



VOL. III. NO. 11, APRIL, 1947. P. O. BOX 328, GRAND CENTRAL ANNEX, NEW YORK 17. YEARLY, \$2.50; COPY, 25c

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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Will, Through A. A., Fosters Spiritual Grace

From Montclair, N. J.

"The fact is that most alcoholics . . . have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically non-existent . . . We are without defense against the first drink." (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 35).

Mexico City Group Welcomes Visitors

There's an added attraction now in Mexico for the A.A. tourist—a small, but vigorous group in the capital, Mexico City.

The group meets in the Y.M.C.A., on Tuesday nights and the fact that the American vacationer lacks knowledge of the Spanish language does not detract appreciably from his ability to thoroughly enjoy and participate in the discussions of the alcoholic problem. At least half of the discussion is in English; or at least the group arranges it that way when a unilingual visitor such as the writer shows up at a meeting.

The first Mexican member of the group is Fernando I., a lawyer who made contact with A.A. six months ago. His story of the mental, physical and economic tolls of alcoholism is no different, in substance, from those heard in A.A. meetings throughout this country but there's an indescribable charm in the way he tells it—partly in English, a string of Spanish now and then when his enthusiasm carries him away, and, through it all, a broad assortment of gestures that actually help tell the story.

His favorite yarn concerns the night he broke his ankle. Seems he had to jump off the roof of the family's one-story home because his wife had locked the doors. She knew that Fernando was bender-bent.

Neither Fernando, nor his charming wife and their children must in any way bow to any American family in their faith in the A.A. program. Senora I., her oldest daughter and a sister all accompanied Fernando to one of the

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We reject the view that there is nothing about a drinker that the exercise of a little will power won't cure. We accept the dictum that whatever will power the alcoholic does possess is impotent to curb the urge to drink. We assert that alcoholics are compulsive drinkers. Our program starts at these hypotheses. It is on these premises that the alcoholic in some degree has been absolved from moral responsibility for his conduct.

The foregoing notwithstanding, we offer to the alcoholic a Program of Recovery, the central point of which is that he makes a *decision* to turn his will and his life over to the care of God (as he understands Him). At the outset, therefore, we suggest to the alcoholic that he make a decision, that is, *that he make up his mind*. He is called upon, without reservation or qualification, to make an election, to exercise an option, to choose between alternatives, to resolve a dilemma. He is expected to reach a conclusion, to make a determination, to render judgment, to choose the right fork in the road.

Does not the 3rd Step (to which we have been referring), presuppose a modicum of will power; is it not linked, like all morality, to a hazardous theory of free will? Or is there a distinction between the two? Indeed, it has been heretofore suggested in these columns that once the alcoholic realizes the nature of his malady and that "there is a solution," an element of moral responsibility enters into the situation, so that the alcoholic may no longer plead his "sickness" in extenuation of wrongs committed. (See

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I

NEWSPAPER SERIES HELPS GROWTH IN BERMUDA

A series of 12 weekly articles on A.A. is currently being published in the *Mid-Ocean News*, Hamilton, Bermuda, and the response has been good according to the St. Georges, Bermuda, Group. The cooperation of the editor and publisher and the staff of the newspaper has done much toward a better understanding of alcoholic problems and the A.A. approach to recovery.

Charles Jackson, author of *Tim Lost Weekend*, spoke informally at a recent meeting, emphasizing that until the public ceases to look upon the drunk as a humorous character, progress will be delayed in the general program of education on alcoholism. Although not an A.A., Mr. Jackson's writing and talks have accomplished much 12th Step good.

Visitors are invited to write Box 50, St. Georges, or phone 7395. Because of the wanderings of the rather cosmopolitan members the group varies, the latest news showing J.L.C. in Iceland on a new job; H.V.W. returned home to England after 10 years absence; R.G.R. and J.E.D. temporarily in the States; R.A.G. and C.R.T. back in Bermuda after leaves at home in the States.

EDITORIAL:

On the 6th Step

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

AFTER the preceding Steps, this one shouldn't be too tough. Already, we have admitted that we were powerless over alcohol; that we would take a moral inventory to do something about it. Generally, an honest self-analysis discloses a number of items on the "wrong side of the ledger." We can do something about many of them. However, we discover a number of defects that we can't do anything about. The 6th Step is considered in the light of this latter type of defect.

The question of personal honesty comes to mind. Many of us became thoroughly dishonest with ourselves after years of alcoholism. Many of us reached the point where honesty was almost impossible. We rationalized. We evaded. We lied. We refused to face the truth of a situation. In the end, we had made a habit of personal dishonesty. Such a habit was not easy to break.

Another common defect among persons, especially sick alcoholics, is selfishness. Many of us reached the point where it was almost impossible to be unselfish. When drinking, most of us were terribly selfish. When sober, many of us found little time to think of the welfare of others. Again, this defect became a habit. In some cases, the habit became an obsession. We became fascinated and intrigued with ourselves.

Such defects of character cannot be removed without help. Try as we might to "turn over a new leaf," or "mend our ways," we found ourselves slipping back into the old, well established habit patterns that were part of our alcoholic sickness.

But there is an answer to this very common problem. In fact, the answer is so obvious, so simple and so near at hand that many of us did not see it at all. The complete solution to the character defect lies in this 6th Step. Some persons call it surrender. Some call it transference. We call it common sense.

Isn't it common sense to ask for assistance in an emergency? Would you try to lift a 1,000-pound weight without help? If your child is ill, doesn't it make sense to ask for the help of a doctor? Of course it does.

Defects of character will retard your recovery and mine. They will take from us that thing that we hold dearest: our sobriety. And if we lose our sobriety, we die. Does it make sense to seek help from a Higher Power in removing these dangerous defects? The answer is obvious.

Reach into your soul and admit that you cannot remove these defects alone. Humbly ask God's help with these life-destroying problems. We must call on the "fellow upstairs" for life. Get ready to do it. Be determined to see it through. If you do, you can't miss because He can't miss. He's the one who is doing the job.

MEXICO CITY WELCOMES VISITORS *(Continued from page 1)*

meetings I attended. A.A. was the only topic discussed when we lunched at their home. The devotion of his family to our program of recovery indicates that A.A. will grow in Mexico. Those who live there are convinced the program will prove to be a vital factor in improving national health as it is in this country. It seems that not all of the souses live north of the border.

There are two Americans in the Mexico City Group: Pauline D., formerly associated with the Washington, D. C., and Los Angeles Groups, and Les F., formerly of New Orleans.

The only deterrent likely to affect rapid growth of A.A. in Mexico immediately is that there is no abundance of evidence among the Mexicans of the dividends of sobriety, such as the newer A.A.s of our country are able to see in our larger meetings and in our business contacts.

In Mexico, where there is virtually no such evidence, it stands out sharply as an aid to recovery. But, if the light to show the path to prolonged and contented sobriety is faint in Mexico now—as it was when A.A. was in its infancy in this country a decade ago—there still is the vigor of a young organization to make the bumps in the road seem less jarring.—*L.J., Mineola, N. Y.*

INTERGROUP OFFICE HANDLES INQUIRIES FOR NEW YORK AREA

Serving the Greater New York area seven days a week—including Sundays and all holidays—the Intergroup Association of Alcoholics Anonymous plays an important part in A.A.'s program of helping the sick alcoholic to recover in the New York area.

The association, which was organized last winter and which opened its offices at 194 East 75 Street, New York, on December 1, 1946, is a non-stock, non-profit member corporation composed of delegates from more than 33 A.A. groups in the New York metropolitan area.

The officers of the association—president, vice president, secretary, financial secretary and treasurer—and its board of directors are elected by the delegates. A steering committee, composed of the five officers and four board members, directs the affairs of the Intergroup office.

Two delegates from each participating A.A. group in the New York area form the general assembly of the association. At present the area includes the counties of New York, Bronx, Queens, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk.

Acts As Liaison

According to Fred M., president of the association, the purposes of the organization are: to handle inquiries and referrals for newcomers to A.A., to arrange hospitalization for sick alcoholics who request it, to act as liaison between member groups of the association, to handle public relations for the New York area and to plan and conduct the weekly Intergroup meeting.

To carry out its aims, the office is staffed by two paid secretaries and numerous volunteer workers who carry out the 12th Step work. It is a busy place—the office handles more than 140 telephone calls daily and an average of 40 letters a day.

On weekdays, the office opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m. On Sundays and holidays, the office is open from 12 noon to 6 p.m. A telephone answering service goes into operation when the office is closed.

The paid secretaries spend a large part of their time arranging hospitalization for alcoholics who request it. Most of the persons are sent to Knickerbocker Hospital, New York, where A.A.s are allowed to visit the patients and inform them of the A.A. program of recovery. Other hospitalization is available in New York, however, and, depending on the availability of bed space and the need, the secretaries make the arrangements.

The planning and conducting of the Inter-
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CLUBS IN A.A.

Are They With Us to Stay?

By Bill

THE club idea has become part of A.A. life. Scores of these hospitable havens can report years of useful service; new ones are being started monthly. Were a vote taken tomorrow on the desirability of clubs a sizeable majority of A.A.s would record a resounding "Yes." There would be thousands who would testify that they might have had a harder time staying sober in their first months of A.A. without clubs and that, in any case, they would always wish the easy contacts and warm friendships which clubs afford.

Being the majority view, we might suppose that a blanket endorsement for clubs; we might think we couldn't get along without them. We might conceive them as a central A.A. institution—a sort of "13th Step" of our Recovery Program without which the other 12 Steps wouldn't work. At times club enthusiasts will act as though they really believed we could handle our alcohol problems by club life alone. They are apt to depend upon clubs rather than upon the A.A. Program.

But we have A.A.s, rather a strong minority, too, who want no part of clubs. Not only, they assert, does the social life of a club often divert the attentions of members from the program, they claim that clubs are an actual drag on A.A. progress. They point to the danger of clubs degenerating into mere hangouts, even "joints"; they stress the bickerings that do arise over questions of money, management, and personal authority; they are afraid of "incidents" that might give us unfavorable publicity. In short, they "view with alarm." Thumbs down on clubs, they say.

Need for Clubs Established

Toward a middle ground, for several years now, we have been feeling our way. Despite alarms it is quite settled that A.A.s who need and want clubs ought to have them. So the real concern is not whether we shall have clubs. It is how we shall enhance them as assets, how we may diminish their known liabilities; how we shall be sure, in the long future, that their liabilities do not exceed their assets.

Of our four largest A.A. centers, two are club-minded and two are not. I happen to live in one which is. The very first A.A. club of all was started in New York. Though our experience here may not have been the best, it is the one I know. So, by way of portraying the principles and problems we need to discuss, I shall

use it, as an average illustration of club evolution, rather than as a model set-up.

When A.A. was very young we met in homes. People came miles, not only for the A.A. meeting itself, but to sit hours afterward at coffee, cake, and eager intimate talk. Alcoholics and their families had been lonely too long.

Then homes became too small. We couldn't bear to break up into many little meetings, so we looked for a larger place. We lodged first in the work shop of a tailoring establishment, then in a rented room at Steinway Hall. This kept us together during the meeting hour. After-

New Groups Reported At Central Office

February 1 through 28, 1947

ARKANSAS—Little Rock (Group No. 4).

CALIFORNIA — Los Angeles (Latin-American Group); La Habra; Indio (Coachilla Valley Group).

COLORADO—Greeley.

CONNECTICUT—New London; West Hartford.

ILLINOIS—Lincoln.

INDIANA—Richmond; Evansville (Lamasco Group).

KANSAS—Great Bend.

KENTUCKY—Cynthiana; Owensboro.

MASSACHUSETTS—Southbridge.

MICHIGAN—Holland.

MISSOURI—Boonville; Rolla.

MONTANA—Havre.

NORTH CAROLINA—Wilmington; Charlotte (Myers Park Group).

NEW MEXICO—Artesia.

NEW YORK—Cohoes; Wayland; Ashland (Federal Correctional Institution); Nyack.

PENNSYLVANIA—Easton.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Myrtle Beach; Florence.

SOUTH DAKOTA—Hot Springs (Veterans Hospital Group).

TEXAS—Temple.

VERMONT—Wallingford (Rutland County Group).

VIRGINIA—Danville; Norfolk (Ocean View Group).

WISCONSIN—Portage.

CANADA—Regina, Sask.; Timmins, Ontario.

ward we held forth at a cafeteria, bill something was missing. It was the home atmosphere; a restaurant didn't have enough of it. Let's have a club, someone said.

So we had a club. We took over an interesting place, the former Artists and Illustrators Club on West 24th Street. What excitement! A couple of our older members signed the lease. We painted and we scrubbed. We had a home. Wonderful memories of days and nights at that first club will always linger.

But, it must be admitted, not all those memories are ecstatic. Growth brought headaches; growing pains, we call them now. How serious they seemed then! "Dictators" ran amuck; drunks fell on the floor or disturbed the meetings, "steering committees" tried to nominate their friends to succeed them and found to their dismay that even sober drunks couldn't be "steered." Sometimes we could scarcely get up the rent; card players were impervious to any suggestion that they talk to new people; lady secretaries got in each others' hair. A corporation was formed to take over the clubroom lease so we then had "officials." Should these "directors" run the club or would it be the A.A. rotating committee?

Such were our problems. We found that the use of money, the need for a certain amount of club organization and the crowded intimacy of the place created situations we hadn't anticipated. Club life still had great joys. But it had liabilities too, that was for sure. Was it worth all the risk and trouble? The answer was "Yes" for the 24th Street Club kept right on going, and is today occupied by the A.A. seamen. We have, besides, three more clubs in this area, a fourth is contemplated.

Start As Central Function

Our first club was known, of course, as an "A.A. Clubhouse." The corporation holding its lease was titled "Alcoholics Anonymous of New York, Inc." Only later did we realize we had incorporated the whole of New York state, a mistake recently rectified. Of course our incorporation should have covered "24th Street" only. Throughout the country most clubs have started like ours did. At first we regard them as central A.A. institutions. But later experience invariably brings a shift in their status, a shift much to be desired, we now think.

For example, the early Manhattan A.A. Club had members from every section of the metro->

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A. A. Clubs - - - Are They With Us to Stay?

politan area, including New Jersey. After a while dozens of groups sprang up in our suburban districts. They got themselves more convenient meeting places. Our Jersey friends secured a club of their own. So these outlying groups, originally spawned from the Manhattan Clubhouse, began to acquire hundreds of members who were not tied to Manhattan either by convenience, inclination or oldtime sentiment. They had their own local A.A. friends, their own convenient gathering places. They weren't interested in Manhattan.

This irked us New Yorkers not a little. Since we had nurtured them, why shouldn't they be interested? We were puzzled why they refused to consider the Manhattan Club the A.A. Center for the metropolitan area. Wasn't the club running a central meeting with speakers from other groups? Didn't we maintain a paid secretary who sat in the New York Clubhouse taking telephone calls for assistance and making hospital arrangements for all groups in the area? Of course, we thought, our outlying groups ought financially to support the Manhattan Club; dutiful children should look after their "parents." But our parental pleas were no use. Though many outlying A.A. members personally contributed to the 24th Street Club, nary a cent did their respective groups ever send in.

Then we took another tack. If the outlying groups would not support the Club they at least might want to pay the salary of its secretary. She was really doing an "area" job. Surely this was a reasonable request. But it never got anywhere. They just couldn't mentally separate the "area secretary" from the Manhattan Club. So, for a long time, our area needs, our common A.A. problem, and our club management were tied into a trying financial and psychological snarl.

Clubs Separate Business

This tangle slowly commenced to unravel, as we began to get the idea that clubs ought to be strictly the business of those individuals who specially want clubs, and who are willing to pay for them. We began to see that club management is a pure business proposition which ought to be separately incorporated under another name such, for example, as "Alanon"; that the "directors" of a club corporation ought to look after club business only; that an A.A. group, as such, should never get into active management of a business project. Hectic experience has since taught us that if an A.A. rotating committee tries to boss the club corporation or if the corporation tries to run the A.A. affairs of those groups who may meet at

the club there is difficulty at once. The only way we have found to cure this is *to separate the material from the spiritual*. If an A.A. group wishes to use a given club let them pay rent or split the meeting take with the club management. To a small group opening its first clubroom this procedure may seem silly because, for the moment, the group members will also be club members. Nevertheless separation by early incorporation is recommended because it will save much confusion later on as other groups start forming in the area.

Questions are often asked: "Who elects the business directors of a club?" And "Does club membership differ from A.A. membership?" As practices vary we don't quite know the answers yet. The most reasonable suggestions seem these: Any A.A. member ought to feel free to enjoy the ordinary privileges of any A.A. club whether he makes a regular voluntary contribution or not. If he contributes regularly he should, in addition be entitled

Men of Extinction

(The first in a series of portraits of men who enjoyed the finer things in life.)



Eustis Bagley, III,
Bon Vivant and Collector of Old Bottles

to vote in the business meetings which elect the business directors of his club corporation. This would open all clubs to all A.A.s. But it would limit their business conduct to those interested enough to contribute regularly. In this connection we might remind ourselves that in A.A. we have no fees or compulsory dues. But it ought to be added, of course, that since clubs are becoming separate and private ventures they can be run on other lines if their members insist.

Club evolution is also telling us this: In none but small communities are clubs likely to remain the principal centers of A.A. activity. Originally starting as the main center of a city many a club moves to larger and larger quarters, thinking to retain the central meeting for its area within its own walls. Finally, however, circumstances defeat this purpose.

Valuable Social Aids

Circumstance number one is that the growing A.A. will burst the walls of any clubhouse. Sooner or later the principal or central meeting has to be moved into a large auditorium. The club can't hold it. This is a fact which ought to be soberly contemplated whenever we think of buying or building large clubhouses. A second circumstance seems sure to leave most clubs in an "off center" position, especially in large cities. That is our strong tendency toward central or intergroup committee management of the common A.A. problems of metropolitan areas. Every area, sooner or later, realizes that such concerns as intergroup meetings, hospital arrangements, local public relations, a central office for interviews and information, are things in which every A.A. is interested, whether he has any use for clubs or not. These being strictly A.A. matters, a central or intergroup committee has to be elected and financed to look after them. The groups of an area will usually support with group funds these truly central activities. Even though the club is still large enough for intergroup meetings and these meetings are still held, the center of gravity for the area will continue to shift to the intergroup committee and its central activities. The club is left definitely offside; where, in the opinion of many, it should be. Actively supported and managed by those who want clubs, they can be "taken or left alone."

Should these principles be fully applied to our clubs, we shall have placed ourselves in a position to enjoy their warmth yet drop any that get too hot. We shall then realize that a club is but a valuable social aid. And, more important still, we shall always preserve the simple A.A. group as that primary spiritual entity whence issues our greatest strength.

INTERGROUP OFFICE

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group meeting of A.A. each week is another function of the office. Speakers are chosen and a program arranged each week for the meeting in the Engineering Auditorium, 29 West 39 Street, New York. In addition, a monthly "special events" Intergroup meeting is arranged in that auditorium.

Each week a mimeographed bulletin goes out from the office to the secretaries of the member groups. Once a month a bulletin, in color, goes out to the groups announcing the programs of the next two "special events" Intergroup meetings. From time to time, a printed list of the open and closed meetings of all groups in the New York area goes out to the groups.

Volunteers Explain A.A.

A considerable amount of work and an equal responsibility falls on the volunteer A.A. workers who are on duty in the office. Four desks for volunteer workers—both men and women—are provided at all times.

These volunteer workers answer the telephone and, if the caller is a person seeking aid or information, talk the problem over with him. If hospitalization is indicated, the volunteer worker turns the call over to a secretary. Volunteers are the first persons to see visitors to the office. If the visitor is an alcoholic interested in becoming a member of A.A., the volunteer interviews him, tells him the story of A.A., and directs him to the group nearest his home. As all of this type of work is considered 12th Step work, the paid secretaries do not handle it.

The following case, which was handled recently, illustrates how The Intergroup office functions:

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon, a 35-year-old man visited the office. An interview with a volunteer worker disclosed that the man not only needed medical attention but was jobless and without money.

Medical Attention Arranged

After hearing the man's story, the volunteer called a doctor who is sympathetic to A.A. The doctor agreed to see the man who was escorted to the doctor's office by another volunteer worker. The man received the necessary medicines and an injection of Vitamin B1. He was then escorted back to the office.

Further talk with the man disclosed that he had been discharged from his job on Christmas Eve for drinking; that he had continued to drink until he became drunk, when he was rolled; that he had continued drinking and had drawn all of his money from the bank.

When his funds were exhausted, the man

The Pleasures of Reading

Human Destiny by Pierre Lecomte du Nouy (Longmans, Green & Co., \$3.50)

Absolute power, which corrupts absolutely when brought into mankind's feeble grasps, imperils all civilization. Only spiritual forces, based upon sound moral values, can save humanity. Therefore, intelligent men must find a meaning to life which is compatible with scientific progress.

It is the thesis of Dr. du Nouy, internationally known French scientist, that man has finished his evolution biologically, and is evolving now on a moral plane. He postulates that humanity's destiny is to achieve, through such spiritual evolution, a better and purer world.

Speculating on the theory of evolution in the light of modern scientific thought, *Human Destiny* contends that specifically materialistic theories of the universe, and of man, no longer are valid. Though Charles Darwin's theory has been presumed to have dealt religion its sockdolager, Dr. du Nouy replies that whatever setbacks mankind may undergo through wars and catastrophes, these, in the long view, merely are veerings from a great human destiny, not measured in paltry fractions of time eternal.

Man, he says, is not on this earth by chance alone. He submits a series of convincing arguments indicating that, by the laws of pure chance, man—and even life—could not be here at all. Dr. du Nouy believes that science finds a purpose evident in the history of life which rises above the laws of matter. Thus, the twentieth century scientist comes to the same conclusion that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the nineteenth century spiritualist, propounded when, in *The Valley of Fear*, he had Sherlock Holmes ask:

"What is the meaning of it, Watson? What object is served by the circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem which human reason is as far from an answer as ever."

Dr. du Nouy does not solve the perennial problem, either, but he does well in showing that "an explanation of the evolution of life by chance alone is untenable today." Then he affirms that science can and will help restore God to man.

"The time has come for nations, as well as individuals, to know what they want," he insists. "If civilized countries *want* peace, they must understand that the problem must be approached basically. The old scaffolding willed to us by past generations cracks on every side. It cannot be consolidated by makeshifts, by bits of siring, by pots of glue and treaties gravely signed by Highly Dignified Gentlemen. Moreover, consolidation does not suffice. Peace must be established by transforming man from the interior, and not by erecting external structures. We have already said it: the source of all wars, the source of all evil, lies in us. No outside protection will be efficient if the enemy cowering at the bottom of our hearts is authorized to live."

So he deals with the greatest drama of all time, The drama of creation, and concludes on a note of hope. An American put it another way on March 4, 1933, saying, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."—R.E.B., *Greenwich Pillage, New York City*.

begged, borrowed and stole to get liquor for a period of three weeks when his wife and family held a council of war to decide whether to commit him to an institution. Alcoholics Anonymous, however, was suggested and this suggestion brought the man to the office.

Feeling better, the man was directed by the volunteer worker to the South Bronx Group, nearest his home. At present, the man is sober, an active A.A. in the Bronx Group and has been reemployed by his company.

Plenty of 12th Step Work

According to the secretaries, the Intergroup telephone number will be listed in all directories of New York in the very near future. At present The telephone number is BUtterfield 8-9643. "We sure could use more volunteers," one of the secretaries said. "It's the very best kind of 12th Step work," said the other.

COLUMBIA INSTITUTE HEARS ABOUT A.A.

Evidence of the ever-widening interest in the subject of alcoholism and A.A.'s contribution to better understanding of what is now recognized as a major social problem is found in the inclusion of a lecture on "Alcoholics Anonymous" March 5 in Columbia University's Institute of Arts and Sciences.

The Institute, of 25 years standing, is an adult education feature of Columbia composed of paying subscribers, and the programs consist of concerts, dramatic presentations and lectures by prominent persons in a variety of fields.

About 500 persons attended the lecture on A.A., which was given by R.F.S. of Montclair, N. J., an alumnus of and holder of two degrees from Columbia, but anonymous to his audience.

Husband Sees Rich Rewards for Non-Alcoholics

From San Diego, Cal.

It has often been said, and truly enough, that A.A. is an organization for alcoholics; yet the fact remains that the majority of the regular members of the organization are encumbered (or shall we say inflicted?) with non-alcoholic wives, husbands or parents, with whom they are living or with whom they are closely associated.

After having been affiliated with A.A. for about a year as a "dry-mate" and after having seen the amazing character and personality changes which have taken place about me, in that time, it follows naturally that I have nothing but the deepest admiration and utmost respect for those who are; on the program. I have enjoyed the association of these people. I have enjoyed talking with them and I have learned things from them which have helped me to understand their problems.

The serenity, the peace of mind, the patience, the humility, the tolerance, the kindness, cheerfulness and understanding of these people, set forth ideals which all non-alcoholics can only strive to attain.

Their Progress a Challenge

At the first dry-mate meeting I attended, we were all in agreement that our mates had outgrown us; had so far outstripped us in their ideal way of living, that it was up to us to do everything possible to try to approach this ideal; for if we didn't, we felt that we'd be left behind.

To be perfectly honest, I felt that I couldn't make the grade. I still think so, although I have made some progress. I saw my alcoholic mate slapped in the face time and again, in her 12th Step work, and in her dealing with the outside world, only to turn her cheek for more slaps. I couldn't get this at all. True, I was willing to do twice as much for the other fellow as he did for me, but that was as far as I was able to go.

Yet, there were some few Steps which I was able to take; particularly the Step in regard to a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself. These things helped, and I give them to other non-alcoholics for what they may be worth. I present them to the alcoholics for whatever interest they may bold.

As usual, I want to say that these things are my own personal opinions and do not reflect in any way upon the opinions of the organization as a whole.

First of all, I came to realize that even though my mate had stopped drinking, my job was not over by any means. On the contrary, my job had become more important than ever and

would keep me busier than before. I found that I had been impatient, irritable, resentful and selfish to an amazing degree. Whenever I went out of my way to do a favor for someone, I expected, in return, a favor of equal value, or at least profound appreciation.

Further, I discovered that although the alcoholic has stopped drinking, he is still fighting, every day. Each morning presents new struggles, new obstacles, which he overcomes by clear, straight thinking and with the help of a higher power, to whom he has turned over his life.

We non-alcoholics have repeatedly stated, in times past, and I quote, "I'd give anything in the world if he (or she) would stop drinking!" "I'd do anything if he (or she) would stop drinking!"

To us, this meant peace of mind, freedom from worry and embarrassment. This would enable us to go about our life's work with a clear mind and a light heart. It would give us a real home; the kind of a home that others had; the kind of a home which we felt we had a right to expect. It would give us a mate of whom we could be proud.

Unfortunately, however, the non-alcoholic is prone to forget the unpleasant things, the unfortunate things which have happened in the past. Ordinarily, with little or no effort, he can and does cast these things from his mind, especially when the going is smooth for him.

Remember the little vow you made when you

A Recipe for Sobriety

From Chicago, Ill.

Select as a prospect a somewhat bewildered man or woman who full well realizes a lack of ability to control drink. Infuse into prospect knowledge that he is victim of a disease—or at best, an allergy to alcohol. Remove from prospect his traits of selfishness, intolerance, bigotry, and other character defects—much as you would remove pin feathers in preparation of wild fowl. Baste thoroughly with sauce made of unselfishness, tolerance, and understanding. Broil for a long period of time (the longer the better) over a slow, but ever-burning fire-kindled constantly by the 12 Steps of the A.A. program.

In most cases results will be a finished product with new-found self control, who can be served at any gathering with pride—and who can once again accept his rightful place as a useful member of society.

NOTE: The word "broil" is not to be confused with "boil" as prospect usually *has* been *boiled* many, many times. Always with most unappetizing results!—W.C.

were married? "To love, honor and to cherish, in sickness and in health . . ."

The alcoholic is a sick person, despite the fact that he has slopped drinking. He cannot regain his health over night, nor in a week, a month or a year. The process of recovery is gradual and necessarily so because he is accomplishing the impossible and you have all heard that "the impossible takes a little longer." Impossible? Yes. Because science couldn't do it, the church couldn't do it and the dry-mate couldn't do it. Yet, we all know that the impossible is now possible through association with A.A. and the Steps of its program.

I say to you that the alcoholic literally walks "through the valley of the shadow of death . . . and fears no evil," for the higher power to whom he has turned over his life is with him and directs his thoughts and his actions.

I say to you, that the most you can do is but a drop in the ocean, compared to what the true A.A. member does every day of his life.

Our Job Is Cooperation

In my opinion, the non-alcoholic has a vital place here with respect to helping this program along. His function is to do everything humanly possible to cooperate at all times and to sustain and intensify the interest his mate has in the A.A. program.

Because the non-drinking alcoholic is in many instances still sensitive, and at times a bit resentful, the non-alcoholic should learn to keep his mouth shut, bearing in mind that it takes two to make an argument. He should, at all times, be very careful in what he says and to weigh statements thoughtfully before he comes forth with them. Perhaps your alcoholic mate is definitely wrong about something and you know it. By keeping your criticism mild and light, or by keeping your thoughts to yourself, you can often avert an argument which would upset your mate, who is having a difficult enough time of it as it is. Often, you will find that later, perhaps next day, or the following week, he or she will come around to your own way of thinking, willingly and on his or her own initiative.

Something like this: "John, I have been thinking about what you said the other day, and I believe that you are right about it, after all. . . ."

This is the inherent honesty of your mate breaking through. This is A.A. speaking. And when this happens, it is one more step forward for your mate, toward better thinking and better living.

Perhaps you think that your mate is "half out of cigarettes" or "doesn't have all her marbles," because she keeps on trying to get "Sophie

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WILL CAN FOSTER SPIRITUAL GRACE

(Continued from Page 1)

"What Is the Alcoholic's Moral Responsibility?"
A.A. Grapevine., November, 1945).

Is there, then, a conflict between the doctrine of free will insofar as it is implicit in the program and the theory that the alcoholic is deficient in will power in the domain of alcohol?

Answering these questions, it is submitted that there is no such discordance. On the contrary, examination of the concepts of free will and will power and related human attributes reveals a potential inner harmony in man corresponding to the moral order of the universe. It supports the validity of the program.

Such an inquiry does not, as one might suppose, involve a consideration of controversial theological speculations based upon scriptural texts and dogmatic postulates. Nor does it require a study of the hair-splitting formulae of mechanistic psychology. We learn much, however, from spiritually minded psychologists who have not excised the "psyche" (soul) from their psychology. And we obtain the answers from writers in the Christian tradition who give an adequate account of the *observable* facts of grace and inspiration and imagination and their relation to be *observable* facts of free will.

II

In its psychological aspect, as David Sea bury demonstrated a generation ago, we must discard the common notion that the will is a sort of psychic muscle, which, like the biceps, can be exercised and developed into a powerful and combative instrument. We must also abandon the notion that the will can or should be restrained, repressed or coerced. For these ideas, there must be substituted the basic doctrine of reliance and self-development.

This doctrine is based on the principle that the will is not a separated or insulated organ, but "the total expression of the impulsive energies of the human being, and thus inseparable from instinct, desire, emotion, sentiment, interest and the deliberative processes which lead to determination." These are the motive trends of the psychic. Therefore, if volitional expression is found to be vitiated by misdirection of unspent emotion or obstinate misunderstanding, common sense dictates a thorough self-examination, possibly reaching into the past and exploring hereditary and environmental factors in order to locate the congestion. Then, the blockages must be dynamited, memory cleaned of its debris, the mind opened to new attitudes and the life given new aims. By a series of successive, tangible steps of this character, the will may be liberated.



"I'm not drinking tonight, Chudley! Just bring me a half a Martini."

Liberation, however, is not enough. There must be direction and guidance. "The soul guides the will and is not mastered by it, which is only another way of saying that the soul may direct itself with wisdom; for if the will is a union of all primary forces, it can be but a union of the soul's energies."

Guided as it is by the soul, the will is nevertheless a reflection of the imagination. It might be said that as a man imagines so he is. As long as he calls before his gaze an image of sickness (alcoholism or whatever else), his responsive organism will obey the pattern of his mind. If the image is one of well-being, his will answers accordingly. "The inner picture of today creates and recreates the man of tomorrow." When the formative power of the mental image is recognized, and its influence on the will is understood, the problem of will power is virtually solved.

The first job, then, is by analysis and examination to clear and free the will. The second is a matter of right direction. Intelligence will chart the course, but the power of the will must be animated by the impulse of live interests. These will be supplied by the inward vision of an imagination turned away from negative and despairing pictures and towards affirmative and

constructive ones. The individual faces forward. As Mr. Sea bury says:

"The individual who has experienced such a release finds all life transformed and himself in a new relation to it; nor is the miracle true only in bodily relations. As men are sick or well, first of all as a result of the way they have lived, and as this has followed the guiding images of the thought, so men are good or bad, strong or weak, brave or fearful, sane or insane, largely in obedience to the imagination."

This happy result follows if we regard the will not as an isolated faculty but as composed of a whole series of elements such as wishes, interests, attention and the like—elements which may be guided and directed in the choice and release of ideas—ideas that will be suitable stimuli to the will and lend to happiness and success. Mark how every Step in the A. A. program contributes to the creation of serviceable habits, the heightening of the imagination, the formulation of constructive and rational affirmatives, and so to the eventual liberation of the will on the highest level of being.

Thus viewed, the alcoholic's so-called lack of
(Continued on next Page)

will power need not long stand in the way of his return to sobriety and of the opportunity of expressing his best self. He may, above all, attain the power of decision which is the highest expression of volition governed, however, by forces over and beyond the power of the will. This power of determination is not a function exercised for an instant, once and for all. It is rather a continuing process, evolutionary in development. It is "work in progress" as William James might have put it. It is based upon constructive and rational affirmations and the building of a forward-looking altitude.

III

Despite its immutability, truth is a jewel of many facets, set in diverse planes and positions, through which its essence may be observed in varied but consistent aspects. It is, therefore, appropriate to look upon the will not only, as we have said, as a reflection of the imagination but as a function of the process of extroversion. As Aldous Huxley says, we have been given free will in order that we may will our self-will out of existence and so come to live in a "state of grace." Defined in psychological terms, grace is something other than our self-conscious personal self, by which we are helped.

Of the three kinds of grace, animal grace is said to be that which comes when we are living in full accord with our own physical nature on a biological level. Human grace comes to us from persons, social groups (including A. A.), and from our own wishes, hopes and imaginings projected outside ourselves. Spiritual grace, with which we are here principally concerned, is derived from our ideals.

Spiritual grace involves, in its most perfect form, a willing away of the self-will to the point where it may in truth be said, "Not I, but God in me," and "Not my will but Thine." While we all fall far short of perfection in thus rendering ourselves capable of receiving the grace which is from instant to instant being offered to every soul, most of us do contrive to forget, if only partially, our preoccupation with "I," "me," and "mine," and do attain, from time to time and in varying degrees, a state of spiritual grace.

Turning to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, we find our analysis verified in the following passage at page 98: "Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How best can I serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.' These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. *We can exercise our will power along this line all we wan. It is the proper use of the will.* Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun the flow of His spirit into us. To some extent we have become

God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense."

The "activities" referred to in the quotation are the activities of service and interest already discussed. The "vision" is the imagination which we have said colors the will. The "vital sixth sense" is the spiritual grace we have tried to describe in relation to free will.

Free will may be expressed in terms of surrender as Huxley does in this statement: ,

"All our actions must, be directed in the last analysis, to making ourselves passive in relation to the activity and the being of divine reality. We are, as it were, acolian harps, endowed with the power either to expose themselves to the wind of the spirit or to shut themselves away from it."

Or, more positively, in the following passage from the writings of St. Francois de Sales, a most extraordinary description of the psychodynamics of the soul:

"God did not deprive thee of the operation of His love, but thou didst deprive Him of thy cooperation. God would never have rejected thee, if thou hadst not rejected His love. O all-good God, Thou dost not forsake unless forsaken, Thou never takest away Thy gifts until we take away our hearts."

IV

In summary, moral psychology and empirical religion supply the answers, the same answers, to the questions propounded at the outset. They begin with rejecting the "muscular" theory of will power and conclude that one's true free will is God's will. They declare that the will is not a single property of human nature but a union of the soul's energies. They emphasize the preponderating influence of mental images.

Progressive liberation of the will and union with infinity are phenomena which, when they happen, do so concurrently; it is as difficult as it is immaterial to tell which is cause and which is effect. Suffice it to say that there is no genuine conflict in man's many-sided nature. We are done with the old notions about "self-mastery" and subjugation of self. The now dispensation rests on self-direction and the power of self-reliance in the Emersonian sense. Our salvation depends upon the release and direction of the finer forces of human nature by the principle of their affirmative emphasis to ever higher levels of accomplishment. This is the process of psychosynthesis, beginning where analysis leaves off, recognizing and utilizing the soul as the dynamic core of human personality. Above all, let us not in the process be blind to the inner light which illuminates the limited wisdom of the secular and finite mind, for as George Santayana said:

"It is not wisdom to be only wise,

And on the inward vision close the eyes."

—R. F. S.

RICH REWARDS

(Continued from Page 6)

Blank" on the program, trying to get her to accept A.A., when you feel that Sophie is a hopeless case, isn't worth bothering about.

If you think so, don't say it, but keep on driving your mate out to Sophie's place. If you don't want to go in with her, then stay in the car. Wait for her . . . and when she comes out, ask her all about it!

Worth the Inconvenience

After all, you may be surprised in regard to Sophie and certainly you have no right to say who is or who is not a hopeless case. My wife has been instrumental in getting a number of new people started on the program. In each and every case, I frankly admit that I thought that all of them were absolutely hopeless . . . and said so. I never say that, now.

To some of you, 12th Step work conducted by your mate may seem hopeless at times and cause you some inconvenience. Perhaps you wanted to spend the evening at a show or do a little bowling, instead of waiting in the car for an hour or so while she talks to some "Sophie." There will be times, at home, when you will want to read the race results or find out what happened to "L'il Abner," or listen to Jack Benny, and your mate wants to discuss A.A. with you. Then, throw your paper aside, or turn off the radio. You will be discussing matters as important as life and death. You will be helping to strengthen a foundation for permanent security, lasting peace of mind and a better way of life for both of you, especially for your mate.

There will be other times when your mate will become a bit impatient with you for your slow thinking and tardy answers to his or her questions. Think nothing of it. Don't fly off the handle. Alcoholics naturally think with lightning speed. They have extremely quick and alert minds. Be patient.

Brings Peace of Mind

To some, these procedures will seem a bit one-sided. but remember, your mate is up against the very toughest kind of proposition. You married him or her, and the least you can do is to cooperate always, forgetting yourself and your real or fancied grievances.

To those who do these things, I am confident that the rewards will be great, after a while, both in your own peace of mind and in the inner feeling of satisfaction in knowing that you had some little, part in helping to effect this miraculoustransformation.—E.L.

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

Modern Miracle

From Daytona Beach, Florida

I think we must remember that we are offering something intangible. We are offering a psychological and spiritual program.

We are not offering a medical program. If a man needs medical treatment, we call in a doctor. If a man needs sedatives or B vitamins, we let the doctor give them to him. If a man needs hospital treatment we let the hospital take care of him. Our vital A.A. work starts when a man is physically able to receive it.

We are offering a psychological program. A man must be mentally able to receive it. He must have made up his mind that he wants to quit drinking and he must be willing to do something about it. Then we must get his confidence by showing him that we are his friends and really desire to help him. When we have his confidence he will listen to us. Then follows the group therapy, the fellowship of other alcoholics who understand his problem because they have been through it themselves.

We are offering a spiritual program. The fundamental basis of A.A. is a belief in some power greater than ourselves. This takes a man off the center of the universe and allows him to transfer his problems to some power outside of himself. He turns to this power for the strength he needs to keep sober.

Psychologists are turning to religion because just knowing about ourselves is not enough. A man needs the added dynamic of faith in a power outside of himself on which he can rely. As I see it, books on psychology and psychiatric treatments are not enough without the strength that comes from faith in God.

Ministers and priests are turning to psychology because faith is an act of the mind and religion must be explained in psychological terms to satisfy the modern man. Faith must be built on our own psychological experience.

We are offering an intangible, thing—a psychological and a spiritual program. The newcomer must turn to a Higher Power, with faith that that power can give him the strength he needs. Then he must re-educate his mind by learning to think along new lines. The man

who achieves sobriety through faith and mental education is a modern miracle. The function of A.A. is to produce modern miracles.—R.W.

Going Slow in Mexico

From Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico

Thanks for remembering me far across the border. Also thank the Central Office for the Christmas Bulletin. Although I have been in A.A. three and a half years and in Mexico almost one year I can't say that I understand the Mexican race yet with regard to their alcoholic problem.

Out here there are three people who are trying to stay sober on small talk that I have had with them.

I was well grounded on A.A. when I came out here and I keep that way by a constant effort to live the 12 Steps. Every word is important to me—they all have their part and meaning. What has helped me a lot is the spiritual side of the program although I never bothered with it before, now I live it the best I can. The 11th Step opened a great key for me. I found a conscious contact—more of a feeling with a kind of knowing that you are being taken care of—that the helping hand is there—nothing to worry about—so you simply let go and rest in contentment of heart and if you have that you have peace of mind, also of the soul.

I think that by being willing to be helpful to all living things is the best way to be forgiven or to have your burdens made light. I also find that I must get rid of my old ideas and I humbly pray for understanding.—J.A.

Arrogance Doesn't Pay

From Dharhan, Saudi Arabia

On lonely evenings out on the Arabian desert I think often of you and wish I could drop in for a moment and greet you, shake your hand and thank you. But behind that wish there is also a vain and proud motive and that motive is to show off. I would like to show you a sun-burned, healthy and infinitely happy replacement of that sallow, sick, dejected and unhappy specimen of manhood who came to A.A. for help that summer morning of August 17, 1946.

It is only a little while ago and even in that short time I slipped. It was in Cairo on October 5, because in my new-found strength there was also arrogance, an Egyptian moon and I ... oh, well, the rest is like A.B.C. to a postgraduate.

Can you arrange to send me *the A.A. Grapevine*? Let me hear from some of you soon.—O.C.M.

There Are No Graduates

From Linda Vista, California

How long will the alcoholic have to attend A.A. meetings and associate with alcoholics? That seems to bother a lot of non-alcoholics and some alcoholics. First let us understand that as far as anyone knows today there is no cure for alcoholism. Once the individual has crossed that line which separates the alcoholic from other drinkers there is no trail back. They must spend the rest of their lives without the use of alcohol as a beverage if they want to live normal happy lives.

Therefore part of the question has been answered by the alcoholic. When he honestly and sincerely admitted he was an alcoholic he made his own choice. In fact he made it long before he admitted he was an alcoholic. The choice was made for him when alcohol made an alcoholic out of him. Seems to me then The only choice the alcoholic and his family has is—what kind of alcoholic does he want to associate with? The dry alcoholic or the wet alcoholic?

The alcoholic who has come into A.A. has again made a choice. He prefers to spend his time with the kind of people he finds in A.A. He knows them and they know him because he has been associating with them while he was drinking. He enjoyed their company in bars, cocktail lounges and saloons. He and they had a common purpose there. Now, in A.A., he and they find another common purpose. This time the purpose of remaining sober on an all time basis. He did not, nor does he have to, change his society, he only changes the place where he wishes to meet and associate with them.

How long he will be in A.A. or how much he will put into A.A. will depend on how much he needs out of it. He will receive only in proportion to what he gives. No matter how much time and energy he uses up in A.A., no matter how much he is away from home, the most radical A.A. in the world has a happier home life and his family is better off than the best wet alcoholic in the world.

The best advice I can offer to The non-alcoholic members of the family is leave him alone, let him run his course. He may go on an A.A.

(Continued on next Page)

PAGING R.W.E.

Will R.W.E. whose letter-to-the-editor regarding a correspondence club appeared in the December issue of The A.A. Grapevine, please communicate with the editor, as to where he may be reached by phone for discussion of his suggestion?

binge, he may get so honest that it's painful, he may start out to tell you that your spiritual life is all wrong, he may go off on any one of several tangents. But remember this, that sooner or later he will find the middle of the road. Remember also that he is starting out on a new way of life and a lot of the road is uncharted for him. He will make you mad, irritated and resentful, but look around at the older members and you will realize that it worked for them. Most of them went through the same experiences. So too it will work for him. Don't worry about how long he will have to do A.A. work because therein lies your and his salvation.—*J.F.H.*

Prescott's Growing Pains

from Prescott, Arizona

Birthing and growing pains have probably never been more acute and evident in any A.A. group in the country than those experienced by the Prescott Group which was started little more than six months ago.

This present group which fluctuates in membership between five and 14 members, with at least half of them apparently getting a maximum benefit from the program, was started by a few desperate men who learned something of the organization in a neighboring city and brought their findings back here.

Since many of the members of the group had never been on the program before, and because the town is comparatively small, we have had to go along to some extent blindly in an effort to learn what is going to prove of the most value for the most members.

We are finding out that we are going through all of the stages and trials that all other groups have gone through in organizing and maintaining a working unit.

For the first five months of the life of this group twice-weekly meetings were held in a conference room graciously donated by the management of a Veterans Administration hospital. During most of this time more of the members came from the hospital, either patients or employees, than from the town of Prescott two miles distant.

For obvious reasons it was deemed necessary to change the meeting place to the town and for some weeks past now meetings have been held in the sample room of a local hotel. This move has so far just about wiped out our VA membership, because of personal and other reasons, but the move is still believed wise and one that will prove more beneficial in the long run to most people.

We have had the problems of personalities, men who have declared that they were out as long as certain others remained. We have had the problems of those who climbed aboard the bandwagon for the obvious purpose of "bor-

rowing" money to sober up on. We have had members work on other members or prospects day and night for which they were not only not rewarded with the gratitude of those they sought to help, but they were not even rewarded with the common courtesy one man is entitled to from another.

And it has looked pretty black sometimes when on meeting nights there were only four or five members present.

But on the credit side, there are at least half a dozen members, who imagine themselves to have been some of the world's worst boozers, who are staying sober, and who are gaining strength with the passing of every hour.

Knowledge and strength has been gained by those successful with the program to the extent that they little resemble themselves of their pre-program days. And if slowly, most surely the influence is spreading to what may someday stagger the imagination of present members.—*K.C.*

Letters Help Clear Up Doubts

From Old Greenwich, Conn.

I recently called on a "prospect" at one of our local sanatoria to spread the word. Only a little sank in, I am afraid. The prospect had considerable reservations about A.A. from a previous contact. He had, we thought, been bludgeoned too severely. Perhaps he needed it. In any event it was decided not to force the issue. To clear up some of his misconceptions, however, I decided to drop him a line. Perhaps you can use a part of this:

Dear A.—

In the short period of our recent visit—not being much of an orator—I hardly had time to accomplish what I was aiming to do, namely, to give you my conception of A.A. This is, of course, a very personal conception; it is what A.A. means to me.

To begin with, if you will permit me to talk about myself, let's clear the deck and for the moment forget about A.A., psychiatry and all the rest of it. The most important thing to a man is his own personality, his own soul, if you will. About a year and a half ago I suddenly awoke to the realization that I had lost the direction of my own destiny and that there were forces over which I seemed to have no control, pulling me downward. This had been going on for some time, only I hadn't accepted it. I hadn't in fact looked myself in the face for years. When I did so I was terrified. Looking back—it seems ages ago—the expression of how I felt is pretty well summed up in a note I have still, a note written in a drunken scrawl, "What have you built?"

That was the beginning, although I didn't know it at the time, of a slow and painful journey back along the path of regaining control

over my own soul. I am still on that journey, but by now am pretty well out of the wilderness. It was as our late, unlamented friend Adolph would have said, *Mein Kampf*—my battle—and it remains so. It is necessary to keep this idea pretty clearly in mind, I feel; no one can save me but myself. That is not to make light of either psychiatry or A.A. I don't know about the former except for a little amateurish delving. Where both these fit into the picture is that they are the means at our disposal. We do it.

The soul either grows or atrophies and becomes deformed. You can put this in psychological terms if you wish—any one of the 57 schools, or in religions terms—any one of the 5700 sects. It doesn't matter. My soul in its growth needed spiritual inspiration—soul stuff as it were—and got it through the fellowship of A.A. There are a lot of people in A.A. whom I don't care for—but I don't have to make my bed with any of them. I do have friends though who give me this inspiration. Among some 35,000 people who are all, in a measure, trying to look themselves in the face you are bound to find a rather high level of honesty, sincerity and square dealing.

There are a number of false conceptions about A.A.:

1. They lean on each other. Bah! There is no leaning in A.A. The guy who leans ends up in his own personal gutter again.
2. One drunk grabs another, sits on his client and pokes pamphlets down his throat. If you don't want access to it as a source of inspiration, that is your own business. A.A. does not (properly) force itself on anyone.
3. One goes to meetings according to a physician's prescription and sits, listening to lectures. This affects the ear drums in some mysterious fashion or seeps through the skin gradually so that somehow one loses the desire to drink. The idea of A.A. as something to be taken like a pill is perhaps the most pernicious misconception of all.
4. A.A. Is a cloistered group of misfits who couldn't make the grade in modern life and have bonded themselves together to create their own little monastery, safe from the rigors of the rest of the world. It is true that some of us move about too exclusively in A.A. circles, but this is generally due not to fear of the "outside" world but to an excess of enthusiasm at having found at last an atmosphere of sincerity and spiritual inspiration. One feels as though he had come home at last. It is almost universal that the A.A. contact helps one to better become a part of the "outside" world, domestically, socially, economically.

5. A.A.s run around like mad, doing 12th Step

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A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

A.A. Benefits Community. — Members of the Wilmington, Del., Group heard a leading industrialist and the head of the medical department of the duPont company praise the efforts of the organization as a contribution to industrial stability and happiness in the home when the annual dinner meeting was held recently. Dr. G. H. Gehrmann, the medical director, was quoted at considerable length in newspaper accounts of the meeting in one Wilmington paper while another carried an editorial headed "Manifold Benefits" saying in part "both for the industries concerned and the individuals affected it is obvious that the gains have been impressive." A further report from Wilmington goes on to say that A.A. was part of the program during a four-day conference of company physicians from all over the country and that the two local company psychiatrists work very closely with the group. Founded about three years ago with the help of the Philadelphia group, Wilmington A.A.s have an outstanding record of community cooperation. Their operation includes a rotating committee for managing group affairs with keen participation by women members. Besides three regular meetings a week the activities committee arranges for visits to the Delaware State Hospital twice a month and there is always a car load to visit at Dover each week. Plenty of social affairs are scheduled and the wives hold separate closed meetings and prepare coffee for the social hour afterward.

Discussions in Two Languages.—The Norwegian Sunset Group had scheduled an open house at the Norwegian Seamen's House, 62 Hanson Place, Brooklyn, N. Y., on April 10 according to advice received at press time. This is to be an anniversary meeting with the talks in English. Recently the group conducted an open meeting at the same location with discussion in Norwegian only.

"A.A. Inside."—The tenth anniversary publication of *The Clarion* published at the California Institution for Women, Tehachapi, Cal., carries the name of D. G. as editor and one of the articles "A.A. Inside" tells of the story of A.A. in institutions in that state since the first group was formed at San Quentin in 1942. The group at Tehachapi started in 1945, according to the article, which says in part, "Parole officers are most enthusiastic in their reports of the success of A.A. members on parole. After four years of concentrated effort, it has been proven that the percentage of violation among

A.A. members throughout the country is less than two percent. We, of course, have not had as many people paroled, who had worked at the program, as the groups who had been working a longer time. However, there are now several members in the community. So far our record is 100 percent. Believing that A.A. is of no value unless it goes through the portals we have worked to that end. The moral psychological program worked on our inner selves has resulted in the overcoming of complexes, fears, resentments and self-pity."

Participate in Conferences. — A.A.s in California and Minneapolis have participated recently in conferences on the alcoholic problem. In Minneapolis, Minn., the second Institute on Chronic Alcoholism, sponsored by the Hennepin County and State Bar Association at the University of Minnesota heard representatives from the Midwest Council on Alcoholism and A.A. during a program built around the theme of handling the chronic alcoholic. Principal agreements at The conference indicated opinions that existing treatment by incarceration, medication, admonitions and release should give way to a modern clinical service, that chronic alcoholism requires the introduction of the concept of the latter as a disease into legal codes and practices, and that the recognition of the almost invariable association of neurosis or psychosis with chronic alcoholism requires the introduction of new methods into the pratique of social service institutions. Many national authorities spoke. In Los Angeles, Calif., alcoholism was viewed as a public health problem during a conference of leading doctors, psychiatrists and social workers under the sponsorship of the Welfare Council, The Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene and individual members of A.A. F. R., active Los Angeles A.A. who died recently, had worked for some months toward the conference and had met frequently with Dr. Anton Carlson of the Research Council on Problems of Alcohol in the interest of such a conference.

Not Out in the Cold —The North Group of Windsor, Ont., having been pushed about for several months on account of the housing problem, has finally found permanent quarters for Sunday meetings in the Y.M.C.A, while Tuesday meetings are in a member's home. Attendance, including members from all groups in Windsor, Detroit and other outside points has increased from five to 35.

Omaha Keeps Stepping. — The Omaha, Nebr. Group continues to throw off sparks of activity, the latest being what is described as a "new hopped-up group bulletin to be printed on our old mimeo" and called *The Twelve Stepper*, according to the newly elected secretary. The publication will reprint articles from *The A.A. Grapevine* and other group publications each week. A new hospitalization set-up has made considerable progress with the medical centers and Omaha A.A.s now feel that the next step is public, education on alcoholism. The group has been asked for material to publish in The magazine section of the *World-Herald* and members' articles will also be printed. On the lighter side the group recently had a big bingo party plus a floor show and refreshments.

Progress at Dallas. — Dallas, Texas, A.A.s now number over 300 with about 200 of these in the downtown group and the others in the suburban organization. The downtown group recently hired a full time manager, a non-alcoholic formerly associated with a Dallas institution devoted to treatment of alcoholics and nervous ailments. He is paid through voluntary contributions of members who believe it will aid in a more business-like operation of the club. Dr. E. M. Jellinek, professor of physiology at Yale and director of its department of alcohol studies is scheduled to visit Dallas late in April and will speak at a public meeting sponsored by the local unit of The National Committee for Education on Alcoholism and later at a closed meeting of A.A. groups.

Drouth Spreads.—Estimates of A.A. membership are likely to be revised upward soon according to the rate new groups are being formed! The Delray Beach, Fla., Group, an outgrowth and affiliate of the Palm Beach County Group, is now under way while members of the Fremont, Ohio, Group have started a morning group in the home of a member to accommodate those who could not attend other sessions. Members from other towns have been attending the meetings which begin at 10 o'clock Saturday morning. A two man group has been created at Newport, Ark., according to the Batesville, Ark., Group which also reported growth. In the Nevada state Prison, at Carson, The first meeting was attended by 14 alcoholic inmates and five members of the Reno and Carson Groups. The move is supported by Warden Richard Sheey and Gov. Vail M. Pittman. The Fair Lawn, N. J., Group

held its first meeting at the Warren Point Lutheran church recently with one of the winter's worst storms failing to keep 65 members and friends away. The group will meet in the church on Route 4, which is the main route from the George Washington Bridge to Pater-son. A member from Artesian, S.D., who has been talking the matter over with the Mit- chell group, has decided to get a group going in his own town and has written for *A.A. Grape- vine* subscriptions, books and literature.

Clubs Want A.A. Speakers. —Civic or- ganizations, principally Kiwanis and Rotary in Tampa, Fla., and surrounding cities, have re- cently been requesting speakers from the Tampa Group to explain the A.A. program to mem- bers, indicating a recognition in that section. Lakeland Kiwanians made the first request and the talk of one of the older Tampa members was highly complimented, the program director hailing it as the best since his tenure of office. The president of the club, who is editor of the Lakeland paper, was so favorably impressed that he printed a two-column article. Similar requests have followed. An appreciative letter was sent to the A.A. secretary by the Lakeland club program secretary.

Memberships Mount. — Including a few who are "playing hard to get" the Battle Creek, Mich., correspondent reports a roll call for 65 members as opposed to 13 two years ago. After functioning for a little over a year, Columbia, S. C., has about 50 members and the group has acquired two nice rooms for a club. During the past several months weekly meetings have been held at a church, but are now being changed to the well-furnished club rooms at 819 Harden Street, Five Points, Columbia, with

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club phone 2-1045, an alternate day phone 2-1095 and a night phone 2-0346. Traveling members may make contact at the night phone or with H.B. at 203 Harden Street.

**Anniversary Celebration.** — The second anniversary of the Pine Bluff, Ark., Group will be observed at a banquet April 24 with Rev. Sam D. of Rome, Ga., as guest of honor and principal speaker. Open to the public, the affair will include guests from 15 to 20 other groups in the area. Founded two years ago by Bill F., Memphis, the group in turn fostered the Fordyce Group about a year ago. Lexing- ton, Ky., held its first anniversary with one of the original members, J.J. and H.H. of Cin- cinnati as principal speakers. Four of the original group as well as members from Mt. Sterling, Paris, Cynthiana, Frankfort, Versailles, Louisville and Cincinnati attended. The Lexing- ton Group has grown to 40 with the central meeting on Thursday night and smaller meet- ings in Frankfort Monday, Cynthiana on Friday, at the Narcotic Farm Sunday afternoon at 1:30 and the Veterans Hospital at 3 o'clock. A ban- quet attended by 115 marked the recent first anniversary of the Niagara Falls, N. Y. Group which has grown from the original six to 25 at the present time. Speakers included the first local member, dry three years, first Tonawanda member, dry five years and first Buffalo mem- ber, dry seven years. The group recently went to St. Catherine's, Ont., and helped form a group there. Little Rock, Ark., has sent out notices that its seventh anniversary will be marked April 27. Principal speaker will be Dr. A. L. of Jackson- ville, Fla.

**Clubs Open.** —The Longview, Wash., Club has opened new quarters in The Alano Club, 215 Empire Building, Hudson and Commerce Streets. Regular meetings are each Wednesday and Saturday at 7:30 with visitors invited. The Longview Group is also putting out a card bearing the P.O. Box number 1028, and phone, 3075-J, with the admonition "Let us help you solve that drinking problem" and a four page leaflet with questions to determine whether the reader is an alcoholic and A.A. information. Clearwater, Fla., members have what our cor- respondent describes as "ideal" quarters for the group of 25, the former headquarters of the Garden Club with a palm tree which came to grief, and blew over, arching the doorway. The palm, a real alcoholic, has risen again and put out shoots. In spite of a small mem- bership the Butte, Mont., Group found a good place with a kitchen adequate to prepare much coffee. A good many members are reported familiar with the surroundings, (formerly a speakeasy) but redecorated considerably, from new wall paper out. The ambition is to have

the club open every night and that goal is being approached. About 50 volunteers showed up in Des Moines, Iowa, to help put the arch through the wall to take on 600 square feet of additional space for the club there and it was reported as a great cooperative effort. One member brought a crew of five with three trucks and air and hand hammers.

**Short Snorts.**—The Rev. Fr. James P. Tim- mins of Hartford, Conn., addressed an open meeting in Strong Vincent High School audi- torium, Erie, Pa., recently with about 450 at- tending. After the meeting there was a closed session at Perry Hall. Father Timmins, editor of the *Connecticut Catholic Transcript*, described his work with A.A. over the past five years. The Southington, Conn., Group is giving each mem- ber a year's subscription to *The A.A. Grape- vine*. Good newspaper stories and a favorable editorial in the local paper have also been obtained in Southington. Recently the Linda Vista, Calif., Group presented "Junior" with his first birthday cake, "Junior" being 78 years old and with a record of drinking for 74 years!

**Buckeyes Get Together.**—The North West- ern Ohio Groups, which include Bellevue, Nor- walk, Sandusky, Fremont, Tiffin, Milan and Port Clinton, recently had a joint session at Fremont celebrating the fifth anniversary of G.C. of Bellevue, who has been promoted to a job in Chicago. The groups gave him a pen and pencil set as remembrance, as he was the only A.A. in the area five years ago. His spon- sor, Mrs. Blanche Mills of Bellevue, a non- alcoholic, was present and told of his progress. There are now about 150 members in six com- munities. The social nature of A.A.s was also shown when Kent, Lorain and Ravenna got 171 together for a three hour meeting and banquet at Vale Edge. There were six visitors from Akron, four from Cuyahoga Falls, and 40 from Cleveland.

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Mail Call (Continued from Page 9)

work and if they run out of drunks to work on—bingo!—they are dead pigeons, drunk again. This misconception derives from the shallow notion that A.A. is a formula or ritual. 12th Step work is actually only the natural expression of a person who has re- gained control over his own soul, saying in the fullness of his happiness—this is the way I did it.

Well, there it is, as I see it. I don't ask you to accept my ideas or those of any one else in A.A. It is a hell of a lot better for you to think things out for yourself. The important thing is that you do your thinking honestly.—
Howard H.