

The Reformer

By CHARLES M. SHELDON
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"Just the thing! I don't believe Tom my owns him. We have got to do something and do it hard. If Tommy Randall puts up those double deckers, contrary to the city ordinances, have we got to confess that there is no such thing as justice in a city like this, in a country like ours, after twenty cen-



"Do you still love Miss Marsh?"

turies of the Christ of God? Oh, Miss Andrews, it cannot be possible that our appeal to the people themselves, in case all other means fail, will also fail! Do you have ultimate hope in the people?"

She turned her blue eyes toward him, and they were glistening with tears. Whatever her feeling was toward him, she was one of those great souls who can carry in their hearts a love for one being and the multitude as well. All true love with her must have been of the highest exaltation.

"I believe in the people at last. If all else fails, we will appeal to them. These wrongs cannot go on forever. I cannot believe that God will permit it. Child life must be too precious in his sight."

"And yet think of all these years, of all you have done and suffered, of the thousands of innocent lives that have been smothered and buried alive in these places of horror. Do you lose your faith; do you?"

"No, my friend," she answered, smiling. "God is not dead. When a soul hath, I shall die. Meanwhile—"

The Long Felt Want.

Inventor—I have a machine that will make our fortune now. It's a slot machine with a new attachment. All I want is money to set up a lot of 'em along Wall street.

Captain—What does it do?

Inventor—When a man loses money, all he has to do is to back up to the machine, drop a nickel in the slot, and it will make him—N.Y. Weekly.

The Horse Objected.

"How did you like that new breakfast food I have you?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I haven't tried it. You see, my hired man says it and that's why I was for the horse, and he put it in me horse's manager."

"Ain't the horse like it?"

"No, the horse wouldn't touch it. You may have it back if you wish."—Young Statesman.

Why Not Smile?

Smile once in awhile. "I'll make your heart seem lighter." Smile once in awhile. "I'll make your path smoother." Smile once in awhile. "Smile once in awhile. Life is more joyous when you're downtown in the wind. Friends become more real. —Miss Vasserman in "The Merry Month."

A CALCULATION.

John Gordon stood up his head. The dust had descended, and he could see only the outline of her face.
"You have not answered my question, Miss Andrews. Did I do her an injustice when I made it a test of her feeling that she come down here? Ought I to have asked her to do that?"
"Would I be any harder for her to live here than for you or for me—or she spoke hurriedly—"or for any of us?"

"She was born and has been reared in great luxury. Of course coming here would mean a complete change from all that."

"I do not see how you could have failed anything less," the voice came again. "The woman who loved you would say nothing less."

The Quarrel.

"Good-bye, Gordon. If you leave this house to-night, you leave it for good!"

"No, dear, for better"—St. Louis Republic.

"Meanwhile we are powerless, with all this money in our hands, unless we can stop Randall in some way. Of course he will never sell us the lots. Our only use for the money would be to purchase some of the unburned territory and tear down. But it would be enormously expensive. The city ought to condemn and buy up all this district and put up municipal tenements. Of course I know you believe in all that, but a city government that produces and nourishes men like Tommy Randall would as soon be expected to open its council meetings with prayer as to put up city tenements. Our only hope lies in stopping the erection of those double deckers in violation of the ordinance."

Miss Andrews silently looked out of the window. Over at the extreme end of the burned area Tommy Randall with the little group of men was still at work laying out measurements for the contemplated tenement. It was growing late in the afternoon, and the men would soon be going away. Over at the other end of the library Miss Hammond had been busy at work over one of the lecture programmes. She went out as Gordon was speaking about the tenements.

Miss Andrews calmly sat looking at the scene from the window, and John Gordon seated a little back from her, where, however, he commanded a view of her face as the fading light from the large window fell upon it, suddenly made a resolve that in itself was not really as sudden as it seemed. Sometimes a swift action has ripened under a slow process.

"Miss Andrews."

"Yes."

"Will you allow me to confide in you—something I feel impelled to say to you especially?"

There was a short silence; then her voice answered quietly:

"Yes."

Gordon went on a little hurriedly, as if he feared the loss of the impulse that had prompted him to speak.

"You saw Miss Marsh. You know from the newspaper accounts my former relation to her?"

"I remember."

"I asked her again this afternoon to be my wife and come to live with me here. She refused. Do you think a man in my position, with the life I have chosen to live, ought to ask a woman to come and live with me here, to share all these troubles, to bear all these burdens? Is the test I made for her too severe?"

There was silence. It was broken by the quiet voice.

"Do you still love Miss Marsh?"

"No," answered John Gordon slowly. He was seated and had put his hand over his face.

The group of men over at the end of the view from the window separated and went away. One of the residents came into the library and started to light the candles which were placed in an old fashioned silver candlestick which always stood in the center of Miss Andrews' fancies. Candlelight, she used to say, was more literary than electricity.

"Please do not light the candles yet. Miss Farwell," the voice in the window quietly called.

Miss Farwell went out, and in the dark John Gordon could feel his heart beat heavily.

CHAPTER XI.



"Are you a tenement house inspector?"
Peter, awhile Miss Andrews said.
"You say 'no.' Do you not mean 'yes'?"

John Gordon stood up his head. The dust had descended, and he could see only the outline of her face.

"You have not answered my question, Miss Andrews. Did I do her an injustice when I made it a test of her feeling that she come down here? Ought I to have asked her to do that?"

"Would I be any harder for her to live here than for you or for me—or she spoke hurriedly—"or for any of us?"

"She was born and has been reared in great luxury. Of course coming here would mean a complete change from all that."

"I do not see how you could have failed anything less," the voice came again.

"It is no, fair to ask me!" she exclaimed, with agitation. Then she laughed in her usual happy manner. "Excuse me, Mr. Gordon. I fear I am not com-

petent to answer all your questions. The realm of love is a realm of mysterious contradictions. I am sure of only one thing. The test you made was not too great. It was the only test possible. I would warn you, however, as your senior by-ten years—that you do not too hastily judge of your feelings."

"But supposing," Gordon went on nervously—"supposing I had begun to feel attracted toward—"

He could not see her face at all now and could only feel that in some way what he said was unwelcome. He did not finish, and in the silence Ford came into the room and lighted the candles. Miss Andrews rose and went over to the table and asked Ford some question about the day's work, and when dinner was announced a few minutes later she went out and took her place at the head of the table as usual. When John Gordon came out and took his seat, he saw the placid, earnest face heightened perhaps in color, but bearing the usual quiet seriousness that distinguished her.

The talk at table turned upon Tommy Randall and his plans. It was the consensus of opinion that nothing could be done except in the way of enforcing the building ordinances. And everybody agreed that from past attempts the probability was very small that Tommy could ever be convicted.

"For my own satisfaction," said Gordon after they had discussed every phase of the remarkable situation, "I want to see the mayor and have a personal interview with him. Let us strike at headquarters."

Miss Andrews smiled sadly. "Mr. Gordon, youth is always rash." Gordon colored as if he understood her to mean it in a double sense. "But go and see the mayor. I've no objections. Need I say I have seen him several times to no purpose? Has a partisan machine any place in its mechanism for human mercies?"

Gordon felt abashed. "I did not mean to hint that I could do anything. I simply wanted to put the city government to the test in a plain matter of human right and justice. It will be more for my own satisfaction and experience than anything else."

"Go your ways. You will get the experience without fail," answered Miss Andrews, with a look which contained a depth of sadness out of her own experience that haunted Gordon all the evening.

Nevertheless the next day he went down to the city hall and asked to see the mayor. After a delay of half an hour he was admitted. As he entered four men came out of the room. They were talking excitedly, and Gordon could hear the name "Julius Chambers."

"So Julius Chambers is making himself talked about at headquarters," Gordon murmured to himself. "I must know that man."

He was ushered into the mayor's office by the doorkeeper and faced a slightly built, rather aristocratic looking man, carefully dressed. Gordon had seen him on public occasions, but had never before met him personally.

"You are the son of the late Rufus Gordon, eh? Yes. Knew your father quite well. He was a staunch supporter of the party and a man to be depended upon. Sorry to know of his financial losses just before his death."

The mayor was a soft, easy spoken man, with a slight hesitation at the end of his sentences that gave a listener the idea of mental indecision, not borne out by his political career.

"What can I do for you?" he said suddenly. Gordon was not prepared for it. The tone was suddenly hard, brisk business-like.

"A good deal, Mr. Mayor. If you will."

"That's the usual statement, Mr. Gordon. That's what they all say. Of course you've come to me for something. They all do." The mayor spoke with a tone of resignation that struck Gordon as unusually impersonal.

"Yes, sir! I did come to get something, and I have no apologies to offer for it, because it is something that any good citizen ought to get, and that is justice."

"Be specific. Justice is not delivered here in wholesale lots."

"Is it delivered at all?" Gordon burst out. The mayor coolly eyed him.

"That depends. State your errand, young man. Others are waiting."

"Do you know Tommy Randall?"

The mayor raised his eyebrows.

"I know a part of him. Nobody knows all of Tommy."

"He is one of the biggest rascals in this city."

"This is not news." The mayor looked resigned.

"Yes, Mr. Mayor, it is news to this administration. What is this man, Tommy Randall? He is not an officer of the city, he is not authorized to take part in its affairs, yet he dictates—"

"Be specific. Others are waiting."

"The words escape hard, impulsive, like the biting of cold steel against skin. Gordon suddenly pulled up, and in five seconds he was as cool and clear headed as the impulsive political figure sitting there at his desk.

In a swift, forceful manner that characterized him when driven to it by a hostile listener he pictured Randall's proposed violation of the building ordinance, the long, heartbreaking fight for childhood that Miss Andrews had been waging, the gift of the settlement and Randall's contemptuous defiance of all humanity in his plan of restoring the regular course of the people's misery.

He must have stared it wonderfully well, for the mayor was really interested. Once he interrupted.

"Did you say that? I think she believes she does."

"But do you believe she does?"

"It is no, fair to ask me!" she exclaimed, with agitation. Then she laughed in her usual happy manner. "Excuse me, Mr. Gordon. I fear I am not com-

petent to answer all your questions. The realm of love is a realm of mysterious contradictions. I am sure of only one thing. The test you made was not too great. It was the only test possible. I would warn you, however, as your senior by-ten years—that you do not too hastily judge of your feelings."

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"Go on," the mayor said in a low tone.

When Gordon was through, the mayor was contemplatively silent.

"You've come to the wrong place, Mr. Gordon. I can't do anything to Tommy Randall. What you want to do is to lay a complaint before the city building department. The whole business is under their jurisdiction and properly should come before them. I regret exceedingly to hear what you say about the tenements. I had no idea matters were so bad. Of course the housing problem is a vexed question in all large centers of population, and all reformers, I believe, are agreed that no problem presents so many."

"Do you claim, Mr. Mayor?" Gordon interrupted, but his blood always boiled up in him when a man lied to him.

"that you do not know about the tenement house conditions in Waterside district? Has Miss Andrews told it so badly that you have forgotten it?"

The mayor's face was dark. He raised his eyes to Gordon, but lowered them again.

"You have come to the wrong place to prefer your complaint, sir. Go to the city building department. Is that all your errand?"

"It is," replied Gordon, and lie rose.

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