

January 1952

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

THE VISION OF TOMORROW

By Bill

CLEAR vision for tomorrow comes only after a real look at yesterday. That's why we AAs take personal inventory; that's why this issue of *The Grapevine* directs us to meditate upon the great happenings of 1951. It is our yearly inventory.

Every AA will agree that we have just lived through an awesome, destiny-shaping twelve months.

The greatest event was, I think, AAs assumption of its Third Legacy of Service. Our grown-up society could for the first time know its own mind, assume the guidance of its principal affairs and the guardianship of its Tradition. The Third Legacy did mark, too, our definite abandonment of the petty squabbles of childhood for a far more mature statesmanship. Upon our cathedral of spirit the spire of service was firmly anchored aloft. High above its great floors symbolizing recovery, high above those protecting walls denoting our unity, AA's spire of service rose to beckon *the millions who do not yet know*. The last structural job was done. Such, we think, was the inner meaning of the

First General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous which met April last at New York.

But great events also bore down upon us from without. Never before did so many theologues, philosophers, sociologists, employers and political scientists approach AA to see how its principles and structure might fit into their fields of meditation and work. Never before did so many notable clergymen proclaim how the AA Twelve Steps could be used for almost any human problem.

World assault upon the total alcoholic problem intensified; the noted World Health Organization became vigorous. In America, states and provinces granted large sums to hospitals, clinics and education. New drugs were offered as palliatives for everything that can ail an alcoholic — from his shakes to his neurosis. In all these ventures, AA invariably received high commendation. A great life insurance company, the Metropolitan, gave us wholesale approval in its advertising. While we could not in the least endorse any of these efforts,

we did gladly cooperate with some and were grateful for all.

A climax of public interest was reached in the very special February 1951, issue of the magazine *Fortune*. Right in the middle of this number appeared thousands of good words about AA. This piece was significantly titled "A Uniquely American Phenomenon." Its popularity has continued so great that our Foundation has shipped out tens of thousands of reprints.

The year 1951 finished in still another great blaze. The world of science, as represented by the American Public Health Association, placed upon Alcoholics Anonymous its resounding stamp of complete approval. Last October 30th, the stage of San Francisco's historic opera house was filled with leaders in medicine and notables of public life. Then and there AA was presented with the prized Lasker Award which, in the estimate of many, rates with a Nobel Prize. Not only were we recommended for our success with alcoholism, the Lasker citation actually ventured into prophecy. Its closing words declared — "Historians may one day point to Alcoholics Anonymous as a society which did far more than achieve a considerable measure of success with alcoholism and its stigma; they may recognize Alcoholics Anonymous to have been a great venture in social pioneering which forged a new instrument for social action, a new

therapy based on the kinship of common suffering, one having vast potential for the myriad other ills of mankind."

So reads the dramatic record for 1951 — one of the finest yesterdays in AA history.

Every AA who ponders these astonishing events will be almost sure humbly to exclaim "What, indeed, hath God wrought." Should any be tempted by the dream that AA is becoming great, powerful, or may be destined to save the world, they could well re-read the foreword of AA's Tradition where these words are to be seen:

"If, as AA members, we can each refuse public prestige and renounce any desire for personal power; if, as a movement, we insist on remaining poor ... if we steadfastly decline all political, sectarian or other alliances, we shall avoid internal division and adverse public notoriety; if, as a movement we remain a spiritual entity concerned *only* with carrying our message to fellow sufferers ... then only can we most effectively complete our mission."

Which, in effect, is to pray: "Lead us not into temptation" ... let us not be spoiled.

For so long as we shall humbly meditate in this spirit upon our great yesterdays, just so long will God grant us our vision of tomorrow.