MAKING MOONSHINE.

THE "COPPER," THE "WORM" AND THE MAN BEHIND THE GUN.

Many Stills In the Picturesque Mountains of Georgia and North Carolina—The Process by Which the Whisky Is Manufactured.

It's cornmeal when it goes in, and it's proof liquor when it comes out. It's a little "worm" on the mountain top and a man behind a gun. It's keep your eye on guard 24 hours to the day and come out at the end of the year as poor as the dully respectable farmer, your neighbor. It's a risky business all the way through, but when it comes right down to the fascination it's the ideal. It's "moonshine whisky," that's what it is, and it grows in the country "where there ain't no Ten Commandments and a man can raise a thirst."

The moonshiner is an ignorant countryman, very uncouth in appearance, but as shrewd as a Connecticut Yankee. He is also a prince of hospitality, as may be said of nearly all of the Georgia and North Carolina mountaineers. He lives with a sword of Damocles constantly suspended above his head, and no one is more conscious of this fact than he is. As he is in daily, almost hourly, fear of detection, he regards every one with more or less suspicion. Every stranger who arrives in the neighborhood is looked upon as a possible revenue officer, and every knock on the door of his dwelling is answered with inward feelings of doubt and nervousness.

The reader must not infer from this that the moonshiner is a coward, for he is not. As a rule he resolutely opposes any interference with his calling even to the shedding of blood, if this can be accomplished without too much risk of detection.

The extreme northern part of the state of Georgia contains some of the roughest, wildest and most grandly beautiful scenery in the Union. Throughout this region are numberless high mountains, roaring torrents, deep gorges and almost impenetrable laurels. Amid such picturesque surroundings—in the most inaccessible parts, at some distance from public roads and trails—the moonshiner sets up his still. The spot chosen is in most cases in the twilight depths of a laurel screened gorge, through which rushes a crystal stream of water. Sometimes the apparatus is housed in a cave which has been excavated for that purpose in the side of the mountain gorge, but as a rule it is in the open air, being simply covered with a roof of split boards. The dwelling of the operator is seldom nearer than a quarter of a mile.

The apparatus is not complex. A copper still, dubbed the "copper," about 18 or 20 inches in diameter and of equal height; a coil of copper pipe several feet in length, called the "worm;" several tubs or casks for holding the mash and for catching the drippings from the worm; a mash stick, or stirring fork, and a small, narrow bottle in which to test the liquor, these articles comprise the entire outfit. The still is set over a stone furnace, while the worm, with one end connected to the copper, rests in a barrel of running water from the stream near by.

Coarsely ground cornmeal is carried to the still, and a certain quantity, depending upon the capacity of the apparatus, is stirred in boiling water until it is thoroughly cooked. This is called "mash" and is about the consistency of ordinary dough. It is allowed to stand in the fermenters in which it was mixed for 12 to 36 hours. After fermentation has taken place water is added and the mass broken up with a mash stick. When it is free from lumps and about as thick as buttermilk, it is called "beer." At this stage the liquid is not unpleasant to drink. In fact, large quantities of it are consumed by the moonshiner and his family and friends.

Rye or, more commonly, corn malt (from a handful or two to eight pounds to the bushel of meal or tub of beer) is then added to the beer, and it is again allowed to ferment, this time from 72 to 96 hours. At the end of this second fermentation the copper is filled with a semi-liquid (still called "beer") and boiled off.

The steam condenses on and passes off through the worm, and the first drippings are called "singlings." When the strength of the beer becomes exhausted, the refuse, or "pot tail," is removed and fresh beer put in its place. As soon as enough singlings are accumulated the still is filled up with this liquid, and it is redistilled. The product of this latter and final step in the process is corn whisky or proof spirits.

With the crude apparatus and methods of the moonshiner a bushel of meal will yield about two gallons of whisky, whereas the same measure of grain should yield three or more gallons under improved methods.

Contrary to common belief, moonshine whisky is generally of very poor quality. These mountaineer distillers have little or no knowledge of rectification, and fusel oil is therefore present in its original proportions; besides, the liquor is sold before it has had time to age. Strange as it may seem, moreover, adulterations are quite often used, such as tobacco or buckeye bark, for adding to the intoxicating quality of weak liquor, and the addition of soap or lye to make it hold a good "bead." According to the moonshiner, good, unadulterated liquor when shaken in a bottle will contain numerous bubbles on the surface. If four or more of these bubbles remain against the edge of the bottle for some minutes it is said to "hold a good bead." Notwithstanding the poor quality of the average moonshine whisky, however, the unadulterated article is not infrequently equal to and even above government proof.

The product is disposed of in several ways. A considerable portion is sold and given away at the still itself and at the dwelling of the operator. Another method is as follows: A hollow tree or cave adjacent to the nearest village is designated by common consent of the moonshiner and some of his friends, one or more of whom acts as agent between the seller and buyer. When a resident of the village wishes some whisky, he hands the necessary money, together with a jug or bottle, to the agent, who deposits both in the secret place and goes his way. After a lapse of several hours, usually 12 or more, the agent returns and finds the money gone and the receptacle full of the desired liquor, which he delivers to the customer. The latter seldom knows who actually made and sold him the stuff.—Birmingham (Ala.) Age-Herald.

The toy trade may be traced back in Thuringia to the middle ages.

Where Science Stumbles.

In a lecture on "The Progress and Tendency of Astronomy," delivered at Columbian university, Washington, Professor Simon Newcomb spoke of the determination of the exact motion of the solar system as one of the victories of the nineteenth century. It is determined that the solar system is moving forward in space 40,000 miles an hour, but whence it came or whither it is going no one can tell.

Mr. Newcomb does not believe instruments will ever be discovered that will allow astronomers to prove that rational inhabitants exist on other planets. The only way in which they can judge will be by conditions of other planets which would make it probable or improbable that rational beings such as are on the earth can live there.

Mars may be inhabited, but astronomers have not been able to draw any evidence on that subject one way or the other. What changes may come to the earth, the solar system or the universe can only be matters of uncertain speculation. Only one theory can be counted upon, and that is that "all things must end."

Philanthropy.

"How you must enjoy being a philanthropist!" said the sprightly young woman.

"I don't quite understand you," replied the man of earnest manners.

"It must be such a pleasure to feel that you have plenty of money and can always be doing good."

"Yes; but the only difficulty is that one can't always be sure whether he is doing good or being done good."—Washington Star.

Standing In His Own Light.

"I'll never give you up, Miss Perkins—never."

"That's it, Mr. Hopkins; I'd be afraid to marry such a determined, obstinate man as you are."—Detroit Free Press.

Its Changed Appearance.

"My, the house looks changed some way!" said the lady who had moved out a month or two before and returned to make a call and see what kind of furniture the new tenants had.

"Yes," her hostess replied; "we've cleaned it up."—Chicago Times-Herald.

Engagement Confidences.

"You trust me thoroughly, don't you, Ethel?"

"Of course, Edgar; but, tell me, are the installments on this diamond ring all paid off."—Chicago Record.

OLD TIME TRAVEL.

Plenty of Incident and Excitement In Stagecoach and Tavern Days.

Travel in the old times, of which Mrs. Alice Morse Earle writes in "Stagecoach and Tavern Days," may have been somewhat less comfortable than it is at present, but the leisurely pace and close quarters of the coach afforded opportunities for the study of human nature not excelled by those of the "palace car."

Nor was a journey lacking in incident. There was always the possibility of being upset, of being held up, of getting stuck in the mud and of being drowned in fording a stream. As a matter of fact, accidents were rare after the days of turnpikes, and the driver who had driven 300 days a year for 35 years without an accident was not a great exception.

There was, however, the constant necessity of trimming and balancing the coach to prevent it from overturning in the deep ruts which abounded, and the driver frequently called out, "Now, gentlemen, to the right!" upon which all the passengers stretched their bodies half way out of the carriage to balance on that side, and, "Now, gentlemen, to the left!" and so on.

Occasionally the flow of merriment and good humor, to which both driver and passengers contributed, was abruptly checked. A certain old veteran was driving once from Dover, N. H., to Haverhill, Mass. During the spring months the roads were often in a bad condition, and six horses, and sometimes ten, were needed to draw the coach.

In Epping, N. H., was a particularly hard place, locally known as the "soap mine." Through this mine of mud the driver helped to guide his coach and six, but the coach was heavily loaded, and in spite of the efforts of the skillful driver the team was soon fast in the mud, the wheels settling to the hubs.

All attempts of the horses were in vain. The driver finally got down from his seat, opened the coach door, made known to the passengers the condition of things and politely asked them to get out and lighten the load. This they all positively refused to do. They had paid their fares and did not think it their duty to get out in the mud.

"Very well," said the driver, and, quietly closing the door, he seated himself in the roadside.

In a few moments the passengers asked:

"What are you doing?"

"I'm waiting till the mud dries up," the driver replied. "The horses cannot draw the load, so that is the only thing I can do."

It is perhaps needless to add that he did not wait till the mud dried up.

The Wrong Instrument.

Irate Father—Here I've paid you no telling how much money to teach my daughter music, and she can't play any better than she did before. Whose fault is that?

Professor Van Note—Ze fault is ze instrument. I haf von instrument in my shop vich she learn to play soon.

Irate Father—Huh! Is it like this?

Professor Van Note—It looks like zis piano, but it goes mit a handle.

A MILITARY EXECUTION.

The Hanging of a Danny Deever Seen by Six Thousand Soldiers.

"I was compelled unwillingly some years ago," says a writer in Scraps, "to be a spectator at a military execution in a great station in the northwest provinces of India. There had been so many shooting cases of late that the commander in chief ordered the execution to take place on the parade ground and all the available troops to be on the ground. It was in the cold weather, two or three regiments were passing through, and these were ordered to go into camp until the dreaded day arrived.

"At daybreak the five British and four native regiments were marched to the parade ground and formed up into three sides of a square, on the incomplete side being a wooden platform which was topped by a couple of uprights and a crossbeam, from which a rope dangled ominously. As I was a noncom. I had a good opportunity of scrutinizing my comrades' faces as we 'stood easy.'

"As I glanced along the line my thoughts went back to the day when I had seen many of these men engaged in the bloodiest battle of modern days, working their 'tools' among the seething masses of heathendom, with that proud flush on their faces never seen except on the faces of victorious troops. Now every face wore an ashen hue; they fidgeted about, bit their chin straps, twisted their mustaches with unsteady hands and did their level best to appear as unconcerned as possible. A ghastlier failure I never saw before or since. Despite the opportunities afforded me of moving about, I felt, to say the least of it, particularly uncomfortable.

"I thought what a change the sight of an enemy would effect in those ghastly beings before me! Alas, there was nothing to kill that morning, save a poor Tommy Atkins who had run amuck among his fellow men and shot a superior, and now he was to meet his death at the hands of a half caste.

"My musings were broken in upon by the thud of a muffled drum away down by the whitewashed bungalows. Immediately the dead march in 'Saul' came wailing over the cold morning air. 'Attention!' With a rattle our rifles were brought into the order, and then we waited. Oh, such a long time it seemed to me before the long procession resolved itself into a funeral party, but with the chief character in the procession in the full vigor of manhood.

"Leading the procession was an armed party with arms reversed, then the band and drums, followed by an escort of four men, surrounding a fair haired, handsome young soldier, who marched past us with head erect and with firm step, the coolest man out of the 6,000 present. The step of many of the band and escort was erratic, but the bare headed soldier never made a false step the whole time, he even calling the attention of one of the escort to 'change step.'

"He mounted the scaffold, accompanied by the chaplain, the provost marshal and two men; the band ceased playing, and then began the most solemn of all liturgies, the 'burial of the dead.' Ere this, however, he was asked if he wished to address his comrades. His words were: 'Comrades, I deserve my fate. I'm heartily sorry for what I've done and hope God will forgive me. Keep away from drink; never lose your tempers. God bless you all. God help me!'

"During the pinioning process the chaplain repeated the burial service or, rather, extracts from it, and just as the bolt was drawn repeated the words, 'Lord, receive his soul!' Many ejaculated a fervent 'Amen!'

"Instantly the brigadier's voice rang out: 'Fours—right. By the left—quick march!' The whole force was marched past the scaffold and made to 'eyes right' on arriving there, so that every man should see the quivering mass which was suspended from the beam. We marched back to the camp, right glad to get away from the scene; yet, try as we might, we could not cast off the gloom which had settled upon us. During the time we were waiting on parade scores of men, principally youngsters, fainted, as their nerves were overstrung at the thought of what was coming.

"Although I had seen an execution of a civilian, it made not one tithe of the impression on my mind as did this execution."

How Straight Is a Chinaman?

A Chinaman is universally considered to be a liar. And so he is. But after a few years of initiation I have never found much difficulty in extracting the truth from any Chinaman, be he milkman or mandarin. Not only so, but I have always felt great confidence in the truthfulness of my own servants, though they often popped out sundry lies. We have our own lies—divorce court lies, club lies, society lies, husband and wife lies and so on. The distinction is that we lie with a different motive. A Chinaman is thought to be a thief. I always kept the safe locked, possessed no jewelry I had not always on, and I never locked up anything but money and important papers; particularly, I never locked up wine or cigars. During the whole course of my life in China (with one notable exception, when a thief at an inn walked off with me and my bed in my sleep, deposited me in a handy spot and extracted a valuable fur coat from underneath me) I was never robbed of anything.—Parker's "China, Her History, Etc."

The Sponge.

If you look at the sponge you use for your bath, you will see that it is covered all over with small holes, with here and there toward the top some large ones. Now try to realize that in life this creature, the skeleton of which you wash yourself with, was composed as to its fleshy parts of small cells. The whole structure as it was in life might be compared to a city intersected by canals. Ever so many little canals gave entrance to the sea water, which was expelled through the big orifices. In this way it was managed that no large foreign objects could be sucked in, while the sewers, as they might be called, were wide enough to drive anything out by.

—Subcribe for the WATCHMAN.