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Doctor Calls "Slip" More Normal than Alcoholic

by Dr. William Duncan Silkworth

THE mystery of slips is not so deep as may appear. While it does seem odd that an alcoholic who has restored himself to a dignified place among his fellow-men, and continued dry for years, should suddenly throw all his happiness overboard and find himself again in mortal peril of drowning in liquor—often the reason is very simple.

Alcoholic Ills and A. A. Compared to Mankind

(Editor's Note—The following is quoted from a talk delivered by Dr. Ervin Scale of New York City, president of the International New Thought Alliance.)

I attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous last Thursday evening. This is a self-generated group of earnest men and women remaking their lives without any outside aids. Out of great need and often great tragedy they have called upon "a Power greater than themselves" and found help. Having first admitted their own helplessness, they have turned to a Power that can help. That One Power they have experienced first in the sympathetic understanding and kindly counsel of fellow-sufferers and then in the resurgence of confidence in themselves. Sincerity and honesty distinguish their procedures. These are not just words with them, but tools to blaze a way and ladders to climb upon.

The patterns are not new. Neither the pattern of the disease nor the pattern of the cure. For the symptoms of the alcoholic mind are found more or less in everyone—rebellion against the world, selfishness, pride, blaming others, refusal to believe that oneself is at fault. Only when one has been beaten back enough does he acknowledge a higher wisdom than his own. Then he surrenders his aims to it and it lifts him up.

People are inclined to say: "There is something peculiar about alcoholics. They may seem to be well, yet at any moment they may turn back to their old ways. You can never be sure!"

This is largely twaddle. The alcoholic is a sick person. Under the techniques of Alcoholics Anonymous he gets well, that is to say, his disease is arrested. There is nothing unpredictable about him any more than there is anything weird about a person who has arrested diabetes.

Let's get it clear, once and for all, that alcoholics are human beings just like other human beings—then we can safeguard ourselves intelligently against most of the slips.

Both in professional and lay circles, there is a tendency to label everything that an alcoholic may do as "alcoholic behavior." The truth is, it is simply human nature!

It is very wrong to consider many of the personality traits observed in liquor addicts as peculiar to the alcoholic. Emotional and mental quirks are classified as symptoms of alcoholism merely because alcoholics have them—yet those same quirks can be found among non-alcoholics, too. *Actually they are symptoms of mankind!*

Of course, the alcoholic himself tends to think of himself as different; someone special, with unique tendencies and reactions. Many psychiatrists, doctors and therapists carry the

same idea to extremes in their analyses and treatment of alcoholics. Sometimes they make a complicated mystery of a condition which is found in all human beings, whether they drink whiskey or buttermilk.

To be sure, alcoholism like every other
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RUTS ARE MIXED IN PHONE CALLS TO A.A. AND AAA

(Editor's Note—The following trial and tribulation story is reprinted from a recent issue of the Pittsburgh [Pa.] Post-Gazette.)

Pa Pitt needs a new pair of glasses.

When it comes to looking up a number in the telephone book, Pa isn't on the beam. At least that's what the Bell Telephone Company and lots of other people say.

Take, for example, the first listing in the telephone directory. For years it was that of the AAA—Automobile Association of America. Now it's AA—which is short for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Everyone who has followed modern day trends knows that the A. A.s have saved many a man—and some girls, too—from being stuck in a rut, the kind of rut that people who can't handle alcohol eventually fall into.

So what happens?

Pa Pitt gets stuck in a rut. Not an alcoholic rut, just a snowdrift. So, confused by the smog, but not the grog, he reaches for a telephone book and calls Linden 1600, in the bemused idea

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EDITORIAL:

On the 3rd Step

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

When one comes up against this Step, he is likely to ask: What does a decision of this nature entail? Does this mean that forever after I must cut myself off from all the things and all of the people I have known? Must I become a hermit? Must I lead a purely esthetic life?

The initial reading of the 3rd Step often conjures up in the mind of the newcomer some pretty drab images of a dull and barren life he thinks he is going to have to live. In fact, sometimes the first reaction is, "I'd rather be dead."

The reason, of course, is that in the early stages the newcomer has great difficulty imagining any kind of life except in a monastery from which drinking has been deleted. Because he has included drinking in so many of his activities he cannot see how they can be continued without the drinking.

Experience proves that anyone can do virtually anything without liquor that he did with it. There will be, of course, a number of things which he won't care to do that he formerly did while drinking. But this choice is voluntary.

Turning "our will and our lives over to God" does not impose severe restraints or require isolation from normal activities. It is not a shrinking process based upon a series of negations and prohibitions.

To the contrary, this is an expansion. The application of the 3rd Step opens up a whole new world of activities which the alcoholic usually has forgotten about or never really knew. Even when measured from a wholly realistic and practical viewpoint, the turning of our will and our lives over to a Higher Power unfolds new interest, new enjoyment and happiness greater than ever experienced before.

No one who has developed an extreme aversion to anything relating even remotely to "religion" need have any fear that this is an invitation to join a church or participate in any ritual. The careful wording of the Step resolves that obstacle with the phrase, "to God *as we understand him*."

Some may not "understand" Him when inside a church. Some may find it easier to direct thoughts in this direction while shaving in the morning or after retiring at night, or at some other time in some other place. That is their privilege, and it is one of the key principles of A.A.

The decision is one exercise of the privilege. We make it with a free will. We do it voluntarily. And we find that we have much greater freedom than we ever had before. Where previously we could do very few things without the up-propping of liquor, we now find that we can do all of those things and many others, without it. We learn that we have added to, not subtracted from, our lives infinitely by making this decision.

Of course, at the point of development at which we usually take up this Step, considerable courage is required to make the decision. A look around at others who have taken the step helps. Are they hermits? The fact is that anyone who is operating on a negative basis and who has surrounded his life with a chain of "don'ts" has miscued somewhere. Proper application of the 3rd Step is a wholly constructive and positive evolution to which "do" rather than "don't" is the key. It is a thing towards greater strength, greater safety and greater opportunity than can ever be experienced in a prohibitive and limiting theory of life.

This Step is a key that opens—not closes—the door to a rich and virile and happy life.—*T.Y., Greenwich Village, N. Y.*

Patching an Old Coat with New Cloth

From Manhattan

Somewhere in the Bible it says, "A man does not patch his old coat with new cloth." Perhaps I have not quoted it correctly but that is certainly the general idea. It bears thinking about.

At first I said to myself, "Why not? Suppose you have to make your old coat do for another year? Why not patch it as strongly as possible with the best new cloth you can get? You can't go around exposed to the weather, shivering while you wait for the time you can afford a new one. Yes, patch the old thing up and wrap it around you. It will, at least, cover the rags beneath."

When we come into A.A., our lives are just about that threadbare. We clutch our old coats to us, hoping that no one can see through the holes; see the selfish, impoverished little personalities that we are. We have used that old cover-up so long that we are afraid to let it drop. At our first meetings we pick up an idea here and another one there. Patches. We grasp them eagerly and try to incorporate them into the old life.

"We are sick people." All, that's fine. A good dose of meetings and a little 12th Step work.

"Don't take the first drink." Swell, as far as it goes. But many of us hardened sinners have known for years that we were alcoholics and were quite aware of the fact that alcohol in any form was poison to us. Why didn't we stop drinking? Because our personalities were such that we had to have the illusion of warmth that we got from it. We had to feel that we were really remarkable people.

We are not remarkable people. We are, most of us, rather mediocre individuals who couldn't bear the hard work and sustained effort that it would have taken to lift us above this level; flash-in-the-pan people, who achieved a small success early in life and have lived on the memory of it ever since.

Throw the old coat away. Patches won't do. We must accept the whole A.A. program, from the 1st Step through the 12th. We must make our moral inventory realistically, from the point of view that, on entering A.A., we were failures in life and were regarded as such in all eyes but our own.

Our new coat may have to be a very plain one. Our new life will perhaps be quite prosaic and humdrum. Well, so be it. It will be far better, far more satisfying to ourselves and those who depend on us than those sleazy old rags of remembered glamour that we hugged about us for so long.—*M.N.*

Will A.A. Ever Have a Personal Government?

by *Bill*

The answer to this question is almost surely "no." That is the clear verdict of our experience.

To begin with, each A.A. has been an individual who, because of his alcoholism, could seldom govern himself. Nor could any other human being govern the alcoholic's obsession to drink, his drive to have things his own way. Time out of mind, families, friends, employers, doctors, clergymen, and judges have tried their hand at disciplining alcoholics. Almost without exception the failure to accomplish anything by coercion has been complete. Yet we alcoholics can be led, we can be inspired, coming into A.A. we can, and we gladly do, yield to the will of God. Hence it is not strange that the only real authority to be found in A.A. is that of Spiritual Principle. It is never personal authority.

Our unreasonable individualism (egocentricity if you like) was, of course, the main reason we all failed in life and betook ourselves to alcohol. When we couldn't coerce others into conformity with our own plans and desires, we drank. When others tried to coerce us, we also drank. Though now sober, we still have a strong hangover of these early trails which caused us to resist authority. Therein probably hangs a clue to our lack of personal government in A.A.: no fees, no dues, no rules and regulations, no demand that alcoholics conform to A.A. principles, no one set in personal authority over anyone else. Though no sterling virtue, our aversion to obedience does pretty well guarantee us freedom from personal domination of any kind.

Follow Program by Choice

Still, it is a fact that most of us do follow, in our personal lives, the "12 Suggested Steps to Recovery." But we do this from choice. We prefer recovery to death. Then, little by little, we perceive that the spiritual basis of life is the best. We conform because we want to.

Likewise, most A.A. groups become willing to follow the "Twelve Points of Tradition to Assure Our Future." The groups are willing to avoid controversy over outside issues such as politics, reform or religion; they stick to their single purpose of helping alcoholics to recover; they increasingly rely on self support rather than outside charity. More and more do they insist on modesty and anonymity in their public relations. The A.A. groups follow these other traditional principles for the very same reason that the individual A.A. follows the "12 Steps to Recovery." Groups see they would disintegrate if they didn't and they soon discover that adherence to our tradition and experience is the

foundation for a happier and more effective group life.

Nowhere in A.A. is there to be seen any constituted human authority that can compel an A.A. group to do anything. Some A.A. groups, for example, elect their leaders. But even with such a mandate each leader soon discovers that while he can always guide by example or persuasion he can never boss, else at election time he may find himself passed by.

No Place for Dictators!

The majority of A.A. groups do not even choose leaders. They prefer rotating committees to handle their simple affairs. These committees are invariably regarded as servants—they have only the authorization to serve, never to command. Each committee carries out what it believes to be the wishes of its group. That is all. Though A.A. committees used to try to discipline wayward members, though they have sometimes composed minute rules and regulations and now and then have set themselves up as judges of other people's personal morals, I know of no case where any of these seemingly worthy strivings had any lasting effect—except, perhaps, the election of a brand new committee!

Surely I can make these assertions with the greatest of confidence. For in my own turn I, too, have tried a hand at governing A.A. Each time I have strenuously tried it I have been shouted down; so loudly, in fact, that on several occasions it looked as though I was due for swift and certain excommunication!

Sitting at a desk in our Central Office I often watch the incoming floods of personal, group and intergroup problems as they flow in. The tide has been rising so fast of late that each morning's mail brings us an avalanche invariably containing at least one very critical problem from some place or other in the world. The A.A. Central Office has become a hot spot; so hot, indeed, that a "crisis" a day is getting to be routine.

Once upon a time my temptation was to take a strong position on every one of these problems, to exert every bit of pressure and authority that I could bring to bear, to write hot letters telling erring groups or individuals where to head in. At such moments, I used to be convinced that A.A. needed a strong personal government—someone, for example, like myself!

After struggling a few years to run the A.A. movement I had to give it up—it simply didn't work. Heavy handed assertion of my personal authority always created confusion and resistance. If I look sides in a controversy, I was joyfully quoted by some, while others mur-

mured, "And just who does this dictator think he is?" If I sharply criticized, I usually got double criticism on the return bounce. Personal power always failed. I can see my older A.A. friends smiling. They are recalling those times when they, too, felt a mighty call to "save the A.A. movement" from something or other. But their days of playing "Pharisee" are now over. So those little maxims, "Easy does it"—"Live and let live" have come to be deeply meaningful and significant to them and to me. In such fashion each of us learns that, in A.A., one can be a servant only.

Here at the Central Office we have long known that we can merely supply certain indispensable services. We can supply information and literature; we can usually tell how the majority of A.A.s feel about our current problems; we can assist new groups to start, giving advice if asked; we can look after the overall A.A. public relations, we can sometimes mediate difficulties. Similarly, the editors of our monthly journal, *The A.A. Grapevine*, believe themselves simply a mirror of current A.A. life and thought. Serving purely as such, they cannot rule or propagandize. So, also, the Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation (our A.A. general service committee) know themselves to be simple custodians, custodians who guarantee the effectiveness of the A.A. Central Office and *The A.A. Grapevine*; and who are the repository of our general funds and traditions—caretakers only.

Service Center Only

It is most clearly apparent that, even here at the very center of A.A., there can only exist a center of service—custodians, editors, secretaries and the like—each, to be sure, with a special vital function, but none of them with any authority to govern Alcoholics Anonymous.

That such centers of service, international, national, metropolitan area or local, will be sufficient for the future, I can have no doubt. So long as we avoid any menacing accumulation of wealth or the growth of personal government at these centers, we cannot go astray. While wealth and authority lie at the foundation of many a noble institution, we of A.A. now apprehend, and thoroughly well, that these things are not for us. Have we not found that one man's meat is often another man's poison?

Shall we not do well, if instead, we can cling in some part to the brotherly ideals of the early Franciscans? Let all of us A.A.s, whether we be trustees, editors, secretaries, janitors or cooks—or just members—ever recall the unimportance of wealth and authority as compared with the vast import of our brotherhood, love and service.

"Natural" Tendencies Oftimes Damaging

From Piedmont, Alabama

When we have reached that stage in our lives when excessive uncontrolled drinking is a recognized admitted problem with us, we are then at the cross-roads, the turning point. We have reached a crisis.

Let's Not Fight Recovery

The methods we may use, the attitude we adopt, the efforts we may employ are no less important than the decision we have made to eliminate our drinking problem. We suffered a great deal and caused a great deal of suffering. We wasted a great many precious years before we were beat down to our knees. We took a terrible beating before recognizing and admitting we couldn't continue drinking. My sole purpose in mentioning these things is to caution against letting the same forces within us continue to dominate, prevent or confuse us in our efforts to correct our lives as these same forces did in causing years of delay before we finally admitted we couldn't drink. We can't waste much more time. We have been foolish in fighting liquor. Let's not be so foolish in fighting recovery.

We will find the task ahead of us less difficult, less unpleasant and more quickly accomplished if we can convince ourselves that our way of thinking, our convictions, our opinions, our ideals—the same ones that governed us during all our drinking years may also be inadequate for the job of staying sober.

How Good Are They?

It was our "natural" tendencies, our "natural" characteristics, "natural" opinions, convictions and ideals that caused us to drink and they also prevented us from controlling our drinking. These "naturals" prevented our reaching the decision to do something about our drinking until we had beat our heads against a wall for years and years. This would rather discredit certain of our characteristics that we like to defend and call "natural" and "normal." We defend them because we have had them all our lives—they are a part of us. Yes, they are a part of us and just as natural and normal as a deformed or twisted arm or leg.

We should question and ultimately realize that certain of our life-long traits are abnormal, unsuited and out of place. It was because of them that we were prevented from living more contented, happy and satisfactory lives. This would be true even though we never drank or had managed through sheer determination to remain sober for long intervals. Surely we have cried, "Why

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ALKY ALBUM



"I never get any breaks."

Ruts Mixed

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that he is calling the three A's, which is the second listing in the phone book, Montrose 6100.

Naturally, Pa tells the pleasant voice on the other end of the line that he's in trouble. That's right up the alley for the Alcoholics Anonymous.

"I'm in a rut," says Pa. "Can you drag me out?"

"Of course," say the A.A.s "Stay right where you are and we'll send someone out. But don't take another drink whatever you do."

Pa gasps and explains that it is a snowdrift he's caught in.

On the other hand, the AAA's get similar calls.

"Listen, chum," says an inebriated man. "I'm right down in the gutter and I need help."

You know the answer to that one. The three A's go out with tow chains.

Not only that, but there is an eye, ear and nose specialist who has the misfortune to have the same number in a different exchange. The two A's and The three A's get calls from people who frantically beg for a doctor.

Just to make things more confusing, there is a Bellevue market with the telephone number of Linden 6100. The A.A.s, before they can stop the callers, get orders for one dozen eggs, a box of cereal and two cans of condensed milk.

The good housewives are horrified when they find they are talking to an organization designed to help the tipplers.

The eye, ear and nose specialist also gets calls from people who want to rent or buy houses who believe they are calling the same number in a third exchange. That belongs to a Mt. Lebanon real estate company. He is also routed out of bed in the middle of the night by folks who think they are calling the Dormont police station.

The telephone company says Pa ought to get some new bifocals. It could be.

Slips Called 'Human'

(Continued from Page 1)

disease does manifest itself in some unique ways. It does have a number of baffling peculiarities which differ from all other diseases. At The same time, many of the symptoms and much of the behavior of alcoholism are closely paralleled and even duplicated in other diseases.

The alcoholic "slip," as it is known in Alcoholics Anonymous, furnishes a perfect example of how human nature can be mistaken for alcoholic behavior.

The "slip" is a relapse! it is a relapse that occurs after the alcoholic has stopped drinking and started on the A.A. program of recovery. "Slips" usually occur in the early stages of the alcoholic's A.A. indoctrination, before he has had time to learn enough of the A.A. technique and A.A. philosophy to give him solid footing. But "slips" may also occur after an alcoholic has been a member of A.A. for many months, or even several years, and it is in this kind, above all, that one finds a marked similarity between the alcoholic's behavior and "normal" victims of other diseases.

No one is startled by the fact that relapses are not uncommon among arrested tubercular patients. But here is a startling fact—the cause is often the same as the cause which leads to "slips" for the alcoholic. It happens this way:

When a tubercular patient recovers sufficiently to be released from the sanitarium, the doctor gives him careful directions for the way he is to live when he gets home. He must be in bed every night by, say, 8 o'clock. He must drink plenty of milk. He must refrain from smoking. He must obey other stringent rules.

For the first several months, perhaps for several years the patient follows directions. But as his strength increases and he feels fully recovered, he becomes slack. There may come the night when he decides he can stay up until 10 p.m. When he does this, nothing untoward happens. The next day he still feels good, he does it again. Soon he is disregarding the directions given him when he left the sanitarium. *Eventually he has a relapse!*

The same tragedy can be found in cardiac cases. After the heart attack, the patient is put on a strict rest schedule. Frightened, he naturally follows directions obediently for a long time. He, too, goes to bed early, avoids exercise such as walking up stairs, quits smoking and leads a Spartan life. Eventually, though, there comes a day after he has been feeling good for months, or several years, when he feels he has regained his strength and has also recovered from his fright. If the elevator is out of repair one day, he walks up the three flights of stairs. Or, he decides to go to a party—or do just a little smoking—or take a

cocktail or two. If no serious after-effects follow the first departure from the rigorous schedule prescribed he may try it again, until *he* suffers a relapse.

In both cardiac and the tubercular cases, the acts which led to the relapses were preceded by wrong thinking. The patient in each case rationalized himself out of a sense of his own perilous reality. He deliberately turned away from this knowledge of the fact he had been the victim of a serious disease. He grew overconfident. He decided he didn't have to follow directions.

Now that is precisely what happens with the alcoholic—the arrested alcoholic, or the alcoholic in A.A.—who has a "slip." Obviously he decides again to take a drink sometime before he actually takes it. He starts thinking wrong before he actually embarks on the course that leads to a "slip."

There is no more reason to charge the "slip" to alcoholic behavior than there is to lay a tubercular relapse to tubercular behavior or a second heart attack to cardiac behavior.

The alcoholic "slip" is not a symptom of a psychotic condition. There's nothing "screwy" about it at all. The *patient simply didn't follow* directions.

And that's human nature! It's life! It's happening all the time, not merely among alcoholics but among all kinds of people.

The preventative is plain. The patient must have full knowledge of his condition, keep in mind the facts of his case and the nature of his disease and follow directions.

For the alcoholic, A.A. offers the directions. A vital factor, or ingredient, of the preventative, especially for the alcoholic, is sustained emotion. The alcoholic who learns some of the technique or the mechanics of A.A. but misses the philosophy or the spirit may get tired of following directions—not because he is alcoholic but because he is human. Rules and regulations irk almost anyone, because they are, restraining, prohibitive, negative. The philosophy of A.A., however, is positive and provides ample sustained emotion—a sustained desire to follow directions voluntarily.

In any event, the psychology of the alcoholic is not as different as some people try to make it. The disease has certain physical differences, yes, and the alcoholic has problems peculiar to him, perhaps, in that he has been put on the defensive and consequently has developed nervous frustrations. But, in many instances, there is no more reason to be talking about "the alcoholic mind" than there is to try to describe something called "the cardiac mind" or "the t.b. mind."

I think we'll help the alcoholic more if we can first recognize that he is primarily a human being—afflicted with human nature!

The Pleasures of Reading

Stendhal or The Pursuit of Happiness

by Matthew Josephson (Doubleday & Company, Inc., \$4)

Henri Beyle, a French writer who took many pen names, made one pseudonym famous: Stendhal. Though he was jeered at in his own times, he is famous now for his brilliant character analyses, and is regarded as a pivotal figure in the world's literature. A passionate, willy, and adventurous Frenchman, he crowned his madcap career with two immortal novels, *The Red & the Black* (1830), and *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839). It was not until long after his death, as he himself had predicted, that the literary world awakened to his true significance. It almost seems as if his writings were directed to the troubled times of our own century, yet he was born at Grenoble, in southeastern France, on January 23, 1783, during the later years of Louis XVI's reign. If any single adjective could describe his brilliant writing, it would be modern.

As a child he developed an abnormal sensitivity, and a tendency to morbid introspection in trying to escape from his narrow, provincial environment. A clever schoolboy, he was sent to Paris in 1790; there he lived with the Darus, distant relatives who hitched their wagon early to Bonaparte's star. Young Beyle obtained a post in the ministry of war, then became a subaltern of dragoons in Napoleon's army of Italy. He received his baptism of fire in the Alps, witnessed the battle of Marengo, then rose to be an adjutant to General Midland.

Quitting the army to be near an actress-mistress, he tried to be a business man at Marseilles, but Napoleon then was his god, and Italy his adopted country. He undertook a career as a soldier-diplomat under the new French empire from 1806 to 1814, pursuing various occupations and adventures in France, Germany, and elsewhere. He proved his fine courage during the disastrous Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812.

After the emperor's first downfall, in 1814, Beyle returned to Italy. He was a conspicuous figure in Milan, and his close association with such eminent authors and radical politicians as Manzoni, Monti, and Silvio Pellico made him politically suspect to Metternich's police spies. Stendhal, as he now often was called, perforce fled to Paris in 1821. He was renowned for his wit in the Parisian literary salons. From 1831 to 1841 he served as French consul at a small Italian seaport, Civita Vecchia, a boring experience to a man of Stendhal's energy and intellect. He returned to Paris and died there of apoplexy on March 22, 1842.

This Mephistophelian giant of nineteenth century letters, who was both an incorrigible romantic and a profound searcher of men's souls, was a writer of great power and originality who exerted a marked influence on later novelists of the naturalistic school. In the age of Chateaubriand, Stendhal sympathized with the earlier Voltaire and in the day of the romantic carnival he was practicing the reckless dissection of character which marks the works of Taine and Bourget. The distinguishing feature of his works was the application of acutely analytical faculties to sentiment in all its manifold varieties.

Of Stendhal's novels, *the Charterhouse of Parma*, notable for its account of the battle of Waterloo, and *The Red & the Black* generally are regarded as his most important fiction, and are seen to have paved the way for the French psychologists of our own time. His best work, however, may be his acute and cynical analysis *On Love*, which fell flat at the time of publication (1822), with only seventeen copies selling in eleven years, though regarded a century later as unsurpassed of its kind.

Racine & Shakespeare (1823) is a defense of romanticism, while the fragmentary posthumous *Life of Napoleon* (1876) is less original in style than might have been expected, mingling history with legend and gossip.

Stendhal's novels are realistic studies of social types of energy and passion. He analyzes the forms of restlessness into which the fall of Napoleon had thrown a generation trained to a life filled with emotion. His great creation is Julien Sorel, the criminal hero of *The Red & the Black*, whose career was founded upon fact. This psychological novel tells the story of a brilliant, ambitious, and unscrupulous young man whose breviary was hypocrisy. *The Charterhouse of Parma*, with its highly romantic plot and exciting picture of Italian court intrigue, was Stendhal's first popular work. His later writings include a fourth novel, *Lucien Leuwen* (his first was *Armance*, 1827), *Souvenirs d'Egotisme* and *Journal d'Italie*, all published posthumously.

Stendhal has become a figure of increasing importance in French literature, and his appeal

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A.A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

Weekly Aridity Review. Spirit Lake-Milford Spencer, Ia.: "Yes, you CAN stay dry without attending your group meetings. It has been done and lots of guys will do it again but believe us it is not only the HARD way, it is the UNFAIR way. Did that ever strike you guys? Some guys accept A.A.; get what they want (sobriety and its manifold benefits) and then say to themselves, 'Well, I've got it now. My troubles are over. I've got straightened out and I don't need those meetings. Better I should stay home and read, or listen to the radio, or go out to a show.'

"That guy's thinking may be all right for him (though we doubt it) but even if he does stay dry himself he has revealed a selfishness which in itself, is a 100 to 1 shot to upset him in the long run.

"May we humbly submit that the guy who stays away from meetings simply because HE no longer needs them is shirking a solemn obligation inherent in A.A. doctrine. It is the duty of those of us who have enjoyed the benefits and blessings of A.A. to pass them on. It is not only our duty but, strangely enough, we must pass them on or we lose them ourselves."

* * *

Dubuque Alanews, Dubuque, Ia.:

"Tabloid biographical sketch—

High chair
High school
High position
High hat
High balls
High jinks
Hi, warden!"

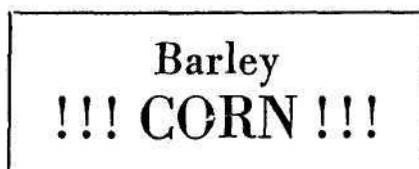
New Yale Study Includes Data from Questionnaire

Hillhouse Press (432 Temple Street, New Haven 11, Conn.) announces the publication of *Phases in the Drinking History of Alcoholics* by Professor E. M. Jellinek of Yale University. This work, constituting Memoir No. 5 in a series of reports of studies conducted by the Section of Studies on Alcohol of the Yale University Laboratory of Applied Physiology, presents the analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted among members of Alcoholics Anonymous by their own official organ, *The A. A. Grapevine*. Professor Jellinek, the author, is a leading authority in scientific research on alcoholism and director of the School of Alcohol Studies at Yale.

Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio: The early pioneers have earned our everlasting gratitude for the adherence to the high standards set by Bill and Co. 'Just think,' one of our members said, 'how long would this have lasted had Bill and Doc lowered their standards a little and permitted one binge a year? A program like this would certainly still have been better than either of their records had shown before!'

"Yes, fortunately for us they set their standards high, and the entire philosophy has permeated into 30,000 families, probably, affecting the lives of from four to five times that many people. Just getting sober wasn't the answer. All of us had gotten sober by ourselves many, many times—and got drunk again. It was the application and absorption of each of the ever-important 12 Steps that changed our decadent lives into purposeful ones."

Rope Yarns, New York, N. Y.: "At the request of Major Nobile, commandant of the detention



From *The Brighter Side,* Waterloo, Iowa: A Scotchman walked up to a friend at the bar and began telling him about a hunting trip. "We shot a couple of bears," he said, "but the biggest thrill was tracking yuers."

"What's yuers?" asked the friend.

"I'll have a beer, thanks," replied the Scotchman.

Just as they reached the bottom of their glasses, the friend said, "Well, I'll have to be going. Got to do my chores."

"What chores?" asked the Scotchman.

"Beer, please," said the other.

* * *

Wife (to drunken husband): "I suppose you expect me to believe that you came right from the office?"

Husband: "Sure did (hie), straight as the crow flies."

Wife: "Oh, I see. Stopping frequently for a little corn."

* * *

OVERHEARD:

"He can still get his humility in the eye of THAT needle and leave plenty of room for the camel."

* * *

Overheard at the Stork: "She drinks so much even Alcoholics Anonymous turned her down."

barracks at Fort Jay, four vets in our group (A.A. Seamen's club) went over. They had an audience of about 50—reception reserved at first but interested and enthusiastic at end. Pamphlets snapped up. Major Nobile keenly interested and wants more. May form a new group there. Bacon and eggs, cake and coffee served. Second meeting had about 60 men present. Very great interest shown. Weekly meetings to be held there on Wednesday and we look forward to big doings."

The Brighter Side, Waterloo, Ia.: "The wording of the 2nd Step suggests to me a gradual building up of the belief in God. True, some experienced a spiritual awakening right at the start; others, by keeping an open mind, an honest desire to live a normal life, plus a willingness to grow along spiritual lines now find they possess an absolute belief in the power of God to enable them to live a happy normal life."

Blue Monday, Wooster, Ohio: "How far out can you reach? With your arm, perhaps not more than a yard or so without moving your feet. How far can you reach with your personal influence? Probably as far as your acquaintance goes, for only a limited number of people can make use of various means of communication without being personally present. How far out can you reach in Alcoholics Anonymous? The answer here is up to you. If you wish you may reach into the heart of every member in your group, other cities in the state or farther. All you have to do is throw your whole life into the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. Work your Steps, help the other alcoholics, love God and your neighbor as you ought. How far do YOU reach?"

The Mixer, Vancouver, B.C.: "'Steps' is a good word. It implies climbing, advancement, growth, progression. The spiritual steps begin with an intellectual conviction; that there is a Power able to do for us what we found we could not do for ourselves. From an intellectual conviction, they go on to an act of will; we made a decision to turn our will and lives over to His care."

A. A., SIR! . . .

Arthur Godfrey of CBS told of the drunk reeling up the street saying. "Shay, can you direct me to the Alcoholics Shanonymous?"

"What's the matter?" asked a helpful one. "Do you want to join?"

"No." said the drunk. "I want to resign."

THE CLIP SHEET

San Quentin, Cal., *News* (California State Prison): "Modern penal advancements have brought recognition of alcoholism in its true light us a sickness or an element of sickness. A complete cure in all cases rests beyond the boundaries of science and yet, paradoxically, the base of the cure is known. It lies in the individual himself.

"San Quentin has taken definite strides toward aiding the alcoholically afflicted through a more sympathetic approach to them, understanding and a genuine desire to help them. The institution's program begins when a man enters the Guidance Center, continues during his period in San Quentin through the psychiatric department and other media, and is extended to the period of parole through the parole authorities.

"An important contribution in the fight on alcoholism in the battle of man to help man, is made by the inmates themselves through the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here a man can get help from others who, too, are striving to become well.

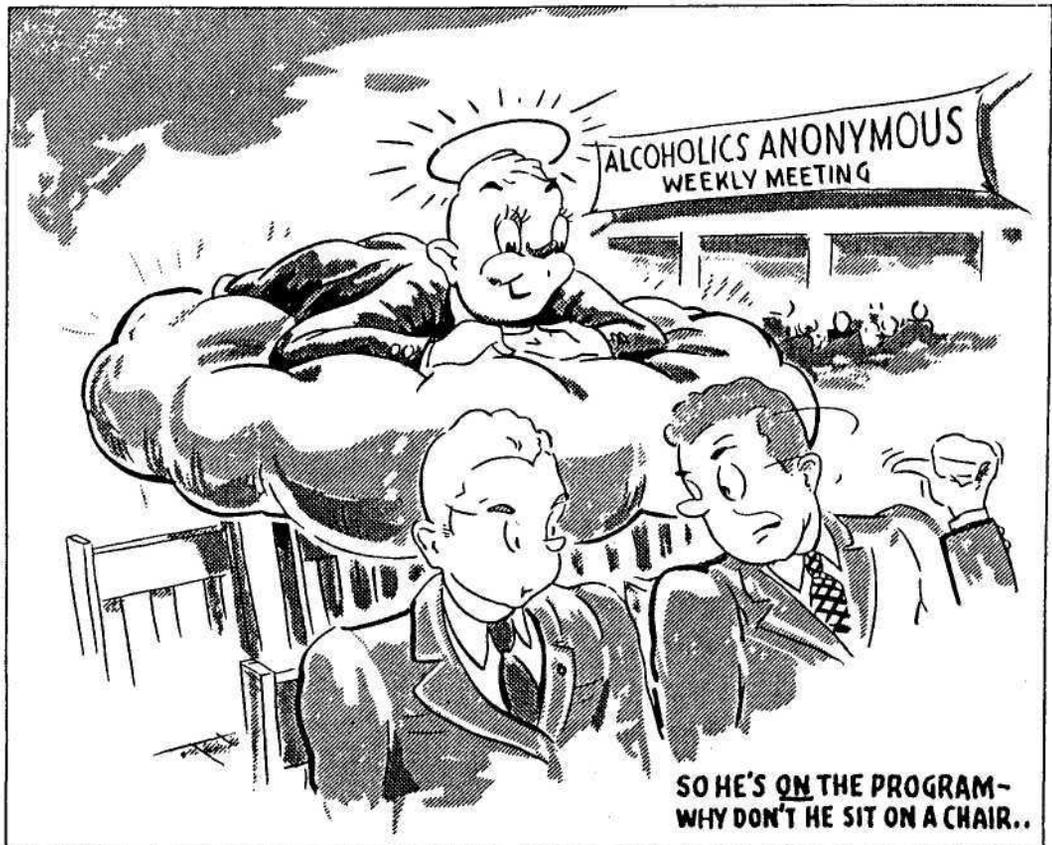
"Alcoholics Anonymous may not be the sole answer, either in San Quentin or on the outside, but through its efforts a man in prison finds the things he needs most: understanding and friendship and most of the answers to 'Why?'"

Atlantic City, N. J., *Press*: "Alcoholics Anonymous are starting their fine work right here in Atlantic City. This comes to me in the form of a letter from a member of that unique and commendable organization."

Montpelier, Vt., *Argus*: "We refer to the state institute for the study of alcohol and alcoholics which is to meet here under the sponsorship of a Vermont committee composed of state officials dealing with health, public welfare, educational and liquor problems and representatives of the clergy and Alcoholics Anonymous.

"It is appropriate that such an institute should be held in this state at this time when the general realization is spreading that alcoholism is primarily an illness and not necessarily a sin—a weakness—and not a crime.

"Probably no two groups have made the nation so aware of this fact as have the Yale School for Alcohol Studies and Alcoholics Anonymous and that they are participating is evidence that experts in the new treatment of alcoholism will be on hand to demonstrate the revised attitude toward and treatment of the problem, the solution of which is of such vital import to The physical and social welfare of thenation."



Pleasures of Reading

(Continued from Page 5)

to The modern reader undoubtedly is stronger than it ever was to his contemporaries. A close analyst of emotions, thoughts, and motives he was one of the earliest and most successful of French psychological novelists, and his influence in this field has been powerful. He may be regarded as the creator of that modern novel of psychological analysis which Bourget and d'Annunzio did so much to popularize. The influence of Stendhal, with his analytical methods, has been paramount on the psychologists and the disciples of Maurice Barres (in his first manner) and of Andre Gide. He also influenced Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and is the spiritual father of Marcel Proust.

Stendhal's characters are so completely motivated, the springs of their action so wholly revealed, that some critics have found them unreal, and call them mere puppets. Beyond cavil, Stendhal was a master story-teller, and his fertile imagination could take flights of fancy surpassing even those of the elder Dumas, for Beyle, the master, of them all, was both a realist and a romanticist; in fact, he defies rigid classification. His style is in the best French tradition—fastidious, concise, and sensitive to every demand.

Mr. Josephson's elegant biography makes Stendhal's life brilliant, paradoxical, charming, and defiant—as adventurous and passionate as the tangled lives of his own elusive heroes in their quests for happiness.—*R.E.B., Greenwich Village., N. Y.*

NEW GROUPS INCLUDE ONE IN DUBLIN

New groups listed with the Central Office from November 10 to December 10 include:

ARKANSAS: St. Paul.

CALIFORNIA: Eldorado City; North San Diego County Group; North Long Beach, Box 546.

FLORIDA: Friendship Group, Box 2522, Station A, Jacksonville.

IDAHO: Lewiston, Box 346.

ILLINOIS: Paxton; Danville.

INDIANA: Warsaw Group No. 2; Plymouth.

IOWA: Newton.

MASSACHUSETTS: Attleboro; Arlington, Men's Group; Newburyport, Box 165.

MICHIGAN: Caseville; Eastminster, (Detroit).

MINNESOTA: Hastings.

MISSISSIPPI: Lucedale, Box 281.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Twin State Group, Lyme, Box 102.

NEW JERSEY: Essex County Group No. 2; Bridgeton.

NEW MEXICO: Roswell.

NEW YORK: Cuba, Box 72.

NORTH CAROLINA: Hickory.

OKLAHOMA: Cherokee; Blackwell; Cordell.

OHIO: Marysville; East Liverpool; Freeman Group, Cincinnati.

PENNSYLVANIA: Burnham.

TENNESSEE: Athens.

TEXAS: Abilene; Pass City Group, Box 1752; Permian Basin.

VIRGINIA: Danville.

IRELAND: Dublin.

WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

Members of the Portland, Ore., Group make wide use of a personal inventory chart. New-comers find it particularly helpful when starting out on the Program of Recovery, and older members continue to check themselves by it at frequent intervals.

The inventory contains 20 questions. You can give yourself from one to five points on each. A total score of less than 50 is regarded as poor; 50 to 60 fair; 60 to 65 low average; 65 to 70 high average; 70 to 80 excellent; over 80 "impossible in this world."

This is the score card as sent in by Leo C.:

KEEP THIS AND CHECK YOUR GRADE EACH MONTH

Has my past been a *mess* and am I EARNESTLY DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH A BETTER WAY OF LIFE, and am I willing to make the effort?

Do I admit BEYOND ANY DOUBT that I am powerless over alcohol— that if I use it, *it will destroy me*?

Do I sincerely believe that there is a power greater than myself in which I WILL PUT MY TRUST regardless of what happens?

Do I realize the importance of talking A.A. and attending all A.A. MEETINGS POSSIBLE, or do I hedge and make excuses?

Am I really willing to MAKE RETRIBUTION where possible to those I have harmed, or am I just kidding?

Do I SINCERELY OBSERVE daily moments of *constructive meditation*, thinking of my humility and desire to understand?

Am I TRULY HONEST with others, or *will I chisel* if I get a chance?

Am I PATIENT in waiting for the rewards of my efforts?

Am I FRIENDLY and do I TRY TO OVERLOOK the shortcomings of others, *regardless of who they are*?

Am I tolerant—do I *show consideration* for those whose beliefs, practices, or habits differ from my own?

Am I a gossip—do I *repeal* rumors or chatter about other people's affairs?

Am I GRATEFUL for ALL HELPFUL THINGS and DO I SAY SO?

Do I have REAL COURAGE and am I FREE FROM FEAR OF ALL KINDS?

Do I really have CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF and others, or am I filled with doubt and suspicion?

Do I cooperate with others and HELP PROMOTE constructive ideas?

Do I practice SELF-CONTROL and *really* forget and forgive differences?

Am I neat in my appearance, and do I keep as clean as I can under the circumstances, both in *body and mind*?

Am I extending any effort to *help others* with *their* problems?

Do I realize that my problem is NOT MONEY, but *mental and physical*?

Am I making any reasonable effort to OVERCOME *any other undesirable habits* or CHARACTERISTICS I may possess?

Total

E.I.B. of Binghamton, N. Y., suggests that one way to avert cockiness would be to apply the old Albanian proverb which goes:
DO NOT MEASURE YOUR IMPORTANCE
BY YOUR MORNING SHADOW

A recent issue of the *Topeka State Journal* carried an ad for A.A. and this was followed directly by one which read: "Wanted, Empty Bottles. Topeka Pure Water Co."

"Natural" Tendencies

(Continued from Page 4)

(to I drink as I do?" "Why can't I live like other people?" There must be a very powerful cause behind it or else we would not have virtually wrecked our lives against our will. Shouldn't we abandon our cherished phrase — "nothing is wrong with us other than that we just drink too much?"

Why have we avoided looking for the real cause of our trouble? Could it be that we suspect that the characteristics we should question and work on are the very ones we never wanted to admit and never wanted to do anything about? We give ourselves away in this by our display of defiance, irritation or outright anger when the discussion gets too close to home.

We, who have succeeded in breaking down our defenses and eliminated our resistance and have become honest with ourselves, are equipped to acquire a philosophy that is far superior to our old distorted, maladjusted, unpleasant and twisted sense of values, basis of opinion, conceptions and ideals.

I think I have an understanding of those who have yet to find means of accepting what science through medicine has proven and knows about us. I think I have some understanding of those who haven't succeeded in breaking down their defenses and opened their minds and accepted the possibility that there is a philosophy that is far more satisfactory to live with than the cherished, protected, impossible, unsuited and often distorted convictions, ideals and opinions we have held onto for so many years. I think I have an understanding because I have been through it all and not in the too distant past.

Many who come into A.A. are indeed fortunate in that the needed changes seem to take place immediately and without apparent effort. But what of the others who have reached a crisis and want to do something about their drinking problem and fail to get on the program and have repeated relapses? Is it that they haven't reached the full crisis in that they will not let down their defenses and resistance? Clearly the extent of their maladjustment is more pronounced. It is displayed in the degree of the development of their omnipotence. This often is the stumbling block that prevents recognizing and accepting their unsuited, out-of-place characteristics. This is not a chosen altitude. None of us would willingly prevent our own enlightenment.

I think I have found the means that enabled me to overcome these life-long barriers. Others too, I think, may find the same means when they attempt, through practice, to have a true understanding of the real difference between "being pleasant" and "giving pleasure."—*Waller N. W.*

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

Wives Need Understanding

From Omaha, Nebraska

In reading the *A.A. Grapevine* for November, the article by M.N. of Chicago is so right, but I could not help wondering if maybe the reason the "inexorable laws of nature" are set aside is because the truth is that alcoholics are more sinned against than sinning. If they are sick men—why would any just God punish them?

But let us, too, try to understand the wife. She has carried on in the face of discouragement, fear, resentment, love, hate, hope, despair, etc., sometimes with kindness, and often without, but all in all she has come to feel she is a little noble.

Then she and her husband walk into A.A. and lo and behold—she is the sinner—the one who didn't understand—and he the saint.

Unless she experiences one of those rare spiritual insights, the laws of habit must apply. No one can turn off emotions overnight. The longer it took to induce them, the longer it will take for them to die.

And how are they dispersed? The psychiatrist gives the answer. "Once you put it into words, once you give it expression, it changes."

But how often do we consider the needs of the wife in A.A.?—*Jean K.*

New Clinic Down Under

from. Australia

A.A. in Australia progresses slowly but surely with some of the original members now having been sober for almost two years, many for more than one year and a whole host for six months.

By the time this is printed we hope to have opened our clinic for alcoholics, the first of its kind in Australia. It will be situated at our headquarters in Vianni House, Fouveaux and Riley Streets, Sydney. One of our co-founders, a psychiatrist, and a physician will be in attendance.

In Australia we have had no such luxuries as alcoholic wards, and inebriates are detained in asylums or gaols. Should they happen to be in a bad way they are given medical treatment

with no further advice or treatment after release. They are lucky if a doctor will even speak to them, in such low regard are we held in the medical community.

The documentary film, "Problem Drinkers" is now being screened in Sydney and all members are making it their business to see it. Public reaction seemed good, although some sniggers and wise cracks were heard.

It is our intention soon to hold a dinner to celebrate the two years we have been in existence here. We also plan to have a telephone put into our club rooms after a long wait due to the war.—*Rex A.*

A Flier Lands

From Fort Knox, Ky.

It was an unexpected pleasure to receive your very nice letter. I suppose the explanation as to why I finally joined A.A. is now in order, so here goes. My glittering career in the Army was studded with several meteoric rises and just as rapid falls. I went from a private to technical sergeant twice before they finally made me a flight officer. I managed to hold on to that for a little longer period than the others, but even that wound up when I went on a ferry trip and landed the ship at the wrong base, so cockeyed I couldn't walk away from it. I might have gotten away with that if I hadn't gotten my co-pilot drunk, too. This last little episode was really the whizzer of them all. I was transferred to a new base and became the only flying private in the Air Corps.

Things went so well they decided to start me up the ladder again; so they gave me a little rank. (This was in January, 1945.) Naturally I had to celebrate it so I went to town for two quarts and wound up in Kansas City, Mo. (60 miles away). It was such a fine place and the people so hospitable that I lengthened my stay to 60 days. On the sixtieth day they came after me! The rest is history! I drew a sentence of three years at hard labor which I very rightly deserved.

It was while I was at Jefferson Barracks that a group of us decided to try and start A.A. in the Disciplinary Barracks. It really worked out much better than we had hoped. When we moved down here we really went to work in such earnest, in fact, that a few of us are in for parole to the A.A. group in Louisville, and jobs are waiting there for us. I have made several speeches before the Louisville group, which is some 300 persons, and all in all have really come out of the fog for the first time. I hate to admit it, but these people did me a favor when they locked me up.—*H. R.*

News from the Canal Zone

From Panama

Hans left at four this morning for Colombia so you may be hearing something when he gets back to the States before Christmas. He spent a week in Panama. Got all the news of A.A. from him, and we went to a meeting here Friday night. When I left town in August there were six of us. In the four months since, the number has increased to 19 and we are looking for quarters. So far there have been only informal gatherings at members' homes. Now we must have a place of our own. There is a lot of interest, but without a definite location, phone, and someone to take care of inquiries we miss a lot of people. One of the members has so far handled calls and correspondence from her home, but it is getting too big now. It is a fine group here. I don't get to town often, but when I do I always look them up. (Over a year behind me now, and I'm glad about it still. It has done a lot for me.)—*Bob S.*

Travel Expenses

From Philadelphia

May I call the attention of groups throughout the country to a practice which may seriously dampen enthusiasm for A.A. among members of the medical profession?

A.A. groups are constantly calling upon physicians to speak at their meetings or attend conferences for one purpose or another. Too frequently no effort is made to reimburse the physician for his traveling expenses, a custom which even medical societies follow when inviting visiting men to address them.

This is, I fear, indicative of an apparent fallacy in the thinking of many of our members. They seem to believe that the doctors are lucky fellows to be invited to come to A.A. and that they have unlimited funds for the expenditure of train fare or gasoline and oil. They seem to expect to have doctors place at their disposal unlimited time and effort "for free," a situation which is most embarrassing to the intelligent and conscientious men who are now helping us.

Another phase of this same type of wrong thinking is the altitude of too many alcoholics regarding medical bills. They seem to think they should be treated free and because the therapy the physician supplies is so often only advice, counsel, and discussion they believe it should cost nothing. Men who have poured thousands of dollars down their throats will complain loudly and often profanely against a bill for profes-

(Continued on Page 10)

sional services involving four or five hospital visits to the patient's bed.

Certainly A.A. does not believe, I am sure, that we should be favored by the medical profession when we of all the patients they have ever treated have been the most difficult, the most costly of time and effort and the least cooperative.

Reluctance of people to pay for health is not confined to the alcoholic. Every hospital administrator knows how hard it is to collect bills after the patient has recovered. But we who pride ourselves on assuming moral and financial responsibilities upon our recovery must lean over backwards to avoid being identified in the minds of the medical profession as "dead beats."

Quite aside from the problem of the physicians is that of A.A. men and women who are invited from time to time to speak before A.A. groups in other portions of the country. They are always happy to give of their time and energy but for some of them the financial outlay involved in the travel presents a serious problem. They, too, have old debts to retire. They, too, have families to support. None wants to turn down a bid to talk because of finances but some may have to unless every group inviting an out-of-town speaker offers to pay traveling and other incidental expenses.

Some groups now do so. But many do not. It is, I think, an oversight but it should be corrected immediately.—*J.*

Freedom in Prison

From San Quentin

(Excerpts from a letter received by an A.A. from a prisoner in San Quentin whom he had befriended by mail.)

... It is so nice to realize that I am not standing alone. For a long time I thought the world was against me when it was really I bucking the world. It took a long time and a lot of hard knocks to bring me to the understanding of "Things are not as we see them but as we are."

The past 26 months have been kind to me. I have enjoyed many good breaks but the greatest break I have ever had came when I really became a part of the A.A. program and through it, became acquainted with God and some of His greatest creations — friends, who gladly forgive and count future possibilities as greater than past performances.

I can truly say life began at 40 for me. Since that time I have enjoyed more of life than ever before. And, believe it or not, I have been far from unhappy, even though in prison. And, why shouldn't I be happy? I have good health, a love for and a desire to help others and I am surrounded with opportunities to exercise them. I have more freedom than millions who have never been behind bars, and though I possess only a

few dollars, I am richer by far than many who possess millions.

If things work out, as I have hopes that they will, I will pay you a little visit before too many more months.—*L.T.*

Let's Face the Disease

From Linda Vista, California

Alcoholism is a disease, not a symptom of a disease.

The symptoms are extended hangovers, insatiable thirst, inability to stop, jitters, butterflies, sleepless nights, blackouts, prolonged sprees and loss of moral character. These are just a few; there are many others.

Our moral inventories show that we have fear, remorse, hate, envy, jealousy, dishonesty, loss of faith or other forms of moral or mental laxity. These are not trails peculiar to the alcoholic but are also found in the non-alcoholic. They do become more intense and aggravated by the excessive use of alcohol.

The sooner we admit that we have a major incurable disease (by incurable I mean one that will always recur as soon as we start to drink) and decide to hold that disease in an arrested state the sooner we start to recover.

The premise that we became alcoholic because we had an inferiority complex, fear, hate or remorse is as wrong as it would be to assume that if because of any of these defects of character we went out and slept in a rainstorm and woke up with pneumonia. The thing that would have caused us to have pneumonia would have been a weakened physical condition and over-exposure to adverse weather conditions. The thing that caused us to become alcoholics was alcohol. We could have all the imperfections of body and mind known to man and still have never become alcoholic if we had never started to use alcohol. The records show that neither the kind, quantity or quality of the alcohol made us alcoholic, but that it was what alcohol did to us physically and mentally that finally made us alcoholic.

The moral inventory of non-alcoholics shows that they also have the same physical, mental, and moral defects that we have and a large percentage of them can and do drink, even get drunk at times, but they don't become alcoholic.

Then why do we need A.A.? Because we have lost faith in God and man. Because we have become social outcasts, because we need an association of our own kind who understand us, who believe and trust us. Why do we need the 12 Steps? Because they show us how to rid ourselves of these moral flaws so that we can live the kind of a life God intended mankind to live.

Let's stop kidding ourselves. Let's admit that in alcohol we have caught the bull by the tail and he has a down hill pull on us and as long as we hang on he will pull us lower and lower. Let's let loose of the bull and grab on to the program of A.A. and start letting it pull us up to the top of the hill, where all is peace, serenity and sunshine. Let our faith in God as we understand him restore us to the Garden of Eden that is here for us when, through the working of the 12 Steps, we find a way to live happy, useful, contented lives free from worry, hate, fear, greed and envy. That is what we in A.A. are really trying to accomplish.—*J.F.*

I Saw Myself

From Detroit, Michigan

God permitting, I am about to celebrate my sixth anniversary as a member of A.A. Since World War I, I managed to keep myself the greater part of the time under the influence of alcohol which shows quite a good many years. After having lost my business, as well as everything else man can possess and not even having the price of a drink, I wrote to A.A.

I have often wondered just why at the first meeting something clicked, for at that meeting I was a changed man and proud to say never had a slip. Convinced I am an alcoholic, that I am powerless over alcohol, that my life had become unmanageable, I have tried hard to live the 12 Steps.

From the first I have never allowed myself to become overconfident, I have avoided places where there was alcohol and I do not keep it in my home. On this point other A.A. members have disagreed with me but it was of my own choosing.

About two weeks ago my wife and I, together with six other couples, were invited to a birthday party. I knew this party would be more than wet but I was confident that I would not falter. The party was made up of weekend drinkers and from my acquaintance with them am sure none are alcoholics.

As time passed on the party became livelier and livelier and the men became drunk and the women were feeling high.

While the women were getting lunch, I was sitting by myself near the bar watching the party. My wife came and sat beside me, saying, "Watch Horace making for the bar"—drunk, staggering, not knowing he was there—tie off, hair mussed, he poured a drink, drank and fell down.

My wife leaned over and whispered in my ear, "That was you six years ago, honey. I am terribly proud now."

I just looked, shuddered and walked away, and as I walked I said to myself, "Thank God I do not look that way today."—*Julian J.*

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

Growth in New England. — In less than three years, A.A. groups in Massachusetts have increased from two to 36, or a gain of 1800 percent, while Connecticut shows a 700 percent gain, according to a member of the Newtonville, Mass., Group. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island, starting from scratch, now have 13 groups. The formation of an efficient Central Service Committee in Boston last spring has been a vital factor as was the attendance of about 600 at the sixth anniversary banquet. New England groups now include the following, which the *A.A. Grapevine* has been asked to list: Massachusetts: Boston, Brockton, Brookline, Brookline Village, Cambridge, Cape Cod, Hyannis and Falmouth, Dorchester, Edgartown, Fall River, Fitchburg, Greenfield, Haverhill, Holyoke, Hyde Park, Lawrence, Lynn, Malden, Mattapan, New Bedford, Newton, Norwood, Pittsfield, Rutland, Salem, Somerville, South Ashburnham, South End, South Shore-Quincy, Springfield, Upham's Corner, Watertown, Wellesley Hill, Woburn, Worcester, and Lexington; Connecticut: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury-Bethel, Greenwich, Hartford, Kent, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Norwich, Saybrook, Stamford, Stratford, Torrington, Waterbury, Westport, Winsted; Maine: Bangor and Portland; New Hampshire: Dover, Manchester, Portsmouth and Hanover; Rhode Island: Providence; Vermont: Bennington, Burlington, Montpelier, St. Johnsbury and Windsor.

No Strike in A.A.—The Tacoma A.A. Group reports progress after settlement of a recent six weeks' bus strike which hampered attendance and affected the usual A.A. activities, although there were enough cars to pick up regulars needing transportation. Increased attendance and interest is manifest at meetings and round-table discussions and at the time of writing the group was looking forward to the visit of M. M., scheduled to address the Tacoma Kiwanis club.

Happier Birthdays. — Double celebrations of sobriety and the holidays are reported from many areas. The Ottawa, Canada, Group's first birthday was celebrated by about 100 members and guests in the parish hall of Blessed Sacrament Church. An open meeting followed the dinner, with the founder of the Toronto Group as the first speaker, using the topic of the 12 Steps. He was followed by other members from Toronto. A guest soloist and two short moving pictures were included on the program. . . A full column in the *Daily Sentinel* of Nacog-

doches, Texas, told of the 20 members from that city who attended the area meeting of A.A. in Palestine recently where about 100 heard an outstanding member of A.A., a prominent Dallas business man. Cities and towns represented included Nacogdoches, Center, Henderson, Douglass, Longview, Crockett, Palestine, Athens, Centerville, Fort Worth, Dallas, Amarillo and Waco. Three ministers and the sheriff-elect of Anderson county praised the organization's efforts. . . An overflow crowd of members, wives and friends flocked to the second anniversary banquet of the Montpelier, Vt., Group recently. A steak dinner was enjoyed by 132, including members from Barre, Burlington, Ely, Newport, Northfield, Richford, St. Johnsbury and Windsor, as well as Lyme, N. H., and East Orange, N. J. Prominent business men, ministers and state authorities were speakers. . . Columbus and Central Ohio A.A.s celebrated the fifth anniversary in Columbus with a meeting attended by 700 who heard an Ohio physician define alcoholism as "soul sickness." . . The Huntington, L. I., N. Y., Group held its first annual dinner on January 8 with several fine speakers and a delicious dinner.

Going It Alone. —When a man who had been hospitalized by the Alkanon Club of Binghamton, N. Y., was taken home and left on his own resources it was decided to carry him as a corresponding member, to write to him each week, telling of the discussions, carrying some of the problems to him, or asking him to write something for club members to discuss. After either the Wednesday or Sunday night meeting some one of the members starts a letter and leaves it on the desk where it is available to all members to add whatever they wish and by so doing cover the meeting. Every member has written and to show the results a letter from the man, who is 40 miles from the group, was received recently addressed to "all of the Happy Family" and expressing appreciation of the letters. To the Group he writes, "My sobriety has been since June 10 and now I feel quite safe. Of course, one is never really safe—life isn't even that, but I am happy and all of you help me feel that way. I can imagine a light down the road and I want to make it without any turns or byroads, and with the help of you all, I think I can make it. You can see you are playing a big part in my life." . . Still more on his own is a correspondent from Ronceverte, W. Va., who says that "back here in the hills we don't have the meetings and all we got to talk to are drunks and preachers." Left as the only mem-

ber of a group of five who started out about a year ago, this man sought out A.A. in various places and finally worked out a system of mental exercises, talking A.A. an hour a day, stressing church attendance, creating an A.A. bank account which is used for activities and "all in all has had a fine time and hopes to be having a fine time when the end of this day comes."

Alaska Thawing Out.—How A.A. is beginning to flourish in Anchorage, Alaska, in spite of a frontier atmosphere and bad weather is related in letters from an Army officer at Ft. Richardson. A woman who had been a member of a group in the States made arrangements before her return in August for a notice to be placed in the Anchorage paper when "Lost Week-End" was to be shown. The officer and another man got together on it, arranged for the use of a Sunday school room, helped to cut lumber and line it, and contacted others. Classified ads have been run every night and letters have been pouring in. At least 10 members formed the nucleus of a group which is attacking a big field, complete with lots of liquor, high prices, 30 to 40 below temperatures, and other rough and ready conditions.

Doctor, Psychiatrist Speak.—Signing the letter "A-lways A-chieving," the *A.A. Grapevine* correspondent from New Orleans reports Tuesday night open meetings have heard a prominent doctor of psychiatry, who agrees with the A.A. program, and a national business executive who recommends it. Visitors from many places have visited the club room at 1113 Chartres Street in the basement of General Beauregard's former home and good Louisiana coffee is promised to all who come that way.

Group Gets Going Again.—After a small start in Wooster, Ohio, several years ago, the Group there dissolved, but in March of this year four alcoholics and two wives began attending meetings in Ashland and eventually decided to build a group in Wooster again. A local church has provided rooms, programs and refreshments have been planned, a weekly bulletin called "Blue Monday" is being put out and a program of social visits with new members is used.

New Quarters for Two Groups.—Tampa, Fla., A.A.s are justly proud of the new club house into which they moved recently. Located at 405 Tyler Street, it is a two-story former resi-

(Continued on Page 12)

ALKY ALBUM



"A few drinks help me get over my shyness"

dence, which is being completely renovated inside and out and rearranged to provide with its 12 rooms, a lounge, assembly hall, buffet and kitchen, quarters for the resident secretary, office and study room and a game room. Financing was made possible by a building committee, open to any members of Tampa Groups who wish to make a small monthly contribution in addition to their regular ones. The new building is the central headquarters for all groups. Tampa A.A.s are about ready for the third annual banquet scheduled for Sunday, January 26. Out of town guest speakers will be on the program. The Tampa Groups also enjoyed a visit from S. R., formerly of Alaska, who visited her mother here, and gave several talks during her stay...In Rochester, N. Y., the Central Groups announce a move to larger quarters in the downtown district, with room for 300 people. Meetings are held every night in the week at 8:30, with a Monday morning group for shift workers. The new Monday night group, recently formed, had the first meeting, with attention concentrated on men under 35 years and ex-G.I.s. The new address is 12 Andrews Street.

More Meetings—Freeman Group of the Salvation Army meets at the Salvation Army Hall, 1514 Freeman Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, every Monday night at 8, with an average attendance of about 40. A meeting is held the first Sunday of each month in conjunction with an open religious service. About 80 attended a dinner recently to hear a Cleveland speaker as well as one from Lakewood and solos by a member of the Cedar Group of Cleveland. . . The Haverhill, Mass., Group was recently informed by the management of the Hotel Whittier in that city that there would be no more charge for the

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meeting rooms on account of the good work being done! Gatherings at the hotel are held Friday at 8:30 p.m. . . The St. Mary's, Ohio, Group, numbering five members, had its first meeting in December with visitors from the Lima Group which helped them get started...The Essex County Group No. 2 will meet every Sunday at 7:30 p.m. at 139 Walnut Street, Newark, N. J., following its recent founding. Calls and letters are invited.

Hopes Husband's a Member—The weekly broadcast of the Towson, Md., Group over station WFBR brought a note from a Pittsfield, Mass., woman who asked the members to aid in her search for her husband from whom she has been separated for 10 years. The woman hopes her husband may have become a member of a group somewhere and says that "his wife and three grown children want to hear from him and see him," although he may "feel we have no use for him." He is described as being W.F.B., born July 10, 1897, at Whiteheads, Va., 5 ft. 11 in., blue eyes, was red-headed, probably gray now, and not too heavy. He is an expert machinist. The radio program which brought in the appeal has been changed from 7:15 Monday to 7:15 p.m. Saturday, the Group reports. The Towson Group went in a body to attend formation of the Hagerstown, Md., Group and attended a later session.

Billings Keeps Trying.—After a former Atlanta, Ga., member brought A.A. to Billings, Mont., the Group enjoyed a growth for a while,

only to dwindle to two, who kept trying until now there are six or seven members with about half a dozen others listed as dependables and about as many more who may make the grade. The Rotary Club invited the secretary to speak on A.A. at a recent luncheon and the reaction was favorable.

Raking In the Chips.—The founder of the Elmira, N. Y., Group received his blue chips recently at a meeting to which a local paper devoted considerable space. When members of the Group start out they are given a white poker chip as an A.A. reminder. After three months an A.A. red chip is given out and after a year a blue chip goes into the pocket. At the blue chip presentation the hostess brought out a now unused cocktail shaker, draped with a black ribbon, and used it for serving coffee. Speaker for the occasion was a member who joined the original Group in Akron, Ohio, more than 10 years ago. Guests were present from Addison, Elkland, Endicott, Ithaca and Sayre. The Group schedule included a New Year's Eve party.

Mixer Starts Whirling.—Vancouver, B. C., A.A.s have a new periodical, *The Mixer*, produced by the West End Group. Its 12 pages contain news, serious articles, humor and personal notes. Arrangements are being made to extend its circulation throughout the district, including Victoria.

Austin Is Host.—The Austin, Texas, Group was host to the statewide convention which was held in the Driskill Hotel this fall with a national officer attending. Another feature was the distance traveled by some members, one coming 600 miles from El Paso, five coming 500 miles from Amarillo, and three from the Rio Grande Valley. Nearly all Texas groups were well represented.

Proud of Achievement.—Proud of the growth from two members to 15, the A.A. Group of Princeton, W. Va., numbers many who have been sober the full six months since the founding. The Group reports a large field in which to work and feels confident of results. Meetings are on Thursdays and information for visitors can be obtained at 115 Bluefield Avenue.

Hospital Asked for Alcoholics—Construction of two 150-bed institutions for the treatment of alcoholics will be recommended to the next legislature by the state commissioner of mental hygiene, a Columbus, Ohio, member reports. A.A.s are also watching with interest the administration of the law already on the statute books to permit the admission of chronic alcoholics to state hospitals.