

MORE WORK FOR UPLIFTERS

BY JAMES STEVENS

As the new societies for the enforcement of sexual purity upon the American male have not yet come before the public with tables of figures prepared by experts, and as the carnal statistics gathered in the days of licensed sin reveal the conditions of that time only, precise knowledge of the prevalence of chastity among the mass of plain Americans of the heroic sex is difficult to obtain. The only investigators I know of have studied, apparently, only three classes—the farmers, the working men and the little business men. Their conclusions agree that virtue exists among the farmers not at all, but that there is already a degree of it among the workers of the cities, and that a very respectable number of small-town business men now hide a great deal of actual rectitude under their bluster of worldly wisdom and romantic enterprise.

The little business man, according to these inquiries, lives chastely because living otherwise is apt to have a sequel in scandals that are hurtful to his credit. I believe that the motive is given too much weight. A better guess is that Babbitt lives angelically because of his nature, which has no other devotion than trade. His mind is never as grand as a mountain, but it is usually as densely occupied as an ant hill; it swarms with industrious, tiny thoughts that carry no wine of the blossom, but are only dull little traffickers, something above vermin but more common. They are incorruptible guardians of his purity. Scandals of unchastity, once so productive of jubilant adventure for the gossips of Main Street, now make a very feeble noise. His confidants only yawn when

Babbitt tells them of his imaginary adventures. They know that it is all only a devilish pose, and akin to the naughty pose of the traveling salesman.

The Prohibition movement gathered momentum in the small towns only when the scandal of drunkenness was abated and tamed; the movement to enforce chastity will get up steam only when the lovers of adventure begin to protest against the actual tameness of their lives. The pose of the little business man will then be taken as a real picture of him and his lies about his secret deviltries will be broadcasted as true horrors. The doctrine will appear everywhere that thousands of unfortunate individuals, names not given, would be the ornaments of their communities if the amorous aftermaths of evening automobile parties were prohibited, and an earnest program for that prohibition will be roared about until it is made into a law for all of us. The little business man will support such a law, for his mind, for all his sinful talk, really inclines him to chastity, as it inclines him to sobriety. He will see in the new statute a solid reason for abandoning his painful and unnatural pose as a frolicking faun. It will shine before him as a triumph of his own virtuous instincts. It will seek to make others live as he lives, and so give him an austere sense of rectitude, and a new dignity as a good citizen.

What classes, then, will suffer? Not that of the husbandmen certainly, for chastity is as impossible on the farm as it is troublous and painful in the towns. From infancy the agriculturalist has before him examples of the dreadful passions of the

beasts, who first discover to him the mystery of mysteries. In the fields he usually works alone, and the life around him inspires him to loose and lush meditations. The hot, heavy air of the haying season, laden with the aphrodisiacal odors of clover, affects him like a sensuous drug as he drowns on the mower seat. Much of his life is spent in this drowsy riding, not only on the mower, but also on the rake, the binder, the gang plow, the disk, the roller, the grain drill, the corn-planter and the cultivator. Great sweating horses plod brutishly as he wills; he breathes the earthly odors of stirred soil, and the heavy scent of the hay falling over the droning sickle. He lives among brutes and strong odors. How could angelic ideas blossom in such a life? He may think a great deal about his God when he grows old, but he is stung in the flesh while he is young. He must be valiant and strong, indeed, to overcome the temptations that beset him. The marks of the bitter struggle are on most farmers; nervous disorders rage among them.

For the farmer does struggle fiercely. He puts on righteousness as an armor against the devil; he tries to lose himself in labor; but the voices and shapes around him remain earthy and unashamed; they are images of sin to his tormented soul. His play at the day-end is not among crowds under lamps, but with one in the moonlight and shadows. His are wayside wooings on country roads, where every lonely lane and every silent grove is an incitement to hazardous lingering. He cannot fail to yield to such overpowering temptations, and so he is oppressed by a helpless sense of his weakness against sin; remorseful, embittered, he becomes its most violent hater. Live among country people and the highest talk you hear will be on the consequences of sin, the wrecks of men and women who have succumbed. Has a noble dream or a vision of beauty ever come directly from the fields? I think not. But they are the source of all the fanatical moral and political uprisings that shake

the world—all of them symptoms of the farmer's rage against the evils that overcome him. The notion that the open spaces breathe a spirit of simple virtue is only another of the idiocies of the poets, who forget that true country fairy, the satyr. When the poet goes to the fields he admits that he himself is made amorous by the clover bloom, yet he would have it that the farmer, a simpler and more carnal man, is uplifted by the same hellish scents.

II

The suffering working class of the cities is the unwilling martyr, in this great free Republic, of every righteous cause, and it will be the chief victim when the cure of unchastity is officially begun. Unlike the trader's, the laborer's mind repels practicalities and he is glad to forget his job when the day is done. Unlike the farmer, he has to seek temptations rather than avoid them. Unselfconscious, unpretentious, he is the eternal child, and he can only show hurt astonishment when he is convicted of sin. He is the guinea pig of the sociologists, and is always the first to be given a new serum for all the sorrows of the world. After much kicking and squealing he escapes—only to be taken and dosed again. Cured of drink, he has now turned to amour. He pursues his new diversion innocently enough; he is nearer the philanderer than the libertine; but the legend which pictured him as a wife-beating sot in other days indicates what accusations will be fired at him in his new rôle, once the state undertakes to save him again.

A drinking laborer myself after my fifteenth year, I have seen little worse than noisy social drinking in the industrial districts of the big cities. Only in the small ranch towns of the West have I seen whole groups of men insanely drunk. It was a common occurrence in sagebrush saloons for drunken sheep-herders to baa idiotically like their sheep. There, too, pop-eyed cowboys would break forth with lunatic

yells after the fourth drink, and the honest homesteader would glower and snarl unintelligibly over his liquor, and then drive furiously from town at a late hour, answering the howls of the coyotes with screams of rage, a possessed man when he reached his lonely home. Such men went mad over the temporary ease and freedom that alcohol gave them.

The town laborer drank his beer innocently, sociably and temperately—in his home, in some friend's home, or in his club, the cheap saloon. Such drinking was the main part of his social life; it was destroyed by Prohibition, and he had to devise a new release from the agony of living. Except for feeble experiments in home-brewing he has now abandoned alcohol; it is prohibitively costly, and group-drinking, his true delight, has become difficult, for in towns the law is always around the corner and the working man cannot bribe it. Prohibition thwarted his pleasure for a long time; it denied him solace in the dark depression of 1921; it very nearly made a sad, dull fellow of him. But now he has something new—and it is something that shines with the most glittering and sinful splendor beside the puny little wickedness of the days of beer. For, in spirit at least, he has joined the gay unchaste. After two years in small mill and ranch towns, I have again visited the industrial cities of the Northwest and found him so. His old coarse, boisterous jovialness is gone, and he has etiquette, but a light of hell is beginning to shine again in his eyes. He has come out of the confusion of the war, he has recovered from the depression of the first years of peace, and his physical energy and appetites have been fed by two years of prosperity. He no longer pouts and cries against Prohibition as he did when he half believed that his harmless drinking was the monstrous iniquity that the legislatures voted it to be. Now his resentment is gone, the preachers are forgotten—and when he is not at labor he innocently pursues the unterrified flapper of his kind.

In any study of the new American working man first consideration must be given to the effects upon him of the dance-hall and the small automobile, the two most powerful agencies of Venus in his life. The astonishing increase of both is evident everywhere, but the reason of the vast demand for them has not, I think, been publicly revealed. The public dance-halls of the pre-war era were frequented mostly by youths of the clerk class. Men of brawn danced only on special occasions, at balls given by their unions and the like. Their habitual diversions were cards and beer at home, beer and talk with the gang in the saloon, and occasional tours among the red lights. Most of them who were over twenty-five would rather have attended Sunday-school regularly than a public dance-hall.

But behold them now! The moral investigator of dance-halls sees the male dancers only as so many Satans from whom the girls must be saved; they seem to have no other mark of interest. Yet a large part of the male dancers now are working men between twenty-five and forty-five, just as a large part of the drinkers in cheap saloons in the pre-war days were working men of the same age. The knowing beholder observes rough hands and crooked fingers protruding from Rochester coat sleeves; he sees the shop grease and the fireroom soot holding stubbornly to the skin of the machinist, the millwright and the fireman; he discovers the carpenter and the bricklayer by the marks and calluses on their hands, the lumber-handler by his stoop and stiff walk, and the logger by his long, climbing stride.

The halls are thick and smelly with them every night; they dance awkwardly and with roughness, and, despite their barbers, clothiers and new manners, they have no pretty charms. They are still laborers; honest, sober, industrious fellows, not occupied with swarms of insect ideas, not gloomily bellicose from struggles with the tempter and ripe for God, but men whose main business in life is to work with their

hands and who now pursue the delightful female in their hours of ease just as they sought forgetfulness at Fritz's bar in other days. And the girls welcome them joyously. They see the dollars which, in those days, would have gone into the barkeeper's till, now going into monthly payments to the Dodge agent for a sedan. And the oldest profession languishes and the gas stations flourish as Phil and Mart step out with Cora and Jane for that new floor at the beach forty miles away.

III

Prohibition has been a fairy godmother to the working girl. She suffered like Cinderella in her rags when the saloons took the plumber in his idle hours. He then gave her nothing but deference, respect and chivalrous regard. No one, indeed, could praise virtuous womanhood more eloquently than the hard-handed man with the last drink of the evening in his hand.

"You know it 'n' I know it, Shorty. 'Tain't no use d'nyin' they's anythin' sweeter 'n nisher 'n' lovelier 'n' more of 'n angel in this here life than a hones' to God clean, desh'nt girl. Damn it, ol' feller, when I think how you 'n' me hog aroun' this way 'n' mix up with ol' battle-axes what jus' want our money, I could cry. Makes me feel 'shame' to look good girl in the face. Hones' to God, we jus' nasherly ain't no use, Shorty, for if we was, . . . No thanks, ol' feller; can't stan' 'nother one. . . . Jus' wanna talk 'bout good girls, tha's all."

Words of honest emotion, heard every night in the old saloons, but seldom on the tongues of men today. The girl who sat by the fire in the Winter and rocked on the porch in the Summer, waiting for some toiler to break away from his gang and seek her hand—this girl, I fear, resented the exaggerated respect and worship that an inebriated sentimentality gave to her. But now, as she often expresses it, she has got the world by the tail—and the credit

for this new independence and glory goes rightly to the Uplift. Science and Art may claim that they have contributed the cheap motor car and jazz to the cause, but the Uplift alone has given the working girl the free spirit that she now possesses. It has given her, through Prohibition, what she has always wanted most—many men, all of them willing, all of them ardent. An uneasy Uplift is beginning to feel stirs of doubt about the change. Ere long, no doubt, it will begin to yell.

But the working girl is having shining hours for a time, at any rate. Cinderella is now in her glory at the ball. Her prince is the honest workingman. Her coach is a flivver sedan. The odious days of beer and strumpets are no more. Her elder sister remembers enviously that in her own youth she felt lucky to have a male caller in the parlor or a bashful companion on a moonlight walk. She remarks every evening that Cinderella only thinks of her home as a place where she can eat, sleep and dress. When dinner is done—it is supper no longer—the working girl has hardly changed to her dancing things before she hears a honking in the street. The sunburned, dressed-up tin-roofer is waiting in his sport six for her, or the less favored truck-driver is sitting in his repainted sedan, admiring, while he waits, the new purple and green curtains that he has modestly bought for the car windows. . . .

The car ride over the highway built by the money of the helpless taxpayer ends when the crowd returns to Jenkins' Jazz Palace in town, or it is broken by a stop at Pearl Beach. At some place there is dancing. Couples dance for a while, then they meander out in the moonlight and sit in their cars; they return and dance and depart again. It is the custom. Supper afterward at the Oriental Café or the Tumblein Roadhouse. Sometime after midnight Cinderella is in bed, pawed but happy—dreaming that the fairy story will last forever.

What more could she dream for? She might, indeed, adorn her imaginings with

the figures of a rich young Adonis, a movie hero, a champion pugilist or other such gorgeous fellow. But she does not envy the gentler girls who ride on street cars to dull parties with budding young lawyers, aspiring young business men and struggling young doctors. A twelve-dollar-a-day saw-filer shines above them with a blinding glitter. Today is Cinderella's golden age.

The consternation of the Uplift at her perversity in enjoying her new freedom has been manifested already in sundry studies, protests and exposés. But we still await the grand announcement that unchastity has succeeded alcohol as the national pestilence. This announcement, I believe, will not be made until the new ease and freedom of manners among the lowly have become country-wide. It is now only forming, and no doubt it is in different states of development in different parts of the country. But I have had men from Minneapolis, Chicago and Des Moines tell me that "it's the same old stuff back there. All the working stiff's is buying cars, and they's a new shimmy parlor started somewheres in town every week." The workingman who is over thirty and has thus lived something of the old life is not quite sure of himself in the new game; the younger man, who is starting out by buying a "bug," and who hopes to work up to a thousand-dollar sedan, is the one who will perfect it.

IV

I hope it will not be thought that, because I am a laborer myself, I shut my eyes to the evil that the growing looseness among us may do. It can be pernicious, just as the occasional drunkenness among laborers was once pernicious. I am not familiar with any but the physician's argument for the virtue of men, but it seems to me that, in regard to laborers, it may be of quite as much importance as the virtue of woman. It is argued that the virtue of woman is the chief necessity of the

race, for it is the foundation of motherhood. No doubt it needs a good mother to inspire her son to rise above a laborer's life and become a salesman, a lawyer, a preacher or a politician. Yet these are all men whom we could get along without very comfortably. On the other hand, if a father is a hod-carrier, a stevedore or a ditch-digger, he must be an upstanding man of heroic qualities to make his son want to have a job alongside the old man. And hod-carriers, stevedores and ditch-diggers are very useful people. Drunkenness among working men worked its greatest evil when it destroyed the glamor of fatherhood. The drunken bricklayer's son, disgusted with his father's swinishness, would resolve to climb from such a life; there is no doubt that we would have been spared many unnecessary editorial writers, chiropractors, and auctioneers if more bricklayers had stayed sober and made their sons admire them. Fortunately, most working men in the old days were sober and lived so as to give the country a plenitude of honest he-men. Fortunately, the workingman of today, for all his new goatishness, is only occasionally a genuine libertine.

The fact is that this working man, taking him as he runs, is only a grown-up boy with an irrepressible instinct for play. He is a spendthrift, and he is seduced by ridiculous gaudy follies. Any straw boss will tell you that one of his main difficulties is to stop roughhouse frolics on the job. The union leader organizes and bosses the worker as a scout-master does his troop. The worker bawls and whimpers when he is abused and oppressed. Even his discontent and rebelliousness are childish. He puts his fingers in dangerous places and the most ingenious safety devices cannot save him from accidents. He learns a task or a trade as the schoolboy learns the multiplication table.

Being so much a creature of instinct, he is safe from abominations and excesses, as children and animals are safe from them, if he has a few simple restrictions and

diversions to guide him. He needs always, above everything else, a necessity for work. He needs, again, pastimes for his idle hours that will keep him out of mischief. The saloon met both needs admirably. It got his wages, thus compelling him to stick to his job, and it kept him away from the dynamite in the libraries. His new wickedness, no matter what moralists say of it, will serve as well if it is allowed to develop naturally. The automobile agent and the dance-hall proprietor will get his money as the brewer and the saloon-keeper got it before. The charms of his sweeties will perhaps make him an even steadier worker than the old gang comradeship. And, for all his disillusionment about the virtue of the fair, he will marry, in the end, in one of his fits of

hopelessness and depression, as he has always done, and so the nation's supply of brawn will not diminish.

But his happy state, I fear, will not last. As it grows toward perfection it will be recognized as a major evil that carries none but the colors of sin. Then the bellows of agonized righteousness will arise from every quarter again and merge into a thunderous battle-cry; the drums will be beaten, the trumpets blown; criers will sound the warning in the streets, and riders at night will alarm the countryside; the embittered farmers and the ant hill minds will flock to the colors. And the poor working man in his party clothes, astounded and helpless, will be attacked and smitten until the new shape of Satan is knocked out of him.

THE HAMMER OF HERETICS

BY R. F. DIBBLE

IN 1893 Syracuse University was in a bad way. Financial difficulties, bickerings among the trustees, faculty squabbles, ominous mutterings among the student body—all sorts of troubles loomed. Something must certainly be done, and done quickly. It was obvious that there must be a complete change in administration. Chancellor Sims, doddering in his dotage, had just enough strength left to hurl a farewell Old Testament malediction at his brethren before he disappeared. His successor must be a man of entirely different calibre. Three qualities were absolutely indispensable and a fourth was very desirable: he must be a Methodist clergyman, and he must be exceptionally vigorous in body, in spirit, and, if possible, in mind. The Board of Trustees gave themselves with profound seriousness to the task of finding such a paragon.

John D. Archbold, son of a Methodist preacher, high official in the Standard Oil Company, and multi-millionaire, was the president of these trustees, and he joined in their labors by meditating long and powerfully, turning over and over in his mind the claims of various candidates for the chancellorship. He himself had received only a common-school education; but, having come into colossal wealth and power, he found himself constantly associating with men who, though infinitely his inferior in money and influence, were correspondingly superior in education. Keenly sensitive to this, Archbold determined that, even though he could not compass the higher intellectual processes personally, he could control them. He was willing, and even eager, to spend millions for the upbuilding of Syracuse University—provided that those

millions were used as he wished. To the peculiarly desirable characteristics of the new chancellor, Archbold accordingly added another: he must be a man who would implicitly believe and steadfastly preach, in season and indeed out of season, the doctrine that the lion of Nineteenth Century corporate wealth could lie down peacefully with the lamb of First Century Christianity. As Archbold searched for light, cherishing this thought, there suddenly flashed into his mind the name and figure of the Rev. James Roscoe Day, pastor of a New York City Methodist tabernacle in which Archbold himself held a very expensive but somewhat unfrequented pew.

The Rev. Mr. Day, indeed, seemed to have been created and trained by Providence for the very position of chancellor of Syracuse University. Born in 1846 on a farm in Maine, he had been a Methodist from infancy, and while still a young man he had also become a Christian. In 1872 he was ordained to the sacerdotal office, and in the years that followed his magnificent voice had thundered God's message from divers pulpits. A very successful pastoral career of six years in Portland, and then one of five years in Boston, resulted in his elevation to the high and puissant post of minister to the wealthy St. Paul's Church in New York. Robust and gigantic—he stood almost six feet six inches in his socks and weighed over two hundred and fifty pounds of solid bone and muscle—he had roughed it, in his youth, with cowboys in the Rockies, had never known a day's illness, and had never been tired for a moment. His vocal range extended from the deepest bass to the highest tenor; he could