

THE PRAYER CORNER

THE SCOUTS

My Dear Young Editors—I am sending you "The Prayer Corner" on THE SCOUTS for your issue of The News. God bless it to you, one and all, and to all who read what you so faithfully and lovingly edited. Sincerely yours for the cause, —C. D. C.

One of the enactments of "The Scout Law" is brief and to the point—"A Scout is courteous." True courtesy is never out of fashion. But it is, after all, a quite different quality from fashionable good manners. It is quite consistent with our self respect; but it includes habitual and instinctive consideration of the other man, and it requires that we should think of him with habitual good will.

What a different world our human world would be if we all were courteous. Would you not like to have it said of you as the English editor, Sir Robertson Nichol once said of Lord Harcourt: "He was never known to do an unkind thing."

Courtesy has its usual opportunity in little things. It is not put on with evening dress or official robes only for great occasions. "A small unkindness is a great offence," said Hannah Moore. Our courtesy is a different and much deeper thing than fashionable manners. It lays hold on the courtesy, the good will, the loving kindness of God.

"Religion," says Archbishop Leighton, "doth not prescribe, nor is satisfied with such courtesy as goes no deeper than words and gestures, which sometimes is most contrary to that singleness which religion owns. These are the upper garments of malice; saluting him aloud in the morning whom they are undermining all the day, or sometimes, though more innocent. Yet it may be troublesome merely by the vain affection, and access of it. Even this becomes not a wise man, much less a Christian.

"Our courtesy goes deeper than all these superficial things to draw

its inspiration from above and to take refuge under the shadows of the Second of the Great Commandments: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (See Mathew 22: 37-39).

A PRAYER FOR THE SCOUTS

Dear God, you are always near us, we know. We want to feel that we are near you. Make real our belief, deepen our trust, strengthen our love. So shall we more surely know that you are not beyond our reach, and that we are close to one another.

Father, we know we ought to be on good terms with every one. We know that we should bear no ill will in our hearts, but be kind and forgiving to all, even as you are to us. Teach us, therefore, to treat others as Jesus treated them, that NOW and in the days to come, we may both forgive and forget every wrong even as we ourselves hope to have those whom we have wronged forgive us.

Our Heavenly Father, we are Thy sons and daughters. Help us to honor our father and mother as we honor Thee. Teach us our duty to our home, that it may be a happier home because we are there. Let us not act in any way to give pain to those who love us. May our life bring them joy and honor, never sorrow or shame. In place of secrecy, give us honest and open hearts. Make us thankful for all they have done for us. So in honoring them may we honor Thee and learn to be like Jesus Christ.

Grant, O Lord, that in all the joys of life we may never forget to be kind and courteous. Help us to be unselfish in friendship, thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves, and eager to bear the burdens of others. Keep us ready to help others at some cost to ourselves. Send us chances to do a little good every day, and so grow more like Christ.

And unto Thee dear Father, and Thee dear Jesus, and Thee dear Spirit, shall be all the praise, now and ever, Amen.

—C. D. C.

BEE GEE'S CORNER

THE MOONSHINE STILL, AND THE MOONSHINER

Today we hear more of the "moonshine stills" (whether on lower Manhattan Island, in the "foreign" districts of Chicago, or in the mountain areas), than nearly any subject. The Southern Appalachian section gets a large proportion of the credit of the "moonshine activities," regardless of the fact that one large outfit captured in New York, Pennsylvania or Illinois, may be able to make more liquor in a day than all the stills in half a dozen of the mountain counties in a week.

Since the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, and the enactment of the prohibition laws, and the consequent high price of illegal liquor, it is true that a large number of mountain distillers have engaged in this traffic "for revenue only," and many of them have developed a marked ability in "cutting," "adulterating," "re-running over and over again," so as to make their product bring them a high revenue. However, this is a product of the conditions of the last few decades, and has little if any bearing on the development of the "moonshine still" as it has long been known.

The original "moonshine still" was primarily an economic development, and not a development of criminals and lawbreakers.

A century ago, it was the usual thing for a supply of whiskey, wine,

ale, or brandy to sit openly on the sideboard of nearly every house. Dealing in liquor was, by many considered an unpardonable crime. On the other hand, it was almost as unpardonable for a family, even fairly well-to-do, for a family to not have a supply on hand, for themselves and for their guests.

A well-to-do planter considered a still as almost as necessary a part of his equipment as his plows. The main crops were corn, rye, apples, peaches and grapes. The local demand was limited. To haul the crops a great distance cost more than the crops would bring at destination. The only way to save a bumper crop was to turn it into the form of distilled spirits. In this form, highly concentrated and powerful, a man could carry more "crops" in his saddle bags than a wagon could haul in the form "as grown," and more easily marketable, and at a higher price.

Under these conditions, drinking was practically universal. But drinking to excess was a rarity—especially in the rural districts.

From time immemorial, our forefathers were accustomed to make ales, wines, brandies and whiskeys, to keep them on hand at all times, and to dispense them at their pleasure.

Before the early settlers came to this country, the same was true of the old countries. In England, Scotland and Ireland, depending on the location, one would always find ale, stout, brandy or whiskey, and often the whole round. The excise laws (taxes on spirits) were the most unpopular laws of England. Be he prince or peasant, it was the exceptional man who objected to his liquor being a liquor that had "not paid tax to the crown." The ordinary man did not consider it a crime to either beat up or kill a "gauger" or "collector of excise taxes."

The same traditions permeated the early settlers of this country, from Boston Bay to Camp Oglethorpe. The governing powers did not interfere with these traditions. The "Whiskey Rebellion" in Western Pennsylvania, during the term of George Washington as president, came near wrecking the New Republic. After the "Whiskey Rebellion"—nominally "put down" but actually compromised—the question of excise did not arise in the United States until the Civil War.

As a war measure, to help defray the cost of the Civil War, Congress passed a tax on whiskey, originally

raised to a dollar and ten cents a gallon. This tax, though originally passed as a war measure, was continued until the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1918.

With the foregoing explanations, it is easy to visualize conditions in these mountain sections. The people were practically self supporting, but, at the same time, they had to have a certain amount of "hard cash." It took actual hard money to pay taxes, to buy salt, coffee, tea and sugar, and to buy instruments, luxuries and conveniences that could not be supplied by the local craftsmen.

Mining in this territory was unknown. Timber and timber products had only a local demand—transportation costs precluded export. The surplus crops grown were in like condition—it would cost more to get them to market than they would bring. It being absolutely necessary to have "hard money," the economic conditions forced turning the surplus crops into a form that could be easily transported, and would always bring a good price. Hence, the "still" as a part of the regular farm equipment.

When Uncle Sam imposed a tax on liquor, the ordinary mountaineer gave but little weight to the law. At best he had but a hazy idea of the Federal Government, and cared less about the government getting pay for the costs of the Civil War. For generations, he had had the idea that he had a perfect right to make anything he pleased out of anything he grew. At all times it was hard sledding for him to get enough "hard money" to pay his taxes, and the "excise law" was regarded as an infringement on his rights.

With the widespread corruption in governmental circles among the various "Whiskey Rings" during the quarter of a century after the Civil War, he did not bother his head. About all he knew of the Federal Government was an occasional visit to court at Charlotte or Greensboro, and later at Asheville, either as a defendant or a witness, which might occur when either he or his neighbor happened to be caught by an occasional visit to a Deputy Marshall or an Internal Revenue Collector. The activities of the Bureau of Internal Revenue did result in his moving his still from his farm buildings to a point up one of the numerous coves or near his farm. He also early developed the idea of placing a still, either badly worn or cheaply constructed, on the same stream with but below his still, with the "plan" arranged to have all the appearances of being operated. Then, with a judicious use of the "supply on hand," placed "where it would do the most good," he would generally be able to steer matters so that the officer would "cut up" the "plant," and make a report that the outfit was cut up in too wild a section to be brought out, and most important, to report that no operator was caught. The remains of the "plant" could be patched up a little and made do duty as another "plant" from time to time.

Until a comparatively recent time, the "moonshiner" cared very little for the monetary returns. He was under necessity of raising enough "hard money" to pay his taxes. A "run" or so, judiciously handled for friend at a distance, would meet this demand, and possibly supply him with salt and sugar and coffee. Beyond this, you could not insult him worse than to offer to buy liquor from him. If he liked you, he would gladly give you all you could carry, internally and externally. If he didn't, you had better move on.

Conditions have changed, and the supply of money comes from other sources.

The old time moonshiner would consider himself eternally disgraced if he sat out a bottle or a jug that contained anything but a pure liquor. He prided himself more on the quality of his liquor than on the abilities of his "houn dawg," or on the accurate shooting of his rifle. The adulteration and cutting was unknown, and would not have been tolerated.

Since the Eighteenth Amendment, and the Volstead Act, the high price of the contraband spirits has brought into the "moonshine" operators all sorts and conditions of people—the various classes that give an undue value to a dollar. There is as much difference between the modern moonshiner and the old time article as there is between the modern eight cylinder, high priced pleasure car, and the old rough mountain sled that is still used in some of the back coves.

Times have changed, but they don't all change in the same direction.

Even with the changed times, there is still an occasional mountaineer to be found (who has the same old handmade copper outfit possibly made by his father and grandfather) that he has had for years, who makes an occasional "run" for himself and friends; who would sooner lose his right hand than to sell even a drink; who is never classed as a "moonshiner," who would resent it as a mortal insult, if any one offered to buy a drink or some liquor from him; but who, should you be one of the fortunate ones invited to enjoy his hospitality, would set before you a jug whose contents would far surpass the fabled "Ambrosia" and "Nectar" of the Gods, and which would cheer one, make one "love everybody," exhilarate one, but would never furnish even the suspicion of a headache.

Verily, the advertising of the Eighteenth Amendment and of the various prohibition acts, and the changed conditions resulting, have given the old fashioned moonshiner an unmerited name.



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