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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.

Mental Sobriety Means Spotting Danger Signals

In 1940 I took my last drink. Naturally I hope I will never take another. But can I be absolutely certain? No, because I do not believe that I can ever accept my sobriety as an accomplished fact. Yet, neither do I mean that I am, as in the early days of it, haunted by the fear of returned drunkenness. Then it was a ghost always with me, casting its dark shadow across the way. What if the old pattern reasserted itself? What if I did get drunk? I, who wanted so desperately to stay sober!

I thought much and with concern about it, and then one day, quite unconsciously, my son gave me what has seemed to have been my answer. He was a boy of 10, captain of one of those little boy football teams that play the game so very enthusiastically and with such very bad results. His heart was set on winning the game against the school's great rival. As the day drew near I asked him how things were going and what the chances were. Earnestly he looked at me and said, "It's a funny thing, Mummie, they all want to win the game, but they don't want to practice!"

Instantly it struck home! Had I wanted to win the game of sobriety without realizing that to do so would depend entirely on my own willingness to practice regularly those things in which mental sobriety has its origin?

A certain pattern of physical sobriety had been established. There was no longer a definite physical urge to take a drink; but what about mental sobriety? From then on I began to think much less about a physical slip and much more about a mental one. I lost the fear that I could "catch drunk" as I could "catch cold." In its place developed an awareness that if I remained mentally sober, I would never find myself physically drunk. This became a firm conviction and has remained one ever since.

I determined to recognize all subversive thoughts. What better sign, for instance, that I

am going off the A.A. track than to start feeling sorry for myself? That "nobody loves me" feeling and its companion, "no one really understands me." Or the pressure signal. Here is a

EXCESS BAGGAGE

"I have just discovered one of my worst faults," Bill H. of Detroit confessed. "I carry too much excess baggage."

"What have you been doing," a friend asked, "cleaning out the attic?"

"Something like that," Bill acknowledged. "For years I have been letting the memories of old failures and old disappointments drag me down. Finally, it has occurred to me that they were excess baggage."

"There's something in that," his friend agreed, "and just what have you done with them?"

"I've thrown them into the discard. I refuse to think of them any more."

"That sounds like quite a trick," he ventured.

"Not so difficult," was the answer, "by keeping my mind on problems of the present, I can keep the old ones from crowding in."

Bill's idea isn't new but too little attention has been paid to it. If one will realize that the past is dead, and should be buried, he will have more time and strength to cope with the problems of the present. The old mistakes and sorrows may have proved valuable as lessons, but there is no sense in keeping their graves green. If one thinks he has to nurture old sorrows, and decorate them with flowers of thought, it might be a good idea to do it only once a year—on Decoration Day, perhaps.

Needs of the moment are enough to keep most men busy, and if one spends too much time at the side of the graves of old misfortunes, there won't be enough time and strength to combat those which threaten in the present.

Excess baggage calls for extra fares.

world to be remodeled. I, and I alone, must do it, and that immediately or at the most within two weeks. Just as when the intolerance signal flashes. Then indeed must I be on the alert for when I start worrying about another's failure to practice the 12 Steps I can be quite certain I have mislaid them myself. No stranger, either, to my impulses, is the one which prompts me to believe that I have never been fully appreciated; that circumstances have cruelly diverted genius into mediocrity, that old ego aborting the truth. Nor does it stop there. It invariably leads to a sense of self-importance that is translated into terms of my wanting to play God. In my own life and the lives of others I want to be the director. How smoothly The show would go off, if only I was allowed to manage it all! This feeling is often directed primarily against the group—that intractable, obstinate body of men and women who surely, after all, do need me more than I need them. When this happens I know definitely that it is time for me to act.

For me, it is not enough to merely recognize these danger signals. I must take action against them. This I find can best be done by doing immediately some A.A. work. Any one of a dozen ways may suffice, but the one which so far has not failed is getting myself to an open meeting. Taking the attitude that it is my first meeting, I try to clear my mind of all that I have previously known about A.A., and open it only to what I do not know. That I shall never know much, can never feel myself to be immune, or as not needing daily practice in The 12 Steps, becomes plain. I am once more impressed with the need for and greatness of A.A.

Back on the scrub team I am content to let someone else call the plays, certain that if I respond with my best efforts, A.A. will through its program, give to me in return a deep, rich assurance that I need never take another drink.—
Fannie L., Manhattan.

EDITORIAL: On the 6th Step...

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

For one who has been following the Steps in the order in which they are presented in the book, the application of the 6th Step would come about almost automatically. However, few do follow the Steps in their numerical order, and it is not necessary to do so. After concurring in the 1st Step, which of course is the impelling reason for anyone seeking A.A., many have progressed by taking the other Steps in the order in which they seemed to come most easily.

Nevertheless, the 3rd, 5th, 6th and 7th Steps seem to fall into a natural group. One leads to another; the practice of one helps in the practice of the other three.

Certainly anyone who has applied the 3rd Step and "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him," is at least nearly ready "to have God remove all these defects of character."

Being "entirely ready" is vital phraseology. If one is "entirely ready" he has rid himself of the last vestige of reservations. He is ready to go the whole length in making use of the Power.

All of these Steps, in fact, are a conditioning for the application of "the thing that works" in A.A., to express it as countless many have expressed it and countless others will express it in the years to come.

Logic suggests that the 6th Step is preparation for the 7th. And the preparatory stage is important. In this Step, the action is mostly spiritual, or mental, if one prefers the latter word. It is, in any event, attaining a certain state of mind. This state of mind is one of acceptance and of complete willingness to try what in many cases is a new idea, or an old idea long forgotten and now newly revived. It is a state of mind in which there are no longer any reservations. As long as reservations remain it is doubtful if the individual is "entirely ready." He may be almost ready but not "entirely."

One approach to the development of this desired state of mind is through a review of the drinking history and of the repeated failure to control the drinking. Through this procedure, one again reminds himself of the fact he has finally had to face—that he cannot do it alone and that he must have help. The group will help, of course. All of the techniques of A.A. will carry the individual a long way a long time. Some say indefinitely, but no conclusive measure is yet available.

On the other hand, many believe by virtue of their own experience and the experience of others, that when one qualifies on the 6th Step he stands at the threshold of true and lasting progress, of real growth and of unprecedented happiness.

Many have come up a long way in A.A. without applying the 6th Step, and are still traveling upward. The 6th Step cannot be said to be an early "must" in the program. There are few "musts" in A.A.

Furthermore, many will apply the 6th Step without being aware of it and without considering it separately from the other Steps. Some, in fact, have already reached the state of acceptance called for in this Step, by the time they seek A.A. Others reach the same receptive attitude when they become receptive to the 3rd Step.

Whenever and however it occurs, the application of the 6th Step is furthered by the development of a hope, at least, that an unlimited Power can be drawn upon for help. Even if the individual has no more than a hope in the beginning, he can attain a state of readiness.

The development of such hope may be furthered by giving thought to the fact that the experience of many in A.A. has demonstrated that the great promises implied in the 6th Step can be fulfilled in abundance.

Twelve Suggested

By Bill

Nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It grew. Trial and error has produced a rich experience. Little by little we have been adopting the lessons of that experience, first as policy and then as tradition. That process still goes on and we hope it never stops. Should we ever harden too much the letter might crush the spirit. We could victimize ourselves by petty rules and prohibitions; we could imagine that we had said the last word. We might even be asking alcoholics to accept our rigid ideas or stay away. May we never stifle progress like that!

Yet the lessons of our experience count for a great deal—a very great deal, we are each convinced. The first written record of A.A. experience was the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. It was addressed to the heart of our foremost problem—release from the alcohol obsession. It contained personal experiences of drinking and recovery and a statement of those divine but ancient principles which have brought us a miraculous regeneration. Since publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in 1939 we have grown from 100 to 24,000 members. Seven years have passed; seven years of vast experience with our next greatest undertaking—the problem of living and working together. This is today our main concern. If we can succeed in this adventure—and keep succeeding—then, and only then, will our future be secure.

Since personal calamity holds us in bondage no more, our most challenging concern has become the future of Alcoholics Anonymous; how to preserve among us A.A.s such a powerful unity that neither weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of these troubled times can harm our common cause. We know that *Alcoholics Anonymous* must continue to live. Else, save few exceptions, we and our brother alcoholics throughout the world will surely resume the hopeless journey to oblivion.

Almost any A.A. can tell you what our group problems are. Fundamentally they have to do with our relations, one with the other, and with the world outside. They involve relations of the A.A. to his group, the relation of his group to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, and the place of Alcoholics Anonymous in that troubled sea called Modern Society, where all of humankind must presently shipwreck or find haven. Terribly relevant is the problem of our basic structure and our attitude toward those ever pressing questions of leadership, money and authority. The future may well depend on how we feel and act about things that are controversial and how we regard our public relations. Our final destiny will surely hang upon what we presently decide to do with these danger-fraught issues!

Points for A. A. Tradition

Now comes the crux of our discussion. It is this: Have we yet acquired sufficient experience to state clear-cut policies on these, our chief concerns? Can we now declare general principles which could grow into vital traditions—traditions sustained in the heart of each A.A. by his own deep conviction and by the common consent of his fellows? That is the question. Though full answer to all our perplexities may never be found, I'm sure we have come at last to a vantage point whence we can discern the main outlines of a body of tradition; which, God willing, can stand as an effective guard against all the ravages of time and circumstance.

Acting upon the persistent urge of old A.A. friends, and upon the conviction that general agreement and consent between our members is now possible, I shall venture to place in words these suggestions for *An Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition of Relations—Twelve Points to Assure Our Future*:

Our A.A. Experience Has Taught Us That:

1.—Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous *is* but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

2.—For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our Group conscience.

3.—Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. Group.

4.—With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. Group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

5.—Each Alcoholics Anonymous Group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose*—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6.—Problems of money, property and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. Group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much properly or administration, ought to be so set apart, that if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the Groups. The management of these special facilities should be the sole responsibility of those people, whether A.A.s or not, who financially support them. For our clubs, we prefer A.A. managers. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation,, ought to be well outside A.A.—and medically supervised. An A.A. Group may cooperate with anyone, but should bind itself to no one.

7.—The A.A. Groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each Group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous; that acceptance of large gifts from any source or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is usually unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

8.—Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those full time services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But personal "12th Step" work is never to be paid for.

9.—Each A.A. Group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is usually the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a

large metropolitan area their central committee, which often employs a fulltime secretary. The trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation are, in effect, our General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which they maintain A.A. General Headquarters and our General Secretary at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal publication, *The A.A. Grapevine*. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

10.—No A.A. group or member should ever, *in such a way as to implicate A.A.*, express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

11.—Our relations with the outside world should be characterized by modesty and anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

12.—And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a truly humble modesty. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

May it be urged that while these principles have been stated in rather positive language they are still only suggestions for our future. We of Alcoholics Anonymous have never enthusiastically responded to any assumption of personal authority. Perhaps it is well for A.A. that this is true. So I offer these suggestions neither as one man's dictum nor as a creed of any kind, but rather as a first attempt to portray that group ideal toward which we have assuredly been led by a Higher Power these ten years past.

P.S. To help free discussion I would like to amplify the *Twelve Points of Tradition* in future *Grapevine* pieces.

Four More Explanations in "Slip" Clinic

(Third in a series of discussions on the cause or causes of "slips," in which different A.A.s present their ideas, experiences and suggestions as possible helps for others who may be having similar trouble.)

When I was introduced to A.A. I gave unqualified intellectual acquiescence to the entire program. I was naively amazed to find it was a concentrated extract of the meatier parts of my early upbringing; something from which I had wandered far afield because I had found it interfered with my opinionated ways.

I admitted to being an alcoholic with what I considered minor reservations. I resolved in an indeterminate sort of way to stay sober. I attended meetings regularly for a few months until the repetition became boring. I made a number of helpful acquaintances but no friends; my negative actions would not attract anything positive. My material affairs improved considerably. I began to nibble and ended up as of yore.

In two years I had five slips and all for the same reasons: I was accepting the protection of A.A. until my health and finances were in good shape and then I was leaving the haven to face the issues of living with the same incomplete equipment I had always had.

I believe any alcoholic who accepts A.A. can be reasonably sure of not slipping by doing nothing more than attending a weekly meeting, keeping his mind receptive and charging himself each morning with the responsibility of staying sober for that particular day.

I don't think any alcoholic can be completely safe from slipping until he has attained that inward peace, that tranquility of mind that comes from the sure knowledge that he is performing his duty to the best of his ability. Duty, for the greater part, being the observance of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, the obeying of the Ten Commandments, and the avoidance of the Seven Deadly Sins. He must put his ideals on a high plane and then endeavor to climb up and join them.

* * *

Why did I slip? I slipped because I look a drink.

* * *

"How is it," a friend asked, "that you stayed dry for a number of years and then went off the beam?"

I suppose there are a number of answers which make sense. The first which occurs to me is that in my immature development I still had the childish desire to play with fire, hoping of course, not to be burned. A false sense of security must have been developed as a result of several material "successes."

The plain simple truth is that the only suc-

cess which I may have had was due to a strict practice of all the A.A. principles and the discipline which resulted from a rigid determination to live within the A.A. pattern.

At about this time a change of residence and a new environment made it easy to drop away from the group. I failed to attend meetings, lost contact with A.A. members. Truthfully this was difficult at first, but it became easier as time went on.

You will of course realize that my thinking was entirely negative and the desire to build was, if not lost, seriously impaired.

It was at about this moment that a most unreliable friend said, "But, Bill, you never were really alcoholic." This was not new but it must have been what I wanted to hear so the nibbling began, not to any extent at first, just sort of flirting with the old pal, John Barleycorn.

The result, of course—my thinking became negative—fancied slights, imagined injustices, suspicion of others—all the old familiar themes—increasing inaccuracies both in my work and in my life—finally a very real loss of all the values which had been built during the period of sobriety.

Were there other causes? Doubtless, but really what is the difference? The point seems to me to be that daily we must reinforce our sobriety by a conscious acknowledgment to the Supreme Being, that it is only through His help and guidance that we are sober, and to fill our minds with the principles and teachings of A.A., and to practice them in all of our relations with others and in all of our affairs.

* * *

After twenty-one months of sobriety I got drunk. Until a few hours before, the idea of drinking hadn't occurred to me although I had been confused—tense—frustrated—completely negative in my thinking for several months; turned in on myself.

I had thought of suicide—planned it in my mind but I hadn't thought of drinking. "To drink again," I would have said, "I'd have to be insane." Well—I was—temporarily insane.

For two days I sobbed my heart out and relaxed. My immediate aim had been achieved.

Then followed a period of complete dependency. Dependency on my doctor—on my friends. Perhaps this was my greatest aim—dependency.

But why? I had long been aware of the fact that my positive—aggressive—extremely independent attitude was false. False in the sense that I forced myself to be all these things against the wishes of the largest part of my personality—the unconscious. This false front was intended

to prove to the world and myself that I wasn't too frightened to live. In the language of psychiatry, I was over-compensating for an unconscious desire to be very dependent; indeed. I had seen quite clearly that alcoholism ultimately makes a dependent of everyone.

I thought I had made an honest effort to stand on my own feet—my own emotional feet. But I learned that I must do more than that. I must, also, learn my limitations.

I earned my living at a full-time job—I was treasurer of my group—I spoke at outlying groups and did considerable 12th Step work. I left myself no time to be patient or pupil. I should have spent part of my time with older members on whom I could lean—from whom I could receive counsel and strength, for I had not yet developed objectivity—except in flashes. I could not sustain it under pressure.

Some of my friends said afterwards "You worked too hard—exhausted yourself physically." True, but I cannot: escape the fact that I had created the circumstances that made it necessary to work too hard.

To avoid everything that is disturbing, even if it were possible, would be limiting. It would limit emotional growth, intellectual understanding and narrow the scope of one's activities. Yet, I must learn what I cannot endure *safely*. If I cannot resolve the conflicts that drive me blindly, I must avoid what disturbs me—*too much*.

This is an individual matter which each must discover for himself. It is a question of learning not only what to do, but what not to do.

I naturally wish to integrate without sacrificing too much of my personality. This requires considerable work (analyzing—explaining—re-educating) and some unhappiness (it isn't pleasant to face oneself honestly) but the reward is great. The reward is a rounder, richer personality.

I see this sort of effort as part of the A.A. program. The 4th Step—interpreted in my language—reads in part "A fearless and searching self-analysis."

I do not delude myself that I will do a thorough job—that I will become as whole a personality as I could wish but I will do the best I can.

That which is too costly—that which causes more emotional disturbance than I can support, I shall try to side-track temporarily. I hope to be sufficiently alert to learn my tension capacity.

Behind me is another fifteen months of sobriety and I am content. Things have shifted back into perspective and I feel somehow free. After years of blundering attempts to fight life, I am trying now to live it.

STUB OF A PENCIL *The Pleasures of Reading*

Having been particularly blessed by the opportunity of being in the right place at the time to found an A.A. group, I would like to pass a few observations on the growth of a member.

From the first contact in Utah in November, 1944, to the most recent addition to the group of a few weeks ago, a pattern of the struggle for calmness, serenity and sober-happiness seems to shape itself. As I have watched this ever changing, yet fundamental sameness of pattern form I have likened our 12 Steps to tools, tools with which to hew a future. To me, at least, there is only one piece of matter for us to carve from: our past. When given our first kit of tools many, many things can, and usually do, happen. Normally our enthusiasm is greater than our reasoning and we injure ourselves. Perhaps our hammer of admission of self defeat is used so strenuously that our uncalloused palms are blistered. Quite often our chisel of introspection has lain too near the fire of hate and resentments for too long a period and we are badly burned. Many are the mishaps of the initial handling of our tools because of abnormal gratitude. This period of growth in A.A. takes its toll of craftsmen and some disgustedly cast aside their tools for a time. These men are not in the majority, however. Mostly we lay them in an orderly arrangement in front of us and approach them a bit more calmly. One at a time we heft them, evaluate their usefulness and study them conclusively. We spell our doom or interminable happiness by our final decision.

At this juncture the pattern begins to shape up. This is the period I have found to be the line of demarcation between thought and action and I am completely satisfied that this period continues on for the balance of our lives. As the tools before us are perused and studied there is noticed a little stub of a pencil almost hidden by the larger equipment. This small pencil, difficult to find, as is so often the case in life, is the most necessary tool of all. Craftsmen all know that plans must be drawn before constructive action can be taken. We pick this stub up and find imprinted upon it "I turn my will and life over to God as I understand Him."

From the outset we are prone to do our construction work without the use of this pencil in drawing our plans. Time and time again, we miserably back track and hunt for this little stub of a pencil. Always we have difficulty in laying our hands upon it. Often after it is found we thoughtlessly stick it into our pocket instead of using it. Periodically, in utter futility and

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Written on the Wind, a novel by Robert Wilder (Putnam; \$2.75)

Unequivocal in its sense of the strengths and frailties of human values, here is a bold story, written with a sensitivity and depth of feeling which carry the reader into the minds and emotions of characters who verily live.

It is the saga of the beginning and probable end of a wealthy family founded by old Andrew Whitfield, who fought his way up from the fields of his small farm to become his era's tobacco tycoon. He built "the biggest, by God, house in North Carolina," and had himself finally put to rest in a one-man, red granite mausoleum within plain sight of the front porch. Thus would his progeny be reminded forever that but for his industry and acumen they might be toiling in the adjacent tobacco fields.

Andrew's sons, Cassius and Joseph, were normal enough in their own way, but the tremendous fortune left to them stultified personal initiative. Joseph, perhaps the wiser of the brothers, elected to live the life of an idle man of means on his estate, after sowing wild oats over two continents, complete with full publicity.

The elder brother, Cassius, "never quite recovered from being the possessor of so much money." For all the space in Andrew's monstrosity of a house, there was little real love in it after Cassius "married a simple girl of good family in Roanoke." The real trouble came when the children of Cassius and Laura grew up.

Gary and Ann-Charlotte were ruined by Cassius' indulgence. Ann-Charlotte was an amoral female about a degree short of nymphomania. Before she was fifteen she was netted in a state police raid on a tourist camp, shacking up with a young filling station serviceman. Her bewildered father solved his problem by shooting the attendant and himself.

After her father's suicide, Ann-Charlotte, "a mysteriously intense girl, alarming in her beauty and wilfulness," was sent to school in France, where her brassy, pert indifference to morals was subdued, but not removed, and she returned to North Carolina, where she continued being a menace to herself.

Gary Whitfield was sent to Columbia University along with his boyhood chum, Reese Benton, who had been virtually adopted by the Whitfields. The lads managed to get themselves expelled from college, then Gary, at an early age, married Lillith, a sensational new stage star. Gary soon developed a psychopathic state of self-pity and alcoholism. Lillith, after showing remarkable patience in putting up with her wastrel husband's futile and often drunken moods, fell in love with Reese, who also was the object of Ann-Charlotte's amorous indulgences.

Gary, when he was not drunk, was bored; when he was bored, his sole solution was to throw a party at which everyone got drunk. Such a pattern must be familiar to those who read this review. The Whitfield broil had to end in tragedy, and the reader is left to guess whether Gary's death was murder or suicide. Many readers will recognize in the crashing finale a close similarity to a tragedy among the wealthy more than a decade ago.

Mr. Wilder has made a strong story from this rather unsavory material. There are no dull pages, and there are some that are unforgettable.—R.E.B., *Manhattan*

The Innocent Mrs. Duff, by Elizabeth Sanxay Holding (Simon-Schuster; \$2.50)

This new novel is not only a gripping experience of, suspense and excitement, it is also the most authentic study of an alcoholic that I have ever read.

I spent one night that I shall never forget, in bed with *the Innocent, Mrs. Duff*. And at my age too!

Many A.A.s have found that as they progress from the alcoholic fogbanks they find new enjoyment in reading. Various A.A.s have recommended these books. The books listed are not necessarily A.A. "endorsed" or "approved." Orders should be placed with the publisher or your local book store or dealer. *The Grapevine* does not accept book orders.

Christian Behavior by C. S. Lewis (Macmillan, \$1)

If You Drink by Wilfred Funk (Wilfred Funk, Inc., \$2)

Mind, Medicine and Man by Gregory Zilboorg, M.D. (Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$3.50)

Psycho-Analysis edited by Sandor Lorand, M.D. (International University Press, \$6)

Great Time To Be Alive by Harry Emerson Fosdick (Harper & Brothers, \$2)

Forget Your Age by Peter J. Steinerohn, M.D. (Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., \$2.50)

Escape from Freedom by Eric Fromm (Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.50)

Alcoholics Anonymous (Works Publishing Co., Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y., \$3.50)

The Clip Sheet

No Hospitalization in Denver

The Denver, Colo., *Rocky Mountain News*, in a column devoted to the alcoholic and hospitalization, decries the fact that no hospitals in Denver will accept an alcoholic. "I have talked with the managers of several Denver hospitals," writes the columnist, "and they insist there is no rule barring alcoholic patients.

"The way it works, however, is that the alcoholic patient gets the run-around. Most hospitals are kept filled to capacity—the Gen. Maurice Rose Hospital will relieve this condition somewhat—and are receiving mainly emergency cases. The alcoholic for the first week anyway, is more trouble than the average patient. . . . No matter how much he may need help, it will be difficult if not impossible for most alcoholics to get admitted to a Denver hospital. . . . We continue to show pitiless savagery to the alcoholic who has the additional handicap of being poor."

Lady Drunks On the Increase

Edwin Neff of the Washington, D. C., *Times-Herald*, writes that there is an alarming increase in alcoholism among women in Washington, and "the problem, while impossible to measure by statistics, is probably worse than the public imagines.

"It reaches into all avenues of society, and while causes vary with the individual woman, in Washington, at least, the problem most frequently is loneliness."

Neff declares that his statements have been confirmed by a Methodist minister, a member of A.A., and "to some extent" by Capt. Rhoda Milliken, head of the D. C. Women's Bureau. "Capt. Milliken's statistics show 2,700 women arrested for drunkenness last year," continues Neff. "That the problem is nationwide as well as local is indicated by an article in the February *American Mercury* by Dr. Alson J. Smith,

NEW PLAY CONCERNS A WOMAN ALCOHOLIC

The first play presented by the Show Shop April 1, in the small theatre of the Sutton Hotel, 330 East 5th Street, New York City, is about alcoholics and in particular about the rehabilitation of one who in this case is a woman. It is "The Taker," by Craig Richter.

The play is reported to be a serious treatment of alcoholism, what to do about it—beginning where "The Lost Week End" movie left off!

a pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Church in Brooklyn.

"Dr. Smith writes, 'many a homecoming soldier is returning to face a problem he never suspected—his wife, or sweetheart or sister has become an alcoholic.'"

Obsolete and Inadequate

Antigo, Wis., *Journal*: "For many years it has been recognized by those who have given thought to the problem of treatment of alcoholics that state legislation and institutional facilities are sadly inadequate and way behind modern knowledge of how alcoholics should be treated. But one state, Connecticut, has ventured to take a real forward step through adoption of a law for the study, treatment and care of inebriates. Prof. Selden D. Bacon of Yale University calls it 'the first new legislation designed to meet the problem of alcoholism.'

"Important features of the law singled out by Prof. Bacon are: 'It recognized that alcoholics are sick people . . . the fact that alcoholics can be rehabilitated . . . a responsibility on the part of the government to meet this problem. It calls for public education on the subject of alcoholism. It omits all mention of punishment as a means of controlling the problem. . . . It offers free service to those requesting it. . . . If Wisconsin intends to move forward in this field its legislators, judges and others should not only study the Connecticut law but also the valuable knowledge obtained by such organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous."

Alcoholic Vets May Get Help

Dallas, Tex., *News*: The Veterans Administration is considering offering care to alcoholics in its hospitals, Mrs. Marty Mann, executive secretary of the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism, said here.

VA officials have been giving serious study to plans proposed by the national committee, she said, and have expressed a favorable reaction.

29,000 Alkies in Jersey

New York *Herald Tribune*: New Jersey should establish state-operated centers to aid its estimated 29,000 chronic alcoholics, two Rutgers University sociologists said recently. . . . On the basis of interviews with 456 physicians in 42 communities, Dr. John W. Riley Jr. and Dr. Charles F. Marden reported that referral centers for victims would be the first step in a more ambitious program to deal with alcoholics. Their report was prepared for the New Jersey Commission for the Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Promotion of Temperance, headed by Alfred E. Driscoll, state Alcoholic Beverage Control Commissioner.

The centers, operated as a state public health service, would provide guidance and information for alcoholics and their families. In addition, the report said, the program could direct needed public education on alcoholism, and could help in coordinating the work of private agencies dealing with the problem.

Their survey of physicians, Dr. Riley and Dr. Marden said, was the first mass opinion ever obtained from the medical profession on the problem of alcoholism. Most of the doctors interviewed strongly favored a campaign of public information on the subject. They reported that 65 per cent of the doctors handled chronic alcoholics during the last year, that sedatives and vitamin therapy were the most frequently used treatment, that alcoholics make difficult patients, and that physicians generally lack facilities for dealing with them on a long-term basis.

A.A.s Aid Washington Judge

During February, the Washington, D. C., *Post* carried a story on its front page to the effect that Alcoholics Anonymous have "salvaged" all but two of 35 drunk case defendants referred to them by a municipal judge since the beginning of the year.

According to the newspaper account, two members of the Washington Group spend six mornings a week in court conferring with the prospects. They serve in answer to the request of the judge, who averred that he felt discouraged with present methods of dealing with alcoholics.

The judge refers only those cases whom he considers worthy of A.A. guidance, asking them to step aside for interviews. He recommends a system of "screening" such defendants, to avoid court appearances in many cases, and has urged a meeting of civic leaders for discussion of the handling of drunks and revision of the laws now governing disposition of their cases.

NO—'TAINT' SO!

Many inquiries have been received at the Central Office asking whether A.A. is sponsoring the production of a motion picture. The inquiries apparently have been prompted by publication in two nationally syndicated Hollywood columns of reports that a movie is now being made based on A.A.

Except for a *March of Time* documentary news film, now in production as reported in the last issue of *The Grapevine*, A.A. is not participating in any motion picture venture. No financial consideration for A.A. is involved in the *March of Time* film.

A.A. has been approached numerous times to sponsor or participate in the production of a full-length movie, but the Foundation has turned down all such offers to date.

A WORD TO THE WISE (WIVES)

From Santa Fe, N. M.

As the wife of an alcoholic who suffered through years of unhappiness because of my husband's affliction, I took to A.A. perhaps even more avidly than he did when we first heard about it. I entered into all the activities, subscribed wholeheartedly to all the precepts of A.A., and thought I was helping my husband to the fullest.

This winter I had to come out here from our home in Illinois because of my own health. It has been my first trip away from my husband for many years, and being alone I've found that there are several lessons in A.A. for us wives.

To me, one of the most insidious thoughts that has dominated the attitude of a wife who has stuck through all the trials and tribulations of a drinking career is the self-pride and nobility on which vanity feeds so copiously. I was never conscious of it, actually, and really meant it when I said that I wanted Jim to recover from every bit of the illness; I wanted him to be independent, sufficient in himself, and wanted him to do the thinking for the family. When he started up the long road, and signs of the emotional changes in him became evident, I was delighted. It wasn't until I got away from him, and had to relinquish my mental attitude of supremacy, that I realized how that had built up over the years, and what a large part of my subconscious it occupied!

Jim is more than grateful that I did stick, I know, and pays me plenty of tribute on that score; I know that his present sobriety and constant character development and improvement are the best tribute I could desire. Nonetheless, I must admit to a void in my own little inner world now that it has been stripped of that tendency to feel that "maybe things have gone badly for Jim and me; nevertheless I haven't thrown in the sponge! I've been a loyal wife!" Now as I look at myself, I realize how much comfort I did take from that vain-glorious feeling in self-contemplation. Certainly his drinking and its attendant demands on me were sometimes pretty harrowing; just the same, I still felt pretty noble, I'm afraid.

As I look back over Jim's first few months in A.A., I can see, too, how that attitude of mine carried over and created a few minor crises that shook my faith in A.A. I blew up in completely alcoholic fashion myself over things so infinitesimal I never would have noticed them in the old days when I was wrestling with job, rent, and children problems. And I see now that it was because I hadn't worked much on my own habit-thinking pattern. Emotionally, I missed the build-up I got all the years of his drinking, when I had those big things to contend with. Being shorn of the responsibilities, and the attendant self-approbation we have enjoyed for a long time, is hard on our mental constitution. I feel now though that it is the first thing an A.A. wife must accomplish to help get life back into normal proportions. In our own way, we too have been pretty self-centered.—*June T.*

A.A. DIGEST—*Excerpts from Group Publications*

Camel Club Chronicle, Marshalltown, Iowa: "There are some of us who get sober and go around with a chip on our shoulder waiting for some one to knock it off; also, there are some of us who not only have a chip on one shoulder, we have a chip on each shoulder almost begging some one to knock them off. Is that straight thinking?"

"Then there are some who do things for other people . . . even go out of their way to do something for other people; then, go round 'popping off' about what they have done. Is that right thinking? Now, if you do not want to do these things without expecting recompense, then . . . don't do them at all, because in the end they never do you or the ones you are doing something for any good."

The Toss Pot, Charleston, West Virginia: "The slogan 'obey that impulse' may be good advertising but is poor morals. Nothing is more dangerous to our permanent peace of mind than these vagrant impulses which seize us and drive

us to action without careful advance consideration of the facts. No one knows where they come from. No one will take responsibility for them. They arrive without credentials and leave us without apologies. Yet they are accepted at face value time and again with disastrous results. Against them every sensible man will stand guard every minute of his day. If it is a good impulse that comes knocking at your door it can afford to wait and does not fear examination. If it is an evil impulse you cannot afford to hurry."

The Empty Jug, Chattanooga, Tenn.: "The clubroom of the Chattanooga Group of A.A. will be open each evening, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. . . . With the exception of Tuesday and Friday evenings, when regular group meetings are held, members will be available to discuss A.A. with anyone sincerely interested in the program. Curiosity seekers or persons under the influence of alcohol are requested to stay away."

Barley
!!! CORN !!!

(What's the funniest A.A. tale or quip you've heard? Others would like to hear it. Send it in.)

A kindly old lady accidentally walked up to a drunk and inquired how to get to the post office.

"The post office?" he answered. "Let's see. You go *two* blocks down this street, then turn to the left—no-o-o. You go three blocks to the left, then turn right and go—no-o-o. The post office? Lady, I'm sorry, you just can't get to the post office from here."

* * *

Overheard in a bar: "You're so drunk I can't even remember your name."

* * *

A policeman walking his beat came upon a tipsy gentleman on his hands and knees in the gutter, searching intently along the curb. "What you looking for, bud?" he inquired.

"I lost a ring."

"Where you'd lose it?"

"Down at the corner of Nassau Street."

"At Nassau Street? Then why look for it here?"

"Cause it's light here."

* * *

Culled from an early morning radio broadcast, the one about the inebriate who tipped his hat and apologized after bumping into a light pole, proceeded and collided with a fire hydrant, and muttered "Sorry, sonny," walked on and bumped into another light pole and again begged pardon. Sighing deeply, he then sat down on the curb, and said, "Guess I better wait till the crowd thins out."

* * *

Definition of an alcoholic: A man who when he goes to a wedding wants to be the bride; when he goes to a funeral he wants to be the corpse; he runs his trotting horses and trots his running horses; when he goes to a dinner party he gets amorous, and when he goes to bed he gets hungry!

* * *

Sign on a barroom wall: "Count yourself again, old man, you ain't so damn many."

* * *

A sailor was walking down the street with one foot in the gutter and the other on the sidewalk. It wasn't long before the shore patrol caught up with him and said, "You're drunk."

"Thank heaven!" said the gob. "I thought I was lame."

A HANGOVER FOR EVERY TYPE

(Any similarity between the following descriptions and your own experiences is purely coincidental. The author, a Scripps-Howard staff writer, is a non-alcoholic, and apparently had no thought of A.A. in mind in writing this piece, which is reprinted by permission from the Jan. 2, 1946, issue of the *New York World-Telegram*.)

By Robert C. Ruark

A hangover is the unpaid balance on easy-credit ecstasy.

There are many kinds of hangovers, according to the quality and quantity of the booze, the state of the soul and the stomach, and whether or not the victim went to bed at all. Or, so the boys have been telling me.

The least common type is the inexplicable hangover. This is the one you get twice a year. You never get it oftener, they say, or you would quit drinking. It strikes you suddenly, generally after a night when you thought you were taking it easy.

This hangover is standardly equipped with headache, nausea, and delusions of mice in bed. Only time or a pistol will cure it. Cold water makes you sicker. Aspirin makes you sicker. Cold cloths on the head merely dampen the pillow. Food is repulsive, drink more so. This is the one which makes you say "never again," and you believe it.

The Yoga Type

There is the more common, or yoga type. Your stomach is in good shape, and your head is all right. You have had breakfast, and the hands are steady.

But you are obsessed with a desire for solitude and meditation. No music on the radio. No telephones. And no conversation. All you want is to be left alone with your thoughts and perhaps a book with big print and lots of pictures.

A third type comes only to the more highly integrated people. This carries a sensation of floating in space, while you look at yourself sitting down below. Generally, you don't think much of yourself.

This disembodied feeling lasts all day, and is sometimes accompanied by the sound of softly chiming glass prisms. While it grips you, conversation is undesirable, and the hands have a habit of dropping everything they touch.

The Claustrophobic Type

We deal now with the claustrophobic hangover. That is the one when you don't want people to get too close to you, and riding in a small, crowded elevator is exquisite torture. Your nerves are whetted to a fine point, and the rustle of a newspaper is like dragging a stick along a picket fence. This is the one which gives rise

to the stories about wrens stomping around in the bushes, and kittens clomping up and down the hall.

One kind is actually pleasant. It's The cheerful Sunday hangover. It comes when you have drunk considerably the night before, but have had 10 hours sleep and a good breakfast.

You feel relaxed, pleasantly melancholy, and content to stay home with the funnies, some soft music on the radio, and a short beer every now and then. At the end of the afternoon, maybe a stroll in the zoo or a neighborhood movie. You will fall asleep in your chair after dinner, and eventually struggle off to bed.

The Guilty Kind

One of the worst is the kind which wouldn't be so bad if you could stay home, but is awful when you have to work. You cure the hammering head with aspirin, and you brush your teeth. But when you get to work, you still feel that you must smell like a brewery, so you turn your face away from the boss.

The hands, which shook not at all when you were home, suddenly begin to dance violently when you hand the man a letter, and your tongue, so sure and witty last night, stumbles and stutters over routine words. This is called the guilty conscience hangover.

These are the commonest types, and the most easily classifiable. Some people have copyrighted heads, and imagine that they hear flutes playing or cicadas chirping. But this is getting out of the realm of hangover and into whooping jitters.

Big Shots, Eh?

Being apt to build The biggest mountains out of the smallest ant hills and to exaggerate our own importance, A.A.s will appreciate the philosophy expressed in this quotation from William Beebe's *Book of Naturalists*:

"We would go out on the lawn, where we took turns at an amusing little astronomical rite. We searched until we found with or without glasses, the faint, heavenly spot of light-mist beyond the left-hand corner of the Great Square of Pegasus, when one or the other of us would then recite:

That is the Spiral Galaxy of Andromeda.

It is as large as our milky way.

It is one of a hundred million galaxies.

It is 750,000 light years away.

It consists of one hundred billion suns each larger than our sun.

After an interval Colonel Roosevelt would grin at me and say, "Now I think we are small enough. Let's go to bed."

Letters Reveal

A.A. Philosophy

(In the March, issue, several letters written by a recently deceased A.A., Elliot B., to friends in the Manhattan group, were reprinted. They are continued here, with the thought that this man's faith and personality are still inspirational to many outside his wide circle of friends made during four and a half years' contact in A.A.)

July 4, 1944

"Lord! Wouldn't I love to see you all again for a little while. But, 'accept those things we cannot change' goes there also. But I'm sure nobody ever had more than I have right now, even without being able to see my A.A. friends. . . . Strange what a strong feeling of intimate personal friendship one can form—even in later life—under the common denomination of the tragedy of booze."

Elliot's letters became less frequent after July, 1944, and in the fall of that year we discovered that he had returned temporarily to New York for a hospital checkup. He appeared at a Tuesday night meeting and with no reference to his own problems gave an inspiring talk on faith as it applied to the A.A. way of life. Almost no one at the meeting knew that within 48 hours he was to undergo an operation in which his surgeon had had to tell him that his chances of coming through were no better than 50 per cent. Probably because of a combination of his faith and his powerful physique, he pulled through and within two months had returned to Virginia and his beloved engineering job. His next letter was written the day after Christmas and shows that consideration and thoughtfulness for others that was so much a part of the man.

December 26, 1944.

"There's so much more to this thing called life than what our senses bring to us and if I can only grasp just a little of the other part—the spiritual side of this marvelous existence—I'll be satisfied. Gratitude is the road that led me to whatever faith I may have. Mine is so great that I simply can't contain it within myself and must express it to the Source from whence it came—must have come!"

By early November, 1945, however, Elliot's health had begun to give way under the strain of his work, following the operation of a year before. Then suddenly came the overwhelming shock of his wife's entirely unexpected death. Even these events shook neither his courage nor his faith. He wrote on returning once more to Virginia after her funeral, still determined to clean up some final details of his job:

"Never have I blessed A.A. as I do now, for the absolute faith that has come to me during

(Continued on Page 10)

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 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.

Easy Still Does It

From Atlanta, Ga.

In the Army we had a saying that, "It's rough, brother. It's rough all over." For the demobilized A.A. that goes double.

It isn't that we get a worse deal than the next veteran. We and they want the same things, a home and a job and a chance to earn security for our families. We get the same treatment and run into no worse headaches when we go after these things. It's rougher for us because we are naturally less able to deal with these things. Setbacks and disappointments hit us harder.

In ten years of alcoholic drinking I grew a magnificent tendency to run away from everything unpleasant. That makes it doubly hard to face up to things now. I became a complete and utter egocentric. So now when I don't get what I want when and as I want it, it's hard for me to take. Like all of us drunks I had lots of practice feeling sorry for myself. That, too, can wreck me if I give way to it now.

It used to be easy for me to find excuses to drink. Every little, no-account sorrow had to be drowned. If I wanted excuses now, I could produce some real beauties. Probably most veteran A.A.s can match them word for word. But here are some samples.

When I got back to my home town after three and a half years absence it look me four hours of phoning to find a former friend who would put me up for the first night and three days of tramping in the snow to rent a room for my wife at a higher cost than I paid for a five-room apartment in pre-war days.

Since then I have had employers turn me down with the remark that "you GIs come a dime a dozen." I have had real estate men laugh in my face. Why should they carry houses that will take a GI loan when the same house can be sold for twice as much to a civilian? I have been unable to even find a place to keep my family together. Life has been full of disappointments, delays, sneers from civilians who seem to resent the fact that soldiers are not demobilized via a gas chamber. Strong language, yes, but plenty of you other vets can back me up in what I say.

In the old days one-tenth of this would have

sent me running to the bottle. And then it would be all up with me. Why have I been able to stay dry so far and stay in there fighting? The answer is simply A.A.

I have learned, and, believe me, learned the hard way, that so long as a man keeps working at the 12 Steps of A.A. he CANNOT take that first drink, be CANNOT give up and run away as be used to, he CANNOT be beaten no matter what comes.

In our A.A. way of life and fellowship there is an answer not only to the problem of drink but to every problem we face today and in the future. Mark that I say to every problem we FACE. A.A. won't help if you run away. A.A. won't smooth your path or make things easy. It never did that for me. In fact I think that in every way except drinking things have been and are much rougher for me now than when I drank.

A.A. can and will keep you fighting and give you the added strength, out of the mighty strength of God, to keep you going despite anything. And, through A.A. we learn that as long as a man keeps his head up and keeps fighting, he has WON, no matter how many battles may seem for a while to go against him.

You have got to want A.A. more than anything else on earth.

You have got to work at the 12 Steps. Work hard. Work all the time.

You have got to remember and apply the A.A. principles all the time; not just when your stomach gets tight and the palms of your hands sweat and you can already taste that first drink; not only when you are on the edge of a slip, but all the time.

You **have** got to face things and fight things the A.A. way.

Then the victory is certain.

We A.A.s who are also veterans need our group and our way of life right now as much or more than ever before. We have every excuse (?) and every reason (?) to run to the bottle again. The whole world seems at times to be pushing us back to the first drink.

It is only when we look at life with the sanity that A.A. teaches, that we can win out. It is only by practicing A.A. every day that we can keep our lives straight.

I know what I am talking about. I am a veteran myself and going through all this. It has been no bed of roses. It has been damned hard.

Five years ago I had my last drink after ten years of drunkenness. With the help of God and A.A. that will still continue to be my last drink.—*E.Y.B.*

What We Get

From Newark, N. J.

I attach a list of 15 observations compiled by D.W., of the Kearny, N. J. Group.

To our group's mind they completely answer the question "What do you get out of A.A.?" Their impact is heightened by reading the first nine from top to bottom using the right hand side as the "before" and the left hand side as the "after."

If you can possibly use them, do. We believe that they could be clipped from *The Grapevine* and will make a better wallet sized copy than we have obtained by micro-photostat.

What Do You Get Out of A.A.?

1. Peace of mind instead of utter confusion.
2. Self respect instead of self contempt.
3. Self confidence instead of complete helplessness.
4. Faith instead of black despair.
5. Hope instead of desperation.
6. Courage instead of fear.
7. Respect of others instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clear conscience instead of the crushing weight of a sense of guilt.
9. Real friendships instead of utter loneliness.
10. A clean cut pattern of life instead of the futility of purposeless existence.
11. Love and understanding of our wives and children instead of their hate and loathing.
12. A bright and happy home and family life.
13. Freedom from the obsession of alcohol which has darkened and blighted our lives.
14. The joy of achievement both within ourselves and when we have helped others.
15. Economic security and improvement.—

George H. B.

* * *

Premiums Must Be Paid

From Denver, Colo.

The day we came to A.A. and professed our faith and belief in its principles and methods, "The 12 Steps to Recovery", we took out an insurance policy for sobriety. Now then we all have other insurance of various kinds and know that we must keep the premiums paid; if we do not the policy will lapse and we have no insurance. In A.A. the 12 Steps are our premiums and if we do not pay them (by working them), our insurance will lapse and we will end up drunk again.

When I came to A.A. there just was nothing

Mail Call

else and you may be sure that had there been I don't think I'd have accepted any part of A.A. As I was completing a course at a Chicago sanatorium I was given the book to read, but what could a bunch of ex-drunks tell me? I knew all about drinking, that was certain. The day my wife told me I was an alcoholic really called for me to pound some sense into her head. So when the grand finale came I had nothing left and when asked if I'd let these A.A. fellows come and talk to me I said "Yes, I'll even let them come," so you see there just was nothing else, and if this did not work I was a dead pigeon.

It was not just a marvelous thing—one big happy family where everyone wanted to help in any way possible, not something that brought peace of mind, contentment, happiness and all out of chaos, *but the only thing*.

Therefore it was necessary that I accept anything and everything that was told to me, completely, entirely and wholeheartedly. I certainly was in no position to question anything nor argue any points, for after all here were men who had made a success of their home life, their business life, were contented and at ease with the world and themselves and I was the one in trouble.

These men did not have to jump every time the phone rang lest it be a call they did not want to answer. They did not have to go through the agony of going into the office next morning, eyes bloodshot, cold perspiration on their foreheads, shaking so that to even make the letter X was a task, let alone sign anything. They did not have to cross the street in the middle of the block to avoid meeting some one. They ate their breakfasts that morning and I had a time drinking mine, keeping the first drink down, even with bitter, pepper and all.

I'll never forget that afternoon when they made their entry—one big fellow looking every inch a plainclothesman and his partner considerably shorter and bordering on being plump. They looked like the two who had answered a call from my wife the night before except they were not in uniform.

They invited us to an open house that Saturday night but I did not think I could make it—my back hurt (on account of the fall I had the night before), my head was twirling and the entire Russian Army had marched through my mouth, boots and all, so we would make it some other time. My wife made up our mind, however, and we went; found several neophytes that night who felt as bad as I did (one could hold out only about an hour and a half) so I had found companionship; a few others who felt as I did

right then, and also many who once had, but now were enjoying themselves.

It was good for my wife, too, as she found that there were several things that I had not as yet got around to doing, though it was only that I had not thought of it or else just was not in a position to do it. That is why today I tell a new man that if he did not steal the pennies his wife was saving and had hid away high on a shelf in the clothes closet it was only because either they did not have any pennies or else he did not think of it.—A.J.S.

* * *

It's the Quality

From Des Moines, Ia.

I am in A.A. and have been sober about three years but on the program, really, only about 9 months. I find there is a difference after three years of sobriety and really being on the program. Some stay sober but are not on the A.A. program. I see some fellows try to make this through a big fancy club house. It doesn't seem to take out here. They don't stay sober. You can't make this deal with social life alone. It wears off too soon like a cheap paint job on a house. Give us something along this line in *The Grapevine*. Maybe I'm wrong, but is drinking the worst vice a man can have?—C. H.

The Stub of a Pencil

(Continued from Page 5)

desperation because of the chaotic mess in which we find our handiwork, we dig up our little pencil and use it. Is it not amazing that the point is never dull nor broken, that the print which it draws is always precise and exact, that our construction immediately begins to shape up before our eyes? A structure, founded upon right thinking, will elevate its spires into the clouds of happiness and calm serenity.

In summary: We of A.A. have our raw material from which to build, our past, comprised usually of (1) self indulgence, with varying degrees of lying, cheating and stealing to perpetuate it; (2) environmental pampering—the whole world seemingly contributes to this; (3) kidding and dishonesty with one's self, superimposed on our minds by years and years of wrong thinking. These and numerous other ego-centric traits comprise the material from which we can do our building. We of A.A. have tools, 12 tools, which have graciously and unselfishly been bestowed upon us.

With raw material which we ourselves have supplied, and with tools that have been bequeathed to us, we have the wherewithal to build calmness; serenity, and sober happiness, the degree of which is governed only by the frequency of the use of "the stub of a pencil."—G.O.L., *Salt Lake City, Utah*.

FOUR MEN

(The following is reprinted from the well known Southern newspaper column, Everyday Counselor, with the permission of the author, The Rev. Herbert Spaugh, D.D.)

A thumb-nail sketch of the program of the Alcoholics Anonymous is given for the benefit of many readers who have inquired about it. The picture presented is general, and will be seen to be a fine program for the church or any organization designed to help others.

In the first place, the patient must be willing to be helped, must admit his need of help. He is then urged to make the acquaintance and face squarely four men.

THE FIRST MAN. This man is yourself. Stand in front of a mirror and honestly look at yourself alone. This is difficult, as it is the last thing which many want to do, but it is the necessary first thing. Look beyond your face and down into your heart. You may fool the world, your family, your friends, but you can never fool yourself. A guilty conscience is poor company. It is responsible for more sickness, misery and suffering than anything else in the world. You may try to run away from it in work, in play; but it is always within you; you can't escape it.

THE SECOND MAN. This man is your God. To the Christian, He is The Man, Christ Jesus. He who rules all creation, guides the heavenly bodies in their courses, plans and directs the workings of nature, is ready to help you, if you will let Him. He stands ready to help you with every problem. You will never know how to live happily, successfully, victoriously with yourself until you learn to live with your God. Only in

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A.A. Philosophy...

(Continued from Page 8)

these past four years is like a rock at the moment. She is not dead but has just gone on to the next plane that our mortal eyes can't see but with faith can find without the shadow of a doubt. So don't think of me as depressed."

In conclusion, it seems appropriate that we should quote from Elliot's letter of the summer of 1945, when he was still happily absorbed in his work, to the man who introduced A.A. to him. It is very characteristic of his whole philosophy of living:

"In me you still have what I've never had—a first ewe lamb! I'll try not to get plastered on your account. Isn't much of an effort any more—that end. But what a joy all the interests and faiths are that have followed the drying up end of it. I've really lived more in the past four years than all the rest put together—and so happily! Great thing, A.A.!"

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

One of the regular Sacramento, Calif., Group meetings was attended by Rev. Nelson E. Hinman. On the following Sunday the clergyman preached a sermon on A.A. to one of the largest congregations in Sacramento. The services had been well advertised in the Sunday papers. In the first four days following the sermon, the church received 22 inquiries regarding A.A.

Several months ago the Sacramento Group started a weekly beginners' class, using the four discussions as set forth in the Washington pamphlet. As a result not only has the membership increased in the past months, but better still, the percentage of "casualties" has dropped appreciably. Furthermore, the Sacramento honor roll shows a marked improvement in the number of new members attaining their place there after three months of sobriety. These people are how beginning to move into the six months class.

* * *

The Fort Worth, Texas, Group published, in cooperation with the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Health Education Committee a recent issue of *Timely Health Topics*. The Group secretary believes this work is of national interest in that other groups throughout the country might want to work out with their county officials some arrangement to join with them in the publication of their county paper. The Fort Worth issue of *Timely Health Topics* was furnished to more than 5,000 physicians, city and county officials and others interested in the alcoholic problem confronting the public today.

* * *

The Rock Hill, S. C., Group was host to all the North and South Carolina groups at a meeting last month. Two hundred representatives were present from Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Shelby, Winston-Salem, Asheville, Hendersonville, N. C., and Columbia, Anderson, Chester, Greenville, S. C. . . . Marty Mann of the NCEA spoke last month to the student body of Winthrop College, South Carolina's largest female institution. She also spoke to the South Carolina Legislature; the student body of the University of South Carolina at an open meeting of the Carolina groups.

* * *

Oklahoma City A.A.s are preparing to establish a group in Clinton. Shawnee, the latest town in the Sooner State to form a group, now has 15 members, and they are steadily rolling 'em in. . . . A.A.s of Philadelphia attended a lecture on mental hygiene at the Philadelphia County Medical Society. . . . To better serve new members, give them more individual attention, the Atlanta, Ga., A.A.s have branched out into

54 NEW GROUPS IN TWO MONTHS!

Fifty-four new groups have gotten underway in recent weeks. Added to the list between Jan. 11 and March 11 were Lexington, Ky.; Schulerberg and Amarillo, Texas; Arlington, Lydonville and Windsor, Vt.; Tipton, Mo.; Mishawaka, Ind.; Beverly Hills, Pomona, Fresno, Pittsburgh, Santa Ana, and San Vicente (Los Angeles), Calif.; Fairhope, Ala.; Hill, N. H.; Pittsfield, Brookline, Fitchburg, and Framingham, Mass.; Helena, Mont.; Adrian, Manistique and Mt. Clemens, Mich.; Raiford and Lake Worth, Fla.; Covington, West Monroe and Minden, La.; Cumberland, Md.; Walla Walla, Wash.; Upper Arlington (Columbus) and Port Clinton, Ohio; Alexandria, Va.; Bloomington, Ill.; Elmira and Niagara Falls, N. Y.; Council Bluffs, Iowa; Summersville and Bluefield, W. Va.; Elizabeth and Union City, N. J.; Bristol, Conn.; Belhaven, N. C.; Auburn, Neb.; Clinton, Okla.; Yuma, Ariz.; Texarkana and Magnolia, Ark.; Rock Springs, Wyo.; Bangor, Me.; Meridian, Miss.; Leamington, Ontario, and Sardis, British Columbia.

No Newcomers? Try This!

"Is drinking harming your family?"

"If the answer to this question is 'Yes' and you want helpful information, write A.A., P.O. Box 454, Montpelier, Vt."

The above is one of a series of leading questions being printed in the Montpelier paper, free of charge, to encourage contact with the group there.

The editor of the paper reports that the questions have elicited much favorable comment, and the group reports numerous calls daily.

a second group. . . . Last November a group was formed in Wakefield, Neb., which later combined with the Pender Group. Jointly, they have 11 active members and several prospective "customers." They are running ads in the three local papers. . . . The Deep East Texas Group comprises members from Centerville, Palestine, Longview, Nacogdoches, Lufkin, Diboll and San Augustine.

* * *

The Syracuse, N. Y., Group now has 100 active members, and the women's auxiliary, recently organized, about 30 members. . . . On invitation, Lt. Col. Samuel Paster, psychiatrist at Kennedy General Hospital, addressed the Memphis Group, outlining the responsibility of society resulting from the psychiatric disturb-

ances caused by World War II, and the possible help that A.A. might contribute. . . . Fort Smith, Ark., boasting 24 members and more new ones each week, has moved into new clubrooms at 708½ Garrison Avenue.

* * *

Manhattan's loss is Florida's gain. Two members, Bill W. and Art C., who have moved south, are now spark-plugging the Sarasota group which numbers about 20, half of them transients during the winter months. John A. of Manhattan, visiting there for six weeks, has also attended meetings of the Tampa Group, which now boasts more than 70 active members and maintains clubrooms in the DeSoto Hotel. The Tampa group was organized by Roy Y. while he was stationed there with the Army. A.A.s from Fort Myers, Bradentown and Venice drive to the Sarasota and Tampa meetings often, John reports.

* * *

"A.A.s live democracy," said a Glendale member, speaking at a big meeting of the San Bernardino, Calif., Group. ". . . Our goal is not to be better than someone else but to be better than ourselves. . . . When an A.A. told me I was emotionally immature I didn't mind. So was he."

* * *

The seven-year-old Dayton, Ohio, Group saved 1,700 manpower hours per week during the war by putting alcoholics back on the job. "A cell is a medieval instrument of detention and has little or no place in the fight against alcoholism today," declared Dr. James Sagebiel, Dayton psychiatrist who, like the A.A.s, deplors Dayton's lack of hospital facilities for treatment of alcoholics.

* * *

In New England they don't seem to mind the weather. Brockton, Mass., A.A.s braved hazardous travel conditions in a downpour to be on hand for their usual meeting. Membership of the three-month-old group has been boosted to over 30 and all of them, plus several new prospects, showed up during the storm, wet without, dry within.

* * *

The story of A.A. was heard at a meeting of the Council for Coordination of Community Services in Montgomery, Ala., as the first in a series of programs built around the theme "Developing Citizenship," selected by the program committee of the council. The Montgomery Group cooperated with the committee in arranging details.

* * *

An Indianapolis, Ind., A.A., at the fourth of

a series of forums at the West Lafayette First Methodist Church, answered questions on the purpose and methods of A.A. . . . The South Jersey Group heard a talk by Dr. C. Nelson Davis of the Psychopathic Division, Philadelphia General Hospital. . . . The St. Petersburg, Fla., Group observed their *first anniversary* with a dinner and meeting; . . . The Denver, Colo., Group, now four years old, gave a ball to obtain funds for clubrooms large enough to accommodate their rapidly increasing membership.

* * *

In 1940 there was only one group in Connecticut, located in Greenwich. Today there are 14. They are located in Bridgeport, Bristol, Cornwall Bridge, Danbury, Derby, Greenwich, Hartford, Meriden-Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, and Waterbury.

In a eulogistic piece about a New Haven meeting, attended also by members from the New Britain Group, a local paper wrote: "A.A. recognizes both sides of the truth that a man must help himself, and that self-help may be greatly supplemented by the moral support and comradeship of fellow victims and victors."

* * *

The Montgomery, Ala., A.A.s recently had their *second anniversary* gathering. . . . A Baton Rouge, La., A.A. spoke at a luncheon of the Cooperative Club of that city. In the same state, the Alexandria Group is now holding meetings in the Salvation Army's Red Shield center.

* * *

A little over a year ago four Norwalk, Ohio, men met in one of their homes and held the first

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Norwalk A.A. meeting. In 12 months the group had grown to 22. Their *first anniversary* dinner was attended by 136 members representing seven counties and 12 cities and towns in North Central Ohio. . . . A Tallahassee, Fla., member outlined the A.A. program in a talk before the Rotary Club. . . . Wilmington, Del., A.A.s received as guest speaker Col. Charles I. Carpenter, head of the Air Force chaplain service in Washington, D. C.

* * *

Addressing a St. Louis, Mo., A.A. meeting, Dr. Joseph B. Kendis of that city said that the ratio of women alcoholics is increasing in astounding proportions. Formerly, the doctor said, there were four-and-one-half male alcoholics to one female; now there are two to one. . . . The new clubrooms of the Pittsburgh, Pa., Group are at 615 West Diamond Street, Northside. . . . "Alcoholics Anonymous" tops the alphabetical list of 81 civic organizations published by the Bloomfield, N. J., Independent Press. . . . Niagara Falls A.A.s meet at the local International Institute, where 15 other organizations also hold their meetings.

* * *

Clergymen and city officials were among the more than 60 persons who attended the *second anniversary* get-together of the New Bedford, Mass., Group at which an A.A. speaker told of taking his first drink when he was seven years old. "My mother had a party for my older brother. While my folks and the guests were in one room, I was in another draining the glasses." He drank from that time on until Labor Day 1943, when he was hospitalized and immediately afterward came into A.A. via the Boston Group. He has had no slips.

* * *

At a public forum sponsored by the Lexington, Ky., Speakeasy Club (it's not what you're thinking; the members practice public speaking), A.A.s from Cincinnati, Ohio, and Louisville, Ky., answered questions tossed at them by medical men, the clergy and representatives of various civic clubs. Over 200 people were present.

After the formation of the Lexington Group a local newspaper wrote of A.A.: "Inspiring is a windy high-flown word in ordinary usage, but it is the one word, in its full and rightful meaning, that describes the meeting conducted at the city hall by Alcoholics Anonymous. Only the rare scoffer, only the lonely dissenter could have left the hall without feeling that in this loose but vigorous organization lay real hope for victims of one of the most wretched of afflictions. Only the phlegmatic, the totally unimpressible or the incurably cynical auditor could have remained unimpressed by the confidence and honesty and over-all humility of those who

confessed to their sordid experiences with alcohol and told of their liberation from it.

"A.A. deserves the support of officials, courts, police, clergymen, the medical profession and the private citizen. A.A. can make us a happier and better community."

Four Men

(Continued from page 10)

Him can you find a clean and pure conscience.

THE THIRD MAN, for the one who would take the program of the Alcoholics Anonymous, is your fellow-member of the local A.A. club. These clubs meet every week, report on themselves and on each other. If a member has been unfortunate enough to have slipped and fallen, the other members go after him and bring him back.

THE FOURTH MAN WITHOUT WHOM YOUR LIFE WILL NOT BE COMPLETE is the man with whom you must share your new experience. One requirement in an A.A. club is that each member must share his new strength with other alcoholics; this is their strongest aid to sobriety.

Four is the world-number of completion. To live successfully in this world you must meet and know these four men.

Spending To Keep Sick

Six months ago I was in a hospital in Barre, Vt., doing just that very thing. A nurse was doing something for me and I was talking to myself chiefly. I don't recall the exact words I used but the idea still sticks with me and it ran something like this:

"What a fool I am.

"Here I am flat on my back in this hospital. All around me are dozens of people who are probably making more money than I do and they are spending hundreds of dollars to keep well.

"I'm different. I don't make too much money, but what I do make, I spend just as fast as I can so I can be sick."—P.F., Montpelier, Vt.

Minneapolis Institute

Members of the Minneapolis Group cooperated in an Institute of Chronic Alcoholism held under the auspices of the University of Minnesota Center for Continuation Study during February, with a view towards establishment of a clinic for that area. Included on the faculty for the three-day institute were Dr. E. M. Jellinek, director of the Yale University Section on Alcohol Studies; Dr. Leo Alexander, associate director of research, Boston State Hospital, and Dr. Haven Emerson, New York lecturer, as well as several Minnesota state officials.