manner, and placed his hand on her head.

"I do not ask you to marry me unless you can trust everything to me. If you are not able to go without any fear or doubt, 'I will go with you in all the way you have chosen.' I do not, I cannot, plead with you, Luella. Is that asking too much, dear? Can the man who loves you ask any less?"

"No, no, he can ask no less! But, John, I fear to go"— She had raised her head and was looking at him with more agitation than he had ever known her to show. "I am not certain that I am fitted, that I am adapted, for such a life. I have a horror of the places—the—I do not love the people, John, as you say you do. Am I to blame for that?"

She asked the question almost timidly, but nothing could soften the hardness of the statement to him. He did not yet see that the one thing that kept her from coming to him without any questions was her lack of religious experience. She did not love the people because all her life had been so far devoted to a love of the things that had surrounded her social position.

"No, I do not think you are to blame. But, oh, Luella, could you not learn to love them? Could you not come with me and let the future"—

"I could not pretend," she began, with a return of her proud attitude.

"I do not ask you to pretend. If you love me, will not all the rest be possible?"

She was silent a moment. Then suddenly she looked up and said frankly:

"I would not be true to you if I kept anything back. I not only do not love the people as you do, but I do not see why you should sacrifice your life to them, as you plan to do. I cannot see that you will accomplish anything."

"And is accomplishment the great and only thing? Is there nothing in being or in striving regardless of accomplishment? But I cannot argue the matter. If you love me enough, Luella, all the rest will follow; if you don't, it will all be useless to you."

She still looked at him with the uncertain, disturbed air that had marked her manner when he first began to talk to her, only the look had deepened into an expression of doubt and painful unrest.

"I do not see the need of all you plan to do. I do not see the need," she said slowly.

"You would not have to see that if you only loved me," he replied in a low tone, and there was a hopelessness in it that had not been present before. He stood looking at her, and suddenly he added:

"Let us be entirely frank, Luella, that we may not misunderstand. You shrink from the thought of living in every minute, could not resist an admiration for his great shrewdness and insight. And all the time he was blocking out the page Gordon thrilled at the vision opened up of what might be done for the people and by them if once a daily that was really theirs lived its life for theirs.

"Of course I understand," Harris had at last added, "that all this will mean a tremendous amount of work. That is what a daily paper means to everybody connected with it. But it need not mean that you would have to give up residence in Hope House. In fact, it would be better to continue your actual touch with the district so as to be able to give what you write for the paper color. I also realize that you have need of money to carry out some of these plans. That is the reason I stand prepared to make this offer. If you will undertake this work, I will pay you $500 a month and in addition help carry out some of these ideas where money is needed. I don't care to say just how much I'll give. Time enough for that when we get to it."

He stopped abruptly, and then, to the surprise of the two friends, he suddenly rose and said as he came up to the table and took his hat, which he had laid down there:

"Don't answer now. Give it consideration. Whatever you choose to arrange with Barton will be satisfactory. Barton, you'd better get out to Colorado for a month, as I advised. Knowles can manage very well for awhile longer. Good night."

He walked out, and Barton and Gordon sat silent for a moment.

"Of course he heard what you said about the paper having no influence with the best people," said Barton, with a chuckle.

"I believe he did, but his manner did not betray it except once."

"Yes, I noticed that. Oh, the old man would give his long white hand to possess real influence. That's his ambition, my boy. All he said about the boulevard and the slum was pure nonsense. He doesn't believe it any more than I do."

"I believe it, though. He spoke the truth whether he meant to or not."

"What difference?" David Barton spoke carelessly. "But this proposition, John," he added, keenly watching Gordon. "How about that, eh? The opening, the leverage, the money. Wait a minute. This confounded cough is going to get me again."

He went into the other room this time, and his coughing spell lasted so long that Gordon was alarmed. He went in where his friend was sitting with his head down between his knees, his whole body racked with the effort, and when it was over he still maintained the same position until Gordon remonstrated with him.

"David, you're in no condition to go on with work. You're killing yourself on the News. I had no idea you had such a cough. How long have you been this way?"

"The average limit of usefulness on the News," said David Barton as he lifted up his head, "is less than ten years from the time of beginning. I've been with it now going on six. The rule in a daily paper is, no old men in any department. If you see an old man anywhere around the office, he's a visitor or a stranger. Modern journalism is a hard killer. I'm just one of the fools caught between the rollers. See? It's like this. Harris prizes me because I know how. But when I once let go he knows he can get another fool to take my place. Food for the lion. Three cheers for the press! It's the great agency of civilization. It's the price life takes. It's the look out! Here I go again!"

He put his head down and coughed so long and violently that at the end

"I am prepared to make you a proposition."

of it John Gordon found himself on his knees by the side of his friend holding his head and now thoroughly alarmed.

"Why, this can't go on, David," he expostulated.

"Yes, it can apparently. At least it seems to go on quite easily."

"But you'll simply commit suicide if you don't listen to reason and quit all work for at least six months."

"Can't do it. Got too much at stake." Barton answered. He rose, and, going into an adjoining room, he took some medicine, bathed his face and came out looking so much better that John Gordon was amazed.

"Only a trifling little cough, John. It's not on my lungs. Just a throat trouble. I got caught out in the rain down near Hope House the other night and didn't have a chance to steal

Perhaps in all his life he had never felt so lonely as at that moment. The consciousness that his father and sister and now the woman who had promised to be his wife had repudiated his life smote him with a sense of personal abandonment that was keen and searching.

For a moment he felt so completely alone that he let go of every motive for action. The city and the overwhelming thought of its misery and sin and selfishness enraged him. "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!" he cried out, and nothing at that moment would have saved John Gordon except the fact that what he had mentioned to his father and sister and Luella as his religious experience was the greatest fact so far in his career. As he stood still there at the foot of the steps gradually his spirit grew calmer. The consciousness of God in his life grew stronger. The purpose of his ambition cleared. And after a little while he started on, knowing that his life work would not be changed in its main intent by anything that had so far happened. Only as he went on he also knew that he could not and would not be the same man and do the same things in some parts of his earthly vision as if Luella Marsh had decided to walk with him in the way. It was also quite clear to him that without being able to give a good reason for it he was not closing the chapter with Luella yet. He certainly entertained the idea of her still coming into his life. It was not from his interview with her that he drew any such hope. But he knew that he did not yet consider her action as final, or possibly it was his own action that was not final.

He stopped at a corner, and the sight of a street name on a car going by decided his next movement.

"I'll go and take tea at Hope House," he said to himself, and took the car, noting, by the time, that he would reach the house just as the little family of residents were in the habit of sitting down to their evening meal.

Hope House stood in the midst of its desert of tenements and its corner saloons and vaudeville halls like an oasis of refuge and strength. Saloons to right and left and front and rear, with piles of brick and wood and rubbish flung together in chaotic, tumbled heaps, with openings for human beings who streamed in and out of court and alley and doorway or sat in pallid, huddled masses on the stoops or curbing formed the frame in which Hope House was set, unique and alone.

John Gordon left the car one block from Hope House and walked down past five saloons in the block until he came to the arched entrance of the house. Going into the little court, he breathed a sigh of relief at the sight of the familiar oleander tubs that stood against the outer wall of the court, and marveled at their ability to blossom with such freshness in such surrounding.

"If oleanders ever had any fragrance in this part of the city, they must almost smell of beer and sewer gas," he said to himself as he went on into the broad hall that opened on the court. He was by no means a stranger to Hope House. Since his return from abroad he had been a frequent visitor and had been welcomed with that inner welcome that springs from well known common purposes.

"You are just in time!" called out a quiet but cheerful voice as John Gordon stepped into the doorway of the dining hall. "Miss Manning is absent. You may take her seat by me."

"I count myself fortunate," John Gordon replied as he took the seat, returning the greetings of those at the table.

"We were talking about you," said the head of the house, with her quiet but earnest manner.

Praye

To Be Releas
From Life.

Almost Insane F
Nervousness.

Dr. Miles' Nervine
Salvation.

Do you enjoy life, or do you sleep so that you are more tired when you than when you go to bed? Is your failing, are you getting thin; does your ache, back ache, eyes tire easily? The symptoms of a nervous disorder should be promptly treated or faint mental and physical nervousness, fears and loss of control will lead to or mental irresponsibility. Strengthen nerves with Dr. Miles' Nervine. It supplies nerve force and vitality to the ened system, bringing sleep, appe health.

"I was almost insane with nervous Could not eat or sleep. Could see no in life; indeed, life was a burden and I even prayed God to release it. Three doctors did all they could all to no purpose. I was in despair getting better when I saw the ad of Dr. Miles' Restorative Nervine bottle, commenced taking it as I was advice. I followed it carefully, taking Nervine, Restorative Tonic, and Liver Pills. These remedies wrought vation. It is some months since I taking the Tonic but I keep the house all the time, as it is a home do not feel safe without. If any should doubt the truth of this state them write to me and I will do drive all doubt from their minds." MABEL REDDER, La Jose, Pa.

All druggists sell and guarantee the Dr. Miles' Remedies. Send for on Nervous and Heart Diseases, Dr. Miles Medical Co., Elkhart, Ind.

"I'm sorry to interrupt the tion," replied John Gordon.

"No interruption, we are glad you came in, for you only person who can answer tion Mr. Ford just asked."

"Rather a personal question Gordon," said Ford, a student the university, who was a several months' standing. "The tion I asked Miss Andrews was 'What is Mr. Gordon going to do he possibly come in here with

John Gordon did not answer question at once. He knew plete freedom of the social of Hope House, especially times, and understood well lence would not be misconstrued discourtesy.

He looked around the cheerful nest, friendly faces at the his gaze included, as it had before, the room itself, with dark wainscoting, its few portraits, its plain but attractive likeness; but, as on every sion, his look finally came face of the head of the table was the genius of the place.

Grace Andrews was sixth year. At the time John first met her at Hope House been in charge of the settlement twelve years. Twelve years ciation with desperate human lems such as those that surrounded the people themselves had left face marks of that humanity calmness that all great who have loved the people. Andrews did not impress visitors as being great in sense, it was because the face spoke of a quiet many people superficially with meekness, but do not an element of power. The Hope House understood all the oldest residents underwent ter than the youngest, and unquestioned reverence for ness of Grace Andrews who had less knowledge of

It was with a deepening ness of what this woman her wonderful life and influence

John Gordon came into He had met her during his career when some special taken him down to Hope House one of the first places he his return from abroad. dining room with its presided over by that that dominated the entire was at that first meeting frankly told her and something of his religious and its bearing on his was that frank confidence up to the question by Ford.

"Well?" Miss Andrews as John Gordon seemed after looking at her so ing his silence the conversation table had gone on in a natural fashion. Every one always gave every one freedom for his personality one felt at all disturbed Gordon did not reply student's query. They their talk when he spoke.

"I've been thinking of count it an honor to be family." He spoke to but included all the table fare. "I'm still in some ing my future. I am enough interested in know that I have left I am just at present permanent place of abode would be willing to take

He spoke somewhat without a certain seriousness all seemed to understand drews glanced at him with a real tone of

"We would not only welcome, Mr. Gordon, selves fortunate to have

TO BE CONTINUED.

The plague of '92—La Grippe
The destroyer of LaGrippe