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*The national monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, devoted to those seeking further knowledge on the problem of alcoholism, with the hope that it will help all alcoholics everywhere. Individual opinions expressed here are not, necessarily, those of A.A. as a whole.*

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## A Word to the Wise A.A. Parent

*(Editor's Note: The following was written by an A.A.'s 21-year-old daughter who was at first skeptical but now has seen how A.A. works.)*

UH HUH. A lot of drunks got together and solemnly declared they're going to stay dry. They'll all help each other. Read the book. Have meetings and tell the world what louses souses are. Meaning them personally. As if the world doesn't know it."

Callous? Nasty? Sure. When I heard about this new stunt Mother was pulling to "get well," that's the way I felt. Probably even said so, out loud. Catch me calling it a good idea. No matter how many people dried up in A.A.

Of course, that didn't help Mother much. The wall drinking had built grew even higher between us. We were both in a real emotional snarl. Until we could reach full trust and understanding, neither A.A. nor home life could be what it was meant to be.

High on the list of personal relation adjustment comes this family relation. You must break down the conditioned response of distrust and disgust which you built in your child. Understand, be patient, love, help her to understand A.A.,—and you and your child will live a new life.

Your offspring's altitude is the real hurdle. But you must realize your child has been through an emotional turmoil harrowing as your own during your alcoholic years. Her hopes for your recovery, your reappearance as the firm foundation of her life—have soared and crashed too often. You'd wake up smiling (for her) one morning, and the nightmare would end. But there was always another. Your child learned not to hope. Far easier to hide the squirming agony of disillusion and fear under hard eyes and an uncommunicative voice.

To you, and at times to her, it will seem that she hates you. Never let yourself believe it. Don't berate her, goad her, show your resentment. She needs to be convinced of your mutual

love. In this situation you're not the patient but the doctor—not because she shouldn't meet you halfway, but because she can't. You wouldn't expect a neglected puppy whom you'd kicked for ages to lick your face, would you?

Don't ask more than your child can give. You checked out of your parental status when you began drinking. Chances! are your kid had to be responsible for you more than you realize. You were nobody to look up to! It was practically a parentless life. Responsibility ages anyone, and your child has been schooled to independence. Don't make the mistake of hoping to take

### WHO USES ALL THOSE SLEEPING TABLETS?

*From the N. Y. Herald-Tribune*

Government officials say that it is anybody's guess where all the barbituates go.

The United States now produces almost 600,000 pounds of barbituate sleep producing drugs each year. Experts calculate an "average medicinal dose" at about 2 grains. They estimated the 1945 production of 582,000 pounds was sufficient for every man, woman and child in the United States to sleep every night for two weeks, or, to put more than five million persons to sleep every night for a year!

Information available to Federal officials is virtually zero. No federal laws regulate barbituate sales and many states have no barbituate laws or don't require the drug to be sold on prescription. The entire pharmaceutical and drug industry represented by the National Drug Trade Council is campaigning for stronger controls.

up just where you left off. You're both changed—so must your relationship be.

Steady recovery, determined picking up of pieces, calm resumption of life—it may take weeks or months, but your kid'll come around to accepting A.A. as a working hypothesis. Tension will ease as she feels a growing security at home. Gradually she will relax, learn to believe, again to accept you. The more you can help her to understand A.A. the quicker reconstruction will be. Give your child some feeling of contribution, some feeling of belonging to A.A. If she can live it with you, you have the basis for a real friendship.

My own conversion to A.A. came when by chance I went 12th Stepping with Mother. Father wouldn't let her answer a night call to this particular neighborhood alone. I went, planning to stay downstairs. But there were groceries to get, and a meal to cook. That was the least I could do.

It was the first time I felt A.A. bore any relation to my own life. As I saw Mother work, I could see the analogy between the 12th Step and my own feeble attempts to help schoolfriends with our little problems. Here was the same feeling of accomplishment. It was a revelation. At last I understood, heart and mind alike.

I still do some 12th Step work—mostly crisis baby-sitting. But the other Steps are just as important in my life. I've learned to analyze my own personality, to try adjusting my personal relations. Even the 1st Step's mine. I'm the best potential alcoholic I know. I just got A.A. at a bargain price, thanks to Mother.

And thanks to A.A., I got a mother, and a friend. Love and respect? Listen brother—if I had to be born again and pick a new parent—I'd take an A.A. They know what life is all about—and they're on the right path. That's the kind of mother who is worthwhile.

# EDITORIAL:

## On the 4th Step . . . .

*"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

WE ONCE HAD a college professor who said: "If every man in this room would take five minutes a day alone with himself, I would have the world's most industrious class in Chemistry I." We think we know now what he meant. And we believe he meant that every man should take a daily personal inventory.

Now that we have taken the first three Steps of the program, we come to the 4th Step. We have admitted that we were powerless over alcohol; that we came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity; that we made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him. At this point, we begin actively to do something about our alcoholism.

Experience has proved that the beginner in A.A. should make this personal inventory alone—preferably in the quiet of his room. Obviously, he must be honest about it. He should enter into this self-analysis sincerely and with determination because this Step in the long run will give him peace of mind.

Because there are as many ways to take personal inventory as there are individuals in A.A., there are no rules about the process. Some persons make use of a list of questions. Others simply take out a "quiet time" to meditate on themselves. At least two members we know not only use a list of personal questions about themselves but score themselves daily.

Such questions as—Am I in the habit of lying? Am I being honest with others? Do I have any resentments? Am I a phony? Am I tolerant of the faults in others? Do I really want to stop drinking or do I want to learn to drink like other persons? What is my motive in joining A.A.? Am I desperate enough to put a higher value on my sobriety than on anything else? Am I joining A.A. to help myself or to please somebody else?—would do to get you started on the inventory. These questions are merely suggestions, however, because only you will know what questions to ask.

Again, experience of ourselves and others in A.A. has proved that once an honest personal inventory is made, the person is rewarded with a feeling of relief. Psychiatrists call this a catharsis: a cleansing or purging of the mind. In any event, once the person analyzes himself honestly, he feels tremendously improved.

The next step is to do something about the things that you have found wrong in your life. Sometimes it isn't easy. Sometimes it's almost impossible. But if we are to arrest the terrible compulsion of alcoholism, a *sincere effort must be made to correct our faults*. Generally, the person will find many things in his life that he can change easily. He will find that many of the worries and frustrations of his life no longer exist in the cold light of sincere reasoning.

At a meeting recently, a member remarked: "It's your thinking that's stinking, not your drinking." How true it is. How often have we rationalized about the things in our lives that are directly concerned with our drinking? Serious effort with this 4th Step will do much for your thinking because if you are not honest with yourself, you can't possibly be honest about the A.A. program. And remember, if you don't face the issues in your life, you are not fooling anyone but yourself. You're the sick guy. Do something about It!

As it has so often been said: "Count yourself again, you ain't so many!"

## *SOBRIETY FOUNDATION OF WHOLE NEW LIFE*

*From Port Clinton, Ohio*

The hardest thing for me to do when I first came into A.A. was to face myself; to be absolutely honest with myself.

And I was in A.A. five months before I experienced any spiritual growth. Oh, I thought I had it all right after my first few meetings. Then after a couple of months I began to lose patience with those who said they just couldn't get the spiritual part of the program. I criticized the way they were going at it. The leaders too came in for some criticism.

I began to dream up a wonderful lead that I would use some time if called on to lead a group meeting. In this lead would be all the answers to the many problems others couldn't solve in their search for the spiritual part of the program.

More and more I would "buttonhole" one or two after or before a meeting and let drop a few words of wisdom on the right course to take if they would get the most from A.A.

Then it happened. I was invited to lead a meeting in a nearby town. This was what I'd been looking forward to; this was opportunity knocking . . . but so were my knees. I groped frantically for an "out." It suddenly dawned on me that to face a quiet and attentive audience that would hang onto my every word was more than I could stand up to. But I had an "out." I was working nights. So I used that for an excuse to turn down the invitation to lead a group meeting. I was glad that I had, what I called, a legitimate excuse.

But I wasn't happy about it very long. It bothered me a great deal because when I came into the fellowship I knew it was my last chance to lick "Old John." I'd tried everything else in vain. My conscience gave me no rest. I had pulled a fast one and I knew it. I felt ashamed that I'd used a weak excuse to dodge a responsibility which in the long run would only hurt me. I was truly humiliated. I realized then I was following the same old pattern that I'd followed in my 35 years of hard drinking. I was a phony pure and simple . . . but more simple than pure. That was a bitter pill to take, but I took it.

From then on my thinking took a different slant. I think that was the beginning of my spiritual growth after five months in A.A. When I looked back on those five months in A.A. I discovered that, although I'd remained sober, I hadn't tried very hard to live up to The precepts of The 12 Steps.

I knew, too, that I wouldn't be any great

*(Continued on Page 8)*

# Facing the Future Without Alcohol

*From New York City*

I am writing this article on my sixth birthday, which might strike you as a tender age at which to be writing an article so titled. Of course I mean (as you have guessed by now) the sixth birthday of my life without alcohol. I am forty-two.

Looking back over the past six years, so constructive and sunshine-filled and generally wonderful as compared with the black, almost suicidal years immediately preceding them. I feel that some of my thoughts and conclusions about life without alcohol might be of interest to fellow A. A. members.

As the mighty force that is A. A. continues its phenomenal expansion, thousands on thousands of men and women are being, in the literal and best sense of the word, "saved"—fine, intelligent, talented people who otherwise might have been as mortally doomed by alcohol as were, in other eras, the victims of epidemic smallpox, cholera, and bubonic plague. And every alcoholic man or woman who wins through to permanent abstinence has, along with many lesser gratifications, one crowning gratification: he has successfully exchanged the thing he hated most in his life for the thing he wanted most.

## We Want to Get Well!

For every alcoholic who is worth saving wants passionately to get well.

In certain unanalytical moods, one is often startled by the apparent simplicity of the "cure" for alcoholism, i.e., "Stop Drinking!" In more thoughtful moods, the tremendous complexity of that seeming simplicity is even more startling. Alcoholism has its vast complexities, which can never be too earnestly nor too expertly probed; each alcoholic's history has its complex causations, which should, at the right time, be researched. But I'm not concerned here with looking into, or looking back, but with looking forward.

Every sincere A. A. faces a life absolutely without alcohol—*his whole future life without alcohol*. It's rather a staggering thought, when put so baldly.

Well, what about it?

Well, the one outstanding thing about it is: *it's a glorious prospect!*

I didn't say an easy prospect. I said glorious.

I didn't say it must not be unremittingly, though relaxedly ("Easy does it!"), worked at. I said it's glorious.

I didn't say it will solve all your personal and business problems—or make you happy all the time. I said it's glorious.

It is glorious because it is an emerging from

the dungeon into open air. It is relief from inquisitorial tortures. It is mental health in place of morbidity. It is self-respect in place of self-loathing. It means being loved and trusted, instead of pitied and feared.

In the early days of their new, emancipated life, most A. A.s occasionally feel nervous and tense; occasionally they suffer acute spiritual pain. One often hears a fledgling sobriate (if I may coin a word opposite to inebriate) say: "I'm lost without alcohol." It is still a glorious new life. No matter what you may have to suffer through at first, it is gloriously worth it.

A new A. A. tends to feel "cheated" at first, if he stays away from parties where liquor will be served; or bored if he goes; or fearful, because it seems like inviting disaster. But under this discomfort there is always a song of happiness, which swells gradually into a paean as days of sobriety turn to weeks, weeks to months, and months to years — the great and all-important task getting less and less difficult all the time.

We might strike a balance sheet on "Total Abstinence for the Alcoholic—Its Liabilities and Assets":

LIABILITIES:

None.

ASSETS:

1. From every viewpoint containing common sense, the alcoholic *must* stop drinking. So he might as well make a virtue out of the necessity, and, in the white-hot beam of that one searchlight, burn out all reservations, all cheated feelings, all boredom, all fears.

2. In the morning, he gets up clear-headed, and steady-stomached, his soul unpoisoned by remorse or the pangs of conscience, with a good appetite and good courage to face the day—the famous next 24 hours. That's glorious champagne in itself—without the hangover.

3. His wife's face (or her husband's) is no longer white with apprehension of what the day may bring; her eyes are not pools of terror. His children don't shrink from him. Nor does his dog, who perhaps had been even more sensitively

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## *New Headquarters Properly Christened!*

The New York City office of *The A.A. Grapevine* was moved in December from the Metropolitan clubhouse to a basement location in Greenwich Village. The very first day of our occupancy, right on the heels of the men carrying in our files and furnishings, and as soon as we had tacked our name on the door, came a knock and a request for a handout for a drink! Possibly we felt on the sentimental side that day, for he got it without a word of argument!

aware than his family of his periodic personality changes. His home life is sweet once more. As sobriety continues, he finds himself usually contented, often happy, and sometimes exalted—he who used to wonder again and again, in his black despair, whether he would ever, in the remainder of his life span, know any spiritual climate other than agony.

4. At his work, he is surprised, sometimes astonished, by his new energy, his new capacity for concentration and application. He turns out more work in a month than he used to in a year. He has at his disposal, now, all the dramatically potent force of his redirected mental and emotional power. He is no longer faced with the necessity of hiding his "condition" from his boss and from his colleagues. He is not, now, neglecting his job, nor running away from it — nor losing it!

## Gains New Respect

5. He has, as an eternal bonus, the respect others invariably feel (whether they express it or not) when it comes out, gradually or suddenly, that he doesn't drink. This is not a smug or shallow gratification to A.A.s, whose great wish is that all others who, like them, are psychically allergic to alcohol, may find the same path. Sometimes this manifestation of respect has its comic side, since we don't (and shouldn't) tell our alcoholic past to everybody. Sometimes we find ourselves mistakenly regarded as life-long abstainers when we are dying, inside, to say: "Brother, if I told all, or roughly the half of it, wouldn't *your hair* stand on end!" Once in Paris, during the late war, I attended a party where all the others present were French—French and stewed to the gills. After a while, beginning to take it ill that I stuck to water, these merry Gauls threw me to the floor and tried to force my clenched teeth apart and insert the neck of a bottle. They didn't succeed. Finally they gave over, released me, brushed their clothing, and downed a few indignant slugs of *calvados*. "*Mon dieu!*" murmured my host, eyeing me bewilderedly (but, mind you, respectfully), "*quelle austerite!*" "*Mon dieu!*" I thought, straightening my tie, "if you only knew the truth!" The whole thing was far too complicated to go into, of course, especially to French people, to whom wine is water and water not even potable. Thereafter, their respect was so marked that I, who in my day habitually got drunker than any of them, drunker than all of them put together, was genuinely embarrassed. But I would be lying if I said I wasn't gratified by their respect. Every human being likes to be respected. For A.A.s, it is by no

*(Continued on Page 12)*

# VINO VIGNETTE: *The Story of Slap-Happy Sal*

*Greenwich Village, N. Y.*

We were sitting in the A.A. clubhouse one day talking of this and that. My friend, an old-timer in A.A. from Cleveland, noticed a striking looking girl who was talking to another girl across the room.

"Who is the tall girl over there?" my friend asked.

"That's Slap-happy Sal. She's quite a worker in A.A.," I said. "Would you like to hear her story?"

"Sure," my friend said, "she seems to be lecturing a prospect!"

"Well," I said, "Sal's story begins in a small town. . . .

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"The fellows in her neighborhood called her Slap-happy Sal. Even the girls, who stood somewhat in awe of her, called her by the unflattering nickname. Older folks around the town, who knew and respected her father, called her 'that wild Cherry girl.'

"Even in those days Sal was a character. Tall and angular, with a shock of yellow hair, she always gave a startling impression, but she was popular. Whenever she barged out to a football game, or a dance, she was surrounded by five or six laughing and chattering boys. It was a common sight in the town to see her roaring through traffic in her car with a crowd of bare-headed young men.

"She really wasn't different from the other young girls of the town, just more money, more energy, more joy of living.

"It was in her junior year at college that she began to have trouble. During the winter term of that year, she drove to the city to meet a man that she liked a little too well. He was quite a drinker.

"She had met him at a dance and had become infatuated because he was older, smoother and completely indifferent. He had been drinking at the time and he sneered at her because she gagged when she tried to keep up with him.

"As she drove toward the city, she determined to take drink for drink with him. Who the devil did he think he was? She would show him.

"In this state of mind, she began the weekend that ended with her dismissal from college. In the city, she had proved that she could keep up with him. In fact, he had passed out of the picture early on the first evening. What a sissy he had turned out to be! But what was more important to her: she was beginning to enjoy the stuff. How good she felt after a few drinks!

"Driving back to college in the late afternoon, she began to nibble from one of the bottles she brought back with her. When she ar-

rived at her room in the dormitory, she was feeling fine. Just fine. Boy, oh, boy! An hour or so later she was drunk.

"The dean was very nice about it. She hadn't scolded. She merely pointed out that her drinking was a serious infraction of the rules; that if it happened again, she would have to leave.

"The next time Sal started drinking, she didn't bother to stay around to be kicked out. She packed up her things and drove home. It was going to be better at home anyway. She could drink where she liked and when she liked. And there were plenty of fellows to drink with, too. She was going to have the time of her life!

"At first, things did seem better at home. Her father had been very nice about the incident at college. He did seem a little surprised at her daily drinking, but he didn't bother her and, for a while, she had a gay time of it.

"Soon she began to be bored with the boys and girls of the town. As her drinking increased, she began to lose interest in things. She took to drinking alone in cocktail bars, but was unhappy because she didn't like the people she met. She became a familiar figure around the drinking places of the town. People began to notice that 'the Cherry girl' entered bars unusually early in the morning! All the bartenders got to know her.

"About ten o'clock one morning her father appeared at a bar and took her to the hospital. She was very drunk and didn't remember anything about it. When she awakened, the doctor was standing over her bed with a hypodermic

## ALKY ALBUM



**"I am not an alcoholic; I take a drink just to quiet my nerves."**

needle in his hand, he was Dr. Walters, the family physician. Dr. Walters didn't scold her. He simply smiled and told her not to worry.

"After the first night, it wasn't so bad in the hospital. Father's friends dropped in to see her and everyone carefully avoided the subject of her illness. Nobody scolded her. When father took her home, he didn't scold her. Somehow, she felt very sorry for her father.

"At home she began to drink again. This time she preferred to stay in her room. She began to be miserable. Somehow, drinking wasn't as much fun as it used to be. She felt very sorry for herself. Where in the devil is the maid? I sent her for a bottle hours ago!

"One evening, she heard father and Dr. Walters talking outside of her door. They were talking about her. Didn't she hear Dr. Walters say something about a sanitarium? What were they talking about? She poured a large drink and went to sleep.

"It was a half hour later that she awakened. She felt terrible. Father and Dr. Walters were seated across the room, talking in quiet voices. When they noticed that she was awake, father said:

" 'Sal, John and I are here to help you. Don't worry, we both realize that you are very sick?'

"Dr. Walters walked over to the bed and said:

" 'Sally, I used to think that a sanitarium was the best place for a person as sick as you. I'm not so sure today. The trouble is that you've become an alcoholic. Don't let the word frighten you. The condition is a form of illness. Tell me, do you want to stop this drinking?'

" 'All I know, doctor, is that I am miserable and that I want a drink!'

"Dr. Walters poured her a drink and continued:

" 'I am calling a nurse for you, Sally, and in a few days you will feel much better. Will you talk to me alone after you are feeling well again?'

"Sally said: 'Yes, Dr. John, I want to get well. I must get well. I promise to do anything you say.'

\* \* \*

"Strange part of it is that Sal really meant what she said to her doctor. He told her about A.A. on his next visit. When a young woman in A.A. called on Sally, she was persuaded to come to an A.A. meeting.

"It was easy for Sally. She really wanted to get well. Her story happened two years ago. Since then Sally has helped hundreds of women alcoholics. But there's one thing she does to women that I don't understand. She scolds the hell out of them every time!"—J.T.

## THE CLIP SHEET

# The Pleasures of Reading

New York, N. Y., *Herald-Tribune*: "Dr. Anton J. Carlson, professor emeritus of physiology at the University of Chicago School of Medicine, speaking at the New York Academy of Medicine on the treatment of chronic alcoholism by the general practitioner, said:

"There must be an entire change in the social attitude and public understanding of the problem (alcoholism). A recent survey of facilities for the treatment of alcoholism in New York City showed that probably less than 40% of the doctors here treat alcoholics.

"Yet compare this," he said, "with the following situation—no matter how contemptible, or how down-and-out a person may be who has contracted pneumonia or who has broken a leg, the medical profession will treat him.

"Frequently, if the alcoholic reaches a doctor, the doctor sends him to a psychiatrist or some sort of institute when, in many cases, immediate medical attention is needed."

"Dr. Carlson said that the general practitioner here and elsewhere is handicapped by the fact that most hospitals refuse to take alcohol addicts as patients. he said that there were a few exceptions to this but cited as one exception the facilities at Knickerbocker Hospital where alcoholics can be kept for a few days, after which they are placed in the care of Alcoholics Anonymous."

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Council Bluffs, Iowa, *Nonpareil*: "In a letter to the editor, an A.A. member explained the operation of his organization as follows:

"There is no mysterious formula. Just a plain, frank, logical expression of workable ideas which not only have kept but are keeping a spirit of 24-hour teamwork. The thought stressed most is: If you can do without it for this 24-hour period, you can certainly do without it for the next 24 hours.

"There is no ranting and old-fashioned roaring against the liquor interests. In fact, alcoholic drinks are not advertised at all. Just a comfortable assurance that a very real human problem is being faced and solved on a day-by-day, time-payment basis for solid investment."

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Montgomery, Ala., *Alabama Journal*: "At their meeting recently in the City Auditorium, Alcoholics Anonymous heard the former mayor of a city in Florida. This mayor remarked that he believed that he is the only mayor who was ever thrown in his own jail.

"In the end booze got me and I was retired from office." With the help of A.A., the mayor now is "dry" and is slowly coming back. He was recently elected city councilman."

*The Practical Cogitator* by Curtis and Greenslet (Houghton Mifflin Company, \$3)

(Editor's Note: Last of a series of reviews of contemporary books of permanent value on the intellectual, philosophical and spiritual concerns of man. The *Consolation of Philosophy* appeared in the June, 1945, issue; *The Perennial Philosophy* by Huxley in February, 1946; *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels* by Santayana in September, 1946; and *Men Who Walk with God* by Cheney in December, 1946.)

When Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, speaking at a dinner given in the interest of Alcoholics Anonymous at the Union Club on February 8, 1940, said, "This idea of setting an ex-alcoholic to catch an alcoholic is good," he was echoing the thought of the sixteenth century philosopher Montaigne, who said:

"Experience stands on its own dunghill in medicine and reason yields in its place. Medicine has always professed experience to be the touchstone of its operations. Plato was right to say that good doctors themselves ought to have had the diseases they want to cure, and been subject themselves to the misfortunes and circumstances which they have to diagnose. Let them catch the pox if they want to know how to cure it! I'd trust such a doctor."

Similarly, the greatest and last of the late Victorians, C. K. Chesterton, wrote:

"A man can understand astronomy only by being an astronomer; he can understand entomology only by being an entomologist (or, perhaps an insect); but he can understand a great deal of anthropology merely by being a man. He is himself the animal which he studies. . . . It is necessary to cease to be a man in order to do justice to a microbe; it is not necessary to cease to be a man in order to do justice to men. That same suppression of sympathies, that same waving away of intuitions or guesswork, which make a man preternaturally clever in dealing with the stomach of a spider, will make him preternaturally stupid in dealing with the heart of man."

The foregoing excerpts are culled from the collection contained in *The Practical Cogitator* or *The Thinker's Anthology*. As its alternative title suggests, this compilation of pieces is "for the thinker, and not for the feeler, primarily for the extrovert thinker," but its authors concede that it runs over into some of his introverted and intuitive margins (as in the portions above quoted). One gets the impression that Messrs. Curtis and Greenslet feel apologetic about anything which has crept into their volume that does not meet their standards of what is pure reason. These are very peculiar standards because we find in their book very little from the simon-pure rationalists of any age or philosophical period. Indeed, this book is so full of quotations from the modern empiricists who are "feelers" and not "thinkers," that one who has cerebral aspirations will be inclined to go back to Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas and Jevons *On Logic* for some good, old-fashioned objective reasoning.

Perhaps this is so because the compilers have followed a self-imposed rule of always using the modern instead of the ancient; when they have used the ancient it was because (again the note of apology) they knew of nothing better since. In consequence, this work is heavily loaded in favor of Holmes, James, Dewey, Whitehead, and the like. These people believe in relativism and pragmatism. They have no philosophical belief in absolutes, universals, objective standards, a universal idea of being, but move in a chaos of phenomena, materialistic science and subjectivism. So, like Rousseau, from whom they stem, they wind up as emotionalists instead of intellectuals. It was Irving Babbitt who explained the paradox in this wise: "The prime virtue of science is to be unemotional and at the same time keenly analytical. Now protracted and unemotional analysis finally creates a desire, as Renan says, for the opposite pole, 'the kisses of the naive being,' and in general for a frank surrender to the emotions. Science thus actually prepared clients for the Rousseauist. The man of science is also flattered by the Rousseauistic notion that conscience and virtue are themselves only forms of emotion." The inevitable result of such spurious philosophy is intellectual nihilism and loss of spiritual integrity.

But these anthologists, being men of intellectual probity, have not permitted their natural bent for modernism to exclude many gems of wisdom from the "ancients" and extracts from the sayings of both old and new thinkers on the eternal verities. Taken together, they make a good case for scholastic natural law, the unity of mankind, objective reality and a universal moral order binding on every man and ruler—our only hope of salvation, personally and spiritually, collectively and politically. Among the contributions in this category is Thoreau's timely and famous essay on civil disobedience in which it is insisted that the "State come(s) to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treat(s) him accordingly." About a hundred years later this principle was declared to be law, in a flag-saluting case, by a majority of the United States Supreme Court, and the opinion

(Continued on Page 7)

# A.A. Digest—Excerpts from Group Publications

"The *Paradox*" **Appears.** — Known as "The *Paradox*" because "every A.A. is a living paradox," an attractive new publication has been started by the Kansas City, Mo., Groups, and is appearing monthly. It contains articles on A.A. philosophy as well as news and humor.

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*Squad One.*, Washington, D.C.: "All those who have expressed themselves emphasize the imperative quality of the word 'continued.' It is by constant application, not only of this Step, (the 10th) but of all the Steps, that we maintain our sobriety and gain more and more of the true spirit and practice of the A.A. program. We must 'continue' the processes of the 10th Step all the time. We must 'continue' to remember and to apply all of the Steps all of the time. It is a process that will never end for a practicing A.A."

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*The Paradox*, Kansas City, Mo.: "No virtue is claimed by more people and practiced by fewer than tolerance. An honest self-inventory will show that most of us are tolerant only of people and ideas agreeable to us. But without tolerance the A.A. program cannot be completely acquired or followed."

\* \* \*

*The Toss Pot*, Charleston, W.Va.: "The test of your intelligence is your ability to take hold of your own life just as it is. Know yourself. Make an estimate of your situation. Consider the circumstances of your birth, your childhood, your home life, your wealth or lack of wealth, the influence of the neighborhood in which you live, your friends, your skills, your limitations, and your points of strength. You will find shortcomings which you can correct, handicaps which you must accept and make the best of. But begin. Act. Do something. Things that seem difficult at first will become easy. Rise above your failures. Excellence cannot be reached by merely looking for defects. The real building of a life or a machine or a social system is the result of positive thinking and constructive action. It cannot be built by the wrecking crew. It requires energy, goodwill, initiative, planning."

\* \* \*

*The Midwest Council Bulletin*, Minneapolis, Minn.: "Only because it may help someone else who, in the same prideful conceit, the same folly and ignorance sought to serve self by prayer, I pass on what to me is the secret of prayer. This secret I learned only after coming into A.A. I hope earnestly it is not too simple for understanding and belief, for it is this: Never, in our extremities, ask Almighty God to come

over on our side, but rather ask Him always for the grace to go over on His side. That is it. It is the core and the meaning—the very quintessence of prayer as I understand it."

\* \* \*

*The Eye Opener*, Los Angeles, Cal.: "It has been possible to keep A.A. out of the talons of those who might seek to use its tremendous mass power, because there simply is no money to be made out of it. Never must we permit ourselves, even with the purest of intentions, to deviate from this self-imposed restriction. We must never allow A.A. to be used as a money-making agent. We must keep it pure, fundamental, and basic. We must keep it as nearly as possible as it was when B. first stepped forth on his strange, unbelievable journey 12 years ago. It is a sacred trust to us to keep it, as he himself has tried to keep it, simple and real."

\* \* \*

*The Rope Yarn*, New York, N. Y.: "Life is a school; a day is a session in class and each experience an experiment. There is no success or

failure—only a study course of development with advantages for every disadvantage. Each day is a life in itself. In the morning you are born, only to die at night again and wake up for a new dawn and further lessons. This makes our lives full with the richness and beauty of many lives. We learn to live naturally—not as an actor in an acting world."

\* \* \*

*Weekly Bulletin*, Amarillo, Tex.: "After all is said, the prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous, 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference,' is but a paraphrase of that more ancient dictum, 'Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.' This deal between God and man is the only one which has ever been made, and it can only be fulfilled by man's dealing inside himself."

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## The Last Round-Up — On Subject of Gossip

*From Windsor, Out.*

Now that A.A.'s of both sexes have taken their own—and each others'—inventories so well, may I, a sexless sexagenarian, virtuous by necessity and utterly uncritical except of those I don't like, raise my quavering voice?

People talk too much. They gossip. Both boys and gals seem to be unanimous about this. So what? A.A. has no monopoly there. Some time ago, a male gossip got us all thrown out of the Garden of Eden: "The woman tempted me, and I did eat," he said. Not so long afterwards, Dinah spilled the beans on her lover and got a whole tribe of Shechemites put on the spot. This sort of thing has been going on for ages, why get all hot and bothered because it crops up in A.A. now and then? After all, feathers are few and far between on A.A. shoulders.

And there are ancient wolves, forsooth. Tut, tut. Sanctimonious billygoat whiskers have been the favorite camouflage of the genus "lupus" from time immemorial. Along about middle life many of both sexes lose track of their emotional centre of gravity. It is not a coincidence that some of these are also alcoholics. It is the law of averages.

Prophets of doom, like the guy who's confident everyone else is due for a nose dive, are old stuff. 'Way back there in Troy there was

a doll named Cassandra. In her youth she got smart with the gods. They cursed her by decreeing she should thenceforth speak nothing but the truth and no one would believe her. As a prophet of doom she was good—so good, she perished by her own wagging tongue: She, too, died in the sack of Troy she had so dolefully foretold. There have been misanthropes in all eras. Most people with bum livers—and that means most A.A.s—get that way sometimes.

There is a lot of difference between seeming smugness and the broad viewpoint which sees past present bickerings to the better things beyond. Many a guy who looks smug is only sorry. But those who actually are smug—well, they're taking big chances. Too-great self-satisfaction is pretty dangerous ground to tread. Old John Barleycorn has mined every inch of it.

"Pots of all sorts and sizes, great and small, that stood along the floor and by the wall; and some loquacious vessels were and some listened, perhaps, but hardly spoke at all." Surely the old Persian Tentmaker must have been reporting an A.A. meeting when he penned those lines.

Who is there among us that hasn't been bored stiff by the guy or gal with the strong legs? Nevertheless these, too, have their place in A.A. If talking endlessly and through their gats keeps these A.A.s sober, who are we to kick? We go to meetings for sobriety, not entertainment, and

when we go for any other reason we're getting perilously close to that next drink. Old Demosthenes, however, had something on the ball in this respect, he went down to the seashore, put a pebble on his tongue, and talked to the waves ---and by the time he discovered his words made no impression on them, was ready to talk to people. Brevity being the soul of wit, these A.A. orators will learn in time when to shut up, because most A.A.s are witty. In the meantime it might be profitable for all of us to reflect on the endless hours we spent talking crass stupidity with our foot parked on a brass rail.

We have 12 common sense Steps to guide us in this path we have chosen to tread. There are 35,000 of us, therefore there must be exactly 35,000 different ways of implementing them. Each to his own, and more power to him, if he remains sober! That there are differences of opinion among individual A.A.s is not alarming. On the contrary, in view of the fact that all 35,000 of us still need considerable spade work done on our thinking, it is remarkable there are so few.

How are we going to reconcile them all? Reference to the Big Book solves that problem. There we are advised to be honest, willing, and to keep an open mind. If we do this, we shall also be tolerant enough to let the other A.A. hold to his own viewpoint regardless. Tennyson summed it up beautifully nearly a century ago:

"So many gods, so many creeds,  
So many ways that wind and wind:  
When just the art of being kind  
Is all this sad world needs."

Kindness is the golden key which unlocks the exit for all our troubles. It is so in everyday life. It is also so in A.A. Let's just be kind one to another in brotherly love and forget our little differences. After all, sobriety is what we seek in this new way of life---what difference which road we travel to find it?---*R.O.H.*

### *Cornell Gets \$150,000 For Alcoholism Study*

A gift of \$150,000 to the Cornell University Medical College for five years of research into the causes of chronic alcoholism has been announced by the Research Council on Problems of Alcohol, an associated society of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 60 East Forty-second Street.

The project will be under the direction of Dr. Oskar Diethelm, professor of psychiatry at Cornell and chief psychiatrist at the New York Hospital, 525 East Sixty-eighth Street, and calls for the study of a limited number of patients over the five-year period.



*And the 'lil woman gets so sore that she actually buys me a bottle and sez: "Go ahead. Drink yourself to death!" And I sez: "What---on one bottle?"*

## *The Pleasures of Reading* (Continued from Page 5)

of *Mr. Justice Jackson* therein is included in this collection. In nobility of spirit, it is the equal of Thoreau's and in technique of demonstration it is superior.

There are many other items in this volume, more or less logically arranged, which are worth reading and re-reading. There is an excellent statement of the best in pragmatism by William James, a summary statement of the twenty-four hour plan by the renowned Dr. William Osler, and a bit (by Thoreau again) of the philosophy of the Puri Indians, of whom it is said that "for yesterday, today and tomorrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday, forward for tomorrow, and overhead for the passing day." Short shrift of theology is made by the writers quoted on that head, but no mention is made of Carlyle's dictum that "a religion without a creed is like a body without a spine." However, due tribute is paid to the doctrine of faith by Holmes and Cozzens, and the pleasure of conversation (a lost art) as well as of reading is extolled by Montaigne.

A saving grace of the book, which, like all anthologies, will completely satisfy nobody, is the inclusion of a judgment by John Jay Chapman: "I say that the great illusion of the period which is now passing has been that anything whatever, no matter how recondite, could be discovered through hard intellectual work and mental concentration. Would it not then be natural if, when once honestly baffled in our search for truth, through concentration, we should be unexpectedly invaded by truth in the relaxation that followed on our acknowledgment of failure? Surely the world will give a great sigh of relief when it discovers that a tremendous intellectual power has been misapplied. We have been endeavoring to express the fluid universe of man's emotions in terms and symbols drawn from the study of physical science; and in the meantime we have all but forgotten the languages of Art, Poetry and Religion which alone can express the passion for truth with which we burn." So, Cogitators, practical and visionary, Easy Does It!---*R.F.S., Montclair, N. J.*

# Sobriety Foundation

(Continued from Page 2)

shakes as a speaker at a group meeting. But I made up my mind that if I was ever called on again I'd make some kind of lead if I got up before the group only to tell them how grateful I am for this wonderful A.A. fellowship.

## Accepted Next Invitation

So it came again. A friend who came into A.A. about the same time I did, and who was now secretary of his group in another nearby town, asked me to make a lead for his group. I accepted immediately and told him that I would do the best I could but not to expect too much from me. I'd made the plunge and now I was going to face up to my responsibility. I felt a great load lifted from my conscience and I was grateful that he had asked me. But then anxiety set in and for days prior to the meeting I was filled with apprehension and a sense of frustration. I'd never addressed a group before and I really wanted to tell them how I felt about A.A.

I'd written out some things as reminders but I got off the track and toward the end of the lead I was mumbling in my beard and most of those present couldn't hear what I was saying.

I had an awful letdown feeling after I'd finished. But the secretary said something that put me at ease again. He said I'd mentioned something in my lead that he hadn't heard before in other leads. What he referred to was that I said sobriety, to me, was the foundation of this new life. I thought it kind of him to say that. On thinking it over the next day I came to the conclusion he'd said that merely to relieve my tension and not because he really thought it a new way to look at sobriety.

## 24-Hour Plan Beat Frustration

For four days following that lead I was in an awful state of frustration. I felt defeated. My twisted thinking was a direct route to the bottle and surely would have led me there if it hadn't been for one thing . . . the 24-hour plan. I had resolved in the beginning that come what may, each morning, or at the start of each day, I would ask God's help in seeing me through the next 24 hours without a drink.

That's what held me up through those four trying days. The fourth day I took my fishing gear, went down to the river and rented a boat and rowed out into the lake for a little fishing and meditation. I wanted to be free from any interruption for an hour or two. I was out there four hours. I don't even know whether I got a bite or not but I came back in with a new sense of values.

The first group that had asked me to lead,



*The Brighter Side*, Waterloo, Iowa—

Sandy: "Macintosh must have had a lot to drink at the concert last night."

Mack: "How's that?"

Sandy: "Well, when I was taking him home he let me fall twice."

\* \* \*

*The Paradox*, Kansas City, Mo.—

Son: "Pop, what's an alcoholic?"

Father: "A man who tries to pull himself out of trouble with a corkscrew."

\* \* \*

Mrs. Hibbs sought her hostess and inquired: "What's become of that pretty waitress who was passing the cocktails?" "I'm sorry," apologized the hostess. "Were you looking for a drink?" "Thank you, no," said Mrs. Hibbs, "I was looking for my husband."

\* \* \*

The barkeep kept a pet parrot and one evening a drunk climbed atop a stool and tried to catch hold of it. "Scram, landlubber," shrieked the outraged Polly. "What's the big idea?" The drunk looked surprised, tipped his hat, mumbled, "Golly, I'm sorry, mister! I thought you was a boid!"

and which I'd turned down, called on me again. We set a date and then I really took hold of myself and put my new sense of values to work.

Before driving over to the meeting I went to my room and relaxed for 30 minutes and concentrated on that Power greater than myself. I prayed for guidance that I might present my lead humbly, simply and sincerely.

## This Time at Ease

I was very pleasantly surprised to find myself completely at ease. I stated simply and honestly why I came into A.A. and what A.A. means to me today.

That night when I went to bed I realized at last a full spiritual awakening. And it came merely by practicing the 12 Steps in my own way to the best of my ability. There were tears of gratitude in my eyes when I went to sleep . . . peaceful sleep.

I believe one of the best things that happened to me from my experiences in A.A. is the gaining of emotional stability.

So, to me, sobriety is the foundation upon which I am building a new and better life. I am ten months old in A.A. And although

sobriety is a small part of the program to me now I never lose sight of the fact it is the most important part.

In a nearby city, and near the center of town, is a huge well-constructed foundation made of large brownstone blocks. It has been there for years and to all appearances the plans for building on this foundation have been abandoned. Hundreds of people pass it daily and I'm sure very few give it more than a passing glance. It has neither utility nor beauty yet it has potentiality for both. And so it is with our sobriety.

There are times when we happen upon bits of wisdom in our reading that stand out like glittering gems on a backdrop of black velvet. Such is the following by Andrew Preston Pea - body which to me exemplifies the 12 Steps in A.A.:

"To live in the presence of great truths and eternal laws, . . . to be lead by permanent ideals. That is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him."—Boots C.

## Prison and Welfare Magazines

### Carry Articles on A.A.

Two articles on Alcoholics Anonymous have appeared in recent magazines.

"Here's Looking at You!" appeared in *The New Era*, a magazine devoted to developing a better understanding between the prisoner and society, while the other, "Some Aspects of A.A." was written by a member of the Indianapolis Group and appears in the fall issue of *Public Welfare in Indiana*.

The first begins: "The infant has matured. The Leavenworth (Kansas, Federal Prison) Group of Alcoholics Anonymous has discarded its swaddling clothes to become a formidable factor in the reclamation program of the huge penitentiary. Eighty former tipplers, men who have run the gamut of riotous living to suffer social obscurity and prison sentences have now dedicated themselves to the Herculean task of 'lifting the face' permanently off the bar room floor."

This statement by the secretary is followed by an endorsement by Dr. Manly B. Root, prison psychiatrist, who says, "It is just as well that you don't concern yourself with why you are alcoholics, but recognize your affliction as a fact and seek to adjust your lives accordingly." This is followed by half a dozen statements from members and an explanation by prison authorities that they have maintained a "hands-off" policy.

The second article explains A.A. and how it functions, with emphasis on creating better understanding on the part of laymen.

# 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

## Wants Mail Contacts

From Kentucky

The letter in the current issue signed R.W.E. seems very apropos.

My last "whing-ding" was thrown while celebrating V-E Day and my first contact with A.A. was very soon after.

I have had the misfortune of moving to a small isolated place near a town of less than 2,000 people. My official position is such that I have hesitated to get out and hunt up the few town drunks that are to be found in all small towns. That is, in a small village one cannot keep his anonymity. My superiors or bosses do not know of my alcoholism and being in a government job and hoping for advancement it would not be wise in my judgment to lay bare my past life.

Some A.A. members seem proud of their past lives. I for one don't feel so. When an A.A. moves from one section of the country to another I can't see the use of telling his new acquaintances what a big drunk he was in his former location. You may say that I am selfish and do not wish to share my A.A. with others. I don't think I am as I was the fellow who always paid the check and was the "good sport" in my drinking days.

Just how would an A.A. go about in his practice of the 12th Step in a small town where everybody knows everyone's business and the alcoholic does not want his present boss to know his past record? There are still many people in the world who have no confidence in a reformed drunk and are always expecting a slip. When promotions are in order the former drunk is placed at the bottom of the list. This may not be so after many, many years have elapsed since one's drinking.

There may be others who have gotten on in A.A. and moved to far distant small towns where no groups are established. The writer would like to contact such people for mutual help.

I am of the opinion that unless we practice our 12th Step we may not too long keep our sobriety. To me it is a program that must be

lived daily. Every time we see a person down and out from old John B. we say to ourselves, "Were it not for A.A. and the Higher Power that would be me."

Any help you can give me would be greatly appreciated. I would especially like to hear from R.W.E.—E.K.D.

## So The Day of Miracles Is Past!

From Spencer, Iowa

Well, just try and convince any Iowa A.A. of that, especially since the following came to pass.

Last January a certain "John Doe" was arrested in an Iowa city, charged with operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated and fined \$250 which he paid. The news of this event was duly chronicled in "John Doe's" home city newspaper.

Shortly thereafter "Doe" got on the Alcoholics Anonymous program and, boy, did he ever get on! "Doe" has enough A.A. bubbling out of his ears to supply any shortages anywhere.

Well, in December of the same year, 1946, "John Doe's" name again appeared in his home town newspaper but NOT for the same reason as previously.

The mayor of "Doe's" city had resigned and the city council had to choose a successor and, you've guessed it, the aldermen UNANIMOUSLY elected "John Doe" as mayor.

"Doe" is slightly puzzled about one angle. And that is the angle involved in newspaper business.

"The two-inch story about my O.M.V.I. arrest," he said, "cost me \$250 and plenty of humiliation. The column-long story, with picture, about being elected mayor, didn't cost me a dime and has boosted my morale and that of my family 100 per cent. Seems like the newspaper business is rather screwy but don't ever

## A LITTLE CHILD

From Ogden, Utah

Stevie is my 5½ year old boy. The first three years of his life were separated from me by alcoholic fog, before A.A. It was evening, the Sunday before Christmas. We lay there on the couch together, listening to soft radio music.

"Daddy, I like to be in the dark like this with you."

"Yes," I said. "It's fun, isn't it?"

"Uh huh." He was silent a moment. "This way I can dream without being asleep."

I wonder if there is a better way of explaining "meditation."—D.P.

let anyone tell you that A.A. isn't a swell deal."  
—Group Secretary

## What Price Sobriety?

From New York City

Until I took my moral inventory some months ago after being in A.A. several months I was content in being sober. Oh, I did 12th Stepping and a little thinking on the Steps in between the 1st and the 12th but until I actually wrote out my inventory chart and was completely honest with myself I found I could no longer be content with mere sobriety and 12th Stepping.

I was first aroused to action at hearing an older member say that he did not believe in getting mixed up or confused by wondering why he drank. He was content to accept the fact that there were no real reasons but excuses. This may be so but I found I could not just accept that fact or if I did I would do nothing about my character defects. True as it may be that there are no real reasons for drinking there are surely reasons why we tried to escape from reality or thought we did by drinking. I found this out when I found myself as mentally drunk for several weeks as I had ever been physically before A.A. I found myself in a vicious circle and could not seem to step out of it because of mounting frustrated wrong thinking; The very same mood I was so often in while drinking.

I went over my moral inventory chart and made a more careful analysis. I found that my character defects were not much better—if at all—than when I joined A.A. I could see that they needed much more working on than I had at first suspected, if I was to change my way of thinking about problems and people." To "know thyself" is really a lifetime job. It can also be very interesting because to know why you react to situations and people the way you do you first must realize you can't "judge by appearance sake." Your habits have been formed from childhood and I found I had to search way back to see why I reacted to problems today the same way I did in my drinking days. To change my way of thinking I would have to rid myself of old lifelong fears and get a new slant in order to effect a new re-action. I discovered that what I believed was a minor defect in my character analysis, IMPETUOUSNESS, was my down-fall and that would have to be cleared up before I would be able to make much headway with my other imperfections. I would have to strive for PATIENCE both in myself and other people.

One does not need to be confused by learning. What is the meaning of "Keep an open mind" if not to hear other opinions which may be

(Continued on next page)

better than your own if you would but take heed? One does not have to get mixed up to make a "fearless and searching moral inventory" of themselves. Wouldn't you think it childish of anyone to say, "There is nothing new to learn—I know everything?" Or "I can hold but one thought, the one I have?" on any given subject. The one you have may be wrong as it has often been in my case. It might be well to forget what you have learned and learn anew.

I am no longer willing to accept the statement that sobriety is the most important thing in life. Unless you have MENTAL sobriety along with it your life can be just as frustrated and complex as ever. To live with yourself and get along with your fellow-man you have to change from within your old thoughts and habits. You have to change yourself and not the other person. This is no easy task, I know from my own experience, and though my goal is still a long way off I am sure sobriety is worth the price if you don't stop there.—*Mildred O.*

### Healthy Thoughts for Healthy Lives *From Washington, D.C.*

No man has ever been known to live yesterday over or tomorrow before it becomes a reality. That is a sweeping generality, and usually those statements have one or two exceptions; but in the history of the known world I have never heard of the exception. And so when confronting new A.A.s (and some old ones verging toward the abyss) I have made this remark with implacable finality: "If you can tell me how I can stay sober TOMORROW and do it TODAY I will gratuitously support you as long as I live." No one as yet is being supported by me for that reason. It seems futile to harp on the 24 hour program, for there seems little left to say; but perhaps I can add something that might have been unsaid, or at least has not been called specifically to my attention. In the first place our emotions are the entities that usually run riot and cause the immediate upset; and they are controlled (or not) by our thoughts and will. And our thoughts are more or less developed by the exigencies of circumstances. Consequently we are never quite able to say today what may be our thoughts for the morrow. However, I will say that as long as we keep our thoughts (even 51% of them) constructive and positive our chances of being sober the next day are fairly good. It has always been my humble opinion that A.A. as a whole does not stress that factor sufficiently, nor does it even mildly importune its members to read some of the better and more constructive creations in literature. Most any individual is readily willing to change his unpleasant circumstances, but he or she is seldom willing to expend the effort

## ALKY ALBUM



**"Likker never dulls my senses."**

to change their thoughts about them. And though thoughts may not literally be things it is only one's thoughts about a day that can give good or ill effects TO THE INDIVIDUAL, about that day.—*R.D.*

### A Newcomer Looks at A.A.

*From Scranton, Pa.*

The past two evenings were spent in A.A. work, and tonight will find me doing the same. I should work on my novel or study; Henry Morgan is on the air and I'd like to listen to him, catch up on my reading and relax. There are many things I ought and should like to do.

Instead of the many things I think I'd like to do, it is far more important that I do the thing I KNOW I must do. Actually to me, 12th Step work is a selfish part of our program. It helps me to practice sobriety. Each time I look upon some man or woman who is ill, frustrated and discouraged and in need of help, I humbly thank God for my sobriety. And, as my "charge" progresses, and health and confidence replace pallor and jitters, I am rewarded. This is but The beginning. Meeting a reunited family, hearing their words of gratitude and joy causes my soul to truly sing.

I reflect for a moment and realize that I've but faintly scratched the surface in reaping rewards from membership in A.A. Sobriety, once

my goal, is now secondary. Take friendship. Whereas I once sought to find it at bars, and many times accepted a poor substitute as genuine, I now have a sincere and lasting friendship with every member in my Group. I didn't realize that such sincerity existed in this world. I've heard many state that they couldn't say exactly what kept them dry. One of the chief reasons I stay dry is because I know that I'd have to forfeit the companionship of many fine friends if I returned to my former way of life.

From time to time I'm amazed at the change that has taken place in my personality. A short time ago I was critical, "cocky," resentful. Now I prefer to reserve opinion until I've examined a statement or situation objectively. I ask questions and seek advice of people at whom I once scoffed. I don't resent criticism, helpful or otherwise. And, thank God, I'm humble.

One thing I like about my new life is the insatiable interest I have in other people and their problems and needs. I'm interested in contributing what I can to their happiness, not for any material return. I like people now and want to help them.

Not so long ago I had a system of mental catharsis that was little different from that used by many people. A few Manhattans acted as a primer, generous gulps of rye or scotch put me in high gear. Then I was ready to bend the ear of anyone happening to be near. I had a multitude of troubles and could consume hours telling about them, and I craved sympathy. My troubles have disappeared into thin air. And sympathy—I want none of it. I now consciously and objectively go through some form of mental catharsis each day. Used correctly I believe this is an all-round 365 day tonic. In conjunction with this I've set up a goal and budget for living, giving me no time for frequenting cocktail lounges if the urge should ever present itself.

Spiritually I've had a rebirth. Nothing miraculous has come about, nothing sensational that is, in the ordinary sense. But this transformation and rebirth of mine has something of the miraculous about it nevertheless. I read the Bible now, and though I haven't as yet gone back to church, intend to do so. I pray differently, too. I used to tell God I'd be good and do certain things if he'd do certain things for me. Now I ask God to help me so that I may help others.

When I was first admitted to A.A. I wondered about The sacrifices I'd have to make. I haven't made any sacrifices. The gain has been entirely on my side of the ledger.

I'm hanging on to A.A. and The happiness it's brought me. I'm hanging on with both hands and clutching it jealously, eagerly, I know it won't fail me. My miraculous rebirth attests to that. And speaking of miracles, I hope to help perform one tonight.—*F.W.*

# A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

**A.A. Message in Spanish**—A second booklet in the Spanish language, based principally on Akron No. I Group's *Manual for A.A.*, has just been made ready for the press by the Santa Fe, N. M., Group. The first booklet, *Ha De Ser Esto Nuestro Sino?* was a translation into Spanish of the Salt Lake No. I Group's *Who? Me?* and portions of Akron's *Guide to the 12 Steps*. The material chosen and the translation will, therefore, not duplicate any work in process of the Alcoholic Foundation in its future publications in Spanish. The translator is a newspaper columnist and ex-editor of Spanish periodicals, whose forte previously had been politics. Since becoming an active member his forte is A.A. His columns are being printed in Spanish weekly newspapers throughout New Mexico.

**Clicking in Canada.** — Really tremendous advances are reported for 1946 by the A.A. *Grapevine's* correspondent of the Toronto Central Group which has meetings every night in the week. Open Saturday night social meetings have filled a distinct need with attendance around 100 while the Sunday meetings for beginners run about the same with both new and old members attending. The year's work got underway with a big banquet in March with formation of a central committee at the end of the first six months. This group has built A.A. into a solid unit. There is a monthly meeting with all groups attending at the Central club rooms at 1170 Yonge. According to our correspondent, this is the largest group in Canada and lends considerable help and direction for other groups. Members are proud that L.T.M., one of the founders, was made a magistrate in Toronto last year, an event accompanied by much favorable newspaper publicity. Other favorable newspaper stories have had to do with A.A. success where churches have failed in the work with alcoholics.

**More San Francisco Groups.** — The San Francisco Group, which began the development of neighborhood groups slightly more than a year ago, ended 1946 with five such organizations. It began 1947 with six and the prospect of two or three more in the next month or two. All such groups retain their affiliation with the central San Francisco Fellowship. Holiday week was observed at the clubhouse in the usual happy fashion while more than 100 attended the Christmas dinner at the club and 275 attended the annual New Year's Eve dance. Outside pioneering activities of the group were extended with the inauguration of an A.A. fellowship at the U. S. Army Letterman General Hospital, at

the Presidio of San Francisco. The year's closed meeting activities were marked by visits from B.B. of the New York Central Office and M.M. of the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism. The former said it was the largest closed meeting she had ever addressed. M.'s address was transcribed and the records are now in the hands of several Northern California groups. Both visitors addressed meetings of approximately 500 A.A.s of Northern California.

**A.A. on "Skid Row."** —How A.A. came to some of those needing it most is described in the December issue of *The Volunteers Gazette*, national publication of the Volunteers of America, in an article called "A.A. Joins V. of A.," written by E.G. of the Omaha Group. "Mohammed doesn't come to the mountain so we'll bring the mountain to Mohammed," quoted one fellow to Lt. Col. Jeannette Spencer, district V. of A. officer. The article continues: "He means that A.A. has clubrooms in what folks in this end of town consider the Cadillac-and-caviar-district of Omaha. They don't come out there, so we would like to hold A.A. meetings in your chapel every week, here on the fringe of Skid Row, where A.A. is needed." Next day a new show-card read: "Is Drinking Your Problem? Welcome to Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings. Here Every Wednesday, 8 P.M." The article then tells how two dozen members and wives met with seven men and women from Skid Row with Colonel Spencer an interested spectator. The work has continued with new faces appearing and the meetings have moved from the chapel to club rooms at the V. of A. headquarters. Members of the Skid-Row Group donated a sizable voluntary collection for toys for children who attended its Christmas party. In addition, the Omaha Group has completed redecorating and refurnishing its clubrooms at 109 North 40th Street and celebrated the grand reopening with a gala housewarming.

**A.A. Gets Namesake.**—Celebrating his second year in A.A. recently, J.W.R. of the Mt. Vernon, Wash., Group reports that it was a "double-header celebration, namely, two years of sobriety and happiness, and the arrival of an addition to our family, a baby girl! Having one of God's best gifts bestowed on the second anniversary of A.A. may merely be coincidental, but Ruth and I rather think it's just another one of those spiritual awakenings which occur in the lives of A.A.s. At any rate, we could think of no more appropriate name for our daughter than Alice Ann and for the sake of brevity she will be known as A.A. R. It will be easy to cal-

culate the years I've been in A.A. as the years roll up by adding two years to the age of my daughter. Our son was born about seven months after my entry into A.A. so you can see we certainly have been receiving invaluable rewards during the two years."

**Group Branches Out.** —Covington, La. Group has started to include the towns of Hammond, Bogalusa and surrounding rural areas since its founding in November, 1945. After the usual growing pains about a dozen are continuously sober with two new members celebrating their first year at a supper recently. Bogalusa will have its own group in the near future and Hammond is expected to have a separate one soon. The three towns may then hold an open meeting each month with each town holding its own weekly meeting. Much cooperation has been received from the New Orleans Group.

**Picture, Letters, Happy Ending.**—The October 27, 1946, issue of *The American Weekly* carried a series under "Letters to The Editor" which resulted in what looks like another good member for A.A. An attorney wrote the magazine asking for a cover picture drawn by Percy Crosby several years ago depicting a family on the verge of divorce with the child inquiring how he would explain the situation to his friends. The article accompanying it said the lawyer had shown this picture to several hundred prospective divorce clients with the result that a majority of the cases were dismissed. The magazine sent the picture, asking about the case, to which the attorney responded with a case history, reporting the wife an alcoholic. Letters came to the Austin Group from A.A.s all over the country and the lawyer also received many. A.A.s called on the lawyer but he said the woman had "sworn off" and was trying. Four days later the lawyer reported the woman wanted help, the A.A.s responded, and Austin has another woman who shows every indication of following the program sincerely.

**Meet in Miami.**—The Anona club rooms and meetings of the Miami, Fla., Group have a national convention air as ambassadors of A.A. from many states meet at the coffee bar. One visitor flew over from Cuba and reported that he is starting a group in Havana. At a recent Sunday night open meeting The program featured two married couples, all members of the group. December saw the first anniversary of the Lake Worth Group, attended by a delegation from Miami. January 26 was the anniversary of the Tampa Group, also attended by

many from Miami, while Hollywood started its first meeting with a new group last month. The big party this year was held at Sts. Peter and Paul through cooperation of the Catholic fathers, with more than 400 present.

**Anniversaries Adding Up.** —Anniversary celebrations ranging from first to fifth have been reported. The third annual banquet of the Tampa, Fla., Group was scheduled at the Bayshore Royal Hotel January 26, with an excellent menu, speakers from Jacksonville and Atlanta, and many out of town members welcomed. The Brooklyn, N. Y., Group plans include a dinner on Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, in the Hotel St. George, for the fifth annual celebration. Ottawa, Ont., reports the first anniversary banquet with over 90 present to hear six members of the Toronto Group among the speakers. January 26 marked the second anniversary of the Ft. Dodge, Iowa, Group at the Wahkonsa Hotel with a speaker from Minneapolis and an entertainment program. The Kent, Ohio, Group made a trip to Cleveland on the anniversary of 8005 Lorain A.A. Group. Sixty made the trip, including eight from Ravenna. The way A.A. grows was beautifully demonstrated at the Morton Hotel in Grand Rapids, Mich., at the fifth annual dinner commemorating the start of A.A. in West Central Michigan. More than 150 attended with groups up to 25 coming from Benton Harbor, St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Greenville, Lansing, Holland, Muskegon and one member from Traverse City who made a trip of approximately 300 miles. All five of the original group are still dry and four attended the meeting.

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Note: Subscriptions received prior to February 15 will begin with the March issue.

**Young Groups Growing.** —The Maiden, Mass., Group started last September with 18 members and more than doubled in 90 days with an attendance at the opening meeting of 65. Meetings are every Thursday at 8:30 p.m. in the Spanish War Veterans Hall, 156 Pleasant Street. St. Mary's, Ohio, reports a new member, total now six, with a local physician and a minister working with the group on contacts. For the present the members are attending Wednesday meetings at Lima. Present enrollment of the Pensacola, Fla., Group is 19 after less than a year. The Clarksburg, W. Va., Group is nearly a year old, has 15 members and expects to increase due to the large supply of "timber." Members meet Wednesdays at 8 p.m. at 100 Summit Court. With Essex County Groups Nos. 1 and 2 of Montclair and Newark, N. J., well launched and meeting respectively on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter Claver's, Montclair, and 7:30 p.m. Sunday at 139 Walnut, Newark, an announcement of a third group is expected soon. The first group started in September.

**Hold Information Meeting.**—The Muncie, Ind., Mission Group has changed its name to the Muncie and Inter-County Group, although still meeting weekly at the Muncie Mission until a larger room can be found. Workers report a great need for A.A. work in Muncie and an attempt to meet a lack of information led to a meeting last month at the YWCA in Muncie with speakers from Dayton and Indianapolis, including a minister, priest, physician and an A.A. member. About 300 invitations were sent to clergymen, doctors, judges and others and about 250 copies of *Medicine Looks at A.A.* and the A.A. booklet were obtained for the meeting which is expected to result in better contacts for 12th Step work.

**Happier Holidays.** —Weeks after the Christmas and New Year's celebrations, reports of the way various groups rejoiced have continued to trickle into *The A.A. Grapevine* office, telling of toys for the kids, dinners complete with turkey and ham, coke and coffee, decorations, trees, dances, trips, Santa Clauses, elaborate programs and entertainment. Christmas parties were big affairs at Kent, Ohio, Tampa, Fla., Passaic, N. J., Lincoln Park, Mich., Upper Arlington of Columbus, Ohio, Amarillo, Tex., Charleston, W. Va., Nacogdoches, Tex.; and Des Moines, Iowa. New Year's also had parties and open houses at Cambridge, Mass., Nacogdoches, Tex., Jefferson City, Mo., Louisville, Ky., Miami, Fla., and Rochester, N. Y.

## Facing the Future

(Continued from Page 3)

means the most important thing in their new way of life; but it's a nice bonus.

6. In overall adjustment to reality, the decision to cut off alcohol will not necessarily solve the underlying personality fault that caused uncontrolled drinking. But in *all* cases, coping with the underlying problem—reeducating it gradually out of existence or at the least into harmlessness — becomes incomparably easier when alcoholism's mighty multiple grip on the soul is loosened.

Enough of tabulated assets. The list could be extended greatly. (As, for a final item, the typical A.A. now handling his own bank account with confidence and wisdom, where in the old days his Mr. Hyde withdrew as fast as his Dr. Jekyll deposited.) It's all part of facing the future without alcohol, which membership in A.A., and "getting the A.A. program." makes so much easier. Call it group therapy, call it mass suggestion, call it what you will—A.A. *works!* The will of an individual, pilled against alcoholism, hardly succeeds once in a million times—for alcohol is such a powerful, wily, and multi-weaponed enemy. But under the tremendous impact of mankind's organized will, Demon Rum has already been smashed tens and tens of thousands of times—and it is happily obvious that defeat awaits him in the future in geometrically rising numbers and world-girdling range. It is mankind's organized will, focused by A.A., that has made the great, releasing truths about alcoholism ring like carillons: That alcohol is not a stimulant but a drug; that alcoholism is not a habit, but an illness; that the only answer for the alcoholic is absolute abstinence; that a sincere desire to get well plus intellectual reeducation plus normal will-power leads to the golden goal of *not wanting to drink*, rather than futilely wanting not to drink. Every A.A., before he became an A.A., knew it was utter folly to continue his drinking. But he continued, he knew it meant disaster unless he stopped. But he didn't stop. And with all his other alcohol-created burdens he had that nightmare feeling (we have all had it) of being alone in the world with his tragic, unsolvable problem—until he joined the new brilliantly successful, and desperately needed brotherhood of man called A.A. IremindyouofDr.HarryEmersonFosdick's eloquent words from his review of the A.A. book":

*"Stained-glass windows are not the only things that can be seen properly only from the inside."*

We are inside and thousands are joining with us. As individuals, and as a group, we face, with high hearts, our glorious future-without-alcohol. We are not lost without alcohol; we are found.—C. C.