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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. Contents of this publication copyrighted, 1946 by A.A. Grapevine Inc. with all rights reserved.

Re-creation of Personality Possible Through Training

No vocalism is more loosely used or so frequently corrupted and debased as the symbol which stands as one of the key words in the glossary of Alcoholics Anonymous. Like most intangibles, personality precludes precise definition, although it is variously interpreted to mean that which constitutes a person or that which distinguishes and characterizes a person; and sometimes it indicates an individual, especially one of exceptional (excellent or, at least, attractive) qualities.

But, if the word defies enclosure in the strait-

Rapid Growth Reported From Western Canada

On the west coast of Canada A.A. is making colossal strides. In Vancouver a group just 14 months old now numbers 150, the number having been quadrupled in the last six months. There is an active group nearly a year old in Victoria, the provincial capital of British Columbia, and in the past few months groups have been started in New Westminster, West Vancouver, Chilliwack, Kelowna, and a number of inland points.

One of the Vancouver Group's most interesting meetings was attended by a city police magistrate and a leading psychiatrist, the latter giving an address on the problems of the alcoholic, and saying that he had come to find in A.A. the most promising of all available therapeutic methods for helping such people.

Steps are under way to establish A.A. in Oakalla prison and the penitentiary at New Westminster. The Vancouver police court has an A.A. member in daily attendance to assist the magistrates in alcoholic cases. Growth in membership has led the Vancouver Group to move to new clubrooms at the Kitsilano Lawn Bowling Club and to establish regional groups in the city.

jacket of definition, we are, nevertheless, bound to learn something of what it implies and involves. For are we not told by medicine that "the alcoholic needs a personality change," and by religion that "the alcoholic needs a change of heart"? Has not Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, distinguished psychiatrist, reported that the influence of the program is not lasting unless it "effects a change in the deeper personality components"? Was not William James, in his most significant and influential work *Varieties of Religious Experience*, chiefly concerned with the problem of personality change, which, he held could be accomplished through the "educational variety of spiritual experience or conversion"? And have we not, by our acceptance of the 6th Step, declared our readiness to have removed our defects of character, which are reflected in deficiencies of personality?

The mystery of personality will not be forever eluding us if we view it in a practical way as a bundle of attributes and characteristics, some good, some bad, some innocuous. Carrying this notion a pace further and stepping over from the intangible to the tangible, we may look upon personality as comprising definite habits and skills. What is more important, these habits and skills may be acquired like other habits and skills. Thus, regardless of heredity, environment, or previous condition of alcoholic servitude, fundamental changes in personality may be created if people are willing to acquire new habits. Moreover, we are told, the basic habits and skills of personality may be measured and given a P. Q. or personality quotient.

Personality, then, is not a gift but an achievement. Just as the authors of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* believe that all our troubles "are basically of our own making" (p. 74), so the personality change which must be effected will be very much of our own creation. Therein lies

the ground of our hopes and prospects of recovery and improvement and still further improvement.

With what kinds of habits and skills are we concerned in relation to the re-creation of the personality? Unless they are more than utilitarian in a technical or commercial sense, one is rightly doubtful of their efficacy in restoring the alcoholic to spiritual health. Therefore, the new

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33 New Groups Added In Less Than a Month

Again this month the roster of new groups reporting to the Central Office goes right across the country.

Here are the new A.A. locales, by states:

ARKANSAS—Batesville and Fordyce.

CALIFORNIA—El Segundo, Fontana, Marine City, and Yuva City.

FLORIDA—Lake Wales.

ILLINOIS—Fox River Valley (Crystal Lake, Aurora, Elgin)

IOWA—Oelwein, Oskaloosa and Waverly.

KENTUCKY—Russell.

MASSACHUSETTS—Fall River, Holyoke, Hyanis, and South Ashburnham.

MICHIGAN—Monroe.

MINNESOTA—Owatonna.

NEBRASKA—Grand Island.

NEW JERSEY—Glen Ridge.

NEW YORK—Saratoga Springs and Bayside.

NORTH CAROLINA—Whitakers and Rich Square.

OHIO—Ravenna and Tiffin.

OKLAHOMA—Bartlesville.

PENNSYLVANIA—Scranton and Franklin.

SOUTH DAKOTA—Fort Meade.

VIRGINIA—Charlottesville and Radford.

TENNESSEE—Johnson City.

EDITORIAL: On the 7th Step...

"Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings."

Severe words, but what a challenge!

If we alcoholics can bring ourselves to accept it, we have reached the starting point for complete readjustment beyond the stage of mere sobriety.

Assuming we have put some honest effort into applying the first 6 Steps of the A.A. program to our individual needs, we have taken some big strides on the road back from despair. We have already accepted belief in a Higher Power, made a decision to let God, as we understand Him, take charge of our lives, made an inventory, admitted our faults and have become ready to have God remove our "defects of character." Certainly, it is logical we should next ask Him to remove the maladjustments and wrong thinking that caused our bad drinking habits and made us totally inadequate human beings.

The moral inventory, if "searching and fearless," has indicated to us the nature of most of our shortcomings and the admission of these "to God, to ourselves and to another human being" has brought them into proper perspective so that we have a very good idea of where we need God's help in getting off to a fresh start in life.

There is, however, additional significance to the 7th Step. It, surely, is the connecting link between the first 6 Steps and the last five.

Before we are able to make adequate amends to other human beings for harm we have done them as the result of our alcoholic obsession, we must first be in a position to convince them of our sincerity. Unless our own conscience is good, how can we be convincing to anyone else? And can we be at peace with ourselves unless we have tried, in all humility, to get in tune with the directing Power of the Universe? Without first taking the 7th Step, it would seem difficult to persuade ourselves of our ability to right, in any appreciable measure, the damage we have done to our family, our friends or our employers and if the job of making amends is undertaken only half-heartedly, we may run into our old enemy, frustration.

The 7th Step takes us still further into the program, for the 10th Step suggests we continue "to take personal inventory" and when we are wrong to "promptly" admit it. But to whom? First to God (refer again to the 5th Step), then to ourselves, and finally, now in proper frame of mind, to the injured person.

Again, the 11th Step asks us "through prayer and mediation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." Knowledge of His will for us would seem hard to attain without admission to Him that we haven't done very well on our own and now have an honest desire to clean house with His help.

Finally, are we ready (the 12th Step) to help others, until, in all humility, (a tough word for any alcoholic but, properly construed, an entirely honorable one), we have asked that our own faults be removed?—A. T., *Greenwich Village Group, New York City.*

An Ex-Secretary Pleads for Anonymity

(The following letter is printed in the hope that it will draw attention to the good reasons for anonymity in all public dealings, to avoid undue embarrassment to A.A.s and their families. A policy of no identification on addressed pieces of mail was adopted by the groups in May, 1945.—The Editors)

Six months ago I resigned as secretary of a midwest group to move to the West Coast. I had been successful up to that time in keeping both my problem of alcoholism and my two years' membership in A.A. from the knowledge of my husband's family and part of my own. They are people totally incapable of understanding the problem.

I had been here only a few weeks when a telegram arrived at my former home addressed to
(Continued on page 6)

Birthday Greetings

Today I am one year old.

* * *

Twelve months ago I was introduced to 12 Steps.

* * *

Many things have happened in this brief period of time.

* * *

World War II has been brought to a successful conclusion.

* * *

My personal war on alcohol has, at least, reached an armistice stage.

* * *

Peace—with all its ramifications—regained admittance to my home. It is no longer necessary for my wife and family to "sit and wait."

* * *

Storm clouds appeared on birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries, V-E Day, V-J Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's—BUT—the 24-hour plan met and defeated all comers.

* * *

During the past year I have met many people. I am most thankful for the understanding, help and friendships developed.

* * *

Three hundred sixty-five days of sobriety—without cost—is something most people cannot understand, yet it is available to all men and women who are today what I was 365 days ago.

* * *

Fifty-two weekly meetings are pleasant memories and more pleasurable is the anticipation of the next 52 weeks.

* * *

I have discovered that I am not the "big shot" I thought I was—only a small cog in a big wheel.

* * *

I have found that "first things first" means my alcoholic allergy is ever alert to any cock-eyed ideas I may get that I am cured.

* * *

I have learned that yesterday cannot be recalled and tomorrow is an unknown quantity and that today I must "take it easy."

* * *

A.A. has restored my own self-respect and the respect of family and friends. It has opened the door to a new mode of life and awakened a drugged mind with renewed ambition.

* * *

For these blessings I am thankful to that Power, as we know Him; indebted to Bill for showing me the way and to each and every man and woman I meet in A.A.

J.J.C.—*White Plains, N. Y.*

Seeking Guidance for Safe Use of Money

By Bill

In Alcoholics Anonymous, does money make the mare go or is it the root of all evil? We are in the process of solving that riddle. Nobody pretends to have the complete answer. Where the proper use of money ends—and its misuse begins—is the point in "spiritual space" we are all seeking. Few group problems are giving thoughtful A.A.s more concern than this. Every one is asking, "What shall be our attitude toward voluntary contributions, paid workers, professionalism, and outside donations?"

In the first years of A.A. we had no money problems. We met in homes where our women folk made sandwiches and coffee. If an individual A.A. wished to grub stake a fellow alcoholic, he did so. It was purely his own affair. We had no group funds, hence no group money troubles. And it must be recorded that many an oldtime A.A. wishes we could now return to those early days of halcyon simplicity. Knowing that quarrels over material things have crushed the spirit of many a good undertaking, it is often thought that too much money may prove an evil for us too.

For Essential Services

It's small use yearning for the impossible. Money *has* entered our picture and we *are definitely committed* to its sparing use. No one would seriously think of abolishing our meeting places and clubs for the sake of avoiding money altogether. Experience has shown that we very much need these facilities, so we must accept whatever risk there is in them.

But how shall we keep these risks to a minimum; how shall we traditionally limit the use of money so that it may never topple the spiritual foundation upon which each A.A. life so completely depends? That is our real problem today. So let us look together at the main phases of our financial situation, seeking to discover what is essential, what is non-essential, what is legitimate and harmless, and what may be dangerous or unnecessary.

Suppose we begin with voluntary contributions. Each A.A. finds himself dropping money in "the hat" to pay the rent of a meeting place, a club, or the maintenance of his local or national headquarters. Though not all of us believe in clubs, and while a few A.A.s see no necessity for any local or national offices, it can be said fairly that the vast majority of us believe that these services are basically necessary. Provided such facilities are efficiently handled, and their funds properly accounted for, we are

only too glad to pledge them our regular support, with the full understanding, of course, that such contributions are in no wise a condition of our A.A. membership. These particular uses of our money are now generally accepted and, with some qualifications, there is little worry of dire long range consequences.

Yet some concern does remain, arising mostly in connection with our clubs, local offices and the national headquarters. Because these places customarily employ paid workers, and because their operation implies a certain amount of business management, it is sometimes felt that we may get bogged down with a heavy officialdom or, still worse, a downright professionalization of A.A. Though it must be said that these doubts are not always unreasonable, we have already had enough experience to relieve them in large part.

Remedy Always at Hand

To begin with it seems most certain that we need never be overwhelmed by our clubs, local offices or by the General Headquarters at New York City. These are places of service; they cannot really control or govern A.A. If any of them were to become inefficient or overbearing the remedy is simple enough. The average A.A. would stop his financial support until conditions were changed. As our *A.A. membership does not depend on fees or dues* we can always "take our special facilities or leave them alone." These services must always serve us well or go out of business. Because no one is compelled to support them they can never dictate, nor can they stray from the main body of A.A. tradition for very long.

In direct line with the principle of "taking our facilities or leaving them alone" there is an encouraging tendency to incorporate all such special functions separately if they involve any great amount of money, properly or management. More and more, the A.A. groups are realizing that they are spiritual entities, not business organizations. Of course the smaller club rooms or meeting places often remain unincorporated because their business aspect is only nominal. But as large growth takes place it is usually found wise to incorporate and so set the club apart from surrounding groups. *Support of the club then becomes an individual matter rather than a group matter.* If, however, the club also provides a central office secretary serving the surrounding area it seems only fair that group treasuries in that area should shoulder this particular expense because such a secretary serves all groups, even though the club itself

may not. Our evolution in large A.A. centers is beginning to indicate most clearly that while it is a proper function of a cluster of groups, or their Central Committee, to support a paid secretary for their area, it is not a Group or Central Committee function to support clubs financially. Not all A.A.s care for clubs. Therefore club support has to come mainly from those individual A.A.s who need or like clubs. Which, by the way, is the majority. But the majority ought not to try to coerce the minority into supporting clubs they do not want or need.

A Division of Activity

Of course clubs also get a certain amount of help from meetings held in them. Where central meetings for an area take place in a club it is customary to divide the collections between the club and the central committee for the area, heavily favoring the club of course, because the club is providing the meeting place. The same arrangement may be entered into between the club and any particular group which wishes to use the club whether for meeting or entertainment. Generally speaking, the Board of Directors of a club looks after the financial management and the social life of the place. But strictly A.A. matters remain the function of the surrounding groups themselves. This division of activity is by no means the rule everywhere: It is offered us a suggestion only, much in keeping, however, with the present trend.

A large club or central office usually means one or more paid workers. What about them—are they professionalizing A.A.? About this, there is a hot debate every time a club or central committee gets large enough to require paid help. On this subject we have all done a pile of fuzzy thinking. And I would be one of the first to plead guilty to that charge.

The reason for our fuzzy thinking is the usual one—it is fear. To each one of us, the ideal of A.A., however short we may be of it personally, is a thing of beauty and perfection. It is a Power greater than ourselves which has lifted us out of the quicksand and set us safe on shore. The slightest thought of marring our ideal, much less bartering it for gold, is to most of us unthinkable. So we are constantly on the alert against the rise, within A.A., of a paid class of practitioners or missionaries. In A.A., where each of us is a good will practitioner and missionary in his own right, there is no need for anyone to be paid for simple 12th Step work—a purely spiritual undertaking. While I suppose fear of any kind ought to be deplored. I

(Continued on next page)

must confess that I am rather glad that we exercise such great vigilance in this critical matter.

A Guiding Principle

Yet there is a principle upon which I believe we can honestly solve our dilemma. It is this: A janitor can sweep the floor, a cook can boil the beef, a steward can eject a troublesome drunk, a secretary can manage an office, an editor can get out a newspaper—all, I am sure without professionalizing A.A. If we didn't do these jobs ourselves we would have to hire non-alcoholics to do them for us. We would not ask any non-alcoholic to do these things full time without pay. So why should some of us, who are earning good livings ourselves in the outside world, expect other A.A.s to be full time caretakers, cooks or secretaries? Why should these A.A.s work for nothing at jobs which the rest of us could not or would not attempt ourselves? Or why, for that matter should they be any the less well paid than for similar labor elsewhere? And what difference should it make, if in the course of their duties, they do some 12th Step work besides? Clearly the principle seems to be that we may pay well for special services—but never for straight 12th Step work.

How then, could A.A. be professionalized? Quite simply I might, for example, hire on office and hang on the door a sign reading: "Bill W.—Alcoholics Anonymous Therapist. Charges \$10.00 per hour." That would be face to face treatment of alcoholism for a fee. And I would surely be trading on the name of Alcoholics Anonymous, a purely amateur organization, to enlarge my professional practice. That *would* be professionalizing A.A.—and how! It would be quite legal, but hardly ethical.

We're Not "Pros"

Now does this mean we should criticize therapists as a class—even A.A.s who might choose to go into that field? Not at all. The point is, that no one ought to advertise himself as an A.A. therapist. As we are strictly amateur there could be no such thing. That would be a distortion of the facts which none of us could afford to try. As the tennis player has to drop his amateur status when he turns professional so should A.A.s who become therapists cease publishing their A.A. connection. While I doubt if many A.A.s ever go into the field of alcohol therapy, none ought to feel excluded, especially if they are trained social workers, psychologists or psychiatrists. But they certainly ought never to use their A.A. connection publicly or in such a way as to make people feel that A.A. has such a special class within its own ranks. That is where we all must draw the line.

(To be continued)

HOW TO FACE A COCKTAIL PARTY (By One Who Doesn't Like Them, Either)

Can you face attending a cocktail party without getting the quiggley-wiggles and nervous nip-ups? Wouldn't you much rather duck them and your old drinking friends who now bore you to resentment after the fourth round? Well, then, don't worry, you are probably a perfectly normal alcoholic.

Most of us avoid "parties" unless they are necessary for some business or social reason. What then can you do when you must attend these affairs? Oldtime A.A. hands seem to take them in stride but to the A.A. newcomer a cocktail party often becomes a frightening dilemma.

On my third day "dry" in A.A. some years back the old gang brought the party right to my house car-hop style. They needed a hall, some ice cubes and probably somebody to laugh at.

I had fallen off several "wagons" with these friends in the past. This gag wouldn't go any more without hoots and loud guffaws and an unmerciful nagging the rest of the evening.

My hand shook as I poured their drinks and I started to distrust myself as bartender. What could I do or say to really sell them on my new outlook? What could I say to escape the anvil chorus of entreaties, quips and "Just have a few, Joe."

It worked out easier than I thought possible. I told them the A.A. story. How I had found I was alcoholic and what I was now trying to do about it.

Strangely the crowd took me at my word and accepted my story for the first time. There was no nagging and my "nerves" disappeared. I found I could attend a party without long, dubious explanations that fell flat. I found that in

New York City Sets Up "Clearing House"

The A.A. Cosmopolitan Club of New York has begun two new "clearing house" services for the metropolitan area. The club distributes a folder listing 46 meetings held weekly in Long Island, Connecticut, and New York City; and the secretarial staff notifies each regional group when a new member from its locality contacts the Club.

Twenty-six groups in the area meet at 30 separate addresses in such diverse quarters as medical buildings, a museum, fire department headquarters, a woman's club, a Girl Scout hall, civic and political clubs, hotels, churches, YMCA's and YWCA's. More than half the meetings are open to non-alcoholics.

being honest with others I became honest with myself.

When in this predicament, psychologists tell you to do something positive. Don't try to mentally sit on "dead center" and sweat it out. Do something . . . other than take that drink.

When the drinks start coming round, an A.A. friend relates, he always announces in a loud clear voice, "Please make mine a tall glass of ice water!" He says to say it loud. Once you do that you really don't feel like having a drink, and for some reason people seldom think or make anything of it.

The answer may be . . . if you don't have to, don't face cocktail parties. *You* are not missing anything if you are like I am. If you must go, face them positively. If necessary, publicly reaffirm yourself. Or if things get tough tell them the A.A. story. That will keep you cool, and it usually stops naggers cold.—Hugh B., Manhattan.

Time on Your Hands

When May Day comes, the old summer solstice isn't far off. The outdoors beckons as of yore, and there's no reason why A.A.s shouldn't stretch their legs in the sunshine and play just as they used to.

Lots of the fellows seem to have foresworn former friends and pleasant pursuits, on acceptance of the A.A. program. True, a golf club can be a disturbing place for a fellow trying not to drink, particularly if the club was the scene of his crimes on occasion.

Nonetheless, golf is still one of the most sociable of games, and good for you—right through the 18th hole. There are plenty of golfers in A.A. and George H. of Port Washington suggests that they should get started early on some A.A. golf tournaments in the various metropolitan areas.

Such tournaments can be utilized as another way of promoting close friendships, of getting around and meeting other A.A.s, and of letting outsiders know that dry drunks can still have a lot of fun. Might even inveigle some of the 19th-holders to come around for a closer look at A.A. in action.

* * *

We find there's little excuse for feeling lonesome in a strange town, if you're lucky enough to be an A.A. You can be pretty sure of a warm welcome in any spot in the United States. If you don't find A.A. listed in the phone directory, inquire of the hotel clerk, the police, or the local newspaper. They can usually steer you to the boys.

<p>Barley !!! CORN !!!</p>

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

"My life hadn't become unmanageable—the wrong S.O.B. was managing it!"

* * *

Do you know that a pink elephant is a beast of bourbon?

* * *

"Where have you been?" roared the boss at the returning drunk.

"I'm sorry," replied old sawnerves, "but I have had a cold the last three days."

"The last three days," screamed the boss, "were the first you have been to the office in the last month."

* * *

After a bad Friday night the wife was determined to keep her spouse at home on Saturday. After lame excuses and abortive attempts to go out for the newspaper, the hungover answered the telephone and loudly accepted "an invitation" to go sailing in the Sound.

At 3 A. M. he called his wife and told how fine the sailing had been; explained he couldn't get home because he was becalmed at sea!

* * *

Hardened drinkers at a downtown saloon blanched the other day when a young woman said, "I want a bull moose." The bartender produced a pint of milk, poured a glass two-thirds full and added a jigger of bourbon.

When she downed it and departed, one awed fugitive from Alcoholics Anonymous gasped, "What's the idea?" "Oh," explained the bartender, "she's got an ulcer and has to take care of it."

* * *

This really happened:

A drunk wobbled up to the cashier's desk to get a large bill changed. While waiting he turned to a man (who happened to be an A.A.) standing nearby and seemed called upon to explain:

"Need some smaller bills," he said. "Little poker game going on up in the room." Then shaking his head sadly, he added: "Another day in New York will wreck me."

He was standing at the cashier's desk, Hotel Stevens, Chicago.

* * *

Under a *St. Paul, Minn.*, date line this UP tidbit was picked up: "John Moynihan . . . was in jail today. Police said he got tipsy and kicked in a glass door. The door was the entrance to the clubrooms of Alcoholics Anonymous."

The Pleasures of Reading

Wasteland, by Jo Sinclair (Harper and Brothers, \$2.50)

This is another novel about psychoanalysis, and this is a first novel, which has won the Harper Prize. A psychoanalytic process is one of the hardest things to put into fiction form. And yet this author has succeeded where more brilliant and skillful writers have failed.

Miss Sinclair is utterly simple and unselfconscious. You feel that she, too, knows what it is to have been mentally sick and misunderstood by the world—to have been a wretched misfit, loveless and insecure. And you feel that through analysis she has gained insight into her problems and is now in a position to be kind to others, helpful and understanding.

Jake Brown comes to the doctor, because his sister has suggested it. She, too, had been at the breaking point. She, too, had sought help.

Jake is subject to backaches. He drinks too much, and while the word alcoholic is mentioned, I would say that alcohol was not the big problem. Far more sinister are his hatred for and shame toward his family, and his inability to get away from them. He never tells outsiders that he is Jewish; both he and his sister have bettered themselves. They have risen above the ignorant Jewish immigrant father and mother, the other children. Jake fears that somebody on his newspaper will run into his family some day. He shares the tenement apartment with his family, although he could afford to live elsewhere.

All his adult life, Jake has been a weakling, shirking spiritual and economic responsibility. He has helped force his younger sister into the man's role. During the depression it was she who went on WPA. It was she who carried the burden, and in so doing, she had become too much like a man. Jake both admires and hates her.

The book is an emotional reliving of Jake's life, as told to the analyst, and as presented in the analyst's own notes. You see the beginnings: Jake's father and mother in Europe, their wanderings. The father, who is selfish and greedy, and lazy, the mother, who has been beaten down till she is no good to anyone. The children, all reacting in different ways to this lovelessness and insecurity, which is framed in poverty, ignorance, failure. And a breakdown in the Jewish tradition and religious strength. Jake realizes this, when as a boy of fifteen, he is playing an important role in the family Seder, a Passover observance. In the middle of his father's prayer, he looks around the table "and sees his family as they really are."

At last Jake grows up emotionally and learns to understand his family, to love his sister, and be proud of her, to help his nephews, and save them from the wasteland—and insecurity into which they had all strayed.

Whereas the book is the picture of a Jewish boy in psychological difficulties, I felt, on reading it, that these same neuroses could have developed in this same family, even if they had lived on Park Avenue. We in A.A. know by experience that emotional insecurity is no respecter of race, color or creed. And to me, this very moving account of Jake Brown's illness and getting well, is about the lack of love, and the regaining of it, rather than about the lack of economic and social security.

Miss Sinclair has done a very sympathetic and interesting job on the sister. At last you have a homosexual who is neither a villain nor a figure of fun, but a person who learns for herself that "there is room in the world for me." Indeed the sister is the heroine much more than Jake is the hero. It is through her, really, that Jake and the whole family get a new lease on life.—*Felicia G., Manhattan.*

Change Your Life Through Prayer, by Stella Terrill Mann (Dodd Mead & Co. \$2)

"This book is really a series of case histories of experiences with prayer, with suggested programs whereby the reader may make his own experiments and change his own life through prayer." Mrs. Mann, in her preface, thus describes her book, and goes on to explain why she came to write it. Her life had become "more and more complicated, and so filled with problems and unhappiness, that, but for my children, it did not seem worth the living. Then, one day in 1926, between one moment and another, I was suddenly confronted with a situation so terrifying that I knew nothing short of God, a miracle, could save my life. . . . I learned that prayer is the most powerful force in the universe. . . . I began to see that law was in evidence, here as elsewhere in nature. I determined to learn as much as possible about The laws involving prayer. My first motive has grown

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The Clip Sheet

GOOD SIGNS IN MINNESOTA

Proposing to replace the old-fashioned, futile jail-cell treatment of alcoholics with progressive and effective methods rooted in medical science, interested persons recently held a three-day institute on chronic alcoholism at the University of Minnesota.

The *Minneapolis Star-Journal*, commenting on the meeting, noted that the state hospital at Willmar has been too short of funds to employ adequate psychiatric care; while the Minneapolis General Hospital treats alcoholics only in its psychotic ward.

"The most effective attack upon chronic alcoholism has been made by Alcoholics Anonymous," continues the paper. "Minnesota and Minneapolis could help the good work by providing additional facilities for care."

* * *

Indianapolis, Ind., *Star*: "In Times Square 26 people rushed to join Alcoholics Anonymous when they saw part of a fur coat walking in the B.M.T. subway. It was a live pet marmoset looking for its marmor."

* * *

NAUTICAL SHOE CAUSES DUNKING

Plainfield, N. J., *Courier-News*: "What first appeared to be a duck floating sedately down Green Brook . . . turned out on closer scrutiny on the part of park strollers to be a large-sized man's shoe, enthusiastically if not expertly pursued by two potential members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

"The shoe steered a steady course in the middle of the stream for several hundred yards, blandly staying out of reach of the outstretched sticks of the two tipplers. Climax came when the shoe moored on a rock in the middle of the stream and both stimulated gentlemen fell simultaneously into the water in their efforts to reach the nautically-minded footgear.

"The shoe's owner meanwhile slept soundly on the bank of the stream while his companions pursued their salvage operation."

* * *

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Fayetteville, N.C., *Observer*: "Alcoholics Anonymous since the establishment of its chapter here has served to help a number of local citizens snap their fingers in the face of the devil of intemperance and prove to themselves and

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EX-SECRETARY... (Continued from page 2)

me as secretary of Alcoholics Anonymous with the words spelled out completely and asking me to locate a drunk believed to be in a cheap hotel in the worst section of town. Unable to locate me, the telegraph company delivered it at my father-in-law's office, where it was accepted by his secretary.

He came out here to California with the telegram and "faced" my husband with the disgrace I was bringing to the family. This placed my husband in the position of having to defend his wife to his parents. He came near breaking with them permanently. It took all the tolerance of their altitude we could muster to "stay on the beam" and smooth things over. We had never had any trouble before.

Things were smoothed out to some extent when three months later the same thing happened. Then night before last the telegraph company called my father-in-law's home near here, where he has recently moved, and asked if I, secretary of Alcoholics Anonymous, was there. He gave them my number and they called and delivered the message—with full identification again spelled out—from someone in New Mexico wanting me to locate a drunk in my former home town.

I have thought each time would be the last and there isn't much more damage can be done to me, but my husband says the least I can do is try to help prevent someone else from having the same problem. It seems so unnecessary. One of the principal values of the organization to me originally was its anonymity. I am sure this is true with many members and in my opinion the more anonymous we are able to remain the greater will be our strength. Lack of understanding of our problem by those close to us is not a reflection on their intelligence; some people can't understand and since for so long we did not understand it ourselves we must be tolerant of them too, but this lack of understanding can cause us a great deal of personal unhappiness and I believe we members should try to protect one another from this misunderstanding.

I want to make two suggestions that may help prevent someone else from the unnecessary grief that has come to me from such public use of our lists and names: First, that when sending telegrams or letters the abbreviation be used, and that anyone to whom an address is given be instructed not to spell out the words Alcoholics Anonymous on mail; second, that groups use up-to-date lists as secretaries who retire often move and their mail goes into the hands of families or friends.

This may save someone else from trouble and I know that if I had not been so thoroughly grounded in the program of A.A. the trouble caused by this incident would have caused a spill. I wouldn't like it to happen to someone else. If citing this incident would help, I'll be happy.—R.E.

Pleasures of Reading . . . (continued from page 5)

into a steady resolve to devote the rest of my life to learning all I can about this power we call prayer, and to sharing my findings with everyone who cares to listen."

There is a familiar ring to all of this to us in A.A. — an intolerable situation — recognition of the need of a higher power — case histories — suggested programs for each to use as he wishes. There is much in the body of the book, also, to give in confidence in the author, attitudes and concepts that we have come to accept as we have progressed in A.A.

"There is no problem which necessitates our changing the other person. that is up to him and his own soul. We do not need to reform the world. We need to reform ourselves. . . . When we learn to change ourselves, the problem of having to change another vanishes."

"When we talk about changing our lives through prayer, we must consider man's thoughts as a whole, his altitude, and not just a few selected thoughts now and then. For we shall come to see that all earnest thought is prayer."

"When we learn to live by faith and not by fear, even fifty-one percent of the time, we shall make over our lives and affairs."

The case histories, convincingly presented and carefully worked out, are used to illustrate Mrs. Mann's ideas on how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray for. For anyone not already happily adjusted to a life of prayer, these ideas are worth considering. They may prove revelatory or merely stimulating, but in any event they demonstrate the type of development possible to any of us, and so "Prodigal son, if you are sick and weary of the conditions to which your way of life has brought; you, forsake the husks, arise, by prayer, and go unto your Father. You will find Him waiting, and when you but start He will see you from afar off, and run to meet you. He will place on you a robe and a ring, symbols of wealth, and give you food, symbol of health and life, and make you welcome on your return. For it is not the Father who deserted you. It was your own free will, exercised through ignorance or fear, that led you away from your Father's house. Arise and return to Him. He waits."—Bob D., Garden City.

Re-creation of Personality...

(Continued from Page 1)

habits to be cultivated must be those which will, in the words of the A.A. book, revolutionize "our whole altitude toward life, toward our fellows, and toward God's universe" (p. 35).

This conclusion conforms exactly with a definition of personality offered by Dr. Henry Link in 1938, wherein personality is described as, *the extent to which the individual has developed habits and skills which interest and serve other people*. The primary emphasis, the author adds, is not on conversational brilliance, or eloquence in public speaking, or on getting the better of people. Its emphasis is on doing things with and for other people. Its essence is self-sacrifice, not self-gratification. Nothing, however, is lost by self-sacrifice prompted by love. So goes the ancient couplet:

"True love in this differs from dross and clay
"That to divide is not to take away."

It must be admitted that in a material and mechanistic age, this concept of personality, indeed, any appraisal of personality embracing the soul and the spirit, has not met with universal acceptance, particularly on the part of rulers and rationalists. The breakdown in individual, national and international morale culminating in the war and still evident in preparations for the peace, is attributed by a contemporary philosopher to the result of "nothing-but" thinking. He says:

"Human beings, it is more or less tacitly assumed, are nothing but bodies, animals, even machines; the only really real elements of reality are matter and energy in their measurable aspects; values are nothing but illusions that have somehow got themselves mixed up with our experience of the world; mental happenings are nothing but epiphenomena, produced by and entirely dependent upon physiology; spirituality is nothing but wish fulfillment and misdirected sex; and so on. The political consequences of this 'nothing-nut' philosophy are clearly apparent in that widespread indifference to the values of human personality and human life, which are characteristic of the present age." (Huxley, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, p. 37, 1946).

However exaggerated this indictment may be, the alcoholic perhaps more than other people has been the easy victim of certain current modes of thought and living which have fostered the development of the greatest single obstacle



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to his recovery, namely, a personality having as its core a narcissistic, egocentric, defiant and self-sufficient individuality, supreme in its domain, brooking no interference by God or man. In his own way, every alcoholic is a little Hitler and he courts a similar fate. Such a personality obviously can be transformed only by a change in point of view accompanied by the acquisition of a new set of habits with which to implement it.

This change in the alcoholic's outlook will be marked by objectivity in thought, a dedication of his life to the service of his fellow beings and an attitude of cooperation with the Supreme Being—a metamorphosis which can only be described as a miracle. But, as Dr. Harry E. Fosdick says, it is the incredible that happens, human nature does change, and alcoholics can and do live consecrated lives. The phenomenon of personality change, then, is clearly the result of a spiritual awakening. And the spiritual awakening which breaks asunder the shackles of his basic egocentricity emerges when the patient comes to believe in, surrenders to and makes use of the High Power, which, regardless of the grip of the alcoholic, obsession, he may always invoke.

Power of choice or free will is perhaps the central attribute of the human personality. This is the quality which distinguishes us from the beasts and links us with the angels. Without it the world is irretrievably lost, with it the Kingdom of Heaven on earth is possible. Will power

may be stultified or temporarily destroyed. The inner light of free will is never quite extinguished. St. Francis saw the image of Christ in the face of the leper. The essence of Christianity is the conviction that there is "that of God" in every man, however depraved. The vital principle of A.A. is exemplified by the 12th Step—an irrevocable offer of help to any one, however despairing and despaired of.

A.A. asks an answer to but one question, "Are you ready?" The answer must be a categorical Yes or No. It requires no exercise of will power to answer this question. It does require an election, freely made, between two choices. If power of will were required, most alcoholics would be in a hopeless plight. Since only power of choice is involved, any alcoholic may be free. This is no high-faluting philosophical exegesis. This is the record of Alcoholics Anonymous.

But if free will is the soul of human personality, we must look also to the mind and body through which it functions. These are externals which can be trained and strengthened and directed by psychological and physiological processes in terms of habits and skills. The choice called for by the 1st Step having been made, new insights having been discovered, and new values having been established, the alcoholic is ready to re-create his life, that is to say, his personality, as its essence and its potentialities have been revealed to him.—R. F. S., *Montclair, N. J.*

Slips Laid to Lack of Faith

Confined to bed with a prolonged illness, I have had ample time to dwell on the problem of "slips." Through a process of elimination I have arrived at one conclusion.

Family upsets, business and financial troubles, etc., have been advanced as various reasons for these "slip?," depending on the individual case. Let us not lose sight of the fact that no matter what conditions prevailed at the time A.A. was accepted by these members, they managed to stay sober. So after many months or several years of sobriety, none of the conventional reasons, or excuses, for going on a bender can be advanced for these cases.

I believe there is only one reason for these slips. The errant members neglected—perhaps for one day—to place their lives in the hands of that "Greater Power."

Let us not blame the individuals too much for this. Rather—is it not because at many of the meetings there has been too much of a tendency to accentuate the fact that "this is *not* a religious organization"? The group therapy has been stressed to the extreme of late, while the religious aspect has been side-stepped as much as possible.

I know from my own case (and others to whom I have talked have had the same experience) that, although the group therapy has helped, it alone wouldn't be the answer without the daily prayer, as unorthodox as that prayer might be.

Every A. A. knows it is that first drink and its effects that does the trick. He or she has learned through A.A. the chemical reactions that drink has on the alcoholic. We all agree that no one but an unmitigated idiot would take that first drink under the circumstances. Yet, knowing all this, an alcoholic will take that drink unless he places complete faith in that "higher power"—and he'll do it every shot out of the gun unless he has that faith, A.A. or not.

There are some A.A.s who always have been good churchgoers, but whom the church failed to help with their drinking problem. There are other A.A.s who say attending church fills them with resentments. Some profess upon entering A.A. that they are agnostics and others say they are downright atheists. But all who have succeeded in maintaining sobriety over a prolonged period have done so by turning to that "Greater Power," either consciously or subconsciously, through whole-heartedly accepting A.A.

It is my belief that A.A. members who have "slipped" have done so because they first "slipped" back to their old way of thinking. This has been brought about in a large measure by the playing down of the religious angle of A.A.

in the belief that, it might have an adverse effect on new members. As a matter of fact, if a man is desperate enough to admit to himself that he's an alcoholic and in crying need of A.A., I don't believe that the injection of a little more of the need of the "Greater Power" into his initiation would greatly disturb him. It also seems just as important to me that A.A. not neglect the fact that no matter how long a member has enjoyed sobriety, he's just as liable to go off the deep-end and in as much need of consideration as the most recent member.

Those of you who are inclined to look upon A.A. as an association of drunks standing shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy, alcohol, and feel that all you need is each other's help, just look over your shoulders and sense where your real strength lies. A friend of my wife, a woman who is not given to being emotional, after attending an open A.A. meeting, summed it up like this: "It was inspiring—it is the most religious group I ever have seen." Perhaps she's right, folks, perhaps she's right.—*J. L. N., Merrick, Long Island, N. Y.*

URGES POLICY BE CLARIFIED FOR NEWCOMERS

I have read with more than passing interest the lead article in the March *Grapevine*, Our Anonymity Is Both Inspiration and Safety by Bill. It has supplied some of the answers to numerous questions that have been developing in my mind since I joined up with A.A. some seven months ago.

I came into A.A. under my own steam as I had known for quite some time that it was necessary to do something about a situation that was growing progressively worse. I have had considerable time on my hands and have utilized a large part of it in A.A. work. I have attended meetings of various groups at frequent intervals and have been regularly active in the group to which I belong. These groups vary in size from a few up to 200 or more members. I have consistently tried to meet and talk to as many of the older members as possible, to learn their ways of thinking and of practicing A.A. I found considerable unanimity in the understanding of general principles; wide variance as to practice (which is to be expected) and very few clear ideas, if any, on questions of a national policy.

I have found evidences of group policy on some questions, which policy varies from group to group and even as to individuals within the groups but have been unable to get much information as to an over-all national policy.

It seems to me that in the growth of groups from a few members meeting in a home to gatherings of 100 to 200 or more meeting in halls, certain adjustments may be necessary and even desirable. Due to the phenomenal growth and future possibilities of the organization, would it not be desirable to draw up, for group use, a statement of national policies and direct all groups to instruct all new members on such policies? In large groups the control of individuals weakens and in some groups the desire for size may exceed the capacity for proper absorption. Instruction in clear-cut ideas of national and group policy may, in part, compensate for the close personal influence in the small borne groups.

Theoretically, a series of *Grapevine* articles on policy might "fill the bill" but actually I doubt if the *Grapevine* reaches one-tenth of the membership. It would be a fine move to suggest that the March article and any subsequent pieces on policy be read before a regular meeting of every group in the country. A special pamphlet on national policy and suggestions on group organization and policies would fill a longfelt need on the part of many members. Would it not be possible for the national office to sponsor a simple course of instruction on policies and principles for the newcomer so that he might, right from the start, distinguish between the recognized and accepted policies and the personal opinions of individual members?

On the basis of its history and present activity I can visualize the growth of A.A. to the point where it will represent a tangible power throughout the land; a power that will continually increase and tend to come more and more under the scrutiny of the public eye. If all members are well grounded in an understanding of national and group policy neither the member nor the general public will be confused as to what constitutes policy as distinct from personal opinion. It is needless to mention that with embarrassing frequency one encounters individuals whose personal opinions could hardly coincide with any considered policy, either group or national.

I am happy to say that so far I have not had too much difficulty in maintaining complete sobriety on the program but fully realize that I have much to unlearn and learn. A.A. has opened to me a field of endeavor in which, with God's guidance, I can cheerfully and without fear of evil, labor the remainder of my life.

Home at last, in A.A.—*Tom. K., Pasadena, Calif.*

Mail Call for All A.A.s at Home or Abroad

Letters to this department are invited on any subject pertinent to A.A. Due to space limitations you are asked to hold your letters to a maximum of 350 words.

Only initials will be published unless the writer authorizes use of his first name as identification for A.A. friends.

The Grapevine will not divulge the full name of any writer but will forward A.A. communications addressed to the writers of letters published here.—The Editors.

Not An Easy Job

From Hoosick Falls, N. Y.

We cannot expect to reach a problem so deep-seated that science and religion deemed it unsolvable, with as little effort as is required for the removal of a decayed tooth.

It requires the doing of difficult things including self-discipline and above all unswerving obedience to a conscience. It is part of God's therapy that man cooperate; and cooperation demands high moral courage in the performance of difficult tasks.

We get out of A.A. exactly what we put into it. The more we put in, the more we acquire of this "new life."

If we sit back and watch others do the work of A.A. we will not get much out of it; if we throw ourselves into trying to help the new member, the old member and ourselves, through the 12 Steps, we will accomplish a full life in AA.—*W.R.*

A New House

From Santa Ana, Calif.

I started out some three years ago to build myself a new house in which to live and I'm still building it, or remodeling it. I have taken on a lifetime job, I know, but I get a little better all the time. Here are my specifications: I thought they might be of interest to others. I have used the 12 Steps for them and find that they cover every phase of construction.

1st Step: In this step I found the reason why all my previous buildings collapsed. I had built on the insecure footing that I could find a way to drink like other people, and as long as I continued to try and build that way, my structures warped, crumpled, and finally collapsed. But when I admitted I was an alcoholic, I removed the faulty cornerstone and replaced it with one around which I could really build a house.

2nd Step: Here I found the sand, rock, and necessary reinforcement to make a real foundation.

3rd Step: Here I found the cement to bind these ingredients into a lasting and secure foundation. In the first eight words of these 3 Steps I found the real and only reason to do anything in life whether it be making a cake.

taking a trip, or building a skyscraper. I admitted a need, came to believe, made a decision!

4th, 5th and 6th Steps: Here I found the specifications to show me how to rip out all the old rotten, decayed and useless timber and material that was in the house I had tried to build. They also show me how to detect any flaws that creep into my new structure.

7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Steps: Here I find the necessary specifications to provide the windows, doors, joists, sewage disposal system, ventilation, that I will need to give me fresh air, light, sunshine and warmth.

11th Step: This provides me with a roof to protect me from storms of all kinds and, through continually seeking guidance, I can always find the leaks and stop them up before it is too late.

There you have a building that will stand fire, earthquake, storms, floods, or the ravishes of time.

12th Step: To be sure that I'm on the safe side, I have taken out an insurance policy and I make my payments regularly and often, by working with others, attending meetings, and doing all I can to make others happy and give away all I can of what I have found.—*J.F.H.*

A Tree

From Shelby, N. C.

After a number of years in the business of shade trees conservation, I still had no appreciation for trees other than from a dollar viewpoint.

A.A. has given me an all-together new slant on them and their relationship to individuals. It never occurred to me that the entire life of the tree is the same *as* that of us in A.A. The entire life of a tree is dependent on outside forces for its growth. Its roots depend upon good soil and deeper and deeper these roots work their way into the earth searching for new substance. So do we in A.A. search deeper and deeper for ways to improve our living.

When the tree has taken able rootage, it then seeks the sunlight, the air, the rain and the warm wind. These are its meals—upon which it must depend for a long vigorous life. Then it keeps on growing bigger and stronger each day but the significant thing about the growth of the tree, it doesn't keep this growth to itself. To birds this tree gives nesting, it protects the land upon which it stands and grows. It shelters and cools stock who seek its shade. It joins in song with the wind and spreads its beauty to the landscape. It keeps taking for its growth but it keeps giving back for all that it is and has.

Likewise, we in A.A. grow. Our rootage is in peoples' hearts and in fellowship, in the things

we say, live and do. We take from everything around us, everything our eyes survey. Our very minds are sponges and absorb ideas, thoughts, and the good ads of others. We grow from the very breath of others.

The tree, the same as people, has its contests for life and long years. One lesson we would all do well to learn from the tree, is the manner in which it silently faces its foes, its storms, its hardships, without ever a whimper. It never ceases its growth, towering higher day by day; year by year it keeps reaching higher and spreading its foliated arms wider and wider. Day by day its rootage grows fixing it firmer in its place in life.

Life is progression. The growth of a tree is the growth and health of its inner soul, the same as in man.—*Alex McR.*

A New Airplane

From Pine Bluff, Ark.

As secretary of our group I called on the writer of the enclosed letter who answered our newspaper ad asking for further information about A.A. He was very appreciative and sincere in his interest and has since proven a very happy and staunch member of our Group.

Letters like this one and seeing true Christian happiness come into the lives of others, is, without doubt, the greatest of rewards. I would be willing to fly through hell to help fellows like Gee Bee *Eff.*—*Ken G.*

Dear Kay:

I am not **much** at writing letters but I will try to describe my feelings to you in a strange but sincere way. We will take an airplane for example, since you have had lots of thrills in that mode of travel.

About the first of last month I decided to take a test "flight" in a new type of plane, manufactured by the "A.A." Corp. I wrote you that I was in the market. The next day you delivered that plane, a beautiful job. After you gave me a "briefing" I look off on this test flight and am still at the controls. I won't say that I have not run into some bumpy weather, for that would be stretching the truth a little, but I haven't crashed yet. The "motors" are four great power plants—i.e.—God, A.A., family and friends. I use a new type of fuel *as* you suggested—water mixed with coffee and a little coke, but no "oil" is required. The controls are all stamped with the trademark "A.A." which gives me more confidence. There is no ceiling and visibility is unlimited. Storms or down-drafts don't bother me any more. It really makes a guy feel good to know that you and some of

the other pilots are keeping an eye on him. I am grateful for the phone calls and the interest you have in this test flight, which instills in my heart the courage and determination to bring this plane down at the end of each day without a fatal "crash", that I may live to fly again tomorrow.

Sincerely and gratefully,
Your Co-Pilot,
Gee Bee Eff.
* * *

They're Good Soldiers Now!

From St. Louis

The undersigned A.A. Group, the Wilson Club Branch of Alcoholics Anonymous of Greater St. Louis, Mo., has been requested by one of its "offspring" groups to forward to you a brief history.

In existence since March, 1945, it is known as the Jefferson Barracks Group. Situated at the United States Disciplinary Barracks, Jefferson Barracks, Mo., is probably the first A.A. organization set up in a military installation and it has done remarkably well. Since its inception when there were a mere half-dozen members, it has grown to the present enrollment of 25 men, all of whom are general prisoners—soldiers in confinement.

A years ago Chaplain Keiper called Alcoholics Anonymous to find "if anything could be done for those boys".

The chaplain in turn took the matter up with the U. S. D. B. commandant who was sympathetic to the proposed formation of an A.A. group under his command. Both officers promised their whole-hearted cooperation and enlisted the aid of the U. S. D. B. psychiatric staff, the latter being thoroughly familiar with the case histories of the soldiers in confinement.

Through a careful system of screening (to avoid getting the straight, uncomplicated alcoholic cases confused with those who were not only alcoholics but had some additional psychiatric disorder), the military psychiatrists and the chaplain found out which men were sincerely interested in A.A.—and thus the group came into existence. Of course, the two primary prerequisites were those familiar to all A.A.s—the men had to be alcoholics and they had to be not only conscious of the fact but willing to admit it and their desire to straighten out their lives.

The Jefferson Barracks A.A.s hold weekly meetings in the chapel at the U. S. D. B., and these meetings are usually attended by representatives from the "mother" chapter. The men conduct the meetings themselves, with the chaplain attending meetings in capacity of friend and advisor. Once a month the procedure is reversed and the entire J. B. group comes into St. Louis

in a G. I. bus to attend the monthly "overall" meeting. We are proud to report that these soldier-members, all of whom are in their present difficulties as a sole and direct result of their alcoholism, have grasped the program exceedingly well and to a man they seem to feel that their present confinement, with its accompanying trials and tribulations, is made worthwhile just because they have had this opportunity to find A.A.

The J. B. A. A.s are gradually being discharged from the Service and going home with an asset in one hand and a distinct liability in the other. The asset, of course, is their membership in A.A.—the liability is a dishonorable discharge.

These men have been inclined to worry over their possible reception at their home chapters of A.A. Not wishing to hide anything, they cannot help but feel that possibly they will be shunned a little because of their past military status. The club members have talked to the individuals of this U. S. D. B. Group and have tried to assure them that they have nothing to fear along these lines. As a matter of fact, had not most of us been above the draft age during this last world fracas, we ourselves might well be in their midst.

We all know that John Barleycorn respects no laws or regulations—even army regulations! An alcoholic can become "A.W.O.L." at the bat of an eyelash!

The J. B. members, having become familiar with *The Grapevine*, thought that since it was undoubtedly the most nationally read A.A. publication, printed word of their "plight" would serve to acquaint their home town A.A. organizations with the problem, and thus ease their burden of explanation when they get home and become active members there—for life. The Club concurs with them, and hence this letter.

We hope you subscribe to our idea of making the future as simple as possible for this group of fellow-A.A.s by publishing it.—*F. K. M., The Wilson Club Branch, A.A. of Greater St. Louis*

It Can Happen Here

From Bayside, N. Y.

I came out of The psychopathic ward of Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn, on August 18, 1943, on my 55th birthday. There I ended the binge that was to end all binges—it lasted eleven months. The last nine weeks of it, I was alone in our country home in Putnam County, where I had spent the previous nine summers, some of the time fairly sober, some awfully drunk.

A.A. caught up with me at Kings County Hospital where my son had taken me after he returned on leave from overseas, and learned that I was lying in this country place a very sick man.

He learned from someone of my condition and whereabouts. It took him two days to get me out of bed. Then off to New York City by automobile to be hospitalized. I made every tavern on our trip. My son became disgusted with me and we parted at the bar of a Brooklyn Hotel. I remained drunk in bed for a week. Then, in desperation, realizing I was at the end of my rope and having lost everything, home, business, family and all self-respect, I telephoned my son to take me to Kings County Hospital, for I was frustrated indeed. Just before entering The hospital, my son bought me two drinks in a tavern near the institution in which I was clamped a few minutes later. Those two drinks in August 1943 were my last.

The first A.A. prospect I worked with after I had been sober a month was a former drinking companion who used to bring my liquor to me while I lay in bed drunk. He would sit on a chair beside my bed and get stinko, too. We called ourselves the horizontal and perpendicular rum pots. He has not had a drink since he went to his first A.A. meeting in October, 1943. He and his wife had been separated over three years and he had not earned a dollar in five years, having lost his very lucrative insurance business. He is now back with his wife and has a position in his regular line.

On Friday, April 5th, the Bayside Group was launched with 94 A.A.s and guests in attendance. We now meet every Friday evening at The Women's Club.

The recapture of marital happiness is often one of the blessings of A.A. Among those attending this meeting, one remarried his wife last Sunday. Just eleven months ago, my wife and I went to the same psychopathic ward, in which I had been a patient, to get this same man out of the hospital. We drove him to his first A.A. meeting the same evening, and others the next two nights. He and his wife now work together continuously with new members, both men and lady lushers. My wife and I frequently make 12th Step calls together and she attends at least two meetings a week with me.

The couple who have just been rejoined through A.A. were re-married by the very minister who suggested we contact the husband 11 months ago. Of the 30 guests present at the wedding reception, twenty were members of A.A.

This happy A.A. couple are now on their honeymoon in Virginia. If there is no A.A. Group in those parts, there may be, before they return.

God has granted me "serenity to accept things I cannot change, courage to change things I can and wisdom to know the difference," only I believe, because of application of the 12 Steps to every department of my life, to the best of my ability.—*John G.*

A.A.'s Country-Wide News Circuit

The Philadelphia, Pa., Group, conservative in accordance with tradition, is proud of its 90 new members gained since March 1, 1945, all of whom have been dry three months or more. This brings the total membership to 350. A member of this group which has now incorporated with the six auxiliary groups, is scheduled to deliver two lectures at the Pennsylvania School of Alcohol Studies at Juanita College, Huntington, Pa., during June. They are also furnishing two members to appear before the Pennsylvania Association on Probation and Parole in Harrisburg at a seminar. These A.A.s will speak in behalf of the parole system as it pertains to alcoholics. For the second time this year the Philadelphia Group has been asked to meet with the Psychiatric Association of Philadelphia.

* * *

The St. Paul Group has been fortunate, through the good offices of Dr. R. H. Lindley, superintendent of the state hospital at Wilmar, Minn., in organizing an A.A. group among the alcoholics of that institution. The St. Paul Group, which gives to all newcomers a little card outlining the policy for sponsorship, is to hold its *fifth anniversary* banquet May 4. The principal guest speaker is to be Judge Lewis Drucker, associate judge of the Superior Court, Cleveland, Ohio.

* * *

The one-man group in Vermilion, Ohio, is doing fine. He is approaching his first A.A. birthday. . . . The Cleveland Group will give its annual Minstrel Show May 5 and 6. . . . The Carnegie and Lakeshore Groups recently celebrated their *first anniversaries*. The latter reports it has tripled in membership since its organization in April, 1945. . . . The Lorain-Antlers Group announces acquisition of new quarters, with more space for expanding attendance. . . . A full-time secretary is in charge of the new central office opened by the Boston, Mass., Group at 30 Huntington Avenue. . . . The Charleston, W. Va., Group, Box 924, reports excellent progress. . . . Leading ministers of all faiths, judges, physicians and prominent public officials address the Richmond, Va., Group from time to time. This group now totals 50 members. Richmond A.A.s are sending spokesmen to Norfolk and Staunton to assist new groups founded there.

* * *

At the suggestion of the Baltimore Group a meeting of city officials and A.A. representatives was arranged to consider the feasibility of establishing an alcoholic clinic. Three committees were formed, the first to investigate available space, the second to promote the recruiting of a

psychiatrist and a social worker, and an A.A. committee to determine the maximum number of candidates which could be effectively handled by the Baltimore Group on a referral basis.

Much discussion was evoked in Baltimore business offices recently following a two-column feature article on A.A., "Insurance Against a Lost Week-End," in the Baltimore Advertising Club News Bulletin. . . . Women A.A.s of Baltimore have laid the foundation for a self-operating A.A. Group in the Women's House of Correction at Jessups, Md.

* * *

Arkansas is rapidly becoming A.A.-ized from border to border. Thriving groups now are established in Fort Smith, El Dorado, Helena, Pine Bluff, and to a smaller degree in about 20 other towns; and the three groups in Little Rock have almost 200 members, with about 130 in the original group, 40 in the second, and 20 in the third. . . . The Stockton, Calif., Group was host at a dinner to members from Sacramento, Lodi, and Roseville. . . . Covington, La., A.A.s, whose membership encompasses Amite, Bogalusa, Franklinton, Hammond and Ponchatoula, are running a series of newspaper articles on alcoholism and A.A.

* * *

A.A., organized in Youngstown, Ohio, six years ago, today has its private hospital, clubrooms, and a membership of 500. The club-

How We Rationalize!

"We had been drunk all night in a suite on the 22nd floor of a Chicago hotel" related an A.A. friend recently.

"About 3 A. M.," he went on, "somebody got the bright idea that it would be fun to have a nightcap while standing on the outside window ledge. So darned if we didn't crawl out there."

"Ordinarily I am deathly afraid of high places," he said, "but this didn't seem to bother me. It was windy and we were waving around trying to hold on to the window frame and each other, so it developed we didn't have a free hand to pour the drink."

"I was *perfectly all right* until the third one in the party who had watched the procedure from the inside started to tickle me. I can't stand that and I almost went nuts trying to get inside before losing my grip."

"Although this man had been my best friend for years," he continued, "I bawled him out unmercifully and told him I would never speak to him again. And I kept my pledge for years. In fact I always pointed him out to others *as the man who jeopardized my life!*"

rooms, hospital and offices are in one building; the hospital has 12 beds, for men only. . . . The Columbus Group, four and a half years old, with approximately 450 members, 100 for each year, is planning a big open meeting for June at Memorial Hall. The purpose is to present A.A. to the public as well as to Central Ohio members. This group now uses the facilities of two local nursing homes for work with alcoholics. . . . The Marion, Galion, and Mansfield Groups have made remarkable strides. At least a portion of their success lies, they state, in their friendly habit of attending neighboring meetings.

* * *

Denver A.A.s, since the establishment of their clubrooms, report that more drunks are finding their way into A.A. under their own power. . . . Fort Worth, Tex., now has an Alcoholic Information Center, with an A.A. in charge. . . . The St. Georges, Bermuda, Group, originating in November, 1945, is currently running ads in the *Mid-Ocean News*. . . . A.A.s from Shelby, N. C., and Anderson, S. C., participated in a meeting of the Greenville, S. C., Group which started in November 1945, and today has over 25 members. . . . Celebrating its *fifth anniversary*, the Forest Hills, N. Y., Group had as guest speakers at a dinner-meeting the Rev. Father James Griffin and Judge John O'Brien. This group has moved into larger quarters in the Queens County Medical Society Building, Queens Boulevard and 75th Avenue.

* * *

In the last few weeks the Milwaukee, Wis., Group has experienced a growth which some attribute partly to generous and constructive newspaper pieces on the A.A. program. The Coffee Bar is an outstanding feature of the new clubrooms. . . . In the past six months Albany, N. Y., A.A.s have doubled their membership, which now totals 35. . . . The four-year-old Rochester, N. Y., Group has grown from 20 to 200. . . . Ithaca A.A.s, with a membership of 15, have instituted a series of monthly meetings open to the public. . . . A new group is getting under way in Poughkeepsie.

* * *

The San Francisco Group's institutional program is expanding. Added to the San Quentin program, in which Oakland, Richmond, Palo Alto and Vallejo groups cooperate, is a revival of the Napa State Hospital project, in which Oakland, Vallejo, and Santa Rosa have joined. Now the San Francisco Group has added a Marine Hospital program, with weekly meetings. Hand in hand with that expansion is a project for districting the city and establishing small groups, which will remain identified with the

central body. The Mission Group was established last year; the Marine-Midtown is now under way, as is the Marin County Group, all stemming from San Francisco. A public address system has been ordered for the combined clubhouse-meeting-hall.

* * *

The Upper Darby, Pa., Group, which was started in January, 1945, by a few members of the Philadelphia Group who live in the Upper Darby area, now has a membership of 60. After having generously been provided with a meeting hall by the township commissioners, the group began to feel the necessity for a small clubroom of their own. They procured the necessary furniture and the clubroom opened for business last November 1, at 7020 Garrett Road. One hundred and twenty-five were present at the second open meeting, including doctors, magistrates, educators, lawyers and members of the clergy.

* * *

The annual banquet of the Baltimore Group was held on Easter Saturday evening, April 20. Guest speakers were Dr. Edward F. Kerman, eminent Baltimore psychiatrist; the Rev. Fr. Dougherty, S.J., of St. Ignatius' Church; the Rev. Richard Baker of the Church, of the Redeemer. A.A. speakers came from Philadelphia, Washington and Newark Groups.

* * *

Kalamazoo, Mich., now has two active groups. . . . Starting in July, 1945, with six members, Seattle, Wash., A.A. has grown to a total membership of over 200, comprising nine groups. They have their own clubrooms. . . . The Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Group has observed its *second anniversary*.

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On April 29 the story of A.A. in dramatized form was once again broadcast throughout the nation—over NBC's "Cavalcade of America" program.

* * *

The Memphis, Tenn., A.A.s a few month ago began making calls on the alcoholics at the West Tennessee State Hospital at Bolivar, at the request of doctors in charge. Each band of visiting A.A.s is different from the preceding one. Some of the alcoholic patients, on release from the hospital, are now beginning to get in touch with the group. . . . A state's attorney attended an A.A. meeting in Lyndonville, Vt., last month and was much interested in what he heard. The meeting was held by the Montpelier and the St. Johnsbury groups as a first, venture in that town. The state's attorney participated in the open discussion, indicating deep interest in the age and type of men and women who are finding a new way of living through A.A. At the conclusion of the session he gave the group the names of two men in jail at the time as prospects for 12th stepping. Further, he asked for a list of A.A. groups in Vermont to use in sending a personal

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

Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio: "The trustees of Cleveland Public Library gratefully acknowledged the gift of seven volumes of the Braille edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* presented and prepared by our fine Canton blind A.A. member. . . . This is indeed a valuable contribution and should do a lot of good.

". . . (The member) lost his vision by drinking poisoned hooch and has been an immensely impressive speaker before many groups."

* * *

The Brighter Side, Waterloo, Iowa: "Oelwein, Iowa, look her place in the A.A. world with five good members who have recently been converted to sobriety.

"There were about 12 Waterloo A.A.s who drove over there to help the boys off to a flying start. Something quite unique about this first meeting was the fact that it was organized in the beer parlor of a large dance hall, which was donated by the dance hall management. . . .

"The Oelwein business men are behind this movement 100%."

* * *

Camel Club Chronicle, Marshalltown, Iowa: "Now then, what to do about these troubles, worries, and problems? Well, if you are in A.A. and, if the A.A. program or philosophy, is IN YOU, you know the answer; you have the answer. If you are a drinking alcoholic, your best bet is

letter to the other 13 state attorneys in which he would suggest that A.A. be contacted on alcoholic cases.

* * *

Father Flannegan of Boys Town was a guest at the *second anniversary* get-together of the Sioux City, Iowa, Group. . . . The Albuquerque, N. M., Group, now one year old, has today a membership of 50, and a second group has already been formed. . . . In Cincinnati, you can usually find 12 or 15 A.A.s lunching every noon at The Colony.

Clip Sheet . . .

(Continued from page 6)

their friends and families that they had what it took to stop drink before drink stopped them.

"The personal reward of getting out of the clutches of the alcohol habit is tremendous, and at the same time the benefit to the community is not inconsiderable when one considers the transformation of a citizen, who was apt to become a community liability, into a citizen who pulls his own weight, stays sober, earns money and pays taxes."

to hi-tail it fast as you can to an A.A. member or, if you do not know one, then contact the closest A.A. Group."

* * *

Central Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio: "It has been said that the truest test of civilization is, not the census nor the size of cities nor the crops raised—but it is the kind of man the country turns out. This applies to groups—it isn't the size of the group that impresses us, it is the *caliber* of its membership."

* * *

A.A. Tribune, Des Moines, Iowa: "You will notice the fellow that takes a tumble (Note to other A.A. groups: We do have tumbles) he always is complaining about something that has made him mad. Like one fellow told me—the boss had changed him on a job, and the guy goes to the boss, told him what a rat he was and quit—I quit, you can't fire me.' Then the guy says to me, 'Course the boss was right.' Then says I, 'Well, you haven't told all the story, have you? Didn't you then go and get drunk?' 'Yep,' says my friend, 'I got drunk.' . . ."

"The Information Center is having a broadcast on the Betty Wells hour. . . . Betty has been a great booster for the Center, and the Center is doing a great job. . . ."

"The ladies' group has taken on a gym class at the YWCA."