The Reformer

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"We all think you have renewed your youth, Miss Andrews," Gordon spoke, and Ford led off a pleasant ripple of applause by saying "Hear! Hear!"

"Thank you all." The head of the house seemed genuinely embarrassed and looked more interesting than ever on account of it. "At this rate another $100,000 gift would put me back in my teens."

She spoke lightly, and her blue eyes filled with wonderful light, so beautiful in its expression of joy over the new opportunity to help suffering humanity that the whole company was affected by it, and for the first time since coming to Hope House John Gordon was asking himself whether Miss Andrews had ever had a romance in her life.

The question went without an answer, indeed it was not much more than a vague suggestion prompted by Miss Andrews' appearance during the evening of that eventful day, and the next moment Gordon was busy talking over the innumerable plans and projects eagerly discussed at the table for using to best advantage the wonderful gift from the old sea captain's widow.

"It all comes back to parks and playgrounds," was Miss Andrews' summing up when they had all had their say about the disposal of the money. "My heart has ached long enough at the sight of childhood's misery. We can lessen its duration even if we cannot remove its cause. I know some of you people have got model tenements on the brain. That's all right and good enough, but it's not the end and aim of our work entirely. Let us give starved nature a chance at nature itself. The first hundred thousand for breathing spaces, flowers, water, grass, trees; the next for buildings, additions to Hope House—what you will."

So the next day Gordon and Ford, with Miss Andrews and Miss Hammond, who, next to Miss Andrews, had been the longest at Hope House, sat down to make a definite and positive plan for the transformation of the burned out district into an oasis for the desert of Bowen street that still swarmed with wretched and desperate humanity.

The evening that was marked by Hope House as a turning in its affairs large enough to be called a crisis Mrs. Constance Penrose was having a sharp interview with her nephew, Archie Penrose.

"You are your own master of course," Mrs. Penrose was saying to her nephew, who lounged carelessly in one of the bow windows of the drawing room, "but at the rate you are going you will soon exhaust your resources. You are a spendthrift not only of your money, but of your health, which is worth more than money."

"Oh, that's all right, Aunt Constance," Archie answered, yawning. "I know when to stop."

"Every gambler has said the same thing."

"I'm no gambler, aunt."

"You are. You stake your reputation and the good name of the family every time you put your health and money up against the world, the flesh and the devil. If you have no respect for your own name you ought to have some for mine."

"What have I done to catch all this?" Archie was annoyed and also a little afraid. There was one person in the world who had the power to stir fear in him and that person was his Aunt Constance.

"You have never done anything. What have you ever done, Archie Penrose, to dignify or ennoble the name you bear? To your father's credit, if he was a money grubber he at least had a business. He actually did something besides hunt for pleasure all the time. You—you have no business. You waste every energy God gave you in senseless expenditure of time and means. And in addition to all the rest, you are fool enough to think Luella Marsh will be the wife of the most useless man in the city."

"If I am a fool to think it am I a fool to wish for it?"

Mrs. Penrose stared.

"You don't mean to say you actually love Luella?"

"I do. I love her with all my soul."

"That's not saying much. Your soul has been reduced to the smallest common denominator."

"Aunt Constance!" The young man came out from the bow window and stood in front of her, his hands clinched and his eyes angrily blazing. "What right have you to talk so to me? How big is your own soul? What do you ever do for anybody but yourself? When it comes to wasting energy, who wastes more than you in what you call senseless ways? I may be useless and all that, but I don't toady to a lot of good for nothings like the Fourneys and the Carlisles and the Cranstons just to get into Washington circles next season." He was treading on dangerous ground now, for he had touched his aunt's real weakness as a society woman, and she was in the mood to be deeply angered at what he said. But he went on recklessly, and before he finished Mrs. Penrose had settled back again into the easy, careless attitude habitual with her.

"I know what you invited the Fourneys here for the other night when that man Henry and Gordon got off their stuff about the slums. But all that is of no account to me. You have no business to interfere with my affairs with Luella. That's my own business. If I can get her consent, I am going to marry her."

"It is kind of you to get her consent, Archie," his aunt said, with quiet irony.

"You have no right to interfere," he said sullenly. "I don't mind saying I love her, and I am going to have her for my wife if it is possible."

"She will never have you. She loves a far better man than you ever can be, Archie Penrose."

"Who? John Gordon? He's a crank. Luella has broken with him."

"Yes, her eyes looked it the other night. Did you see how her eyes followed Gordon all the evening?"

Penrose was in a torture of jealousy. He almost cried:

"No, she didn't! I tell you she's broken with him."

"If she has, she will never marry you. Luella Marsh has too much sense to put her life into the hands of a man who never lifted his finger to help make a better world."

"You have set me the example by your own conduct," the young man sneered feebly. He walked back into the bow window and sullenly turned his back on his aunt.

"You're right, Archie," she replied calmly. "It's practically a case of pot and kettle. One is as black as the other. The guilt of nearly all unjust and wretched conditions in this city can without doubt be laid at the door of us rich people, who have the power that wealth can use, and use it for our ambitions. It is probably true that the judgment day will rightly condemn us as the cause of most of the misery Grace Andrews and John Gordon are living to relieve. We have it absolutely in our power to change political and social conditions that create nearly all the human wrongs that exist in society, and instead of exercising that great privilege we go our ways with colossal egotism and monstrous selfishness, shirking all duties and burdens of citizenship and flinging our money into riotous and demoralizing luxury of life that inflames the passions of the poor and keeps constantly in sight the vast inequality of human existence.

"It is a fact, Archie, that we rich people, with a few noble exceptions so rare as to excite constant newspaper comment, are as a class the cause of practically all the misery of the city. We have no place for service in our programme of life. We neither know nor care for the brotherhood. We exist for our own pleasure. And I suppose it will be no more than fair that in the other world we shall long for a drop of water to cool our tongues while the Lazarus we despised here shall recline in Abraham's bosom. Do you ever think, Archie, of the time coming when things are going to be evened up, when the first shall be last and the last first? Of course God will never permit all this human injustice to continue forever, and he will see to it that our earthly selfishness shall some time or other face some kind of a judgment."

Archie turned around and laughed. It was a laugh that made his aunt shudder. It was the laugh of society at its worst, the pagan indifference that for all the centuries has faced humanity's woes with dance and jest, and flung to the beggar the crumbs of the feast.

"Well, aunt, you're a good one! Miss Andrews couldn't do better. Why don't you offer her your services as lecturer? If you got off all that stuff in the drawing rooms it would create a sensation, and of course it would fill the contribution boxes when they were passed for the cause."

Mrs. Penrose did not answer. She lay back in her chair, her eyes closed, and to Archie's great surprise when she opened her eyes tears were on the lashes. To his added surprise his aunt arose and went out of the room. She was gone several minutes. When she came back, she spoke as if nothing had been said of an unusual nature.

"Miss Marsh and I are going down to Hope House tomorrow afternoon to see Miss Andrews and the place. Will you go with us?"

"To Hope House?"

"I said so. Miss Andrews has invited me to come several times. I contributed a little at the time of the fire. So did Luella. Miss Andrews wants us to see what has been done. I have never been down there, neither has Luella. Of course you never have. If you care to go I'll speak for Luella that she will not object to your escort."

"Why, I'll go all right. Tomorrow afternoon?"

"Yes. We'll start from here promptly at 2."

"All right." He started to go and then hesitated.

"Promise me, aunt, you will not prejudice Luella against me."

"No need. You do all that is necessary without any help." She had evidently not forgotten his indictment of her social weakness.

"You'll see. Luella Marsh will be my wife one of these days."

"She has my sympathy when the day arrives."

"Look here, Aunt Constance!" He spoke almost brutally, coming back into the room. "If you feel that way, why do you ask me to go with her and you tomorrow?"

"I want you to see some human misery before you die. I want you to know that God has some good reason for the judgment he will some time deliver to your selfish soul."

"How about yours?"

And again he laughed the laugh that centuries of idle society has not been able to soften or civilize.

"And mine, too," she answered, with a deep gravity that made her nephew stare in astonishment.

"Well, I'll be here at 2," he said as he turned from her. "I don't care what your reason is, but I'll go anywhere Luella goes."

When he had gone, Mrs. Constance Penrose did a remarkable thing, or at

He simply bowed.

least those who thought they knew her best would have been astonished if they had seen it.

She went into her room and kneeled at a little desk upon which lay an open prayer book. It was opened at the Litany, and with whispering lips she repeated the familiar prayers beginning with the words:

From all evil and mischief; from sin; from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and everlasting damnation,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From all inordinate and sinful affections; and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion; from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart and contempt of thy Word and Commandment,
Good Lord, deliver us.
By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation; by thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation,
Good Lord, deliver us.
By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion, by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost,
Good Lord, deliver us.
In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment,
Good Lord, deliver us.

Then turning the page she went on with the words:

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to succor, help, and comfort all who are in danger, necessity and tribulation;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to preserve all who travel by land or by water, all women in the perils of childbirth, all sick persons and young children; and to show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to defend and provide for the fatherless children, and widows, and all who are desolate and oppressed;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
That it may please thee to give us true repentance, to forgive us all our sins, negligences and ignorances, and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy holy Word;
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.
Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.
Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.
O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world;
Grant us thy peace.
O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world;
Have mercy upon us.

She whispered the words over in a sort of sobbing chant that found her at the close saying, "Have mercy upon me," instead of "us." And with the word she flung her arms over the desk and laid her head down on the book, crying convulsively.

The magnificent surroundings of that gorgeously furnished room gleamed all around her as she kneeled there, for the time being as wretched a soul as that sorrow smitten city housed, sunk in the horrible depth of a self accusation that was already a present day judgment, warning her of a future and smiting her to the earth with terror at the thought of a whole lifetime of power misdirected, of a wealth and social influence abused for selfish ends.

When Luella called next day, she found Mrs. Penrose in fine spirits. Archie had already arrived and was nervously walking up and down the drawing room.

"There is no question about your love for Luella?" Mrs. Penrose asked as the bell rang and Luella's step was heard in the hall.

Archie gave his aunt a look that made her laugh in his face.

"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," she said carelessly as she turned to greet Luella.

Luella was in a state of unusual excitement. The prospect of seeing John Gordon and Hope House entered into the situation. The prospect of seeing Miss Andrews was perhaps a larger factor, for Penrose had in his fashion hinted of a possible interest on John Gordon's part toward this gifted woman who had given her life to the people. So, for these two reasons Luella was unusually excited, but in addition was the whole situation, which she realized was not yet by any means decided in her relation to John Gordon. She was apparently no nearer the sacrifice of her social position than when she had made that the test of her love. But none the less certain was it that she resented, as she had a right to do, the suggestion that John Gordon might give his love to some other woman, possibly to this one whom she had never seen, whom she was going to see now, why she did not know, aside from a certain curiosity that longed to be satisfied.

As the carriage entered Bowen street all three of them looked with different degrees of interest at the sight of the double decker. Heaps of rubbish still covered the entire burned area, and the same melancholy groups of children were scattered about playing over the ruins. At the farther end of the area some men were taking measurements and talked earnestly. Among the men Luella thought she saw John Gordon.

Going in through the archway which had bent over so much human trouble and sacrifice, they were greeted in the broad hall by Miss Andrews herself, who was just passing through to the library and stopped to greet the visitors as she saw them coming in.

"I am very glad to see you," she said simply as she shook hands with them all. "Will you come into the library? Our little front parlor has been turned into a hospital ward since the fire."

They all went in and sat down, while Miss Andrews thanked Luella for her gift, saying, "I ought perhaps to have called instead of acknowledging your kindness by letter, but my excuse for not doing so has been the work here."

"Oh, I did not expect anything more," Luella murmured. What was the secret of Grace Andrews' power? She felt something more than common in this woman at once. While she was silently trying to analyze the matter Mrs. Penrose was asking questions.

"But you have not been here much longer than twelve years?"

"Fifteen years next spring."

"Pardon me, Miss Andrews, are you related to the Clay-Andrews family of Baltimore?"

"Mrs. Hamilton Andrews of Baltimore was my father's own cousin."

"Then you belong to the Claytons of West Virginia?"

"One branch of the Claytons married into the family."

Mrs. Penrose pushed her inquiries one question further.

"Wasn't your mother known all through the south as the beautiful Miss Rodney of Baltimore?"

"Yes," Miss Andrews answered quietly. "If you know my family history, Mrs. Penrose, why do you ask me all this?"

The woman of the slums and the woman of the boulevard faced each other, and it was the society woman who felt abashed in the presence of her sister, who had given up so much to gain apparently so little.

"Pardon me, Miss Andrews, now that I have placed you, I cannot help wondering how you came to leave such a splendid social position for—for"—

"For such a splendid social opportunity?" Miss Andrews smiled her rare smile. And then in answer to Mrs. Penrose she recited softly George MacDonald's verses with a power that went deep home to Luella and made even Archie Penrose stop his nervous fidgeting, although he did not comprehend the meaning of the verses to the three women.

I said, I will walk in the fields. God said,
Nay, walk in the town.
I said, There are no flowers there. He said,
No flowers but a crown.

I said, But the fogs are thick and clouds
are veiling the sun.
He answered, But hearts are sick and
souls in the dark undone.

I said, But the skies are black; there is
nothing but noise and din.
And he wept as he led me back. There is
more.
He said. There is sin.

I said, I shall miss the light, and friends
will miss me, they say.
He answered, Choose ye tonight if I must
miss you or they.

I pleaded for time to be given. He said,
Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven to follow
the steps of your guide.

There was a moment of intense stillness when she had finished. There was a hint of tears in Mrs. Penrose's eyes. Luella sat with her hands in her lap gazing at Miss Andrews intently. If John Gordon should love this other woman, would it not be the simple attraction of one soul that has obeyed the voice that says "follow me," at the cost of physical things, drawing another soul that is also living in obedience to the same voice?

Miss Andrews suddenly rose and went to one of the windows that looked out over the burned district.

"Excuse me. I am, of course, specially interested in our plans at present. Mr. Gordon, with some of the residents, has been looking over the ground with reference to our new park. You have heard of our recent good fortune? We are living in a high state of excitement down here. A friend has given us $200,000, and we are trying to see how much fun we can have in spending it. If you will come here, I can point out our proposed plan, or would you like to go out there? We can look over the house when we come back."

"We shall be interested to go outside and look over the plan there," Mrs. Penrose assented, and they all passed out and walked slowly down toward the group of men who were at the end of the street, opposite the block that had been the last to burn. As they drew nearer one of the men left the group and came down toward them. It was John Gordon, and even at that distance it was very evident that he was unusually roused about something.

He was so absorbed in the matter that was exciting him that when he met Miss Andrews with her visitors for the first moment he spoke to her as if he did not recognize the others.

"That scoundrel, Tommy Randall, Miss Andrews! Do you know what he has succeeded in doing?"

He had said that much when he realized who the visitors were. But even then the passion of the information he had come to give Miss Andrews was so strong that he simply bowed to Mrs. Penrose and Luella as if he were in the habit of meeting them every day in Bowen street, and nodded to Penrose, as if Penrose was a familiar sight in the neighborhood of Hope House.

"What has Tommy Randall done now?" Miss Andrews questioned, with a faint smile. "Tommy Randall does the heavy tragedy in Ward 18," she said to Mrs. Penrose.

"Randall has bought up lots all over this burnt district. He has closed contracts for half a dozen double deckers like the one Mr. Marsh had put up," John Gordon continued, entirely unmindful of Luella, or, at least, careless of the effect of what he said upon her. "He has worked all this time we have been discussing the park plan. But how could we do anything?" Gordon spoke in despair, addressing Miss Andrews as if no one else were present. "We only had the money to purchase anything last night. We never dreamed that anything would get in the way of our purchase of at least half the area. Randall has secured his lots all over the district. If he puts up those double deckers, he ought to be arrested for murder. That is what the buildings result in."

Luella flushed and then defiantly looked at Gordon as he unconsciously said the last words looking at her. The expression on her face smote John Gordon into a sudden realization of all his surroundings. Miss Andrews stood quietly gazing over the dreary pile of rubbish. A man left the group at the point where Gordon had been standing and came walking deliberately toward them.

"It's Tommy Randall. If he attempts to insult you, Miss Andrews"—

As he spoke Gordon laid his finger for a second on Miss Andrews' arm. He was standing close by her, and the movement was perfectly natural. Luella noticed it and was also quick to note the color in Miss Andrews' face as she moved a little away from Gordon and said:

"He will not insult me."

"I almost wish he would insult some one so that I could have some excuse for knocking him down," Gordon answered. Neither Miss Andrews nor Luella had ever seen him so angry.

Mrs. Penrose watched all this with gleaming eyes. It had become exceedingly interesting to her. Archie was divided between his disgust at the horrible surroundings and his wonder at what would be the result of the encounter between Randall and Miss Andrews. Luella had no thought for anything except that movement which John Gordon had made as if to protect Miss Andrews. And all of them faced the man as he came up, entirely ignorant of his purpose in seeking an interview, but two of them at least fully aware that, whatever it was, it concealed some evil, and one of them praying in her great, strong heart for some way of deliverance, that her love for the children of her desolate parish might find expression before God's sunlight and flowers closed to some of them on this earth forever.

CHAPTER X.

Miss Andrews placed her fingers on his arm.

WHATEVER else Tommy Randall lacked, he did not lack the most absolute confidence in his position as boss of Ward 18. As he came up to the little group of which Miss Andrews was the central figure not even her thorough knowledge of the man's peculiarly insidious hold on the situation was sufficient to give her a real insight into the motive which prompted him to face her and John Gordon at a moment when he knew their indignation against him was at its highest.

He took off his hat as he bowed.

"How do, Miss Andrews? I've got some good news for you, and thought maybe you wouldn't object to my bringing it. Lots 17, 19 and 21 back of the settlement have changed hands since the fire. Maybe you didn't know it, but I've had my eye on those lots for some time. Now, I don't mind telling you that I admire your pluck. You've been doing good here, and I want to help in a small way. So I've decided to give the settlement those lots. I understand you've been wanting more room to build on a new hall. This will give you a chance."

He stopped very suddenly and his shifty gray eyes, still fastened on Miss Andrews, had a look of such malignant satisfaction in them that John Gordon wanted to strike him across the mouth! He did not do that, but he did say, as he stepped in front of Miss An directly between her and Rand

"When we want any donation you, we will let you know take your gifts where they're appreciated."

The man gave Gordon one st

"Am I talking to you? My made to the head of the house are authorized"—

"Miss Andrews is not going into any conversation with you" Gordon spoke with a rising tide of in him that was nearer to lence that he had ever been. man in front of him was a representative of the most cious, damnable political system was directly responsible for every dwarfed child, every ruin every debauched soul in the There was no room left in Gordon's heart for anything but whelming indignation toward who stood for all that wrong. He wanted to strike thing. His soul was burning compassion for the hundreds of less lives in that hell of with supreme anger against who got his living out of it.

"Oh, Mr. Gordon!" Miss spoke almost timidly. Luella ing every tone and gesture apparent willingness to let Gordon have his way. And the exception of those three dressed to him, Miss Andrews speak again during the strange encounter.

"By your leave, Miss will do the talking, and otherwise I will take the sibility of refusing any gifts dall may, for his own reas the settlement. We know well how lots 17, 19 and 21 hands. We do not care to of stolen goods."

He said the words looking into Tommy Randall's face. Randall knew as he tried to look that here was one man not afraid of him, come what Nevertheless the boss of Ward been ruler so long, he had customed to regard the which he extorted revenue subjects as a legitimate part isting political system, that almost brutally frank caused him only a feeling of

"Just as you say," he answered ly enough. "Lots in Hope House are not given away every day plenty of men who will buy suppose, seeing you are so about the lots, you will lar about who gets them."

He said it with a delibera tiveness so full of Gordon was again tempted him down. Nothing but edge of Miss Andrews' vented him. Tommy Randall own power and went a step

"Perhaps you would be look at my plans." The was so profoundly insolent said a word. Tommy Randall the blue print and spread it them. With the same degree cination that they might looking at a battlefield slaughter John Gordon and drews followed the grimy boss as he described his Penrose, Archie and Luella as interested spectators, especially to Luella, the of the occasion lay not blue print, but in the attitude of the settlement

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT

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Weak, Nervous, Wretched, Tired

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"Dr. Miles' Restorative Nervine has a great deal for me. In the fall of health was in a very poor condition treme nervousness, dizzy spells and headaches made me most miserable. been under the care of our local for some time, but got no better. the verge of nervous prostration appetite, and could not sleep. as the dizzy spells continued and strength. Oh! those lady friend who had taken vine advised me to try it. at the local drug store and had gone I noticed that the helping me. I continued taking to directions until I had used when I felt so much better it. I feel that my present health is all due to Dr. Miles' Nervine. I am grateful ceived and recommend the on its merits as a nerve tive."—Mrs. F. M. H Mass.

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Looking for Tr

"I have heard a good deal ple who borrow trouble my wife will want a lot of that line."

"Why, I thought she cheerful and contented

"She was until our six weeks ago. Now she because he may marry we shall not like."—Ti

How Are Your Ki

Dr. Hobbs' Sparagus Pills ple free. Add. Sterling Remedy