# The ..... REFORMER

By CHARLES M. SHELDON,

Author of "In His Steps," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," Etc.

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"Of course I know what you mean. You can carry a complaint directly to the city attorney, have Tommy arrested and bring the case into the police court. Do you know how many times we have had Tommy arrested?"

Gordon shook his head in surprise.

"Within the last eight years, for one thing and another, Tommy Randall has been arrested as many as fifteen times, with no result except failure on our part to convict. Do you wonder that the women in Hope House have given up arresting Tommy?"

"It seems to me the person to arrest is the mayor," growled Gordon. "Before God, he is guilty if ever man was."

"Arrest Tommy and bring the case in Justice Chambers' court. According to the statute law, the jurisdiction of Chambers' court extends to all cases in the Waterside district. Chambers has never had a case of this kind. From all the evidence I know of him so far he is not a friend of Randall nor in any way indebted to him."

Gordon gravely assented. He was sitting in the library, where his view through the window extended down Bowen street to the end of the burned district. He could see a group of workmen laying out foundations for Tommy's first double decker.

The sight suggested a plan to Gordon, and he went out and walked over to the place.

Tommy Randall was at the farther end of the lot, but as Gordon came up he walked over to the street and said with cheerful insolence.

"Fine day for building, Mr. Gordon."

Gordon went down to the end of the lot. The basement excavation had been made, and the masons were at work on the foundation wall.

Gordon came back to where Randall still stood.

"Of course you know your rear end line for this building runs fifteen feet farther south than the law allows?"

Tommy Randall was chewing a bit of pine splinter. He spit out the piece, then turned toward John Gordon.

"Is this your building that's going up? Don't you worry about me. I know what I'm doing."

Then to Gordon's surprise Randall came up close to him and said in what was intended for a bluff, hearty manner: "Say, Mr. Gordon, what's the use of quarreling with me over this little matter? Of course I know that technically the ordinance isn't lived up to, but it is practically a dead letter anyhow. None of the contractors ever pays any attention to it. What difference does it make anyhow? I mean to put up a good building, and the people know my rents are fair. No one ever complained that Tommy Randall ever screwed 'em for rent when it was hard to get. Live and let live is my motto."

Gordon looked him in the eye.

"Mr. Randall, you know or ought to know that this double decker you are putting up here is a death trap and that the law distinctly provides for this space at the rear of the lot to give the tenement dwellers sufficient light and air at that end of the building. After you have got your building up it will be a fire trap like old No. 19. You deliberately violate not only the ordinance in regard to rear space, but you are planning to violate other provisions of the building acts in regard to lighting areas and metal staircases. I've seen your plans, and they are nothing more nor less than copies of plans of No. 91. I'll have you arrested unless you change the ground plans of this building."

"You will, eh?"

Tommy spit out another piece of splinter and contemptuously started down toward the masons. "It ain't the first time I've been arrested, but the fellows that does it remembers it longer'n I do."

Gordon went over with Ford to the city hall, and together they swore out a complaint before the city attorney. That officer eyed Gordon rather curiously, and while his assistant was making out the warrant Gordon asked a few questions.

"This case will come in Judge Chambers' court?"

The assistant looked up and paused in his writing.

The city attorney eyed Gordon again.

"Justice Chambers has jurisdiction in the Waterside district. It has been customary, however, to follow the precedent established by the new building act of '97 and call these cases in the district court."

"Jury case?"

"Yes."

"Am I right in saying that the complaining witness in cases of violation of city ordinances has the right to appear and cause the party complained of to appear in the police court that has jurisdiction in civil cases over the district in which the violation occurs?"

"That is the law." The city attorney slowly and seemingly with reluctance spoke.

Gordon went one step further. "Then this warrant will cite Randall to appear before Judge Chambers. If cases that come under the provisions of the building act of 1897 are appealed from the police court of Judge Chambers, do they go to the court of appeals or the court of special pleas?"

The city attorney hesitated.

"The court of appeals. There is no choice in the matter."

Gordon was silent. The city attorney eyed him again with interest.

"Are you a lawyer, young man?"

"No."

"Do you know Tommy Randall intimately?"

"No. Do you?"

The city attorney evaded the question.

"He's a bright one, Tommy is; very bright. Very bright, don't you think?"

"Will this warrant be served at once?" Gordon asked, in his turn ignoring a question.

The attorney placed the warrant in the hands of an officer with instructions to serve it on Tommy Randall at once, and as he gave the order it seemed to Gordon that everybody in the office, from the city attorney down to the policeman, eyed him with a sort of pitying contempt.

He walked out of the building boiling with wrath at the insolent attitude of every person in the city administration with whom he had come in contact during that week's experience.

"But Chambers seems to be unpopular around here," he said to Ford. "That's hopeful for us, isn't it?"

"How unpopular?"

"Didn't you notice the city attorney's hesitation when Chambers' name was mentioned? And while you were talking I overheard a little talk between two men at the other end of the office. Chambers' name occurred several times, and it was never spoken of in any complimentary terms. If he is unpopular with the city administration, isn't that a good sign for us?"

"Yes. It's a glimmer of hope, but only a glimmer in this awful municipal darkness. We'll follow it, though, and hope for the best."

Gordon was not present when the officer served the warrant on Tommy, but he learned afterward that the two regarded the matter as a good joke and adjourned to the nearest saloon to have a drink over it together. When next morning Gordon appeared with Ford in Chambers' court in response to the warrant, which set 9 o'clock as the time, Tommy was there in good spirits and nodded familiarly to Gordon as he came in.

When the case was called, the three went forward and Gordon noted with deep interest the man who presided and of whom Mrs. Penrose had said, "He does not fear man or devil."

He was almost youthful in appearance. His smooth face had a delicate, scholarly look that a pair of gold bowed spectacles emphasized. He seemed strangely out of place in that police court. When he spoke, it was in a voice so soft and refined that Gordon was disappointed. His heart sank and at once the glimmer of hope he had allowed his heart to entertain flickered and went out.

"Who are the prosecuting witnesses in this case?" Chambers said, and Gordon and Ford stepped up. Gordon made his statement, and the judge eyed him through his spectacles. Then he turned to Tommy Randall.

"Have you any defense, Mr. Randall?"

"I plead not guilty. My attorney will take the case," said Tommy, with a smile.

Then, to John Gordon's surprise, a man got up from the front bench and laid a bundle of papers on the rail in front of the judge.

"May it please your honor," he said, "this case is purely spite work. My client has gained possession by purchase of a tract of land that this man Gordon and his companions have been trying to buy for their own uses. They are now trying to stop the building of a model tenement by my client by swearing out this warrant, charging him with violation of a city ordinance in regard to the space required at the rear of a building lot. We don't deny the ordinance. It explicitly states that if the building is four stories high there shall be fifteen feet between the rear end of the structure and the end of lot. But may it please your honor, my client has not violated this ordinance. The diagram here will show that my client has left the required space provided for by the law."

The lawyer unfolded a blue print and spread it out. Gordon looked at Tommy Randall. There was a smile of satisfaction on his face.

"You may see, your honor, for yourself. This plat is the city engineer's. The measurements from Bowen street south on lot are ninety-eight feet in full. My client's building, as seen by this contractor's figures and diagram," he opened another paper, "is exactly eighty-three feet, which is just what the law calls for."

"Will the city engineer certify to this statement?" The judge's voice seemed softer and more refined than ever.

"He will if necessary."

"Is he present?"

"We did not think it necessary, your honor. I think he is out of the city at present. But your honor can see that the print is his own official measurements. My client asks that this case be dismissed as malicious persecution."

"What have you to say, Mr. Gordon?" The judge turned his spectacled eyes toward him.

"I say he lies," replied Gordon promptly.

"Have you any proofs?" The voice seemed sharper, and the figure straightened up perceptibly.

Gordon hesitated. He began to see through Tommy Randall's scheme. It was not like Tommy Randall to run such a risk, but his whole political life had been such a mesh of lies and deliberate dishonesty that it was not beyond the region of probability for him to resort to a very dangerous and desperate trick to clear himself. Gordon had carefully measured the foundation walls of the double decker and knew that by his measurement they covered the entire lot, yet he had nothing to prove that fact except his own statement.

"Have you any proof that this statement of Mr. Randall's is a falsehood?"

The voice came in an added tone of sharpness.

"Nothing but my own word," Gordon answered quietly.

"Have you the measurements you made with you?"

Gordon produced a paper with a rough diagram marked on it showing the distance from the front of Bowen street to the end of the lot to be ninety-eight feet and the foundation walls of the building to measure the same distance.

"You've nothing more than this?" the judge asked. His voice was again soft and his manner meditative.

"Nothing more." John Gordon hesitated. "Miss Andrews was with me and Mr. Ford when we took the measurements. She could verify their accuracy."

"Is she here?"

"No, but she could be summoned."

"It isn't necessary. I'll go down there myself and make the measurements. It is possible some mistake has been made by one side or the other. Gentlemen, I desire your attendance while the court adjourns to Bowen street."

If a bomb had exploded in the face of Tommy Randall and his lawyer, they could not have been more thoroughly dumfounded. The lawyer hastily whispered to his client. Tommy smiled in a ghastly manner.

"It is possible, of course, your honor, that the city engineer has made a mistake in his figures. Mistakes are possible in surveys and measurements, as can be easily shown by reference to official records."

*The little company rose to greet him.*

Justice Chambers made no reply. Probably a more speechless group of men never traveled in the electric cars together than that one which made the trip from the police judge's court, No. 9, to the Waterside district.

When Bowen street was reached, the five men walked over to the site of Tommy's double decker.

Judge Julius Chambers secured a mason's measuring line from one of the workmen. Then he turned, somewhat grimly to Tommy Randall.

"I suppose you can trust me to measure correctly?"

Tommy murmured something. So did the attorney. It may be remarked in passing that it was not exactly a prayer that either man uttered.

Calling one of the masons to help, Judge Chambers measured off the foundation walls. Then he put down some figures on a card. Then he straightened up and said in a peculiarly soft voice:

"I get your measurements, Mr. Gordon, just ninety-eight feet. Court is adjourned to the station, and I desire the attendance of all the parties in the case."

Not a word was said by any one on the way back. Gordon was singing in his soul a song of hope. Here was a Daniel come to judgment. Whenever before in the history of that city had a public judge or any other ever done a thing like this? The spectacled, soft voiced young man suddenly loomed up before Gordon as a most imposing figure.

Back in court again, Judge Julius Chambers, relieving the assistant judge who had taken his place in his absence, confronted the parties in the case. His voice was ringing now; no softness or meditation in his manner.

"Tommy Randall, this court finds you guilty of the charge named in the warrant, and I fine you the maximum penalty, which is a fine of $300, with an added sentence of sixty days in jail, unless the building is changed in its construction within thirty days to conform to existing ordinances. I may add that while it is possible the city engineer may have made a mistake in his figures, it is my deliberate conviction that a conspiracy of a grave character has been entered into here by you, Mr. Randall, to deceive the court, and if such conspiracy can be shown to exist, as I shall do my utmost to prove, it will be a penitentiary case for both you and your attorney. Call the next case."

Tommy Randall's attorney had a face the color of dirty putty. Tommy himself glared at the judge and then at Gordon. He finally, with a great effort, pulled himself together and went out with his lawyer after the latter had gone through the regular formality of appealing the case to the court of appeals.

All the way to Hope House Gordon and Ford felt like executing a dance of some kind in the car. Once in the familiar library, they related the whole affair to Miss Andrews and the delighted settlement workers.

"This means the beginning of the end for Tommy Randall," said Ford.

Miss Andrews shook her head.

"Tommy appealed the case. He will get out there. Remember he has never yet been convicted. Today's experience was only a scratch to him. He has not yet been seriously hurt. You do not know him as I do."

"But Chambers does not intend to let the other matter rest. It was a plain case of conspiracy and deliberate effort to deceive the court."

Miss Andrews shook her head again.

"Tommy is an old fox. He made a mistake in not measuring Judge Chambers aright. But now that he knows him he will be cautious. I confess I have very little hope of his ultimate conviction."

"But he will have to change the building, won't he?" one of the young women asked.

"It's my opinion the masons will be at work tomorrow just the same, and no change will be made. My dear, you do not know Tommy Randall nor appreciate his power. I do, to my cost."

In the morning Gordon and Miss Andrews went over to the site of the tenement, accompanied by Ford, Miss Hammond and nearly all the workers.

The masons had begun their day's work. In answer to questions they said they had received no orders to change anything.

"It's easy to say, I told you so!" Miss Andrews calmly spoke as the little company slowly went back to the house. "Of course, pending the decision of the case in the court of appeals, Tommy will go on with the building, because he feels sure the decision there will reverse Chambers' decision."

"Then I don't see as we can do anything," said Gordon dejectedly.

"Yes, you've done something to get Tommy Randall convicted in any court at all."

*Neither said a word.*

"But I don't see that the conviction hurts him any. He ought to be in jail. Instead of that, he's going right on with his lawlessness just the same as if he hadn't been found guilty at all," said one of the young women.

Gordon looked at Miss Andrews. She smiled sadly.

"Yes," she replied in answer to his question, "unless Judge Julius Chambers can scotch this viper more seriously than this I anticipate nothing except endless delay of the case in the court of appeals. There is a case there now that was appealed by Tommy three years ago. It is a case of law's delay, and we seem powerless to do anything."

"Somehow I have hope in Chambers. Did you see the account in the Index this morning? That sounded like him."

"I saw that," Ford spoke up brightly. "It gave Tommy a great roast, I tell you."

The article referred to in the morning Index was a conspicuous column account of the conviction of Tommy Randall in public court on a charge sworn out by the Hope House people. It was a scathing article, written by some one who had dipped his pen in something more than a hired reporter's ink bottle. There was a scorching vigor to it that drove the fact deep home to the reader that Tommy Randall was murdering little children in Ward 18 by his construction contrary to law of tenements like the one that made possible the recent tenement house tragedy. The article concluded with these words:

Will the people endure this sort of thing much longer? Tommy Randall is not an abstraction. He is 200 pounds of coarse flesh and bad blood, which spits on the law and says to the people, "You mind your own business." For thirty years Tommy Randall has ruled Waterside district like a tyrant. He has no office in the service of the people. He works at no trade. He is not elected to any position in the city. Yet he has grown rich from his blackmail of saloons, gambling dens, houses of vice and business firms in the district. His trade is in flesh and blood. No slave driver ever employed more artful means to trap his victims or more brutality in riveting on their manacles, and the horror of the whole affair is intensified by the fact that this creature who is after all the tool of the machine that created him has actually persuaded the miserable wretches who nourish him that he is their best friend. There will be no release from this slavery until the machine that made Tommy Randall what he is has been broken in pieces by the people so that it can neither turn out any more product like him or keep in power what has already been brought into existence. We say, Smash the machine. The people are able to do it. Will they do it?

The Review also contained a good account of Tommy's case in the police court and in addition cited in full the blue print incident and boldly denounced the lawyer and the boss for attempt at conspiracy to deceive the court. Three other papers had more or less extended notice of the event, and all of them were unfavorable to Tommy. This was the more significant as two of the papers had been for the administration.

"There's hope here," Miss Andrews said that evening as the little settlement family was gathered in the family library and the accounts in the different papers were being reviewed. "Maybe this is the first murmuring of the people. God grant"—

The bell rang, and a visitor was announced.

Mr. Julius Chambers came in, and the little company around the table rose to greet him. The slight, pale faced figure with the gold rimmed spectacles was at that moment the most interesting personality, next to their own head, in all the city. "I've had in mind to come here for some time," he said to Miss Andrews when they were all seated again. "I want to know you and your work at first hand. Unless I am mistaken the storm center of the next campaign will be somewhere in this vicinity."

"Will you be anywhere near the center of that center?" asked Gordon, leaning over and looking at Chambers intensely.

"By the grace of God, Mr. Gordon, I want to be as near the center of it as I can get, and nothing would please me more than to have your company."

Gordon tingled all over. He arose and put out his hand. The judge took it. Neither said a word, but from that minute the two men were knit to each other.

They sat late that night around the library table, the most enthusiastic, interested and in some ways the most unselfish group of men and women in that city. Gordon and Chambers laid out a plan of campaign. It included the use of every moral and Christian force in the city. And the message they were to bring to the people was the message of murdered childhood, the double decker for a background, the political boss a necessary result of politics that lived on its spoils and cared no more for humanity's loss and ruin than any machine cares for the dust that whirls through its mechanism, to be blown out over the world or trod under foot to rise and be swept again into the rush of the wheels that with metallic heartlessness grind on, doing the will of their maker, but caring for no man's soul.

It seemed to them all during the weeks that followed that the city was awakening to some stern reality of its moral obligations. As the young judge had said that night when he appeared at Hope House, "The hour of the people is at hand." He himself, sometimes alone, oftener with Gordon or Falmouth, night after night addressed great mass meetings held under the direction of church or temperance or municipal reform bodies. Falmouth and a score of other ministers organized the young people into campaign material. The pulpit began to speak out. The papers contained columns of very free advertising of Tommy Randall and his methods. Chambers' voice spoke through an astonishing number of editorials and other articles, exposing long standing cases of awful incompetency and fraud in the city government. The storm of the people's fury rose and grew with every night's gathering, and the storm center was literally the Waterside district.

Under the leadership of Gordon, Chambers and Falmouth hundreds of business men visited the tenement houses and saw for the first time the horrors that were intensified by the machine. Hundreds of them were taken by Miss Andrews or Gordon to Tommy Randall's double decker, which had gone steadily up through all the rising of the storm, and the lawlessness of his acts was a visible illustration of the whole situation. Miss Andrews had written to Mrs. Captain George Effingham telling her the situation, and that old lady had replied: "Use the first hundred thousand if necessary in carrying on the campaign and the second also. I will try to find some more if you only succeed in cleaning out Mr. Thomas Randall."

So the settlement workers thanked God and plunged into the thick of the fight as it grew in power, for every saloon interest, every gambling hell, every house of evil fame, fought for its miserable life. For once almost like magic, to the astonishment of evil, all the good of the city appeared to be united, on its knees praying, on its feet working. And as the campaign drew near its climax every dark and hideous viper that had fattened in the security of years of protection from the city crawled out of its hole and showed its ugly and poisonous front, rearing it against an assault that for the first time in history was really doing something to vindicate the name of the stern righteousness of God in men.

One morning John Gordon, going by Tommy Randall's double decker, found it deserted of workmen. It had gone up three stories and a half.

When Miss Andrews heard the news, she said: "That means that Tommy is in need of campaign funds. He has spent a fortune already. If that dumbbell is never finished"—

"We will let it stand as a monument of victory," said Gordon.

Two evenings later Gordon, Falmouth, Chambers and Miss Andrews went together to a monster mass meeting. All four of them spoke. Miss Andrews was received with a great demonstration. When Chambers spoke, it was noticeable that hundreds of men and women representing the wealth and fashion of the city were there, and that, although he uttered the most scathing rebuke of the selfish wealthy people who shunned all civic responsibility, they listened with positive admiration to a speech that was a torrent of eloquence, for Chambers was an aristocrat himself and could not be repudiated by any of the city's most cultured or refined circles. Mrs. Penrose was present that night with Luella and Archie. They all heard Miss Andrews, with genuine surprise at her ability. Chambers provoked their applause even while he angered them by his prophet's denunciation of their wicked selfishness. Falmouth's speech was a calm but earnest appeal to the conscience, and every hearer was more honestly thoughtful for it. Then Gordon rose.

He had gained amazingly in the power to address a great crowd. He simply told the story of the tenements out of his own experience. He made no plea; he uttered no denunciation; simply told how childhood was tortured and crushed and stifled and murdered in the double deckers. His story was the story of childhood's rights. It made a tremendous impression. Mrs. Penrose bent her head, and her lips whispered the litany:

"O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me."

Luella never took her eyes off John Gordon's face. As he drew near the end she noted the extreme exhaustion of his whole bearing. And as he finished and sat down she observed Miss Andrews, who was seated behind Gordon, lean forward and ask him something.

Then as the chairman of the meeting was making some announcement for another gathering Luella saw Chambers and Falmouth suddenly rise and go over to Gordon just as he swayed and would have fallen. The two friends caught him and quickly carried him off the stage. Miss Andrews followed them, and the great audience began to go out.

Luella hesitated. Mrs. Penrose had not seen anything. She had not been looking.

"I think Mr. Gordon was ill," Luella said.

"Shall we wait and inquire?" Mrs. Penrose asked quickly.

"I'll go up and see about it," Archie suddenly volunteered.

He went up and crossed the stage and disappeared. When he came back after a few minutes, he said that Gordon had been removed to Hope House, and no one seemed to know just what the trouble was.

"Nothing serious, I think," Mrs. Penrose remarked. "We'll telephone down when we get home."

Word was sent back by one of the settlement workers in answer to Mrs. Penrose's inquiry that Gordon was ill, but it was not possible yet to say how seriously. Mrs. Penrose sent word to Luella and added that if Luella wished she would go down to Hope House with her next day and inquire. Luella replied that she did not think it necessary, and Mrs. Penrose did not press the matter.

But three days later Luella was in the drawing room when a visitor was announced.

"Miss Andrews from Hope House," said the servant.

Luella rose to meet her as she entered. Both women were very grave. Luella trembled as she motioned Grace Andrews to a seat.

CHAPTER XII.

*She put her lips on John Gordon's hand.*

"I CAME to tell you, Miss Marsh, that Mr. Gordon is very ill. It is doubtful"—

"That dreadful place and work have killed him!" exclaimed Luella. Her face had paled at sight of Miss Andrews. It blanched now, and her exclamation contained a certain tone of reproach as if the woman in front of her were to blame.

"And, if they have, is it not better for him to die there after having fought a good fight for humanity than to live elsewhere and carry no burdens that kill?"

It was a question provoked by the entire social cruelty of that world represented by such women as Luella and Mrs. Penrose. The gentle, patient, sacrificing spirit of the blue eyed woman who had given her whole life to lift the human burden burst out of its habitual repression of feeling and swept up and over Luella as if she were the incarnation of social selfishness which in all great cities of the world seeks ease and pleasure and luxury and denies all claims of brotherhood, refuses to share its strength with the weak and never dreams of such a thing as personal responsibility for childhood's ways of mankind's suffering.

It seemed a long time that Luella was silent. After awhile she raised her eyes to Miss Andrews.

"I am all that you think I am. And yet"—

"And yet, Miss Marsh, John Gordon loves you. He wants to see you before he"—

"Did he send you here?"

"No. But I know he longs to see you. Will you come?"

"Yes," Luella trembled. "But I am sure he does not love me! Oh, Miss Andrews! Have pity on me! If I loved him truly, would I refuse to accept his test for me? Why do I shrink from that?"

"Do you expect me to answer all the contradictions of your heart? You have been born into a social life that reckons up its wealth in physical things. It is also true—pardon me for saying it—but it is true that you women of wealth and social activities are as a class destitute of any real love for humanity. You can feel remorse or momentary pity. You will weep at the representation of wrongs upon the stage in a well lighted, warmed and upholstered theater from a comfortable seat for which you have paid an exorbitant price, but you will not take the price of that seat and go with it yourself to a real human sufferer, or if you do it it is in a spasmodic effort to relieve a dull day or a compound with a conscience that will not always leave you alone in your selfishness. The broad basic element of genuine love of humanity is not known by you or women like you. The richest, most cultured, most favored women in this city are as a rule destitute of real human love for the masses. They are born without it, they live without it, and, may God have mercy on them, they will die without it and receive the final condemnation spoken to those who, like the rich man in Jesus' story, have their good things in this world, but will be shut out by an impassable chasm from the joys of Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham."

Again the spirit of this woman, who had for all those dreary years of lonesome burden bearing felt the crushing weight of a proud city's wealth and fashion which lifted no finger to help in proportion to its enormous responsibility, rose up and flowed over its lifelong repression in the presence of a woman who had refused the great love of a great man because she did not want to miss the things that Lazarus had to do without.

And again Luella was painfully still. She uttered no denial; she apparently did not resent a syllable. She simply looked down, folding her hands in her lap, and Miss Andrews, gazing at her, could see no sign of anger or pride.

But suddenly Luella rose, and, stretching out her hands toward her visitor, she said, while tears were in her eyes:

*To be Continued.*


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