

## Makin' Cider

RONA MORRIS WORKMAN  
ROCKING W RANCH

The other day we stepped back from this efficient age when you can get everything already bottled or canned—if you can afford to pay the price—to the time when you produced with your own hands the needs of the home. We made apple cider. Our two sons had never seen it made; Newdaughter knew it only as something drunk from a glass at a roadside stand and even I had never helped make it, but the Big Boss dug into his boyhood memories and pulled forth the proper method of pro-

ducing that amber liquid which at first is sweet apple juice, then cider, then hard cider, then something that has a kick like a mad steer, and at last becomes that household necessity, real apple vinegar.

Perhaps we would never have reverted to the past had not the ex-marine found on his newly purchased ranch, which adjoins the Rocking W, an old cider mill and press. It had, perhaps, come into this valley in the early days, for it had been many times mended, but was still sturdy and entirely adequate. The ground under the old apple trees was strewn with fallen apples, and we looked, and laughed and went to work like a bunch of children.

It was a warm, golden autumn day. The harvested fields lay quiescent within the circling growth of firs around their edges. The gnarled limbs of the apple trees cast darker shadows than their thinning leaves and there was a faint hum of bees over the fallen fruit. The restless world seemed very far away from this quiet upland farm, and

life regained, for those few hours, something of its lost tranquility. Gathering up the firm rosy apples, feeding them into the ancient grinder, watching the thick sweet juice trickle from the pressed pulp, made us, in some strange mystic way, feel very close to the real spirit of autumn, and I tipped my cup and poured a libation onto the ground in gratitude to the ancient earth-goddess of the harvest. I wonder sometimes, if we, as a people, have not lost the virtue of gratitude. We have come to feel that we are not dependent upon anything beyond ourselves—such very little selves. It hurts our self-conceit to feel grateful for anything we receive, and yet, we are dependent upon that something for the very air we breathe, for the earth upon which we walk and from which comes our food, and the materials from which we make our great inventions, and upon that golden spirit which we call the Sun and Light. We are like children who say always, "Give" and never remember to say "Thank you."

The poorest Mayan peon makes a tiny altar in his cornfield, and places fruit and flowers upon it in reverence to the god who gives fertility and life to his field and grain. In ancient days men gathered at the temples with their harvest offerings in thanksgiving to the Power—no matter by what name they call it—which gave forth the means of life, and our own forefathers bowed their heads and thanked their God for the food He gave. The same something, though called by many different names. Yet, how many of us in this present day offer one word or thought of gratitude to the Giver of Life?

I am sitting on the warm grass in an upland field as I write this. The Big Boss is discing the dark rich soil in the field near by. Below me lies the orchards where we made the cider, and the sunlight brings out the vivid orange-red of vine-mapsles against the dark green firs. Only the subdued hum of the tractor breaks the quiet. The smell of fresh moist earth drifts up to me on a wandering breeze that waves the sun-dried grass, and the sky is softly blue with a few slowly-drifting white clouds.

It is a beautiful world; life can be sweet and clean and fine, but we are never satisfied. We are given so much, all that we need, yet we hold out clutching greedy hands and scream for more. We want more land, more money, finer clothes and jewels and homes than our neighbors; we quarrel and fight to get these things, and the getting brings us no lasting happiness. How can it? We have lost our realization of the fundamentals of life, we have lost our simplicity, our feeling of oneness with all that is, and we think that the acquiring of more material wealth will bring us joy.

Perhaps, in spite of the millions of years of our evolution, we are still very young. We are but children in the vast reaches of eternity. We still are greedy and cruel and selfish. We, childlike, want new things, bright glittering things, and weep when they break in our hands. And always we ask for more, forgetting the gifts we have, or holding them worthless because they are simple and old as time, and common alike to rich and poor.

Our human evolution has, through the centuries, brought forth a few men who have ceased to be children in mind and emotion. They have spoken and writ-

## Conservation Practices Not Completely Utilized

Columbia county is not taking full advantage of the assistance available through the agricultural conservation program for improving its agricultural resources, W. C. Johnson, chairman of the County Agricultural Conservation association, says.

Despite the need for increased work to check erosion and depletion on county farm-lands such as digging drainage ditches, land clearing, grass seeding, applying fertilizers, etc., as disclosed in a county-wide survey of conservation needs last spring, indications now are that all of the funds allocated to the county for conservation practice payments to farmers will not be earned this year, Johnson reported.

The county committee is asking each farmer to take stock of his conservation needs now and to apply to the committee for assistance in carrying out any additional practices, that can be done this fall. Fall practices which the committee are encouraging are land clearing, applying fertilizers, seeding pasture mixtures for pasture improvement, seeding grass to establish permanent cover in waterways and gullies, and installing check dams in gullies.

There is still time to carry out many practices for improving grazing land, Johnson pointed out. Assistance is available for range water developments to promote better distribution of livestock, springs, dams and reservoirs.

At the same time the committee is asking operators who will not be able to perform all the practices for which they received approval on farm plans to turn in the balances now. This will enable the committee to reallocate the funds to other farms and obtain more conservation with the funds available.

Failure of Columbia county farmers to apply for and use the funds for more conservation work will result in transfer of unused funds to other counties, Johnson said. The committee believes that this will be most unfortunate in view of the great need for conservation work in this county. It also feels that even though the payment from the government

ten of the essential things of life, but we are not old enough to understand them. Sometime, perhaps, we shall grow old and wise enough to listen and learn, and then we will find how few things are really essential, and we will throw away our cheap toys and tinsel trinkets, our greed and selfishness and hate, and hold only that which is needed for our happiness.

The sun has dropped behind the trees on the hill above me, and the quickening breeze holds a touch of autumn chill. Nehalem Domino, the First, and Boy Baldwin, the Thirty-second, our sleek red bulls, are wandering slowly across the lower pasture toward the barn; somewhere a cow is lowing softly to her calf, and from the lower ranch comes the shrill whinny of the horses. I must call to the Big Boss that it is time to quit for the day, then together we will go down the hill and light the evening fires.

rived will more than equal the costs.

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