

THE SMART SET

NOVEMBER, 1920

A Litany for Bibuli

By Major Owen Hatteras

FROM bad gin at \$95 a case and from bootleggers who promise to dig up some genuine Rhine wine and are then never heard of again; from home-brewed ale with a faint, cyanotic flavour of dishwater and from home-brewed ale with so much steam in it that it squirts all over the ceiling when the bottle is opened; from old family brandy that has been lying in the wood since 1867 and that now tastes like coffin-varnish or Jap-a-lac and from vermin who invite one to dinner parties in remote suburbs, promising leeringly to get one stewed, and then turn out to have nothing on tap save a quart of drug-store rye whiskey and two bottles of American curacao; from fat hostesses who insist upon mixing the cocktails and manage to get at least 75% of melted ice into every one; from louts who call one up by telephone at midnight to report that 20 cases of vermouth have just been smuggled ashore from an Italian ship, and who report the next morning that the captain has been jailed and the vermouth seized by revenue agents who demand \$6 a bottle for it; from liars who circulate the false news that Scranton, Pa., is still as wet as Hoboken ever was, and who thus tout for the hotels of the town, and break many a trusting heart; from bores who have just returned from Havana, and complain that they drank so much Scotch at 30 cents a drink that they have now been ordered on the water-wagon by the life insurance companies; from idiots who know where authentic Lacrimae Christi is to be had down in Greenwich Village at \$1.25 a quart, and who discover, after hauling one about in a taxicab for three hours, that the place closes at 6 P.M.; from home-made wines made of dandelions, elderberries and other such garbage, recommended for the stom-

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ach by grandmothers too respectable to be handed over to the police; from barbarians who invite one to dinner and then serve only *one* cocktail; from Presidential candidates who run as wets in New York and as drys in Elyria, Ohio; from police sergeants in small towns who volunteer to show one where to get a safe drink at \$7 a pint, and then guzzle half the bottle in lieu of a *pourboir*; from members of the Elks who manage to get beautifully snooted every night, but always keep sober enough to avoid telling one where they get it; from cuties who go with one to studio parties, and horn into the gin with such voracity that the host gets cold feet and begins to hide his reserve stock; from old friends who betray the confidence of years and shame the Christian religion by trying to deceive one with grape-juice reinforced with 6% of denatured alcohol; from Herbert Kaufman, who lets it be whispered that he has 3,000 bottles of Culmbacher cached in Tarrytown, and then never invites one out to see his collection of Cézannes; from the kind of Scotch bootlegged by one of the embassies in Washington, and from San Francisco grappo; from moonshine corn whiskey, two days old, at \$30 a gallon, and from Prohibition spies who agree to get one a case of genuine Chambertin for \$27, and then try to palm off a case of corked California Barbera; from non-alcoholic vermouth and from synthetic Dubonnet; from near-beer reinforced by the addition of a cake of yeast to every *Achtel*; from hard cider that turns out to be full of salicylic acid and from absinthe in bottles showing the coat-of-arms of the Glassblowers' Union of Allentown, Pa.—good Lord, deliver us!