

Stuffed Shirt

By Roland Pertwee

The story of a man who had to go to Paris to learn the truth about himself—and the girl who taught him

AT THE back of the recording box, among rolls of carpet, stage props, a make-up table and electric equipment, walked a girl. In her hands fluttered a few sheets of script. Her eyes were shut and her lips moved mechanically. Then her eyes opened and she stamped on the floor.

Was it this way that the chance she had waited for so long should come? Had all her faith and capital been invested in this? To be given a part to play that had no truth in it. To speak lines that no real person would ever utter. Life could not be as cynical as that.

One of the camera crew stopped and touched her arm.

"What a break, kid, to get your first part in a Raynor Galt picture!"

Raynor Galt! By all accounts, a great man. Surely he would understand how the conscience of an artist rebels against speaking lines that have no relation to human instincts or emotions. She must talk to him—explain her point of view. Meanwhile . . . Get the stuff into her head.

Her eyes closed and her lips moved again, silently.

Raynor Galt entered the studio and took his seat in a canvas chair bearing his name. He stared at the set.

It was a simple and homely set—a kitchen parlor. The window sills on the outside were dressed with synthetic snow. The property man was hanging pretties on a Christmas tree.

"You!" said Galt, addressing the man.

"Me, Chief?"

"Abolish yourself."

The man withdrew. Off the set he gave vent to his opinions. That guy Galt! One of these days somebody was going to take a swing at him. That smooth, baby face of his was going to collide with a shut fist, traveling fast.

But a man with as many smash hits to his credit as Raynor Galt had no need to bother about the feelings of lesser fry. Success had made him invulnerable—callous. He could do what he liked.

FROM the ateliers of the Latin Quarter, Raynor Galt had gravitated from canvas to the screen; from "shorts" made on Long Island to super-productions in Hollywood; from a sensitive, striving art student to one of the most successful movie directors on the Coast. Raynor Galt had had the breaks. His triumphs owed little to personal genius. He had discovered a formula—and it sold. What genius he had once possessed lay buried beneath the dust of boundless self-opinion.

Other people's troubles had scored no lines upon his face, which is why, notwithstanding his forty years, a spurious youth still clung to it. He went through life unmoved and insensitive and unaware that success had robbed him of the

joy of looking forward to anything.

He passed both hands over his very fair hair and yawned.

The picture would be finished with the close of this day's work. Then what? He supposed that he and his new wife would go away somewhere. Europe? Juan-les-Pins? It was not an amusing program.

His assistant director came up.

"Ready to go, sir?"

"I suppose so—yes. Oh, that new girl! Show her to me. And don't take all day!"

He did not hear his assistant swear as he went to fetch the girl.

Sheila Faye came on through a door in the back of the set.

"Stand there!" said Raynor Galt's voice. "Let's have some light."

An electrician intoned: "Hit your lights."

Sheila Faye could not see Raynor Galt, because he was hidden behind the arcs that blazed up at his command. Obedient to instructions she stood without moving.

GALT wondered at first what Hofer, the casting director, had been thinking of. The girl looked like a bit of crumpled paper tossed away as useless. His eyes traveled up and fastened upon her small, threadbare face. From it a pair of dark eyes stared wisely and with courage. She posed as if standing for a still picture. She reminded him of his early days as a student in the ateliers of Paris.

The appeal that she made was not to the senses, but to something finer and forgotten in him. He could not remember in years seeing anybody who struck him as being so real as this girl. Sensibility had lined a face otherwise young. She did not seem to have anything to do with Hollywood or with pictures. She was like a piece of life—actual, eager and sensitive.

Unaccustomed to giving more than a passing thought to the human material supplied for his pictures, he resented the interest she awakened in him.

"For pity's sake relax and move about a bit."

She obeyed, readily, with movements that were natural and never aimless. She went to the fire and warmed her hands. She was, Galt saw, an artist.

He was offended. A novice was not expected to show such ability.

"That'll do—that'll do!" he protested. "Sit down facing the window."

She did so, revealing a finely drawn, hungry profile. Her chin was small and purposeful. Once more she had fallen into a pose and was holding it.

"You're not an artist's model, girl?" he said.

"I was once."

The reply flattered his powers of discernment.

"Paris?"

"London and Paris. I used to work at the Atelier du Garde. Then I was left



He had almost forgotten Sheila Faye until he saw her standing on the model's throne. Somebody cried, "Here is a bird without wings!"



"And now," said the girl, "I am fired. But before I leave this floor, I'm going to tell you something, Mr. Galt"

James W. Earley

five hundred dollars and came out here to try my luck in pictures. This is my first chance."

Galt sighed.

"An amateur!"

"No. I've done some acting—hoofing—on the road. Went to Paris with The Peerless Troupe and was stranded."

"May we have your life history some other time?"

He could not tolerate listening. He started to explain the part she was to play.

"Yes, I've read it—I know it," she said; hesitated, took courage and added: "It's all wrong."

GALT did not believe he had heard aright.

"It may interest you to know that I wrote the script myself."

But that did not frighten her. She just looked sorry.

"You wouldn't know," she said. "You're a success. I'm supposed to be a waif off the street. You wouldn't know that kind of girl."

A stillness fell in the studio, for Raynor Galt had been challenged. The event was unheard of. He summoned the aid of sarcasm.

"Teach me," he said.

Sheila Faye did her best.

"Where's a kid off the street going to learn to talk like a cross between a regius professor and an old Virginian mother?"

Galt was staggered, for women never answered him back.

"You were not invited to rewrite the script, Miss—Miss—"

"Faye—Sheila Faye."

"Miss Faye. You're here to do as you are told—by me."

Her composure was unshaken.

"This is my first chance," she said. "Naturally I want to get it right."

The assistant director had never heard anything like it.

"Fire her!" he suggested.

But Galt had his own methods of dealing with insubordination.

"Everybody on for rehearsal," he said.

Without rising from his chair, he attacked her every movement and intonation. She fought back on every point. Inevitably it was a losing battle. The final run-through revealed a piece of acting stereotyped in every detail.

"Let's shoot it," said Galt.

SHE made one last protest before the silence bell.

"You don't really want me to do it that way—that old-fashioned way?"

Galt marked a tremor of passionate indignation held in check.

"If you would be so kind."

"You've asked for it," said she.

A number was cried aloud and a pair of wooden tongs clapped noisily. The scene had begun.

A knock at the door and the girl walked in.

Her written lines were never spoken. She came down to her chalk marks and quoted:

"The lamp of our Youth will be utterly out: but we shall subsist on the smell of it,

And whatever we do, we shall fold our hands and suck our gums and think well of it.

Yes, we shall be perfectly pleased with our work,

And that is the perfectest hell of it!"

Until she had finished, Galt lacked the initiative to give the command "Cut it."

"And now," said the girl, "I am fired. But before I leave this floor, I'm going to tell you something. You're a spoiled child, Mr. Galt, with less knowledge of art or life than the guy who does geometrical designs for oilcloth. Life is

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Cradle Snatchers

By Ray Tucker

Collier's Washington Staff Writer

Despairing of a generation that not only knows what it wants but insists on getting it, the apostles of Reform are laying their nets for the young. The younger the better: they won't throw any of them back

ALTHOUGH presidential and congressional latchkeys no longer hang low for the visits of reformers, as they did during the last decade, the self-anointed keepers of the public morals know no discouragement. They have not been reformed by the nation-wide demonstration that the people want a rest from official and unofficial censorship of their personal conduct; they are more incorrigible than the intemperate villain of Ten Nights in a Barroom, who would not go home until he was thrown out of the saloon.

The present period of liberalism, which permitted a President to wage a successful campaign for repeal and to smoke openly while doing so, a Secretary of the Treasury to twang a guitar over the radio, a Postmaster-General to dedicate a race track in Texas, and a Hugh Johnson to ionize the air with "hells" and "damns," impresses them as only a brief halt in the forced march of a conscript army toward purity and perfection.

Although they disagree in their diagnosis of the causes of the remarkable revulsion of sentiment which swept the United States in the last year—a reversal that manifests itself in nudist colonies, legalization of liquor and scrapping of blue laws, the guardians of godliness are agreed on one thing: 50,000,000 sinners can't be right.

Reform Row clings as tenaciously to the narrow slopes of Capitol Hill as Rum Row remained off the Jersey Coast during the days of triumphant "thou shalt nots," and the dwellers in both dingy and palatial shrines of reform within a few blocks of the national legislature profess a strange lack of concern over the nation's erring ways. They deplore and deprecate, of course, but with an ecstatic gleam in their eyes. Though they cover their faces lest they look upon a panorama of legalized gambling and prize-fighting, fan dances and barbarous night clubs, increased consumption of tobacco, sexy motion pictures, and, root of all evil, governmental sale of liquor, they profess a cheerfulness explainable only on the basis that the reform instinct, like mother love, dotes upon ugly and unregenerate ducklings. The uglier, the better.

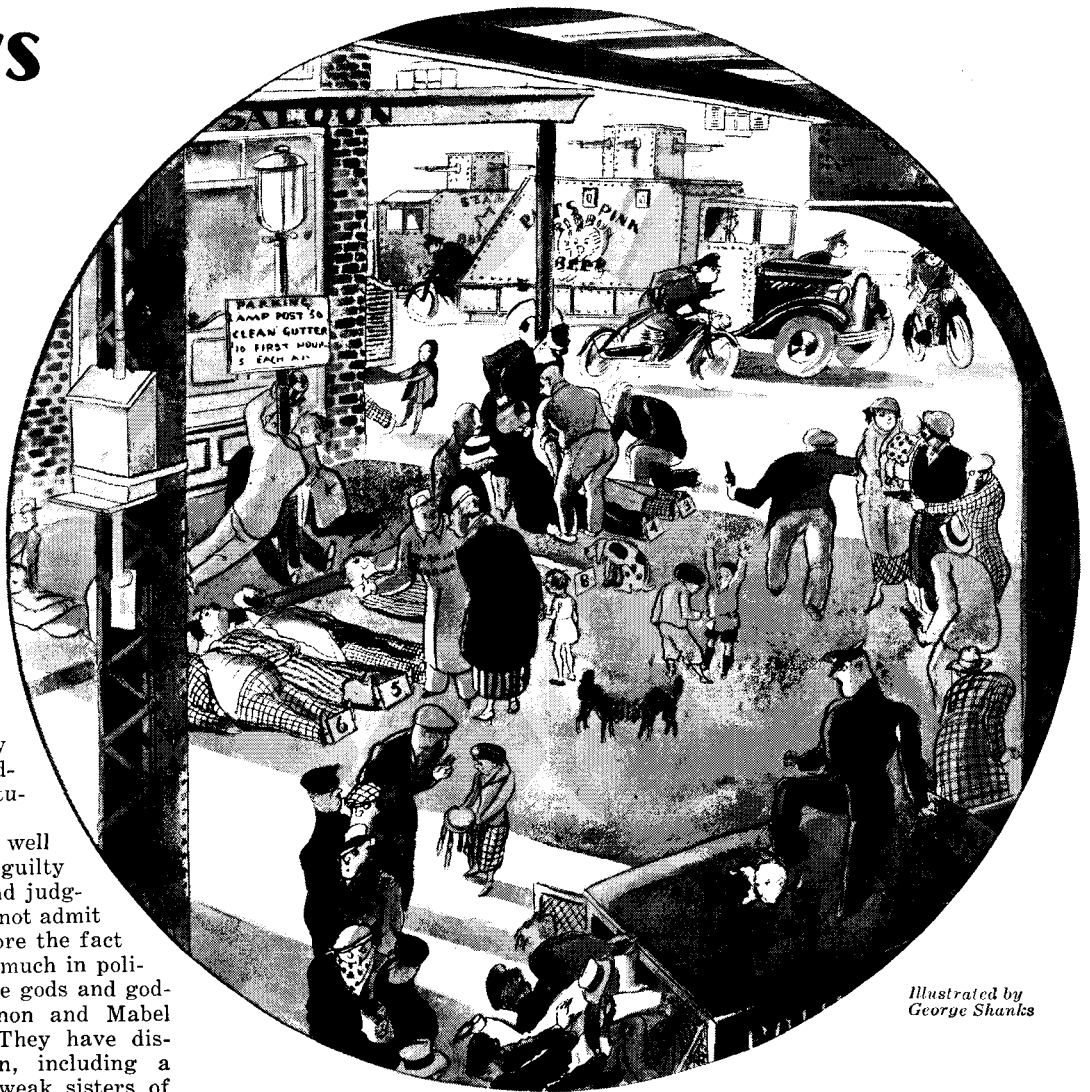
They are in a delightful daze. Their attitude seems to be that they don't know what hit them, but they're

glad it did. It gives them something and somebody to pray at again. It will, they console themselves, arouse "our people" from the lethargy that overcame them after they had written dry and blue laws into federal and state constitutions.

Making inventory as well as prayer, they plead guilty to mistakes of policy and judgment which they would not admit in the past. They deplore the fact that they mixed up too much in politics, following such false gods and goddesses as Bishop Cannon and Mabel Walker Willebrandt. They have discovered that statesmen, including a President or two, are weak sisters of holiness in a political pinch, and that they must reform the people before they try to dictate to the White House and Congress, and to reenthroned prohibition and its correlated commandments.



These are trying days for the professionally righteous



Illustrated by George Shanks

The same policy commends itself to those pleasant persons who measure a "nation's degradation" in terms of cigarettes, gambling, pugilism, nudism and dancing—with or without fans. They will henceforth depend for refreshment of spirit and redemption of a nation upon prayer rather than politics, upon education rather than ballot-box evangelism.

This shift of emphasis means a decentralization of the grand army of reform, and an eventual exodus of the evangelists from the capital. Instead of chasing through the corridors of Congress, parading departmental hallways and ringing White House doorbells, they will carry their appeal to red schoolhouses and white churches. Seeking to educate and evangelize the younger generation which knew not the wickedness its elders embrace, they will turn to elementary and high schools, universities and their own extension courses; they hope to rewrite textbooks and reorganize curricula. They will light their camp fires on the doorsteps of legislatures from Maine to Texas, figuring that they can handle small political units more effectively than massed forces on Capitol Hill.

The reformers will work to save as much territory as possible from the encroachment of evil, confident that they can elect selectmen and state legis-

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lators more easily than a President and a Congress, and keep them straight once they are in office. Their patience is appalling. In their farewell to Washington, the scene of such sweet victories, they say that they will never again advocate national prohibition until assured that it will stick. It may require a generation or more, but what is that to a martyr? Better fifty years of legalized liquor than a cycle of unaccepted and, therefore, unenforceable prohibition! They predict that liquor will yet bring back the excesses of an older day and, as O. J. Christgau of the Anti-Saloon League puts it, "the people will be disgusted after a while with swearing, staggering and spitting in the streets, and with empty pay envelopes on Saturday night."

"Repeal," sighs Mr. Christgau, "is like an old house burning down. You are sorry because of a sentimental attachment, but you know that some day a stronger structure will arise in its place."

Street scenes under repeal, in the dries' conviction, will glorify their cause more than paper precepts of prohibition. They also expect that the social sins charged to Volsteadism—racketeering, bootlegging and other forms of lawlessness—will continue during the "temporary suspension" of the Eighteenth Amendment, thereby disproving the wets' arguments.

Ha-ha-ing heartily, the venerable Dr. Clarence True Wilson denies that there is any reason for discouragement. This cheerful spark plug of the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals is too busy planning for the future to bother about the present

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