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The national monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, with the hope that it will help all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.

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Sobriety Makes the Price of a Drink Too High

From Grand Rapids, Mich.

I've been thinking of all it would cost me if I took a drink today. . . . Strangely enough, I find that the longer I go without a drink, the greater the cost of taking one will be!

If I take a drink today, I'll get into the YMCA some time after the bars close tonight, fairly drunk, for I won't take just one drink, and about seven tomorrow morning I'll get up, feeling rotten and wanting a drink. After the drink and a cup of coffee, I'll go to work, feeling guilty and nervous and with a foggy brain. If no one questions my actions, I'll probably struggle through the day, but certainly no later than 5 P.M., and then I'll head for a bar—if I take a drink today.

The next night I'll be so drunk I'll be afraid to go into the YMCA (I almost got kicked out of there before) so, when the bars close I'll end up . . . in a high-priced room where I'll stay until my funds run low. On the third or fourth day I'll still be at the hotel, paying exorbitant prices for things I don't need and the bellboy

A CHRISTMAS GIFT

Last year at this time many entered subscriptions to *The A.A. Grapevine* as Christmas gifts for newcomers in A.A. and even for some old-time friends in A.A. who had not yet gotten around to subscribing for themselves.

You can do the same this year. If you will send in a subscription blank by December 15 (filled in with the name and address of the person you want the magazine sent to) and write your name and the word "Christmas" across it, we'll do the rest. We'll send a notice to your friend telling him that a year's subscription to *The A.A. Grapevine*, beginning January, 1947, will be coming as a Christmas gift from you.

on the way up to my room with a drink will meet another on the way down with empty glasses, for as long as the money holds out, the drinks will keep coming—if I take a drink today.

By this time I'll be very nervous and concerned about avoiding people I know. I'll probably go to my room at the "Y" some morning and clean up, but things will run along like this several days until the quite few dollars I have in my pocket now will have dwindled to only a few. Those of you whom I may have met and who might have tried to pull me out of it will have given it up and I will be left entirely alone. My wife, by the absence of mail from me, will know what has happened and all the confidence she has built up in me these past several months will be gone and probably never restored—if I take a drink today.

The Old Squirrel Cage

Realization of these things will only cause me to drink more and faster and within a couple of weeks after that first drink I'll have moved to cheaper quarters, and soon my funds will be all gone and I'll start borrowing—ten here, five there, at first, then two and one, until I can't borrow any more—if I take a drink today.

Then I'll begin sneaking into the YMCA to get things to pawn—first my radio, which I enjoy so much and which I had a hell of a time getting out last time; then first one suit and then another, until there is nothing left but what I have on my back—if I take a drink today.

From here on it is hard to predict just what will happen—I may be working in a restaurant or my present employer may take me back, reluctantly, and give me another chance at a reduced salary with all prestige, seniority and confidence wiped out (that's what happened last time). Or, I may have a commitment to Kala-

mazoo hanging over my head or be in jail for 30, 60, or 90 days—if I take a drink today.

But at very best, I can only be back to work under reduced earnings and restrictions. I doubt that I'll have my room at the "Y"—I'll have all those debts to pay back, including a doctor bill. What clothes I have left will be too large, for the 15 pounds I have gained in the past few months will have been consumed in alcohol; all those whom I can now call friends will be skeptical at best and with very good reason to be—if I take a drink today.

However, regardless of what kind of recovery I might make, with the things I absolutely know it will cost me—THE PRICE IS JUST TOO GREAT! I know it will cost me every dollar I have now and what I can borrow, in addition to the loss of income, totalling in all, seven or eight hundred dollars. I know I'll suffer the pangs of hell, wherever I am, both mentally and physically. I know I'll lose the encouragement and respect of my wife, and my employers and associates will speak and think of me in

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MORE FROM BILL

Another article by Bill W. is scheduled for the December issue of *The A.A. Grapevine* with others to follow in subsequent issues.

Bill's articles appeared in *The Grapevine* regularly until mid-summer and covered various phases of A.A. policy and tradition, A.A. public relations, anonymity, the money problem in A.A., and other topics.

Also scheduled for the December issue is one of Chicago's classic accounts of A.A. recoveries; a discussion of the problem of new A.A. women in small groups; and, another thought-provoking article on gossip, the male species.

EDITORIAL:

On the 1st Step

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

Since nearly all alcoholics are ardent individualists, we frequently stress that there are no "musts" in the A.A. program. However, experience has taught us that without unqualified acceptance of the 1st Step any recovery for the alcoholic is practically impossible. Even those alcoholics, and there probably have been a goodly number over the centuries, who have managed to escape by other means than A.A. from the toils of John Barleycorn, seem to have accepted the principle that alcohol had them defeated and was the primary cause of most of their poor adjustment to normal living.

Many newcomers to the ever growing ranks of A.A. still seem to find an almost insurmountable obstacle to getting started with the program in the admission that their drinking has gotten completely out of control. Sometimes those who are ready to admit they are powerless over alcohol, will not concede that their lives have become unmanageable for that reason. They prefer to blame their difficulties on an unfeeling boss, a nagging wife, an unhappy love affair or inability to pay the rent.

A new member of A.A., who as yet perhaps has not taken a very severe beating, may sincerely wonder what constitutes an unmanageable life. Let us cite briefly one example. A man, who has achieved considerable success in his profession, had just completed a job of which he was justifiably proud. He had, at the moment, no particular worries and some free time ahead which he planned to spend with old friends and to do some pleasant things for which he ordinarily did not have the time. He was resolved not to drink enough to even dull the enjoyment of his little holiday. Within forty-eight hours he made himself so ill that he was unable to leave his apartment for four days. This episode convinced him that his life had become unmanageable through alcohol and, for the first time, he became willing, having now taken the 1st Step, to give himself a fair chance with A.A.

Unfortunately some, who have at the start apparently accepted the 1st Step with relief after years of struggle with alcohol, begin to wonder, despite the record, whether perhaps they can now do some controlled drinking. If they wonder long enough, they usually experiment and there has as yet been no recorded case of the experiment turning out successfully.

Into the lives of most members of A.A. are likely to come, at some period, emotional disturbances of such alarming proportions that momentarily the program as a whole may seem of little avail. For those of us who run into such crises, it would seem all important to recall again our initial acceptance of the 1st Step. The storm then will always pass and we can once more chart our course by the entire program.—A. T., *Greenwich Village, N. Y.*

Reunion by Mail

From Danville, Va.

After ten years of alcoholic drinking, the doctors in town told me that I was incurable; that I would have to adjust my life to "sprees" and that I would never be able to control my life.

That verdict was extremely hard to take. There was no A.A. group here and, although I had read about A.A. in magazines, I knew very little about the organization. In fact, I thought A.A. was a crazy sort of idea; an idea that certainly wouldn't work for me. I decided, however, to write an old friend of mine who had been out of town for many years. I knew he was an alcoholic and I hoped that he had found the answer to his problem. He was not only sober but had been active in A.A. for two years. His letters convinced me that A.A. was for me. Now, I am sober and looking for a few persons to help me start a group here.—W.B.

One Green Light Enough to Start Even Streamliner

from Chicago

A little over sixteen months ago, I made my first contact with A.A. I had heard a lot about it, and I had read many articles written by its members. It had been suggested by friends that I should look into it, but I belonged to that great army of alcoholics who say "not for me." I differed in one respect however. I knew I needed it, and I knew that the 1st Step fitted me like a glove, but I couldn't see how it could work for me. . . . I wanted permanent sobriety without all the trouble and bother of getting it on the installment plan—that is, 24 hours at a time. . . . I had to be shown by some concrete example just how this 24-hour business could be applied to my life.

Thanks to that Higher Power that I call God, I was given the answer before I had been in the Group a week. I had finally made a contact in desperation, knowing that I would only last a few days at most. This answer came to me at a time and in a place where one would never expect to find it, but I certainly list it as a great Spiritual experience.

We were taking some friends to the station to catch the train for Los Angeles. Due to the crowds, I did not board the train, and instead, wandered down the tracks to where the great Diesel engine was standing. Somehow, my eyes lighted on a semaphore structure down the track a little way, and as they did so, a giant arm moved, and a green light came into view. The engineer must have seen it at the same instant, for he started clanging the big bell on the engine, and as the conductor yelled "all aboard" people quickly scrambled on the train. In a matter of seconds, the great streamlined train with its human cargo, bound for a far-away destination, slowly pulled out of the station.

A few hundred feet down the track, the train curved out of my sight, and then for the first time, I realized that the engineer had started out on a 2300 mile trip, yet he could see only one green light. The next couple of minutes I experienced thoughts that made sense.

I had seen an engineer with a job to perform—he had to get that train to its destination. What if he had insisted upon waiting to dart until he could see green lights all the way between Chicago and Los Angeles? Obviously he would never have started, because that would be demanding the impossible. That was the reason he had been provided with this signal system. If so inclined, he might think of a hundred hazards that lay ahead of him before

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PATIENCE WITH THE SPIRITUAL FACTOR

From Indianapolis

More than two years observation of Alcoholics Anonymous at work has convinced me that the weary seeker after sobriety, knocking desperately and finally at the A.A. portals, is skittish of what a great many call the "religious" phase of the program.

It may be that he has been plied too well with the pleas of his family or other well-wishers, nagging with religious or moral suasion. He may have been inveigled into signing the pledge or listening to the unintelligible, though well-meant, exhortation of a clergyman. Too, he may have had a brush with the Salvation Army or some hymn-singing rescue mission whose offer in the main was the old traditional cant.

When he totters at long last on the threshold of A.A., our average applicant is sick physically, mentally and spiritually. And though he has a well-founded suspicion he is a lost soul, and in need of some saving, he shudders at the thought of pillorying himself publicly and before Heaven as such. He is abashed in the presence of the Divinity and His mundane representatives, with the filth of his recent career still upon him.

And so with the premature "religious" introduction to A.A. he may wonder: Is A.A. another cult of soul-saving fanatics and Bible-mongers? Is it an order of ascetics who are driving out Demon Rum by the practice of rigorous self-denial, constant prayer and meditation, and long faces?

We're Materialists

Remember, your average applicant has been a gross materialist, an egocentric materialist. The very act of his drinking has been materialistic, sensual, selfish. And his alcohol-colored slant on life has not permitted much, if any, of the abstract or spiritual element. The lovely three-dimensional French mirror in the back bar has been hidden from him by the more important row of practical containers in front of it. And his cursory examination of the labels has gone little further than the extent of the proof and the price.

His drinking career has pandered to his feeling for the material, the physical side of life; the wet years have made him indifferent, if not actually antagonistic, to the abstract and ethical considerations.

My thought on the subject—and I may say it is one born of my own personal experience—is that the newcomer to A.A. should be weaned away from his self-centered materialism gradually, lest he be discouraged and frightened by what strikes him at the time as an outlook on

life utterly beyond his world. Let him use his material gimmicks for awhile, worrying with nothing more spiritual than A.A. fellowship or the wondrous group therapy.

Let him pass the tavern at the home corner of his street car line, thinking about the drugstore beyond, where he is going to get those cigarettes, magazine or candy bar. Even as I did. I wore a path in the street between the rear door of the trolley and the entrance to a neighborhood tavern. The course had become automatic, groovy.

At the dawn of the new deal, however, I made it a practice to do *some* intensive thinking about that drugstore—not too wilfully,

What Do You Think About Youth Group In Philadelphia?

From Philadelphia

A group of A.A.s has been formed at Philadelphia for men and women, 35 years of age and under. This group was formed in January, 1946, with just six members, only three of whom had been dry the four months required for voting membership. This membership has since been expanded to about thirty, nearly half of whom have been dry over four months.

We were under the impression when we began this group that we were trailblazers in the field, but reports from some of our visiting A.A.s have indicated that it has been tried before, although with very little success. We are not seeking pioneer credit in writing this letter, but rather, constructive criticism. We hope to hear from other groups throughout the country, giving us the benefit of your experience with young people and with such organizations as ours if they have been attempted.

We were slow in getting started with our group and we are still proceeding with caution since it is apparent that our abilities lie more in the realm of prevention than in cure. Most young people have not been hurt badly enough or often enough, so they think, to feel that they are in any need of what we in A.A. have to offer. It is feared that for this reason we will experience more than a normal number of relapses, and that our progress will of necessity be slow. However, many of our later members have admitted that had it not been for this young group they would not have stuck to A.A. So, we are doing some good.

Let's hear from other groups. We would like your suggestions, advice, criticism and opinions on what we are trying to do.—*B.D.Mc.*

lest I overplay it—several blocks from my corner. And I would get off at the front door instead of the rear, crossing in front of the car. I thus tossed a wrench in the automatic machinery at an important stage. Now, believe it or not, this small beginning worked for me; and I seized my cue from it, extending the "disorganizing" to the entire day.

I found it was better to alter the whole pattern than to change only the action immediately adjacent to the drink or the bottle purchase. In that way the substitution of another chore for the alcoholic one did not stand out so conspicuously in the day's scheme. In other words, the events leading up to and away from "the tragedy" were shuffled, so that the smuggling of a bottle into the office at 2 p.m. was actually overlooked in the comparative confusion. It was as simple as that—to start with. A few strategic changes in the daily scheme and my old drinking pattern was an unfamiliar shambles. I was intentionally and with deliberate conspiracy throwing myself off stride.

Several gimmicks, ridiculously simple, as they should be for the still slightly damp one served me well in my swaddling days with A.A. Such elementary devices as the chocolate bar, B-1 tablets, walking on "the other side of the street," dry companionships, attendance at events exciting enough to absorb my thought away from drinking—all of these and other little intimate inventions of my own carried me along during the introductory months and helped bring to my alcohol-centric existence a new freedom of interest and activity. Believe me, friends, the deeper "awakening" will come in due time.

Easy Does This, Too

Bill has said that once the alcoholic "has accepted the fact that he *is* an alcoholic and the further fact that he is powerless to recover unaided, the battle is half won." These first two Steps combine with the third for a good beginning in A.A. practice. The others, with the exception of the 12th Step, can come gradually, without pressing or forcing. I have an idea that the more subtly and naturally the A.A. spiritual realization is born within the member, the more sound and sure will be his higher development. It will carry up and on when the stimulating novelty of sobriety has worn off, and the inevitable depression has set in. . . . when the "member of standing" finds himself beset with the feeling that he has exhausted the program!

Indeed the study and practice of the "unalcoholic steps" will hatch you out of your ego—
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An Alcoholic's Wife Finds Many Ways to Help

From Chicago

When the alcoholic member of a family makes his first contact with A.A., and starts upon the new life, it is a moment of great happiness for all those nearest to him. To me the hand of God is most evident at this moment of transition. Suddenly one who seemed lost changes into a new creature, seeking only the good. Yesterday he was a poor, confused soul, torn between appetite and self-disgust. Today he steps forth with the aspirations of a saint. What happened at this moment to the inexorable laws of nature, to "cause and effect," to all the rules that a man must suffer the consequences of his misdeeds? For some inexplicable reason they have been momentarily set aside; and the poor debauched sinner finds himself upon a new road, with new hope in his heart. To a wife who has watched her husband rushing toward his doom, whose imagination could envisage only some horrible climax, this event is nothing less than a miracle. I say this as one who has scoffed at such things as miracles during most of my life.

None of us will ever forget the first few weeks that followed; how the strain and tension relaxed in our homes, how fear was replaced by new hope for the future; how we began to feel love and pride again for the pitiable person of whom we had become ashamed and

perhaps contemptuous.

With the passage of time, however, there do come periods of stress and strain again. The task of character rehabilitation which the alcoholic has set for himself sometimes grows arduous. If the wife and family have determined to give him full support; if they have done their best to understand A.A., they will know how to meet these occasional crises.

I believe it is the wife's first duty, as well as her great privilege, to try to understand A.A. to the best of her ability. She should read and reread the book, and attempt to work out a program of better living for herself, that will make it possible for her to travel the new road with her husband.

There is no room in the home of on A.A. for petty bickering, hysterics, hurt feelings, jealousies. These small indulgences of some "good women" are as poisonous here to peace and security, as a closet full of whiskey.

I, for one, have no sympathy for the wife who thinks it necessary to remind her husband, or their mutual friends, of the things she has endured in the past, or of how she "spent the best years of her life." If the wife believes in the theory of Alcoholics Anonymous that alcoholism is an incurable disease over which the victim, by himself, has no control, then these unhappy incidents could not be helped. Only

a person with no heart would bewail her lot in having to minister to a loved one suffering from cancer or tuberculosis.

It is no "bed of roses" to be the wife of an alcoholic; and when you become the wife of an A.A., there will be new demands upon your time, your energies, your powers of self-control, your social capacities, that you would never have dreamed of meeting in the old, disordered days.

The wife should do every thing she can to encourage her husband in his work with other alcoholics. This may mean throwing open your home to new prospects, or members of their families, it may mean talking with the prospect's wife about A.A.; it may mean cheerfully doing without the company of one's husband on many a long evening while he is off upon his mission of help; or just doing any or all of the little neighborly things for another that we city dwellers have almost forgotten how to do—such as taking care of the baby so that the new prospect's wife can get to some of the meetings with him.

The Chicago group, particularly, has paid great tribute to its wives in permitting them to attend the Tuesday night general meetings. These meetings have been one of the great privileges of my life. I can't understand having to urge anyone to come a second time. Here is to be found more drama, more pathos, more good belly-laughs than in a hundred years of movie-going.

No where else that I know of, could one gain greater insight into human nature, with its frailties and its unlimited possibilities, than sitting here in these meetings week after week, listening to these utterly sincere stories from men and women who have struggled successfully against alcoholism.

Although the wife enjoys the role of being just a listener at these meetings, she can make her influence felt for the good, in the informal social gatherings both before and afterward.

There are many wives of alcoholics who had withdrawn themselves from friendships and social contacts for many years. To them the warm handshake, the friendly greetings with which they were met on their first contacts with A.A. opened up new horizons, and went far toward giving them an understanding of what A.A. could mean to them and theirs.

There are many things we wives are grateful for nowadays. I could go on just listing them for several hours—for dates made and kept, for not having to "wear the pants" anymore, for peace of mind, for tranquil days and nights, and for the ordinary garden variety of home security.—*M.N.*

Now She Takes Her Vitamin A.A. in Large Doses

From Manhattan

Some years ago before I realized I had a drinking problem I heard that Vitamin B, would would be good for my ragged nerves and the terrific hangovers and jitters from drinking would not be so acute. I took them with a vengeance in double doses without consulting a doctor. When I later told my doctor I was taking them he agreed with me that they were good for me but explained that my system would only take so much and the extra amount would be thrown off, so I might just as well cut down on them.

When I started in A.A. I took great doses of it too and because I didn't know how much I could use and no doctor could tell me I decided to take it as another vitamin, so called it "Vitamin A.A."

It makes no difference if you go overboard in A.A., especially in the beginning, as you can only absorb so much of it. You have to get so many ideas and thoughts from as many different types of people in it before you can form your own working program. However, in taking "Vitamin A.A." as well as in taking any other kind of vitamin, it is well to get a re-

liable brand that has worked for other people. From the many successful people and I stress, successful people in A.A., you can take the ideas that best suit you and formulate a livable, likable, workable pattern of living. . . .

As of November 1, I have been in A.A. one year. I am one of those who thinks slips are unnecessary. A slip to me would not mean taking a drink. It would mean much more than that. It would mean slipping back to that old pattern of living. I keep before me at all times a chart of what my life was before and after taking Vitamin A.A.; it goes like this:

<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Low Principles	for High Principles
Self Pity	for Interest in Fellow Man
Weakness	for Strength
Frustration	for Purpose in Life
Boredom	for Full and Balanced Life
Death	for Desire and Will to Live

If I were to slip it would mean my making a new decision. That of taking the negative side of the chart for the constructive. I doubt that anything could be worth such a decision because in the final analysis it would mean I prefer death instead of life. That's how serious it is with me.—*M.O.*

The Price of a Drink

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terms of doubt, at least temporarily—if I take a drink today.

Since I started thinking about what a drink would cost me, a lot of good things have happened to me that would not have happened if I had taken a drink. My wife has spent a grand two weeks vacation with me—the first time we've been together for more than 24 hours for six years—all on account of John Barleycorn. My brother and his wife have been here to visit me—the first time in nine years—and I've had a week's vacation with pay at the boss's cottage and with my wife. I've seen several good ball games, a couple of circuses and numerous other things that I enjoy—none of which would have happened if I took a drink.

My wife is ready to come to Grand Rapids and make a home for me any time it can be arranged and the future in general looks brighter for me than in many years. So, you see, the price of a drink does get greater with the passing of each day of sobriety.

I don't know how nearly parallel my case may run with any of yours, but certainly close enough that none of you can afford to pay the price of a drink today—if you are an alcoholic. And for the benefit of you newer men, if you are an alcoholic take a tip from one who is an alcoholic, *you can't take a drink today* any more than I can, without getting drunk and into trouble.

So, summing it all up and adding it backwards and forwards, the answer is the same and I saw it again and again and again, the PRICE IS JUST TOO GREAT, *if I take, a drink today.*—Tom D.

Patience With Spiritual Factor

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centric and materialistic cocoon, and acquaint you, perhaps for the first time in your life, with many of those good old humanitarian virtues.

This graduation into the higher brackets of A.A. opens up fascinating vistas of the spiritual, and diverts a brooding, selfish, ingrowing mind into a limitless, objective way of thinking'. You'll think something occult is happening to you! And when you begin to feel an awareness and an appreciation of the things in life that cannot be touched by the hand, then will you have caught on—then will you be able to perceive the rich potentialities of this new way of life.

Be patient, you uninitiated! (What an order for an alcoholic!) Don't rush the spiritual factor. Certainly, you don't take differential calculus before the arithmetic!—R.P.C.

The Pleasures of Reading

PRAYER: The Mightiest Force in the World, by Frank C. Laubach, M.A., Ph.D., D.D. (Fleming H. Revell Co. \$1.25)

There are few groups of people who know as well from personal experience that prayer is really the mightiest force in the world as our A.A. groups. Most of us have learned to ask God daily to assist us through the day without drinking, and have had our prayers answered, day after day, when nothing else would do it. Those of us who wish to rest content with this, who feel that this miracle is already more than we could reasonably expect, probably would be irritated by this book, which urges us to go on to apply the principle to other issues.

For those, however, who feel that contributing toward a better world is part of the restitution suggested for convalescing alcoholics, and for those who simply wish that there was something they could do about current events, Dr. Laubach's book offers a satisfying solution. He shows us in detail how to use "chinks" of time for intercessory prayer, and makes a powerful case for its effectiveness. By reminding us that "It is infinitely better for world leaders to listen to God than for them to listen to us," he suggests the solution to the frustration we feel when we read or hear the news these days. We know that things are going badly and we feel heart-sick at our inability to do anything about it. We haven't the influence to make our ideas felt, even if we had any real confidence in our ideas on many complex subjects. The way out, and a satisfying way it is, is to turn the problem over to God by helping those responsible for world affairs to lift their hearts and minds to Him.

"A small group of men are making the plans for world peace, plus a few hundred others who can reach their ears. All the rest of us, the hundreds of millions of us, are unable to offer our views. We must be silent, but we need not be helpless. For the humblest of us can pray. Millions of us ordinary people must pour an incessant white light of prayer upon the world leaders day after day. We must lift the heads of those leaders toward God so that they will hear Him and will obey His will. Enough people praying enough will release into the human blood stream the mightiest medicine in the universe, for we shall be the channel through which God can exert His infinite power. Prayer is to the world of human relations what white corpuscles are to the human body. If enough of us pray enough there will be permanent peace.

"Prayer is powerful, but it is not the power of a sledge hammer that crushes with one blow. It is the power of sun rays and rain drops which bless, because there are so many of them . . . We . . . must learn to flash hundreds of instantaneous prayers at people near and far, knowing that many prayers may show no visible results, but that at least some of them will hit their mark. When you fill a swamp with stones, a hundred loads may disappear under the water before a stone appears on the surface, but all of them are necessary."

After developing the need for prayer in world affairs and suggesting objects for our prayers, Dr. Laubach goes on to describe experiments in prayer which will prove challenging even to those who are not yet convinced of its power. He feels that "much of our data concerning spiritual matters is at the same stage as chemistry and medicine were when they were still called 'alchemy'" and that many of us, by exchanging our findings, can help extend our knowledge of spiritual law. He disagrees with those who feel that this field is too sacred to be subjected to experimentation. "Prayer is too sacred NOT to be given to the entire human race." Which brings us back to that other purpose of prayer—to develop the pray-er. We who have been through the valley of the shadow because of our shortcomings, know that we must grow spiritually or die, and we will ever be grateful to those who can show us the way.—Rob D., Garden City.

WE HAPPY FEW by Helen Howe (Simon and Schuster, \$2.75)

We Happy Few is not a book about an alcoholic; nonetheless, it is a far better than average modern novel which weaves the partial story of an alcoholic into the saga of a typical "set" in much the same way that alcoholics are part of such sets in every strata of life today.

Written by a woman who is famous for her monologues, the novel contains all the colorful characterization which Miss Howe has always been capable of verbally. Her style makes Dorothea, the self-contained, slightly smug, smart heroine, easy to picture from the first scene in the book to the last. And in that distance, Dorothea undergoes the transformation from a more than marriageable girl in her early twenties, to a wiser woman in her forties about to settle down with the personality she has at last uncovered and made peace with.

We Happy Few describes the activities of this woman who moves in the pseudo-culture of school and university sets throughout her life. Daughter, of a mellow and likable preparatory
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A. A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio: "One of the most cheering facts is that the evil imps of hate, envy, fear, anger and the like have no power of their own to enter our minds and poison us. It is only when we welcome them that they come in. Sometimes we are merely careless. At other times we actually invite those imps to take up their abode with us.

"There is no room for evil in a mind that is filled with good. The loving mind is without hate. Our mind is like a house. If we fill our house with guests who are rough and brutal and evil, naturally we keep away guests who are desirable.

"Always the responsibility is our own. As individuals we have the power to choose what kind of thoughts and emotions we want to entertain. Our words, our speech and our actions depict the kinds of guests which are in our minds. . . . What we are we think. What we think always finds outward expression."

A.A. Tribune, Des Moines, Iowa: "If I were the wife of an A.A., I would recognize that all of my past plans for having my husband re-

frain from the gurgle had failed and I would go all the way on the A.A. program.

"I would quit distrusting my husband. I would take the attitude that from the day he went into A.A., his drinking problem was over. I would make plans to attend all A.A. functions that wives are entitled to attend. I would become active in the wives' Group of A.A. I would let him know that I take it for granted that he has stopped drinking. I would treat him accordingly. In other words, I would not live in the past but would live 24 hours at a time."

* * *

Weekly Bulletin, Amarillo, Texas: "I am often asked how one resigns from Alcoholics Anonymous. I don't know. However, here's a suggested procedure that may be effective: Get a little money ahead after six or eight weeks of sobriety and get a little cocky; buy a fifth of 'testing fluid' to check up on your control mechanism. For the next day or two, when you are calling your friend 'Sharlie' instead of 'Charlie,' I suppose you can say you have 're-

signed' from A.A. More than likely, you'll be back!"

* * *

Camel Club Chronicle, Marshalltown, Iowa: "... I hear that some of our groups are becoming greedy for money. Well, that's bad. The local group does not handle enough money to have any difficulty along that line. We are nearly always operating in the red, but I think that is a healthy condition for any group. It makes it necessary for us to work, gives us something to work for, and affords us an opportunity to work together. Nothing so much promotes harmony as the understanding that results from working together."

* * *

Dubuque Alanews, Dubuque, Iowa: "Have you noticed that the 'out of town' members of a club are usually among the better members? We think it is fortunate to have representation from the smaller towns. These members have a potential influence that far exceeds that of a member living in a more populated area.

"If you have ever lived in a small town you know what we mean. In the small town everyone knows you, knows what you do from morning until night and, worst luck, from night until morning. There are no secrets.

"But heaven help the small town toper! He is the Gibraltic Rock on which gossip never wears thin . . . but after the A.A. lightning hits the toper, people begin to think. Maybe the ex-topper knows something, maybe he can help us. After all, maybe he is the one who knows the answer!"

The Pleasures of Reading (continued from Page 5)

school professor, she grows up and marries the scion of an older, more conventional family, who himself becomes a professor at Cambridge, while Dorothea becomes the center of a scintillating little group of flatterers and, in many cases, intellectual snobs.

Her progress is jolted at the outset by her meeting with a young idealist whom she feels she loves, but who is too far outside her normal orbit to afford her the selfish mental comfort she has come already to depend on and expect from life. The early years of her marriage (one judges from the lack of description regarding them) were much like those of most couples with similar interests. It is when the Second World War looms over the world that Miss Howe delves deep into what has become of the ultra-smart Dorothea and her life.

Dorothea finds confusion resulting from her shallowness, later nothing but shame in a brief affair with an old flame now turned man of the world, and little food for her ego in her husband's doggedness to do what he sees as his duty. After his death, she watches the idealist, now famous and less blinded by her outward charms, slip from her fingers, and finally clutches at her son. His entry into the war, and her subsequent inevitable facing up to herself, show poignantly the struggle through which many women have passed in the last two decades.

Miss Howe lays no blame, she does not formulate the theme that the smattering of knowledge gained by the so-called intellectuals of the period has been a dangerous thing; rather one feels that she would change the emphasis on values. She paints, along with the main characters, striking people in the wings—two mothers-in-law, one bent on little other than non-conformance, one less troubled and truly independent; numerous luminaries common to every campus but inherently Ivy League; the alcoholic wife of a stuffed-shirt doctor of letters who recovers not only her health but her purpose in life through Alcoholics Anonymous and later helps Dorothea embark on a truly worthwhile future; an uncouth but brilliant psychiatrist.

Miss Howe shows up in a glaring light many of the fallacies regarding the marital dues which hundreds of women exact, and their most female frailties, and pokes well-deserved but sly fun at the intelligentsia peculiarly rampant in New England communities devoted to the arts and sciences. Few women can read the book without recognizing themselves somewhere along the line; A.A.s cannot read it without realizing how true it is that there are few circles that do not contain their Corinnes, and without being surprised anew at the fact that A.A. itself is now as much a part of civilized living as are the other timely elements of this superior story of what made Dorothea so loath to leave *We Happy Few*.—K.T., *New York*.

Little Rock Group 'Mothers' Southwest

As the Little Rock, Arkansas, group goes into its seventh year the title of "Mother Group of the Southwest" is being used frequently in tribute to the manner in which younger groups turn to it for advice and speakers.

Batesville's group recently celebrated its first anniversary with the speakers including its founder, inducted into A.A. in Little Rock, while a Little Rock member was the principal speaker. The chapter has furnished speakers at Community Chest Groups, Chamber of Commerce meetings, church men's groups and civic clubs as well as principal speakers at Chattanooga, El Dorado and Monticello. For the Atlanta regional meeting the men of Little Rock chartered a plane and flew a delegation of 22 to attend. Many of the more than 300 who have completed the unique Little Rock program have established groups in the state and adjoining states.

SPEAKING OF MANIFESTATIONS.

from Chicago

"A.A. has kept me dry four months," a sincere member said at our Group meeting the other night, "but the spiritual angle eludes me. I have turned my life and will over to God as I understand Him. I have looked for a manifestation that His power is operating in my behalf. But I'm still waiting."

There was a little silence. It was simple to

Clip Sheet

(Continued from Page 7)

ing stories of a man's fall into the curse of alcoholism and his recovery through A.A.

"The speaker was the pastor of a large, local church. He told the story—his own—with superb eloquence and sincerity. He told how as pastor of a church he became addicted to the use of alcohol, of his subsequent disgrace and downfall, of his horrible experiences in saloons and slums and of his deliverance and restoration to the pulpit through A.A."

* * *

Portsmouth, Va., *Star*: "The organization (A.A.) is composed of former and present victims of alcoholism. But it is not a prohibition society, nor is it its aim to prevent any man from indulging in an occasional drink.

"Its aim is to rehabilitate the alcoholic—the man who is a slave to whiskey. Research in recent years has introduced new techniques that have wrought almost a revolution in the treatment of chronic drunkenness. It is now realized that the excessive thirst for alcohol is psychological not physical. ... It is the craving for escape that induces the alcoholic to become a sot. The hopeless alcoholic, in many instances, deserves sympathy rather than condemnation."

* * *

Woburn, Mass., *Daily Times*: "One year of official existence in Woburn marked a very successful era for Alcoholics Anonymous, the work of which now embraces 30,000 members included in 900 units throughout the country.

"Many people did not know that such an organization existed in Woburn until it was a year old. Before the launching of the Woburn unit, local persons studied the plan and attended Boston Groups. They found that the work involved included understanding, patience and persistence. They undertook it and the work has been a humanely profitable one. The enthusiasm of the members and their eagerness to extend themselves in personal sacrifices and personal assistance reveals the wholesomeness of the organization."

diagnose the current trouble of this swell little guy who had gained sobriety and made great progress in so short a time. He was just a little impatient—and just a little blind. Finally, somebody had a happy thought: He spoke gently.

"Joe," he said, "I remember an experience of yours soon after you found A.A. You told about it, right here, a month ago. It had to do with your mother in some little Michigan town. Does it come to mind?"

"Oh, sure," Joe said heartily. "I'll never forget that. My mother is pretty old, you know, and I'd never done anything to make her younger. Fact is, my drinking and carrying on was edging her right into the grave. I was the only drunkard in our large family—but one, of course, is too many.

"Well, in my case I guess Mother had given up all hope, and I could never blame her. So many promises, so many disappointments. I was hopeless, too. And then along came A.A., and after a little period of sobriety, hope came back. And when my faith came back, too, I wrote Mother a little letter and told her what had happened—and what, I felt sure, was going to keep on happening.

"She couldn't wait to write her answer. She wired! The telegram just said, 'Thank God,' and then told about a family reunion she had cooked up for Detroit the following Sunday. That family meeting hit me with terrific impact. Nobody said anything embarrassing; they didn't talk much at all. But everybody was so radiantly happy.

"Mother—she was the quietest of all. She just sat in an old rocker and rocked—and looked at me. It was the look in her eyes that got me, the pride in 'em. That was what I'd wanted all my life, to make her proud. It was the way she'd wanted to see me for years, but couldn't.

"I tell you, it was the biggest day of my life. It was sort of like an impossible dream come true. Kind of like a miracle——"

Joe broke off quickly. There was another silence. He realized that every eye was on him, everybody was smiling a little. He fidgeted in his chair.

"For the love of Mike!" he exploded at last. "Stupid, ain't I?"

"Still waiting for a manifestation, Joe?" prodded the gentle-voiced member who had jogged the worried lad's memory.

"Oh, I see it," Joe said quickly. "I see what you're getting at. That was a manifestation, all right, and I suppose there have been plenty more in these four months. But it all came so naturally, and hardly the way I expected. Somehow, I never quite looked at it that way——"

Somehow, so many of us don't.—E.B.

Moochers .

Down-Under

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NOTES

NO. 2

(By One of the Originals)

From Sydney, Australia

The Australian Main Branch of Alcoholics Anonymous now holds two meetings weekly at its Headquarters, ironically enough a delicensed public house in Sydney. These meetings are held on Tuesdays and Fridays, starting at 7 P.M. On Tuesdays we may bring our wives, sweethearts, ministers of religion and friends who are interested. Friday is set apart for alcoholics only, except that founders and Mr. Frank Sturge-Harty (whom we regard as a sort of Deputy Founder) may attend if they wish. On odd occasions one or more of them may appear, but mostly we are left to ourselves.

On Friday, July 5, there was a large attendance (some 50 or 60 being present). Six or seven were drunk, but no one took much notice of this.

Of later months a certain element has been of some bother to us. They are male members who have been turning up quite regularly—sometimes sober, sometimes not. They move from member to member, getting a cigarette here, a shilling or two there. They never under any circumstances make the slightest attempt to live the 12 Steps, and are, at times, a disorganizing influence at meetings.

Cold Shoulder Works

Our founders advised us not to give them money or to help them in any way; we first commenced taking this attitude (feeling rather mean about it) on Friday, July 5. At the two subsequent meetings not one of them put in an appearance. So it seems they were more interested in supplementing their incomes than in learning how to be dry and happy.

A branch of Alcoholics Anonymous has now been established at Manly (a seaside suburb of Sydney) and another is expected to be established at Katoomba, a mountain town 70 miles west of Sydney. There has for some time been a branch at Barellan in central New South Wales. Another branch may soon be established in Melbourne, capital city of the State of Victoria. Melbourne has a population of 1,200,000 as compared to Sydney's 1,350,000. Sydney is the capital of the State of New South Wales. Further, we are trying to urge the Australian Red Cross Society to establish a branch in Adelaide, capital city (300,000 people) of the State of South Australia.—R.A.

THE CLIP SHEET

Ottawa, Ont., *Journal*: "The alcoholic must have, above all things, an honest desire to break away from liquor. If he has not, A.A. will not bother with him for long. They don't molly-coddle members who 'slip' for they know from personal experience all the excuses the drunk can think up for having imbibed too much.

"In Ottawa, A.A. came into being after a man, an alcoholic, answered an advertisement a year ago in a New York newspaper in hope of finding a way out of his trouble. He became interested in the movement. Last spring, when several of his acquaintances who had a similar problem had become interested, they inserted advertisements in the Ottawa newspapers. They received between 100 and 150 inquiries."

* * *

Schenectady, N. Y., *Union-Star*: "Mutual words of praise have been exchanged between the office of the Schenectady County sheriff and Alcoholics Anonymous.

"A.A. has lauded Sheriff Harold Armstrong and Undersheriff Dimont Rector for cooperation extended in granting access to the jail for the purpose of interviewing men serving sentences on charges of intoxication.

"An A.A. spokesman revealed that a group of members visit the jail each Friday and spend a few hours with men who have been sentenced to jail for intoxication. The A.A.s do not preach, the spokesman emphasized, and usually play cards with the inmates while carrying on their campaign."

* * *

Fostoria, Ohio, *Review Times*: "Professor Selden D. Bacon of Yale University maintains that there are many potential alcoholics.

"He told a conference on parole, probation and crime prevention there are 750,000 alcoholics and 2,250,000 chronic drinkers in the United States.

"Said Professor Bacon: 'After 10 to 12 years, it often happens that the person who took two cocktails before dinner and two highball? after dinner finds himself losing his social facilities, losing his job and eventually his control. Alcoholism is a disease. The sick can be helped when it is regarded as a public health menace. The work of Alcoholics Anonymous has been invaluable.'"

* * *

Yakima, Wash., *Herald*: "The Vancouver, B. C., unit of Alcoholics Anonymous has received support that really counts.

"A group of Vancouver women formed an organization called the 'Ladies Auxiliary to Alcoholics Anonymous.' Among other things



"I don't like to drink alone."

spokesmen for the organization said they would provide refreshments at A.A. meetings."

* * *

Asheville, N. C., *Citizen*: "With more than 300 delegates registered, and 100 more expected to arrive, the annual Southeastern convention of Alcoholics Anonymous held its sessions in the main ballroom of the George Vanderbilt Hotel here.

"The delegates represented 139 Groups from 13 states. Throughout the convention, several nationally-known members of the organization were speakers."

* * *

Burlington, Vt., *News*: "The importance of Alcoholics Anonymous in the recovery of World War II veterans suffering from chronic alcoholism was stressed at a meeting of the Burlington Group of A.A. at a meeting recently.

"The 28-year-old guest speaker, who had alternately flown in combat over Europe and languished in a number of the Army's best psychiatric hospitals, told the gathering of his addiction to alcohol over a period of years.

"Finally, after years of struggle to overcome the problem, he encountered another soldier in a hospital who had been able to put his drinking behind him through the A.A. program. The speaker said: 'Thanks to A.A., I have come through my first sober season in many years.'"

Miami, Fla., *Herald*: "Miamians are sobering up so fast that Alcoholics Anonymous, its AnonA club room only nine months old, needs more space already.

"There are now 225 members. The program has expanded so greatly that to preserve the personal touch, which is an integral part of A.A. activity, two neighborhood meetings are held each week in addition to four in the club room."

* * *

New York *World-Telegram*: "So you don't drink. Good. No need to fold yourself like a napkin under the tablecloth every time a waiter asks you what you'll have. Look him straight in the eye and order a drink that looks as wicked as a sidecar, but is no more potent than a lemonade.

"Marco, who has presided over the Colony bar since it opened more than 25 years ago, has whipped up many a "softie" for drinkers non-alcoholic.

Long and Cool
 ½ grape juice ½ soda Juice of one lemon
 Pour over ice in a tall glass and serve with ½ lemon or lime."

* * *

Jackson, Miss., *Clarion-Ledger*: "The speaker at a recent public meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous told one of the most gripping and amazing
 (Continued on Page 8)

Mail Call for All A.A.s at Home or Abroad

Letters to this department are invited on any subject pertinent to A.A. Due to space limitations you are asked to hold your letters to a maximum of 350 words.

Only initials will be published unless the writer authorizes use of his first name as identification for A.A. friends.

The *A.A. Grapevine* will not divulge the full name of any writer but will forward A.A. communications addressed to the writers of letters published here.—The Editors

Good Advice

From New York

(Reprint of a letter written by an A.A. to a newcomer friend—that helped recovery.)

I was glad to get your letter this morning. I hope by now you are feeling better, more able to enjoy and derive the most that is there.

May I make one suggestion? Read a little if you wish, of course, but not just for distraction—an awful word generally—meaning escape from yourself, which you can't escape, and from things that you think you are, but are not.

Wander off once in awhile by yourself to some beautiful spot where you can be alone, and get to know yourself and God.

To know yourself is not done just by reviewing your "misdeeds"; they are not you. It is not done by so-called self-analysis, by studying your faults and weaknesses; they are not you. Your doubts, fears and apprehensions, your immature cravings, your self-indulgence—these are not you.

They are all committed by your physical body, guided by false instincts and imagination, instead of by your real self, which is the soul, the spirit within—where is your conscience, your wisdom and your strength—which no one can hurt but you.

Get to know your real self then, my dear, this nice fellow within you, who so wants a chance to use your body, with its mind and imagination, for healthy, happy, useful things, integrating them with himself so that the conflict within you can subside.

There too is God—not a remote Being—but a constant and living Presence all about us and within us, "through Whom we live and move and have our being."

"Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." Go out in the woods alone, or on a hill, and just listen—a listening that is in itself a prayer—until you feel Him, and at last can hear Him in your heart.

Ask deep within you for this union of all that you have with the real you and with God, and you will receive it. Seek, and you will find it. There will be no room for anything

but the wisdom, strength and courage that is yours.

And do not leave His Presence behind you. You can't of course, but you can leave your awareness of It. Keep that awareness with you, hold fast to it, in the deeper level of your being, while you carry on in the upper level the affairs of men—from which you need take nothing to give the other, but to which you can thus add much.

And don't forget that laughter is one of God's greatest and most beneficent gifts to us. Laugh with Him sometimes at yourself.—*N.H.*

The 12th Step

From Linda Vista, Calif.

An understanding of the 12th Step is one we all hope to reach some day, and if we live long enough, maybe we can begin to put it into real practice. In the 12th Step we have a complete summing up of the teachings of the other 11 Steps. It is really those Steps in one. It holds out to the new member a promise and hope that he, too, can someday, if not at once, have his spiritual experience. And to the older

ONE LITTLE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE

One secret of a sweet and happy life is learning to live by the day. It is the long stretches that tire us. We think of life as a whole, running on for us. We cannot carry this load until we are three score and ten. We cannot fight this battle continually for half a century. But really there are no long stretches. Life does not come to us all at one time; it comes only a day at a time. Even tomorrow is never ours until it becomes today, and we have nothing whatever to do with it but to pass down to it a fair and good inheritance in today's work well done, and today's life well lived.

It is a blessed secret this, of living by the day. Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, till nightfall. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, until the sun goes down. And this is all life ever means to us—just one little day. "Do today's duty; fight today's temptations, and do not weaken or distract yourself by looking forward to things you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them." God gives us nights to shut down upon our little days. We cannot see beyond. Short horizons make life easier and give us one of the blessed secrets of brave, true living.

—(From *Reflections*, by the Rev. F. E. Lasance—submitted by F. A., Chicago.)

member, as he begins to understand the true meaning of the 12th Step, it opens up an unending vista of a serene and happy life.

But to understand the 12th Step one must have made a real and fairly successful attempt to perform and practice the other 11 Steps. "Having had a spiritual experience as a result of these Steps"—there is the promise to the new member that regardless of his start or conception of God when he comes into the program, he too, can and will have his spiritual experience as he tries to and does complete an understanding of the other Steps, and that as we progress on the other Steps, we will undergo that change in thought and action that will give us the spiritual life that we want.

"We tried to carry this message to others"—What message? The message that there is a way out of the nightmare of alcoholism for those who sincerely and honestly want to live a life free from the remorse, fear, want and hunger that is the life of the alcoholics; the message of hope and help for others; the message that by an honest attempt to understand the other Steps, will give them release and make them happy men and women again.

"And to practice these principles in all our affairs"—What principles? The principle of live and let live; the principles of honesty, tolerance and humility; the principle of being truly grateful for the blessings we have and not being envious of others; the principle of allowing the other man to live with his own conscience and to keep ours clean so we can live with ourselves.

An honest attempt to live by the teachings of the 12th Step offers happiness and contentment, and leaves no room for any fear of what our future life on this or any other planet will be.—*J.F.H.*

The Thrill of New Groups

From Manhattan

I am what they call an "Old Timer". That is, I came in when there were only a few groups and we were numbered in the hundreds. So I got a real thrill out of attending the first open meeting of the Brooklyn Park Slope Group recently. The hall seated one hundred, but when we arrived, there was "Standing Room Only". The meeting was good, the free refreshments were good, but the best of all was the feeling of intimacy and friendliness that a group of 400 of 500 cannot have.

I think the newcomer has the best chance in such a group, for he is not likely to get lost in the crowd. More than a hundred people do not come to such a meeting just to pass the time. They come because what A.A. has to offer them is a matter of urgent need.—*S.W.*

MEDICAL BULLETIN PRINTS A.A. STORY

(Reprinted in part from an article written by Joe H. of the Bronx Group for the Bronx County Medical Society Bulletin of April, 1946. Included is a note written by the editor of the Bulletin.)

"May We Help Your Alcoholic Patients?"

"Both religion and psychiatry contain the essential principles upon which recovery from alcoholism can be based. But clergymen and doctors, as non-alcoholics, have been unable to penetrate the shell the alcoholic has built around himself. Alcoholics would not allow them to erect the strong bridge of mutual understanding and confidence so necessary for success. Yet one alcoholic speaking to another out of a common experience can often do this very thing.

"The purpose of this article is to show how thousand* of us, who were once hopeless alcoholics, have recovered from our malady. We have found a way of life which has eliminated the compulsion to drink.

"Eleven years ago, a drunk got an idea that if he tried to dry up another drunk, it might contribute to his staying sober. He put this idea into practice. It not only kept him sober but he actually did dry up the other fellow. Whereupon he unfolded the idea to his new-found friend, who incidentally, being a doctor, and now being clear of mind, could see the psychology of it. Pooling their mental, physical and material resources, they set out to rehabilitate one other drunk, and in each instance imparted their idea to the new recruit, prevailing upon him to do for other inebriates as they had done for him.

"That nucleus of hopeless and despairing drunks has grown into a fellowship known as Alcoholics Anonymous, with a roster of over 23,000 men and women who are now useful citizens and assets to their communities. This organization, as you can see, has grown rapidly. It is not only national, but international in scope.

Testimony of Ex-Cop

"It was over three years ago that the writer of this article became exposed to Alcoholics Anonymous and reluctantly so. Some twenty-odd years ago, I was a clean-cut, well liked physical example with a fair share of brain matter. Appointed to the Police Department of the City of New York, I retained that standing for a few years. But the advent of prohibition and a desire to be a regular fellow was to catch up with me. Going along for a number of years being able to drink with the best of them, there came a time when alcoholism demanded its toll.

"From there on, a change took place. Not

so much in the beginning, but it picked up momentum. There came the times of being unable to go to work, reporting sick more often than was allowable, general malingering, deceit,

**Barley
!!! CORN !!!**

Heard at the big meeting in Chicago:

"Some blackouts are better left forgotten." . . . "I didn't think I was really an alcoholic until I suddenly realized that I never fell off the stool at any soda fountain."

* * *

One of the Calgary, Canada, members suggests that on the matter of qualifying for membership in A.A. one "has to be bad in order to be good."

* * *

From R.R.W. and S.H. in Longview, Tex.:

When a certain man was told he must be an alcoholic because everytime he look a drink he wanted to stay drunk for three weeks, his reply was: "You mean I'm one of those alcoholic enormouses!"

* * *

Like the lady who, on seeing the ocean for the first time, remarked: "Well, that's the first thing I've seen that there's enough of," . . . the first drink is more than enough.

* * *

Some of the boys at the country club were getting ready for Sunday morning golf. One of them, very badly hung over, said he was going to start, "Golfers Anonymous." Then, whenever a member called up another, he could rush right over with a bottle. That would save all of the golf real estate, dressing and wasting time on the course.

* * *

Via M.E., Miami:

A panhandling drunk accosted a gentleman and wanted a dollar bill.

"Isn't that overdoing it a bit?" asked the gent.

"Well," said the lush, "I'm putting all my begs in one askit."

* * *

And then there was the drunk who was reported to have been overheard while leaning against a pole:

"If you pink pookas don't keep out of my way, I'll take a couple of aspirins and put you all out of business."

failing to share responsibility, and the loss of self-confidence. Fellow officers repeatedly advised and warned, but to no avail. Treatment at home was useless. Hospitalization became necessary on a great many occasions. After a fair trial, the police commissioner decided the department had stood for enough and would be better off without me. God knows everybody had warned me and had done everything to aid but to no use.

"Many thought the loss of the dearly loved job might bring some sense into my head, but instead I assumed an attitude of despair, and became progressively worse, until finally I had become a regular hospital 'stiff,' swinging in and out of both public and private institutions. I had been in the psycho ward of Bellevue sixteen times, with two sojourns to Harlem Valley State Hospital. It was not because I was not trying. I was, believe me. I had been earnestly trying to stop, but without success. I had hit a blank wall, and everything seemed hopeless.

"On my 16th trip to Bellevue, I was contacted by A.A. and promised to look into this group . . . more of an excuse to get out of the hospital than anything else. Reluctantly I attended an A.A. meeting, figuring, what the h—, everything else had failed, what is there to lose? Got no money. No job. Can't even get a reference, and I owe everybody.

"That was three and a half years ago. I have not had a drink since. As a matter of fact, I no longer have a desire to drink. In The first two years of my sobriety, I paid back over \$3,500 in debts, improved the living conditions of my wife and four children, and acquired a serenity I never knew was possible. In addition to being gainfully employed for the entire period of my sobriety, I have made an avocation of alcoholic rehabilitation of those who desire such.

Group in Bronx

"Eighteen months ago, with a handful of other Bronxites, we organized the now well established and rapidly growing Bronx County Group of A.A. We may be reached at P. O. Box 19, Morris Heights Station, Bronx, New York. Literature and further information may be had by writing this address.

"(Editor's Note: The Publications Committee, with the approval of the Comitia Minora, is pleased to publish the above in the hope that our members will direct their incurable alcoholics to the local group of A. A. The astounding success of these men and women was brought to our attention by a former officer of the Bronx County Medical Society who had recommended it to a few patients. We then learned that many physicians and clergymen had been recommending it since its inception.)"

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

Juice Without Gin. The Tacoma, Wash., Group extended its friendships throughout the Pacific Northwest when visiting A.A.s from Portland, Ore., and Seattle met with it at a recent open meeting. Principal speaker was an A.A. doctor from Portland who remarked that A.A. had not only taught him how to live but had given him keener perception. "I have found surprisingly that orange juice can have an exhilarating taste, even without gin," he said. The wife of an A.A. who spoke on the woman's angle urged A.A. wives to encourage their husbands to follow the A.A. program. She pointed out that wives are in a position to exercise "not inconsiderable" influence on alcoholic husbands. Attendance by Tacomans at this meeting improved. At previous open meetings, visitors from Seattle and elsewhere outnumbered the locals.

And Housing, Too. Within five months from the time the first five prospects met, the Alano Club Inc., of Spokane, Wash., had purchased and moved into a beautiful clubhouse with grounds adequate to build an adjoining one-story auditorium which is planned for the near future. Valued at \$18,000 and completely furnished through the work of the Ladies Home committee and fellow members, the club house is described as "sanctuary and bee-hive combined." Squad meetings (classes for beginners) and a general meeting on Saturday keep up the activities every night in the week. Since the first meeting on June 21, 1945, the club has grown to more than 100 members and while growing "fast and strong" has had the finest cooperation of civic clubs, newspapers, judges, doctors and hospitals.

Hoosiers Hustle. A.A. might have a second meaning of "all angles" in Indianapolis, Ind., from the variety of activities there. An open forum has been scheduled for November 8 when lay questions will be answered by a board consisting of a representative of each sectional group in the city. Dates for the fall anniversary banquet and a founders' day or commemorative Sunday breakfast meeting have not been fixed. The latter will feature an outline history of A.A. for the benefit of the untutored. Decidedly worthwhile results have been reported by a small group which has made its particular business the contacting of A.A.s who did a good job for a while but drifted away.

Two Freedoms. Of 40 members of the A.A. Group at the Federal penitentiary at Leav-

enworth, Kans., who have been released either by expiration of their term or parole, none has returned to the prison, although all members of this Group credit their imprisonment to trouble caused directly or indirectly by alcoholism. Members of the Kansas City, Mo., Group held a meeting at the prison April 22, 1945, after obtaining sanction of the prison officials. From the original five, the attendance at the first anniversary meeting readied 61 with the present figure at 80, including 15 one-year members. From time to time members have been transferred to the "honor farm" and at request of

10 members, permission was given to start a group there on August 25, 1946. Programs stress the 24-hour plan and remind members to take it easy and to remember the importance of immediate A.A. contact with their local groups which will help them to start a new, sober, sane existence on release. Two members of the Kansas City, Mo., Group attend each meeting and usually give short talks. But the inmates have their own secretary, are in charge of the meetings, and have the major part of the program. Books, literature and subscriptions to the *Grapevine* are furnished by the Kansas City Group.

55 New Groups Register In Month

New groups registering with The Central Office from September 12 to October 9 were:

ALABAMA — Birmingham (Woodlawn East Group), Tuscaloosa (Veterans Hospital), Tuskegee.

ARKANSAS—Swifton.

CALIFORNIA — Arcadia, Hanford, Hollywood (Motion Picture), Merced, Orange (Midway Group).

CANADA—Prince Edward Island.

INDIANA—Warsaw.

MARYLAND—Hagerstown.

MASSACHUSETTS—Watertown, Wellesley Hills.

MICHIGAN—Gwinn, Harbor Springs, Mackinac Island, Port Huron.

MINNESOTA—Breckenridge-Wahpeton.

MISSISSIPPI—Philadelphia.

MISSOURI—Malden, Maryville, Mexico, Trenton.

NORTH CAROLINA—Asheville (No. 2), Bethel.

NORTH DAKOTA—Beach.

NEW HAMPSHIRE—Hanover.

NEW JERSEY—Allenhurst, Essex County, Jersey City Heights, Linden.

NEW YORK—Binghamton (No. 2), Port Chester, Rikers Island, Salamanca, Valley Stream, L.I.

OHIO—Chillicothe, Defiance, St. Mary's.

PENNSYLVANIA—Erie-Wayne, Williamsport.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Bennettsville.

SOUTH DAKOTA—Pierre.

TEXAS—Monahans, Pharr, San Juan, Waco (Veterans Hospital).

UTAH—State Prison, Tooele.

VERMONT—Richford.

WASHINGTON—Pasio.

WISCONSIN—Eau Claire (No. 2), Rhineland, Menomonie.

First Birthday. Members of "The Fellowship Club," other A.A. groups and specially invited guests including ministers, several judges, members of the city welfare board, members of the parole board and relatives of some members for a total of 135, attended the first anniversary banquet of the A.A. Home in Minneapolis this fall. Starting with seven members, the club was reorganized under its present name with a membership average of 40 and indications of continued growth.

Parties, Picnics. San Francisco's first neighborhood A.A. Group, the Mission, celebrated its first anniversary recently with an open house for the city's members and their families. On the same night the second neighborhood Group to be formed, the Midtown Marina, became the first to divide because it had become too large. The new Groups, Midtown and Marina, adjourned to attend Mission's party. The second picnic of 1946 for the San Francisco Group was held recently at Sonoma Golf Club with more than 300 members and their families present. The same Group's second annual fish fry at the central club house drew more than 500 A.A.s and their guests.

Community Interested. Group psychotherapy used by A.A. was demonstrated by a Syracuse, N. Y., physician before the upstate inter-hospital conference held recently in Syracuse Psychopathic hospital, according to *The Post-Standard* of that city. The program urged creation of a hospital for alcoholics. In an editorial, "Problem for the State," another newspaper, *The Herald-Journal*, praised the work of A.A. in an editorial stressing the need of some constructive action. Members of both the Eastwood and Central Groups were speakers at the conference and were swamped with questions

by interested doctors, one of whom said that A.A. therapy went far ahead of them on the road to proper treatment. Professional and business clubs of Syracuse are taking a keen interest, having invited A.A. speakers to future sessions. A radio program is being worked out for early presentation.

Another Clinic. Working in cooperation with a local doctor, the Fort Worth, Tex., A.A.s have made arrangements for hospitalization in a hotel near the club house. Daily medical attention is given each new "drier-out" with the doctor seeing that everyone placed there has a complete physical check-up, administration of glucose and other medicines. Some member or members of the group will be present on two-hour day or eight-hour night shifts with a dispatcher lining up members to spend the periods with patients they have volunteered to help.

Help Remove Blinders. "We may be wearing bigger blinders than we know," a psychiatrist is quoted as saying in the Nassau Medical News, organ of the county medical society in a front page article on A.A. in its fall number. According to the canon of a Long Island cathedral, the Baldwin, N. Y., Group helped the doctor who prepared the article. "An amazing thing has happened," the article begins. "A group of laymen with no training in medicine or psychology has built up in the past 12 years a system of treatment for alcoholics that has produced unbelievable results." After telling why A.A. succeeds where "medicine and religion had admittedly failed," the doctor discusses the varying altitude of psychiatrists with the conclusion voiced by one, "It is highly impera-

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tive for us as presumably open-minded scientists to view wisely and long the efforts of others in our field of work." The article ends by telling Nassau county doctors how to reach the Garden City, Manhasset and Baldwin Groups.

No Distinctions. "Class groups as such do not seem to thrive," the *Grapevine's* reporter from the East Los Angeles, Cal., Group concludes in telling how that Group, although small, is contacting many people of Spanish-American ancestry with some good results. "We have a large Mexican population, about 300,000, in the area and they have about the same ratio of alcoholics among them as any other class or nationality. The A.A. approach is difficult, due to many factors, but we keep pitching," writes the correspondent. One three-year member is now living in Culican, Sinaloa, Mexico, and is trying to start a group there.

Circuit Flashes. San Diego, Cal., reports A.A. really growing, with Wednesday open meetings in the Chamber of Commerce auditorium, which seats 500. The sixth anniversary dinner, November 6, will be attended by several A.A.s with "six years of real living." Formation of a Norwegian group with the A.A. program in that language is reported. The Bronx County, N. Y., Group celebrated its second anniversary with a dinner attended by 300 members and friends. A Catholic priest was guest speaker. From Sacramento, Cal., comes a report of more than 200 members and their families attending the October picnic of the organization with many present from Sacramento, Fresno, San Jose, Stockton, San Joaquin county and Roseville. In addition to building its own organization up to 80 members, the branch has helped form clubs in Yuba City, Marysville and Reno. About 85 members of the Rockland County Group, Suffern, N. Y., celebrated the first anniversary recently with a New York speaker. A member of the Austin, Tex., Group found A.A. an occupational hazard, for while he was talking to a man in an Abilene apartment two men who have been convicted and fined as bootleggers came to the place and started a fight ending in a 20-shot gun battle. The Wichita Falls, Tex., Group reports that body doing well with 12 members at present.

First Annual Dinner. The Bay Ridge Group, Brooklyn, N. Y., held its first annual dinner on October 7 and the relatively small dining room was filled to capacity. More than 100 A.A.s and their friends attended. Canon Sydney R. Peters of the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, L. I., was the principal speaker. The Bay Ridge Group has increased from seven members a year ago to 52 members today.

One Green Light

(Continued from Page 2)

he reached Los Angeles, but he couldn't worry about them. He had a green light, which meant the start was clear, and it was his job to get going. If he did encounter trouble, his signal system would take care of him—amber lights to warn him of danger ahead. If this light showed he would slow down and proceed with caution. He might even get a red light, and that meant only one thing—stop. He was a good engineer, and he certainly wouldn't go through a red light. But this was all guess work—right now he had the green light and he knew he could start out safely.

There it was—there was the much sought-after answer that I wanted to start me on the 24-hour program and have the confidence that it would work.

I reasoned it out this way—I had a trip to make too, just like that engineer. His destination was Los Angeles, and he had to get there safely and without casualties. My destination was unknown, but somewhere, sometime, I would come to the end of it. Safety without any casualties meant only one thing—sobriety. I would be my own engineer, and by asking God for it, he would provide me with a signal system. It would be perfect if He made it.

Of one thing only was I certain. I knew that each morning when I asked for help for that day, I would be given a green light—I could start with complete confidence each day. During the day, things would come up that would cause the amber light to come on. That would mean slowing down and asking for more help. Then I, too, could proceed with caution. There would be red lights too, but that would mean stop, quick! I couldn't go through a red light without having a wreck.

This human signal system is still a part of my program. As this is being written, I have just passed my 497th signal, and I am at least getting along on my journey. The amber light doesn't flash quite as often as it used to, and there are longer stretches between red lights. But thanks to that Higher Power, I still haven't gone through a red light, so I have enjoyed 497 days of continued sobriety.

This little illustration of how I work the 24-hour program has made it fairly easy for me to stay dry. I hope it may help some other member who might be having the same trouble.

As an afterthought—do you know that when you actually are on a train, once you have passed the green light, it turns red, so that if you look back, all you can see are red lights? As long as they are green when we look ahead, it makes no difference how much danger they might represent once we pass them.—*Joe C.*