

**SPURRIER WITH THE  
WILDCATS AND  
MOONSHINERS**

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Spurrier with the wildcats and moonshiners by Theophilus P. Crutcher

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**THEOPHILUS P. CRUTCHER**

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# SPURRIER

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and Moonshiners

## P R E F A C E .

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This book records some of the adventures of JOSEPH L. SERRATER, an officer in the Revenue department of the government. In Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama he has been known for fifteen years as a brave man, a true knight, "without fear and without reproach." No duty called him into the place of danger without finding him ready to go, and in the many dangerous scenes in which he periled his life, never has he taken the life or shed a drop of the blood of his fellow man!

A strange record is this, and the sequel to this story reveals one of the most startling and impressive incidents that has occurred in the long struggle against outlaws and criminals.

The materials of this volume are taken, chiefly, from the lips of him whose achievements are here recorded.

Nashville, Tenn., October, 1892.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MOONSHINERS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

When Great Britain was engaged in her gigantic struggle against Napoleon Bonaparte all the hidden resources of taxation laws and measures to raise money for the public purse were tried and carried to the utmost point that a free people would permit. Not only were taxes laid in the form of unjust duties, which always raise the prices of the home-made articles in proportion to the tax laid upon the foreign merchandise, but taxes were added in the form of *excise*, the most odious form of compelling a people to pay the war expenses of a government.

The consequence of the excise tax upon whisky, rum, brandy, and other spiritous liquors, was the active encouragement of all parties who could "run the blockade" of the coast-guard of revenue cutters, and a still more active inducement to domestic distillers. The high price of whisky formed a bribe to almost every class of adventurers; for if they saved half the spirits they made, and sometimes even one-third of the amount, the high price received for the quantity smuggled into market fully repaid all losses and left a handsome balance besides.

We find great and good men in the Church of England issuing flaming denunciations of "smuggling." John Wesley published several tracts upon the subject, and the tenor of his arguments, as far back as the middle of the century, showed that the people called

"smugglers" were not always the lowest and most degraded part of the English population. Mr. Wesley took the ground that by refusing to pay the duty on an article of merchandise, the subject was actually guilty of robbing his king. This was by no means a happy form of putting the case before the common mind.

People asked the question, "What right has the king to my own private property?" What right has he to declare that I shall not do as I please with that which belongs to me, if I do not injure any one else by my use of it? I grow wheat, and rye, and barley, whose business is it if out of these materials I choose to make spirituous or malt liquors? May I not do as I please with my own?" Besides it seemed to be the case that the government was in league with the rich to oppress the poor. Rich people could afford to pay the tax, and they were allowed to make anything they pleased; but the poor were not able to pay it and they were denied the privilege of using their own property.

This was the light in which the matter appeared to many thousands of the British people. The consequence was that almost every little creek or inlet on the long line of sea-coast, from Land's End to the farthest point in Scotland, in both seas, the Irish and North Sea, was a landing place, to a greater or less extent, for some kind of smuggled goods. Liquors were by far the most available commodities for the smuggler to handle. For, although heavy and bulky, compared with some kinds of dry goods, ardent spirits had an almost universal demand. High and low, bishop and curate, every degree in