

MAKING MOONSHINE.

The Manners and Methods of the Manufacturers of Mountain Dew.

FOR FULLY FORTY YEARS

White Whisky Has Been the Standard Beverage in Somerset.

HOW THE STUFF WAS MARKETED.

Society as It Is Found in the Heart of the Laurel Hill Region.

FEATURES OF THE RECENT TRAGEDY

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)

HOSE who believe in the certainty of retributive justice can find support for their theory in Somerset county's recent tragedy. The burden of evidence is that Jonathan Hochstetler introduced into the region the illicit business which ultimately resulted in his death. Forty years ago Hochstetler, then about the age of 18, made his appearance in the territory which afterward was the scene of his more or less lawful operations. He came from Washington county, the practice of making white whisky without going through the formality of consulting the Revenue Department was one which had the approval of precedent and antiquity, if not of the Revenue Statutes.

The Laurel Hill moonshine district is not located entirely in Somerset, but as nearly as possible upon the corner where that county joins Fayette and Westmoreland. The actual acre embraced is estimated to not exceed 25 or 30 square miles—but such a country, the rough mountain, intersected by hundreds of roads and paths, transforming it into a veritable maze, the secret of which is known only to those who for years have traversed the winding ways. A region of Deep and Wilderness.

The smaller varieties of game abound, and even the deer is by no means an extinct animal, while wildcats are numerous. Trout are plentiful in the streams, though it is stated that the inhabitants seldom or never disturbed them, and the only lines cast were those of ambitious sportsmen who occasionally ventured into the wild region. The natives had another occupation which demanded their attention, the exclusion of such wild pursuits as fishing.

Only once before this year were the moonshiners treated to a visit of any importance from the Government agents. About nine years ago, when Congressmen South was Collector of Internal Revenue, a raid was made which resulted in the capture of Miller and Hochstetler, the principal and the victim in the recent deed of blood. Miller entered a plea of guilty to the charge of illicit distilling, while Hochstetler pleaded not guilty. This difference of results originated the misunderstanding between the former associates, that had such a fatal culmination.

The Golden Age of Moonshining. Strange to say, though, this raid was followed by what might be termed the golden age of moonshining. Two and three years after that event, the operations were so prosperous and confident that they would come boldly to Somerset and have their grain chopped and buy iron for the hoops of their casks in any shop on the Court House and jail in broad daylight. A prominent resident of the county, more familiar than perhaps any other outsider with the secret operations, was questioned concerning their extent. He said, in reply to queries: "There were about 30 plants in the Laurel Hill district, producing each from four gallons to a half-barrel a day. The average was about six gallons. Very few people in Somerset county, excepting those who visit the licensed distilleries, are acquainted with the manufacture of moonshine. Aside from the cheapness of the other article, its taste is preferred by the initiated, and there is no question as to the purity of the product. How could the product be sold and distributed throughout such an extent of territory?" was asked.

The Whole County in the Secret.

"Nobody in the county thought of molesting the 'shiners, and there were regular agencies at various points. The stories told of leaving a dollar and a jug at a particular spot, and returning an hour later to find the receptacle considerably heavier, are strictly true. I am personally well acquainted with a certain stump about a mile west of Somerset, where I never knew to fail to produce the white beverage when the proper ceremonies were gone through. Of course, in the remote districts the operations were even simpler, as there the fiery article was delivered to the honest farmer directly, or the more trusted ones were allowed to visit the stills and carry their supplies home with them. The moonshiner has few or no facilities for storing his product, and must find a market as speedily as possible. It is held that any of the stuff is kept longer than 30 days. The business became so extensive that Metzler, who has a regular distillery about four miles from the scene of the illicit operations, found his trade seriously affected and sent in a most vigorous complaint to the department. He could not sell the fresh whisky to the neighboring farmers for less than twice the price asked by his competitors. The Still is Easily Transported.

The plants used by the Laurel Hill moonshiners are of the most simple description, and easily transported. They are moved frequently, and to this feature much of the immunity enjoyed for years was due. Once, however, they got hold of a regular plant. A moonshiner named Fletcher, a brother of the one now in jail, opened a lawful distillery, paid the tax and rejoiced

in a bonded warehouse. But one dark night his former comrades swooped down the mountains and cleaned up everything. They took all of the whisky under bond in the warehouse, the still and apparatus—in fact, left nothing. This plant has presumably since then been the pride of the district. A visit to the Laurel Hill region revealed the fact that the most conspicuous characteristic of the inhabitants was the "let alone" policy of the district. A stranger entering the country was followed by his every movement watched until he had left a complete system of signals, mainly by gun shots, was in operation. If perforce a traveler remained in one of the lonely cabins over night a light in a certain position in an upper window warned passing neighbors, or told the husband or son of the family to be discreet about venturing home. The women, according to all accounts, were skillful pretentors, and related improbable tales in the most plausible manner. Not Devoid of Religious Feeling.

Many of these people are Dunkards, and nearly all of them are of a religious turn. If the moonshiners were to be "let alone" were complied with, outside of their



THE MOONSHINE GARDEN OF FRITS.

one besetting sin there would probably be more moonshiners or crime than in an ordinary community. They are opposed to education, and the charges of burning schools made against them are confirmed by the weight of the evidence. The young people marry at an early age, and large families are the rule and not the exception. The women amaze the eyes of the men by their looks with which they may be blessed in youth soon fade. The men of the mountains average six feet, are well built, and are wonderful marksmen, and their favorite amusement is a turkey shoot. There is one story current in the moonshining districts of a very romantic nature, being of the Pocahontas and John Smith order. The period of the incidents in the narrative is located about 1800, and the names of the chief figures have been forgotten or they are purposely withheld by those who still have knowledge of them. The tale runs that shortly after the war an ambitious young peddler penetrated into the wild country, and about midnight visited the cabin of one of the most noted of the illicit distillers of the region—a mountaineer with a large family and a more comfortable home than most of his class. Was the Female's Hearts.

When the traveling tradesman called the men folk were absent, and he was received only by the moonshiner's wife and two daughters, the youngest of whom was quite a beauty of the rural type. The contents of the peddler's pack made him quite popular with the feminine portion of the family, though they did not purchase to any great extent. While the goods were being inspected the mountaineer arrived, followed at short intervals by his three stalwart sons, and another young fellow who was living with the family, and who expected soon to be the husband of the rustic beauty previously mentioned. Their greetings of the visitor were not remarkably cordial, but their suspicions were apparently lulled, for he was finally invited to partake of the homely but substantial evening meal which was speedily placed on the table.

When, however, the peddler later on requested permission to stay all night in the cabin his plea was at first gruffly refused, but the living room for another portion of the room to spare. The "old woman," as she was called, again interferred, though, and after a whispered conference it was arranged that the peddler should sleep in a portion of the male occupants of the place were going to see a neighbor, and would probably stay all night. Soon afterward, the sons and their companion left the home, presumably for the night, and it was not long before the old man announced that he was going to retire, and apparently left the peddler in the company of the young woman. The older daughter and her mother were busy with their usual evening work, sitting from one room to another, leaving the youngest to entertain the visitor.

Not Used to Compliments.

This girl, accustomed only to the boorish ways of the young mountaineers, was more than pleased with the by no means bashful compliments paid by the young traveling merchant. Learning that he was something of a musician, an old fiddle with a string or two missing was unearthed and by his management to the scene at once, and his capricious attention was attracted by low but hoarse voices and other occasional noises. His eyes opened, and he was looking into the cabin he silently stole forth upon a tour of investigation. Guided by the sounds he spotted a man in the shadows of the room, and from a place of partial concealment saw the mountaineer and his sons with their illicit operations in full blast.

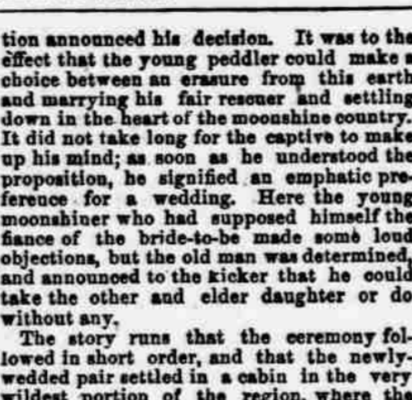
After a brief survey the peddler's discretion returned, and he concluded that he had better get to bed as quickly and quietly as possible. Just as he was turning to do so he was clasped from behind in the strong arms of the young man who was a permanent guest at the cabin, and the struggles that followed brought the other moonshiners to the scene at once, and his capture was the question of a very few moments. His first assailant stated that he had suspected the traveler from the start, and had decided to watch him, with the result stated. The accusation of being a "revenue in-

formation" was immediately and emphatically entered, and as the accusers and the self-installed judges were the same individuals it did not take them long to arrive at a unanimous verdict. Their decision was that as a matter of self-protection and for the good of the community the peddler must disappear forever, and the only question under discussion was as to the best method of making him one of the missing. The method had about been fixed upon and was summarily to be put in execution when the younger daughter put in her appearance upon the scene, having been aroused by the sounds of the struggle. The tale does not go into details as to whether the fair one clasped her arms around the captive's neck in exact imitation of Pocahontas, but she in some manner entered a most vigorous protest. The peddler added his plea of innocence to hers for mercy, and to increase the confusion the other feminine members of the family were aroused and took part in the proceedings.

The Decision of the Mountaineers.

Finally the old mountaineer commanded silence, and after some minutes of delibera-

tion announced his decision. It was to the effect that the young peddler could make a choice between an erasure from this earth and marrying his fair rescuer and settling down in the heart of the moonshining country. It did not take long for the captive to make up his mind; as soon as he understood the proposition, he signified an emphatic assent to a wedding. Here the young moonshiner who had supposed himself the fiance of the bride-to-be made some loud objections, but the old man was determined to have his way, and the ficker that he could take the other and elder daughter or do without any. The story runs that the ceremony followed in short order, and that the newly-wedded pair settled in a cabin in the very wildest portion of the region, where the



WILLIAM MILLER'S MOONSHINE CABIN.

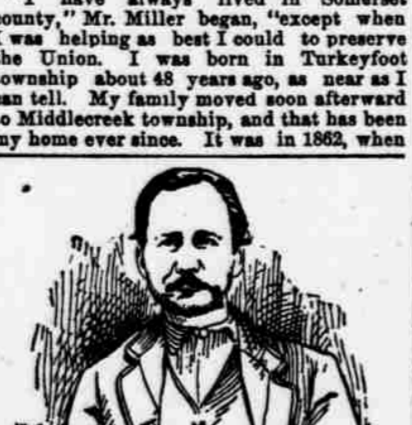
peddler was closely watched by his new neighbors to see that he did not make an effort to take French leave. When asked what had become of this couple the narrators of the tale say that after some years the former peddler, while not taking any very active part in the moonshining operations, succeeded in quieting all suspicions. Allowed to Leave the Region.

This was so much the case that when, about 1870, he received word that some property had been left to him, he sought and obtained permission to leave the neighborhood with his wife and a small but interesting family that had accreted by that time. So far as is known he never returned to pay a visit to his father-in-law or other acquaintances of the mountain region. The narrative is a decidedly romantic one, but the accuracy of its general features is vouched for by a number of persons who have more or less knowledge of the doings in the moonshining district for the past quarter of a century.

But the people of all classes in Somerset are just now more interested in the recent tragedy and subsequent developments than in the remote events of comparative antiquity. The writer found William C. Miller, popularly known as "General Sigel," in a small cell in the county jail previously best known for the incarceration of the moonshiners and their brothers made their sensational escape. Miller is a pleasant spoken, and rather intelligent looking mountaineer, who does not impress one with being a cold-blooded murderer. In response to questions he gave THE DISPATCH a sketch of his career, from the cradle to what may be the threshold of the grave.

Miller's Record as a Soldier.

"I have always lived in Somerset county," Mr. Miller began, "except when I was helping as best I could to preserve 'Union' in the South during the war. I was born about 48 years ago, as near as I can tell. My family moved south afterward to Middlebrook township, and that has been my home ever since. It was in 1862, when



William C. Miller, also known as General Sigel.

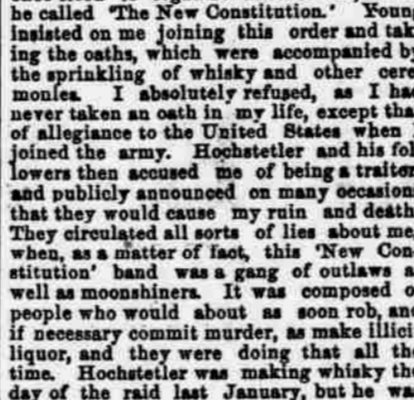
I was about 18 years old, that I first enlisted in the army, for the nine months' service. After this expired I again enlisted, and remained at the front until the end of the war. "My first regiment," he continued, "was the One Hundred and Seventeenth Pennsylvania and the other One Hundred and Eighty-eighth Pennsylvania. It was not my fortune to participate in any of the greater battles, but our regiment was in South, being part of the time in North Carolina. I was never wounded, and the

penion of \$24 a month which I have drawn for six or seven years past was granted for my own heart failure." Not Trembling With Fear. Miller's reply is quite noticeable, and led some of those who were with him, who saw him in jail just after his surrender, to suppose that he was shaking with fear. This is emphatically not the case, as the alleged moonshiner, who is very little about the deed of blood, of which he thinks he will easily be cleared on the ground of self-defense. He is far from alarmed by the deed that is the Government revenue officers, for whom he has a wholesome respect, may take him away from the county authorities and revive the charges of illicit moonshining. His store current that Miller killed his father some years ago, but he only refers to the occasion as a joke, and there has been absolutely no proof against him for the horrible tale. When asked about the death of Hochstetler the prisoner said: "So many false and improbable statements have been made that I think it will be best to give THE DISPATCH the inside facts of the case. In the first place, the name of 'General Sigel' was only applied to me because of my military record. I was a member of a band of moonshiners. There is plenty of white whisky made in the mountains, but of late years, at least, I have only been making it for my own use, and that is not in violation of the law."

What was the cause of your quarrel with Hochstetler?" was asked.

The Cause of the Quarrel.

"Yoney and I fell out six or seven years ago, when a doctor named Hunter came into the Laurel Hill region. Yoney believed that Hunter was a revenue department spy, and wanted to have him killed. I suppose he came to me more than a score of times with the suggestion that the doctor be put out of the way, and I was determined I would have nothing to do with any such proceedings. One night Hochstetler woke me up, rife in hand, and said that if I did not get up and join him he would kill me. I again refused, and from that time Yoney constantly threatened my life. "It is a year or more ago that the 'freundschaft,' the old moonshine organization, was broken up, and Hochstetler at once tried to organize another one, which he called 'The New Constitution.' Yoney insisted on me joining this order and taking the oaths, which were accompanied by the sprinkling of whisky and other ceremonies that were common to the order of allegiance to the United States when I joined the army. Hochstetler and his followers then accused me of being a traitor, and publicly announced on many occasions that they would cause my ruin and death. They circulated all sorts of lies about me, when as a matter of fact the 'New Constitution' band was a gang of outlaws as well as moonshiners. It was composed of people who would about as soon rob, as necessary to make their money, as to get liquor, and they were doing that all the time. Hochstetler was making whisky the day of the raid last January, but he was



WILLIAM MILLER'S MOONSHINE CABIN.

not disturbed, showing that he was playing false to both sides, and had the protection of the Government." "What was the immediate cause of the tragedy?" was asked.

A Resolute Claim of Self-Defense.

"Of course it is a matter which I don't like to talk about now, but what I did was in self-defense, and will be shown in court at the proper time. The fact was that both Fritts and myself were afraid of our lives, and were in constant apprehension of being attacked by Hochstetler. We wanted to make an information for surety of the

Fletcher's Cabin, Where the Murders Took Place.

peace against him before the 'quire, but he feared that between the time the warrant was issued and the constable could serve it that Yoney would hear of it and wreak it not in the hands of the constable, but in the hands of the murderer. So when we heard he was coming along the road, we thought it would be a good plan to go and capture him, tie him to a tree with the rope and have the constable serve it at once. This idea might not have been strictly according to law, but it was not as yet a crime, and I think that it was a very wise one, and I am very glad that we were able to do it. I think there were no shots fired during the scuffle. If one was fired it was in the air. When I called to Hochstetler to halt he took up a rock and threw it at me, saying, 'Now I have you where I want you.' The stone struck partly on the gun and partly on my hand, bruising these things, and I had to drop the gun. He then picked up another stone and closed in on me, attacking me in the most vicious manner, so that I finally had to strike him with the gun in absolute self-defense. He had not the slightest intention of killing Hochstetler, and am very sorry that the blow proved fatal. When Fritts gave himself up, as I think he will, he will corroborate my story, and I firmly believe that we will eventually be acquitted."

Very Intelligent for His Class.

Miller is by all odds the most intelligent of the moonshiners who were with him, and has been a subscriber for one of the county papers for the past 25 years. He also took a little part in the politics of the mountains. He has a very good education, and there is some foundation for Miller's story that Hochstetler had organized a band of outlaws some time ago. About 25 years ago one of the best known school teachers of Milford township was tramping over the mountain back of Trent. The day was hot and the teacher sat down on a log by the roadside to rest. Suddenly he was seized from behind by two men. A struggle followed. Finally freeing himself from the grasp of the rascal the teacher struck one of them, knocking him down, but the latter received a stab in the arm and another that cut through his coat and vest, but failed to reach his body, from a knife in the hands of the second man. Finding that he was equally matched the teacher fled. When he stopped running he found that his pants-legs pocket had been turned wrong side out and had been relieved of several dollars in silver. The revenue officials admit that they know that Hochstetler was making moonshine. He even while he was informing upon the others in the business, but his services as a spy were of such value that it was decided to keep him in the mountains. His body lies in the district had been put behind the bars. Young Hochstetler, better

known as "Billy Goble," whose picture appears with his favorite rifle in his hand, was a nephew of the murdered man, came to Somerset shortly from Ohio about four years ago. He says that his uncle expected an attempt to kill him, and had been endeavoring to dispose of his property for some time, in order to leave the region. A Party at Miller's Home. As showing the social customs of the mountaineers, it is said that a party was given last New Year's at Miller's barn-like residence, a picture of which accompanies this article. A part of the entertainment



Miller's Mountain Residence.

consisted in dancing around a tree hung with various articles, something like a Christmas tree, among others a snake and an orange, two of the persons representing Adam and Eve. This party broke up in a general riot, but nobody was seriously injured. The picture of Miller given is a good one, except that before his arrest the mountaineer wore a beard of immense proportions, which made quite a difference in his personal appearance. "Get through?" No sir. Those plains Indians never just the kind of a box they had in us, and no man, white or red, could have got past them. Every man that made the trial came running back for his life. The moonshine cabin of William Fritts, shown above, is located in the heart of the mountains.



The Home of Hochstetler.

located in one of the wildest spots in the Laurel Hill district. The picture of the spot where Hochstetler's body was discovered the day following the murder is a very faithful representation. When found he was lying with his feet in the little pool of water. His body was on a bank of sand and a large log. The Fletcher cabin shown is the place where Miller and Fritts stayed the night following the deed of blood. Miller's moonshine cabin is located in a wild nook, especially adapted to the illicit business.

Many persons believe that the tragedy and the recent raids will practically wipe out the moonshine industry in Somerset county, but there are others who hold that it will only be temporarily affected, that the transparent beverage is even now being quietly made in the secluded wilds, and that as soon as the noise subsides operations will be resumed with the same vigor as for years past.

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RECUED BY A DOG.

Lieutenant Fremont Tells How a Little Pet Saved a Whole Company. "Yes, 'Dick' was a favorite 'Dick' always counted one in the company; every man claimed 'Dick' as a comrade. Surprisingly young looking for his age, with his dark eyes, honest face, alert movements and ringing bark. All this story was being told of 'Dick,' the company dog, way back in that summer of '69" out in the Indian Territory. "He came from the East with us, joined in Jersey City. 'How did he come to join?' Well, to be honest, we were waiting on the platform for the train to back in, and when the handsome dog came up and made friends, soldierlike he just smuggled him on board. Our company was ordered to march to the next fort and bring down a supply train. 'Steam?' Not much! Six-mile wagon. So one morning off we started, Dick with us as usual."

"To make a long story short, the next afternoon found us surrounded by 400 or 500 Indians, our wagon and men killed and we unable to move, entrenched as best we might, with our wounded as comfortable as we could make them in the center of our circle. 'Safe?' Of course we were; that is, some of us got hurt, of course, but they couldn't break our circle. And no more could we move. There were, out on a wide prairie, only a few drops of water in our canteens and out from any way of getting more. That made it a question of moving and getting killed; staying still and dying of thirst, or getting aid from the fort. Night came and volunteers for water tried to steal through the Indian lines. 'Get through?' No sir. Those plains Indians never just the kind of a box they had in us, and no man, white or red, could have got past them. Every man that made the trial came running back for his life. The moonshine cabin of William Fritts, shown above, is located in the heart of the mountains.

"Next day it was worse; hotter than ever, and what little water there was was kept for the wounded. And the meanest part of it was to look at the rest, some on horseback on the ground stretched out enjoying themselves over to range, and all of them free to ride over to the stream, whose cottonwood-covered banks were in plain sight a few miles away."

"Night came again, and I heard somebody whisper; then 'Dick' was called softly. Nobody could see him at all events. But we had to wait for daylight to make sure the poor old boy was not lying down a little way from us, waiting for the dawn to strike and welcome him as of old."

"But every man's hand was against 'Dick' that night, and after a long time word was passed around that 'Dick' was gone. Nobody could see him at all events. But we had to wait for daylight to make sure the poor old boy was not lying down a little way from us, waiting for the dawn to strike and welcome him as of old."

"Daylight came at last. Then every eye was strained to find 'Dick.' But he was not there. And after the field-glasses had searched in vain for him, there rose a cheer on the morning air that brought the Indians to their feet, anxiously scanning the horizon all around for the welcome sight of old 'Dick.' Well, that little dog made his way to the fort, over the dark prairies, and swimming the stream, until, just after daybreak, about the time we were cheering him back there in camp, he trotted up to the stable guard at one of the cavalry company's stables tired out."

"Well, it wasn't long after that that we saw our relief coming. And they brought 'Dick' with them! How we did pet him! But I often wondered what the little fellow thought that night after we had driven him off, as he trotted along through the dark to the fort!" F. P. FREEMONT.



THE ADVENTURE OF THE BERYL CORONET

WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH BY CONAN DOYLE.

"Holmes," said I, as I stood one morning in our bow window looking down the street, "there is a madman coming along. It seems rather sad that his relatives should allow him to come out alone." My friend rose lazily from his arm chair and stood with his hands in the pockets of his dressing gown looking over my shoulder. "You know I have!" A trouble which is enough to unsettle my reason, so sudden and so terrible is it. Public disgrace I might have feared, although I am a man whose character has never yet borne a stain. Private affliction also is the lot of every man, but the two coming together and in so frightful a form have been enough to shake my very soul. Besides, it is not I alone; the very noblest in the land may suffer unless some way be found out of this horrible affair."

"Pray compose yourself, sir," said Holmes, "and let me have a clear account of who you are and what it is that has befallen you." "My name," answered our visitor, "is probably familiar to your ears, as an Alexander Holder, of the banking firm of Holder & Stevenson, of Threadneedle Street."

The name was indeed well known to us, as belonging to the senior partner in the second largest private banking concern in the city of London. What could have happened there to bring one of the foremost citizens of London to this most pitiable pass? We waited, all curiosity, until with another effort he brooded himself to tell his story. "I feel that time is of value," said he, "that is why I hastened here when the Police Inspector suggested that I should secure your co-operation. I came to Baker Street by the underground, and hurried from there on foot, for the cabs go slowly through the snow. That is why I am out of breath, for I am a man who takes very little exercise. I feel better now, and I will put the facts before you as shortly and yet as clearly as I can."

"It is, of course, well known to you that in a successful banking business as much depends upon our being able to find remunerative investments for our funds as upon our increasing our connection and the number of our depositors. One of our most lucrative means of laying out money is in the shape of loans, where the security is usually impeccable. We have done a good deal in this direction during the last few years, and there are many noble families to whom we have advanced large sums upon the security of their pictures, libraries, or plate."

"Yesterday morning I was seated in my office at the bank when a card was brought in to me by one of the clerks. I started when I saw the name, for it was that of none other than—well, perhaps even to you I had better say no more than that it was a name which is a household word all over the earth—one of the highest, noblest, most exalted names in England. I was over-

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