The sixth of a new series
of articles explaining
The Twelve Traditions . . .

by

Bill

TRADITION SIX

An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.

The moment we saw that we had an answer for alcoholism, it was reasonable for us to feel we might have an answer for a lot of other things. The AA groups, many thought, could go into business, might finance any enterprise whatever in the total field of alcoholism. In fact, we felt duty-bound to throw the whole weight of the AA name behind any meritorious cause.

Here are some of the things we dreamed. Hospitals didn't like alcoholics, so we thought we'd build a hospital chain of our own. People needed to be told what alcoholism was, so we'd educate the public, even re-write school and medical textbooks. We'd gather up derelicts from Skid Rows, sort out those who could get well and make it possible for the rest to earn their livelihood in a kind of quarantined confinement. Maybe these places would make large sums of money to carry on our other good works. We seriously thought of re-writing the laws of the land, and have it declared that alcoholics are sick people. No more would they be jailed; judges would parole them in our custody. We'd spill AA into the dark regions of dope addiction and criminality. We'd form groups of depressive and paranoid folks, the deeper the neurosis the better we'd like it. It
stood to reason that if alcoholism could be licked, so could any problem.

It occurred to us that we could take what we had into the factories and cause laborers and capitalists to love each other. Our uncompromising honesty might soon clean up politics. With one arm around the shoulder of religion and the other around the shoulder of medicine, we'd resolve their differences. Having learned to live so happily, we'd show everybody else how. Why, we thought, our society of Alcoholics Anonymous might prove to be the spearhead of a new spiritual advance! We might transform dreams. How natural that was, since the world.

Having learned to live so happily, other around the shoulder of medi-
cine, we'd resolve their differences. Alcoholics Anonymous might prove to be the spearhead of a new spirit-
duction that suggests I shouldn't break his anonymity at a public level, he was to link the name Alcoholics Anonymous to this particular educational project in the minds of millions. It would be bound to appear that AA was now backing education . . . liquor trade association style.

The minute we saw this compromising fact for what it was, we asked the prospective publicity director how he felt about it. "Great Guns!" he said. "Of course I can't take the job. The ink wouldn't be dry on the first ad before an awful shriek would go up from the dry camp. They'd be out with lanterns looking for an honest AA to plump for their brand of education. AA would land exactly in the middle of the wet-dry controversy. Half the people in this country would think we'd signed up with the drays, the other half would think we'd joined the wets. What a mess!"

"Nevertheless," we pointed out, "You still have a legal right to take this job."

"I know that," he said. "But this is no time for legalities. Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life, and it comes first. I certainly won't be the guy to land AA in the big-time trouble, and this would really do it!"

Concerning endorsements, our friend had said it all. We saw as never before that we could not lend the AA name to any cause other than our own.