

March 1954

How AA Came to Eire

TEN years ago, AA was carried to Australia by a travelling American. Three years later it came indirectly from Australia to Ireland, this time through a Jesuit.

This priest was on holiday in Dublin in September, 1947 and was interviewed by an evening paper on the subject of a Boys' Town with which he was connected in Australia. In the course of his talk, he commented at length on the success that AA was having in Sydney and expressed the opinion that Dublin would do well to take it up. This interview was read by a member of the Philadelphia group, an Irishman who had gone to live in the States, who was also over here on holiday. Spurred on by his wife, he determined to start a group in Dublin. With the help of a doctor and by advertising, he managed to scrape together a small number of men willing to make the experiment.

Their first public meeting was held in The Country Shop on November 25th; and here on that night the first AA group in Europe was formed. As in America, the start was slow and uphill. Today it is firmly established in Dublin; there is a large group in Belfast; there are sizable groups in Limerick, Cork, and Galway, and smaller ones elsewhere. Public meetings are held every Monday night, still in The Country Shop, when attendance ranges from 50 upwards to 100. The maximum attendance was at a meeting held in the Mansion House, when over 400 came along to listen to the co-founder of the society, Bill. At a conservative estimate, there are at last 500 members in Ireland. In Dublin alone, over 700 self-styled alcoholics have "joined," but all are not hunters who blow the horn. A good many, though partially convinced, are not yet ready to make, and act on, the necessary admission that they are beaten by drink.

*Excerpt from an anonymous article in
"The Furrow," an Irish Catholic publication*

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He learns but half who hears only one side.