

Cradle Snatchers

By Ray Tucker

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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.

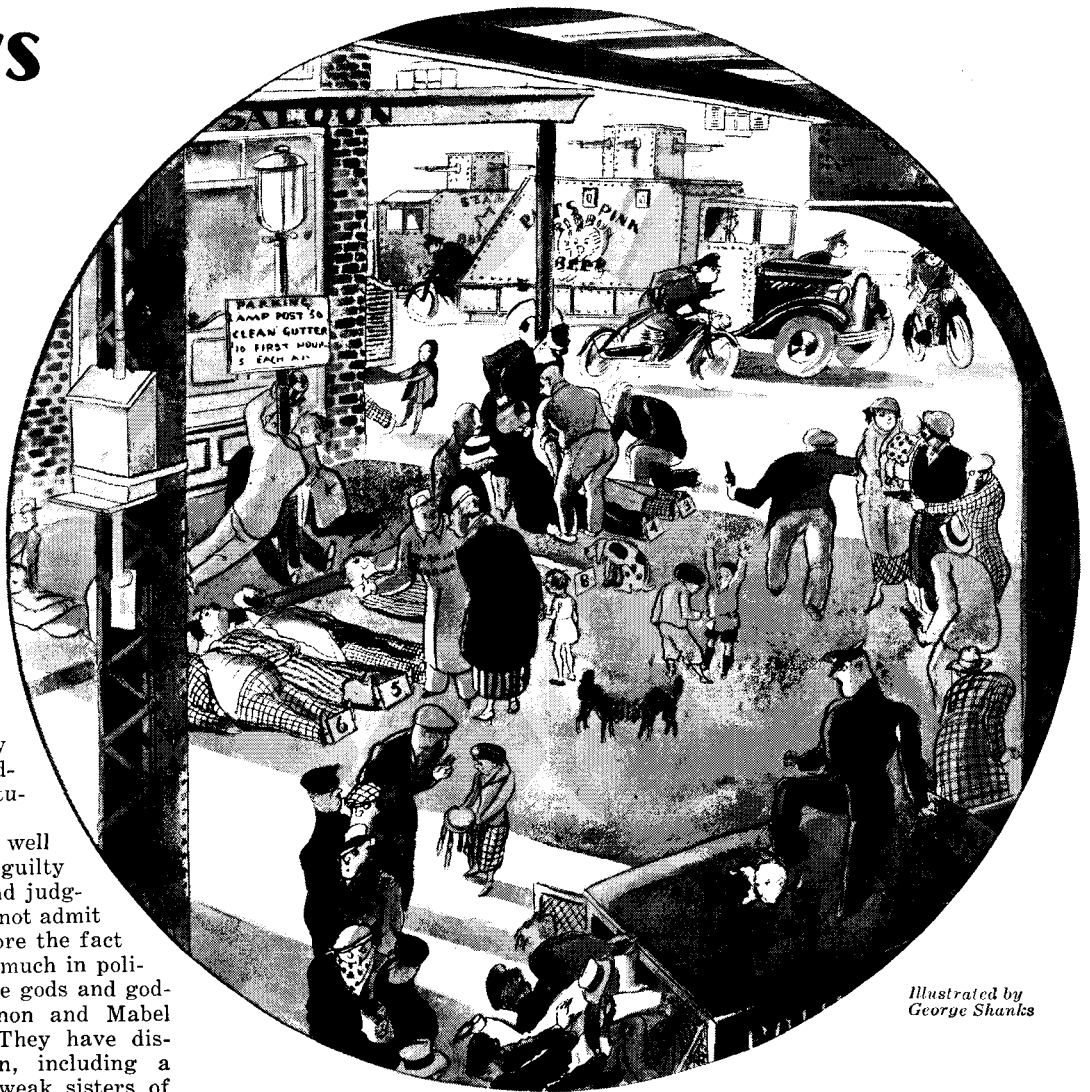
They are in a delightful daze. Their attitude seems to be that they don't know what hit them, but they're

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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The Last Season

By George S. Brooks

Males have a sneaking suspicion that the woman who understands football is a rare bird. This is the story of a woman who knew a few things you won't find in a rules book

MRS. DAD BENTON tossed unhappily upon her twin bed and heard the big clock strike each hour from ten to seven. She also listened to the steady drumming of November rain.

"Darn it," she thought bitterly. "They'll be playing in a duck pond. And there isn't a webbed foot on our squad."

At seven o'clock the phone rang. She ran downstairs without stopping for her slippers. "Hello."

"Hello, Kitty."

"How's the team, Dad?"

"Okay," he replied, trying to keep his voice cheerful. He'd taken the squad off campus the noon before. He liked to keep the boys quiet for twenty-four hours before the Depew game.

"Think it's clearing up?"

"It seems lighter," said her husband. "I'm sending an assistant manager down for my storm hat and slicker. Have them ready, will you, Honey?"

"Yes, Dad. You can't do much with a passing game in this slop, can you?"

"It will be cleared off by game time. Sure to." He didn't believe it and neither did she. "I think you'd better sit in the press box. No use in your getting chilled. I'll have a chair put up there for you."

"Thanks." The press box was covered. That was how much he thought it would stop raining. "Anything else?"

"Nothing, Kitty." His voice sounded tired. He was too old for this grind. That hard cold he caught last fall was almost pneumonia. It had frightened her. And he worried so when the team didn't win. She knew it would add years to his life if he'd just resign and buy that suburban place near Dad Junior's.

"How's the Brewster boy's stomach?" That halfback was just like a sick cat when he was nervous.

"Okay, so far."

"Here's luck, Dad."

"I hope so. We need it." The phone clicked.

"Darn," muttered Mrs. Dad. "Darn everything. Darn light, clever teams and passing halfbacks who couldn't work in the mud. If they only had a line like that 1909 squad—or was it 1910? They were mudders. Darn alumni clubs and engineering profs who flunked good backs. Darn the weather." She caught herself. The weather might be a godsend for Dad and herself. Dad would take a terrible beating today. Then he'd simply have to retire. He'd be thrown out. That was the best thing, since he wouldn't quit of his own free will. It would hurt him, today's score. But it was all for his own good.

How she hated Depew, from the hand-shaking president of the university to the lean-faced Tommy Artz who coached them. Artz wasn't fit to be a doormat for Dad's cleated shoes.

She climbed the stairs slowly, letting out the braid in her hair as she went.

No wonder Dad was gray. Look at the skinny youngsters with flivver legs who came to college these days. Even Dad couldn't make a team from such material.

Kitty paused. She must call him back. Tell him to give the Brewster boy minced red and green peppers on his roast beef at lunch. Best thing in the world for a tricky digestion. And young Collins ought to have a spoonful of bismuth in a glass of water at 9:30 and again at noon.

Before she dressed, she did her bending exercises, touching her toes fifty times. Not so bad for a grandmother. But this morning the thought didn't cheer her. So she lay down on the rug and bicycled with her feet for five minutes more. It was no use. Her morale was still lower than a glee club basso.

She ate her coddled eggs and dry toast slowly. The morning paper commented upon the wet field, prophesied rain and colder, quoted odds of 4 to 1 against Jackson College. "No team is 4 to 1 better than Dad's, not even if he had to put me in at quarter," she assured herself. "Artz has weight and today he has a slippery field just when it counts. But they needn't add up the touchdowns yet."

THE doorbell rang. She handed a bundle wrapped in a light rubber coat to the freshman who stood dripping on the steps. "Tell Dad I said for him to put on woolen socks. They're in there. And don't drop it. There's a pint of whisky in the slicker pocket. Someone might have a chill. If they don't, tell him I said to pour it down the referee and umpire between the halves. We want the breaks today and it might help."

She cleared away the breakfast things, placed paper, kindling and logs

across the andirons in the fireplace. The room would be cozy for Dad right after the game. She made an Irish stew with plenty of onions and set it simmering in the fireless cooker. Dad liked stew better than anything else. He was going to take this hard today. Too bad. He should have quit after his last unbeaten team.

She found the press box fuller than a first reunion. Newspapers always featured the Jackson-Depew game. There were forty years of tradition behind it. It didn't seem possible, thought Kitty, that she'd seen twenty-five of them herself. No, only twenty-four. She missed the 1907 tie because she was in the hospital having Dad Junior. The darned baby spoiled one whole season for her. That was a flimsy excuse of Dad Junior's for not coming to the game. It was nonsense, his having to work. She knew the real reason. He didn't want to see his father's team kicked around. Junior knew his being there would make Dad feel even worse.

Kitty settled herself on the chair, which was too narrow for her hips. She adjusted her marine glasses, placed pad and pencil upon her knee, ready for the notes she meant to take. Then she looked about her.

Freshman managers were down upon the field, rolling back the tarpaulin that covered the playing surface. But it hadn't done much good. The boys sank to their shoetops in the boggy end zones and along the sidelines. A canvas cover was a good protection from a shower. A steady downpour like this soaked right through it.

On her right, a telegraph operator was clicking his key and eating an apple. He wrote something on a sheet of yellow paper which he passed to the reporter in front of him.

"What's your guess on the Princeton-

Yale game?" asked the newspaper man.

An anemic youth with a splotched face looked up from his typewriter. "I like Yale today."

"How much do you like 'em?"

"Dollar."

"It's a bet."

Fools, thought Mrs. Dad contemptuously. Why risk anything, even a dollar, on something they can't know about and can't see?

ON HER left sat an old man with a typewriter before him and a hot-water bottle upon his knees. He typed a few preliminary sentences, pausing now and then to warm his fingers upon the rubber bag. Poor circulation, she reflected. Exercise would help that.

"Come out fighting, old Depew, Come, ye warriors, tried and true,"

blared their band as the other team slithered out upon the field. Kitty rose from her chair.

"Lookit Artz's boys. Lookit the size of them. That center must weigh two and a quarter. And they're fast for big men," exclaimed a reporter.

"Made to order for a rainy day."

"Just too bad for old Dad Benton."

She winced to hear the pitying tone they used.

"Yeah. They'll take this game and Dad's scalp."

"The alumni are waiting for an excuse. They want him out. They want a younger man. Someone like Artz."

"Trouble with old Dad, he isn't a showman."

"That Artz, now. He's a great showman."

She blinked hard and sniffed a little. She hoped there hadn't been any mistake about the minced peppers. Young Brewster would need all the stomach he had, if they were to hold Depew to a

