

Heading Backwards

Progress has lost a faithful follower. From now on you'll find me seated in the back parlor before a picture of Queen Victoria, flanked by crayon enlargements of Rutherford B. Hayes an' J. G. Whittier, feebly mutterin' to the effect that things were different in my day.

Uncle Henry

"WHAT'S the matter?" asked Mr. Stubbs with some anxiety. "You look like you'd lost a near relative."

"I never let any relatives get near," morosely answered Uncle Henry.

"Then how come? Why so lugubrious?"

"I've fallen behind in the march of progress," confessed Uncle Henry. "What with the pace gettin' so hot, I've developed flat feet, heart murmur an' a bad case of spavin. It comes as a blow, 'Lonzo, for you know how I've prided myself on bein' modern. Why, I had as good a line of patter as any livin' radical an', what was more, I even knew what some of it meant."

"For years I've never let a day pass without takin' a slam at Queen Victoria, E. P. Roe an' Longfellow, an' every mornin' I'd leap out of the house with a wild yell, an' start runnin' in circles without even once askin' where I was goin'. I attacked everything that was more than twenty-four hours old, an' governed my life on the principle that a little Mencken now an' then is relished by the wisest men."

"At the time women began goin' in for facial surgery, I made no objection, only takin' the precaution to crop my wife's left ear so that I would know her again. I was among the first to demand the abolition of corsets, pointin' out that solitary confinement was a medieval practice, an' when men protested against bobbed hair, didn't I rebuke them by recallin' the fact that we ourselves once wore sideburns?"

"I was a pioneer in the equal suffrage movement, publicly insistin' that women had jes' as much right to stay away from the polls as men. When divorce was urged as a national pastime, bein' a game that everybody could play, wasn't it my suggestion that marriage be turned over to the mail-order houses



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so that husbands an' wives could be sent parcel post?

"Nobody heard me raise a howl when all the women took to smokin'? Why, I'm actually lame in the legs from strikin' matches for 'em. Instead of pullin' any Jeremiah stuff, I pointed out that cigarettes weren't half as immoral an' depraved as the china women used to paint, the coal scuttles they used to gild, the cozy corners an' dens they used to fix up, an' urged my fellowmen to remember the horrors of pyrography, an' rejoice that a change had come."

"Wasn't I the only male in these parts to stand up for girls when they began bravin' the elements without stockin's? Did I utter a single word about immorality or ask what the world was comin' to? An' that, my dear 'Lonzo, called for quite a bit of courage, for what with all these here curious effects in Primitive Gothic an' Early Clydesdale the feminine leg isn't exactly what might be called an artistic treat."

A Pilgrim of Progress

"I was the first man in this section to learn how to pronounce *bourgeoise*, an' signed one hundred an' eighteen petitions protestin' about Sacco an' Vanzetti before I even knew what they were arrested for. I was also among the first to buy a copy of Sigmund Freud from the local booklegger, an' to show you jes' how far I carried my radicalism, I even read some of the stuff."

"No man was stronger for Libido than me, although, strictly between us, I never did find out exactly what it meant, an' as for psychoanalysis, bright an' early every Monday mornin' I'd take a laundry bag full of dreams down to the doctor. Don't you remember my letter to the papers, in which I contended that psychoanalysis was a great advance over chiropractic, because it wasn't necessary to take any arduous three weeks' course by mail?"

"I stood for all of the new theories in education, even that one about duty an' discipline interferin' with the development of the child's individuality. Why, no complaint passed my lips even when a neighbor's boy buried his teeth

to the hilt in the calf of my leg, for I realized that it was only the little lad's brave effort to overcome some inherited inhibition."

"An' don't you remember how I came out an' fought all those censorship bills, boldly supportin' the radical contention that Art has jes' as much right to be exposed as plumbin'? Art for Dirt's sake was my slogan, an' I yelled it good an' loud. There again, 'Lonzo, was somethin' that took courage, for at my age it's rather hard havin' to put on rubber boots an' a gas mask every time I go to a theater or pick up a book."

The change in dancin' was another thing that hurt. In our day, 'Lonzo, dancin' meant dancin'. Terpsichore was a full sister to St. Vitus, an' when we swung into a waltz, two step or schottische, bystanders had no trouble distinguishin' us from the furniture. Why, if you ever lost hold roundin' a corner in the ballroom, such was the centrifugal force that you'd go right through the wall an' never stop rollin' for two or three blocks."

"Fox trots, one steps, an' tangos killed rapid motion, changin' dancin' from a pleasure into a complaint. It got so you couldn't tell a dance floor from the waitin'-room of a free clinic for creepin' palsy. Then came the rage for classical an' interpretative dancin', with bare-legged gals wadin' in lotus pools an' knee-sprung couples chasin' each other around the parlor by way of showin' how Pan spent his rainy afternoons."

"Nothin', however, was as terrible as this Mental Dancin' that started here a while back. I remember seein' one fellow come out from behind a curtain, costumed in a loin cloth that looked as if it had been sent as a sample by a Vermont storekeeper. He took up a squattin' position in the center of the floor, an' for exactly one-half hour did nothin' but twitch his ears, wrinkle his nose an' utter a series of low gurgles."

"Say," I said, turning to the woman next to me, "when is he goin' to dance?"

"Sh-h!" she hissed. "He is. Don't you see that he's portrayin' Primitive Man's specific effort to adjust himself to a concrete situation? His emotional reactions on findin' himself in a drawin'-

room on a hardwood floor? For heaven's sake, get in rhythm! Breathe in unison."

"Well, 'Lonzo, I even stood for that, but now I've met my Waterloo. I'm finished. Progress has lost a faithful follower, an' I'm back among those who believe that babies come in the doctor's black bag. From now on, you'll find me seated in the back parlor before a picture of Queen Victoria, flanked by crayon enlargements of Rutherford B. Hayes an' J. G. Whittier, feebly mutterin' sentences to the effect that things were different in my day."

Just One Too Many

"What killed me was this new craze for Straightforward Talk, this passion for callin' a spade a spade whether it's a spade or not. I went to a dinner party last night, an' at the end of an hour my blushes had burned off my clothes an' the flames were threatenin' my fig leaf. An' it wasn't as if the subjects were new, 'Lonzo. As a matter of fact, they were *old*, as old as love an' matin' an' children an' sin an' shame an' evil."

"Judgin' from the way they gabbed, sex was somethin' that had jes' been discovered, an' the lusts of the flesh were modern inventions along with loud speakers an' comic supplements. Nice women used words I hadn't heard since I drove mules, an' before the evenin' was over, I felt as if I was attendin' an Old Home Week of the Stevedores' Union, with a delegation from the Taxi Drivers' Social Club as guests of honor."

"But that's the trouble with progress, 'Lonzo. A strong man like Herb Hoover can take it or leave it alone, but the average person becomes an addict. Between you an' me, reactionaries have all the best of it, for people can only get jes' so narrow, an' then they're through. Bein' broad, however, is vastly different, for breadth has no limits, an' the first you know you're takin' in everything."

"Well," said Mr. Stubbs defensively, "you want an open mind, don't you?"

"Sure," admitted Uncle Henry, "but I don't want it runnin' wide open."

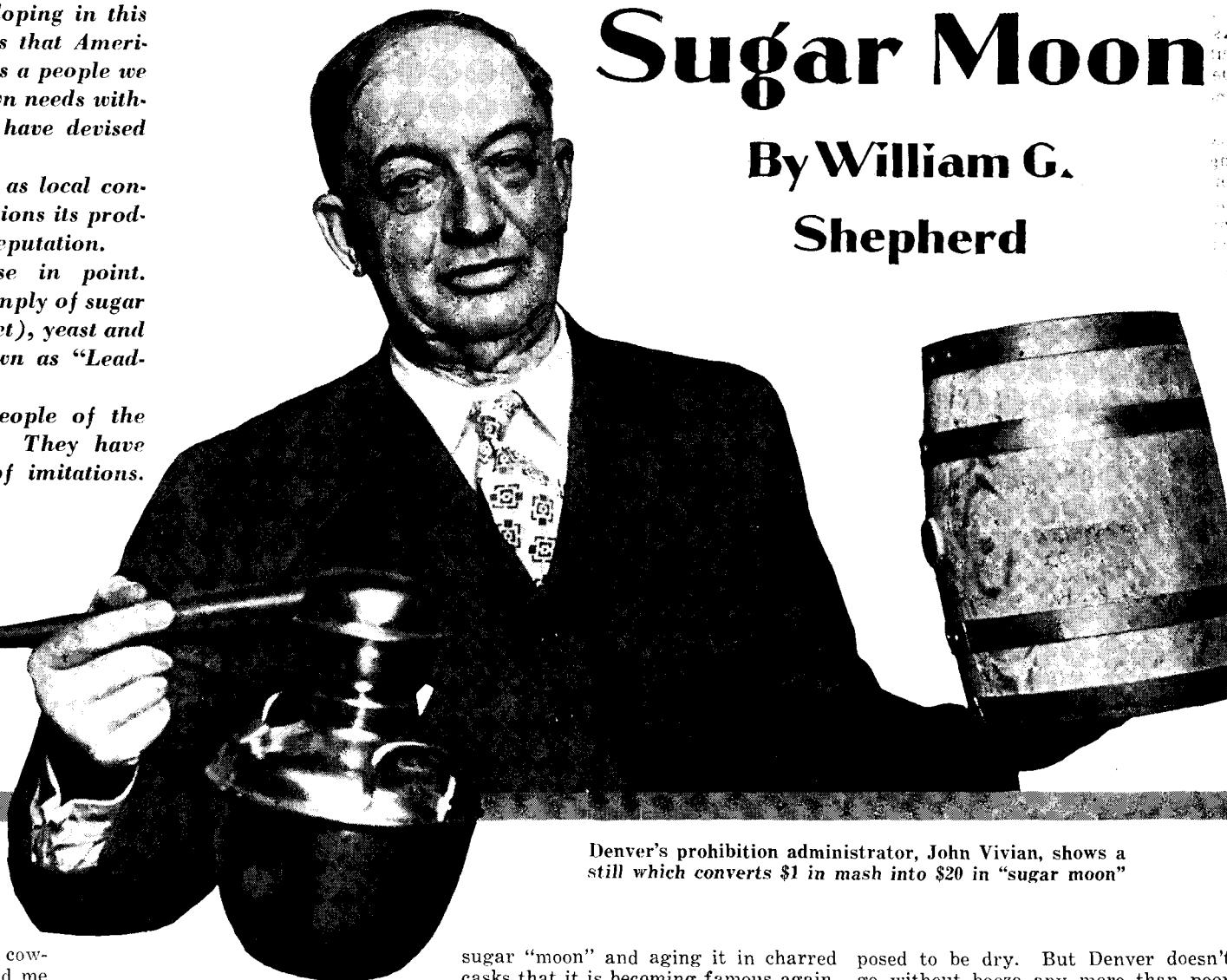


A new art is rapidly developing in this country, an art which proves that American ingenuity is not dead. As a people we are still able to supply our own needs without outside assistance. We have devised a new form of local option.

The art in question varies as local conditions vary, and in some sections its product is attaining a national reputation.

Leadville, Col., is a case in point. There the materials consist simply of sugar (from the Colorado sugar beet), yeast and water. The product is known as "Leadville moon."

Its popularity with the people of the Denver section is immense. They have already learned to beware of imitations.



Denver's prohibition administrator, John Vivian, shows a still which converts \$1 in mash into \$20 in "sugar moon"

AN INDIGNANT old-timer in cowboy boots and a big hat told me the latest liquor scandal in Cody, Wyo.

"Yes, sir," he said, "this prohibition is gettin' plum disgustin'. Back in the early days when Buffalo Bill and Old Man Beck started this town there was occasional ruckuses of course. You couldn't expect those fellows who used to come in from the ranges to behave themselves when they got into town here. I can show you bullet marks on the ceiling of the old barroom of Buffalo Bill's Hotel Irma, and I can show you bullet holes in the walls of buildings and in telephone posts hereabout, but that is a sort of thing that you would expect from them fellows. It came natural to them. But what do you think about a bunch of boys and girls in this town, downright stealin' a keg of white mule from a dealer like they did here a couple of years ago, and goin' over to the Methodist church and breakin' in and havin' a dance there?"

Cody is a wet town. But, isolated though it is in the great sheep and grazing country of the Northwest far from other cities or towns, no outside bootleggers dash toward it along the bleak roads, nor do aviators soar through its blue skies with cargoes of liquor. Cody doesn't need any outside help to be wet—though it would need, perhaps, the help of a considerable portion of the United States army to be dry—because the Cody country has found out how to "make its own."

The Western Renaissance

Mountain water and Wyoming or Colorado beet sugar, with a little mixture of baker's yeast, produces, at more than one remote ranch-house distillery, just as pure liquor as anyone in America ever drank, even in the days before prohibition.

Bars are open in Cody and so are the gambling houses. While I was there several weeks ago the editor of the Cody Enterprise complained in his

newspaper that the town constable should at least keep drunken men off the main street.

Ask any Eastern expert what he knows about whisky called "North Fork," and he'll look blank. This is because he lives too far away from the Shoshone River, where this liquor is made. And not enough of it is made for export.

Now all of this, I know, makes Cody out to be a pretty wet town, set down in the midst of a wet desert. But it isn't fair to pick on Cody alone.

Wherefore, we shall turn to that eminent town of Leadville, Col.

Harrison Avenue in Leadville! There's a street for you.

Back in the old days when the mines were running full blast and at least half the 40,000 people were awake and stirring, either in the sunlight or under the street lights, 24 hours a day, Harrison Avenue was wide open. Music from the dance halls, boisterous laughter, shouts and songs filled each hour of the 24. Well, Mister Old-timer of Leadville, wherever you are today among the tens of thousands that have dispersed from that wild town, it may interest you to know that Leadville isn't so dead, even today. There are only about 5,000 people there now, but the mine shifts work day and night; pay days come twice a month and each of the 24 hours see at least a dozen bars open in old Harrison Avenue and plenty of gambling at faro and on the wheel.

Leadville seems to be coming back just a little bit. Here's what I mean: Wherever you go in Colorado a bootlegger who wants to persuade you that he has the best possible stuff says to you, "Mister, this is good stuff. It's Leadville 'moon.'"

Like one of the communities of France, which each yields its own famous precious wine, Leadville has so far progressed in the art of producing

sugar "moon" and aging it in charred casks that it is becoming famous again, not for precious metals but for precious hootch.

A traveling man approaching Denver, warned me against bootleggers in Denver who might try to foist counterfeit Leadville liquor on me.

"It's sugar liquor they will give you all right," he said, "but it won't be Leadville."

I find a close race in these states at the eastern foot of the Rockies between Leadville liquor and the apparently desirable North Fork liquor made by the ranch blind-piggers of the Wyoming Valley of the Shoshone.

But why ask bullet-pocked Cody and rough old Leadville to stand alone in their wet shame before the world?

There's Denver. She, too, stands in this wet desert that lies along the eastern foot of the Rockies.

Denver's Unique Wetness

If the wet folks in any city in this country have had a hard time making their city wet it was the wet folks of Denver. For a time, indeed, it looked as if they'd never make it. In a country-wide questionnaire on prohibition conducted by Collier's three years ago Denver stood out as the driest city in the land. But the Wets (not the voters but the drinkers) have changed all that.

Consider the problem the drink takers of Denver had to face. Consider Denver. She is 500 miles from any other large city. She stands 5,100 feet up, against the Rocky Mountains. To the north, south and east of her lie the great, incredibly bleak prairies that slowly climb from the level of Lake Superior or the Missouri River to where Denver sits up in the sky.

I have found people all around the edges of the United States who have a feeling that if you get far enough away from the Atlantic or the Pacific oceans or from the Canadian or Mexican borders you will find no liquor.

Our bleak interior prairies are sup-

posed to be dry. But Denver doesn't go without booze any more than poor old isolated Robinson Crusoe went without clothes. And isolated Denver hasn't asked much more help from bootleggers in the great outside world than Robinson Crusoe asked of Piccadilly tailors when he made his goat-skin suit.

Here's how it is in Denver, as a former prohibition officer put it to me:

"Folks here simply had to have their liquor like folks in other places, and so they got it."

Of all the wetness that I have seen in dozens of American cities, the wetness of Denver, with its 2,000 bootleggers on the sidewalks of Welton Street, in garages, in cigar stores, in soft-drink places, in hotel lobbies, in taxi drivers' seats, and elsewhere, is the most unique.

Necessity challenged the local bootlegger of Denver and of the state of Colorado and he has proved equal to the task. Denver's booze is local to Colorado, but it is as pure booze as bootleggers anywhere in the United States have to sell. Let us see how poor, lonely, isolated Denver has met the Federal prohibition problem.

Colorado, as you may remember, adopted state prohibition in 1914 by charter amendment. They tell you in Denver and other Colorado towns today that prohibition in Colorado worked better for six years under the state law than it has for the past eight years under the Federal law.

"Why is this?" I asked a Denver police official. He replied:

"Federal prohibition gave us an extra police department here in Colorado, and we all lean back on the Federal police, I suppose, expecting them to do the whole job."

However that may be, Denver and the rest of Colorado got excellent local booze in the following very Robinson Crusoesque fashion:

Colorado produces copper. If Colorado only had mills in which copper sheets are rolled out, the state would never have to ask any help of the out-