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A.A. at Work for the Seamen

In reference to my work at Seamen's Church Institute in Manhattan, I submit an analysis briefly covering the rudimentary details of my job, including a typical case history.

I think I may best explain my relations with these men by presenting them as a group, as their individual experiences are strikingly similar. These men, for varying reasons, have been drinking for a periods of from a few days to several weeks, have, for the most part, been in fights and arguments, usually requiring both medical and surgical attention. Their money is invariably gone, papers lost or stolen, and many are on the verge of the "shakes" or delirium tremens. At this stage I take them to the alcoholic ward at Bellevue Hospital, where they are kept from one to three or four days until their medical condition is corrected and their appetite at least partially restored.

Upon release from the hospital many are placed in a rest center for an additional period. Others are given lodging and meals, and a temporary shore job until they are once again fit to return to sea duty. While attending to their immediate needs, I also take care of their personal problems of every nature, assist them in their financial dealings, and, perhaps most important to them, obtain duplicates of their papers, which usually takes from one to two weeks. As the majority of these men lose even their

personal belongings and become untidy and dishevelled it falls to me to replace their gear from razor and comb to new clothing.

After attending to their obviously important, immediate needs I then approach them with the A.A. program, give them literature to read, invite them to meetings, and endeavor in every way possible to sincerely interest them in the movement. I am very happy to be able to state that the great majority of these men not only take an active part in the A.A. program but many even bring their former friends and drinking companions. Often, under the strong psychological influence that a return to sobriety brings, a great number of these men once again turn to religion.

To further clarify the preceding explanation, I cite the following typical case history of one of the many young seamen with whom I have worked. This seaman, who had been on a prolonged three week drinking bout, finally ended up where they all do, at the Credit Bureau, which referred him to me. Because of his jittery nerves and inability to eat, I personally took him to Bellevue Hospital where he remained a few days. I then called for him, brought him back to the institute, got him food, lodging and duplicates of his papers. As a result of a hold-up a year ago, he was sent to the Marine Hospital for some extensive dental and plastic surgery which

necessitated his staying ashore for several additional months. As he was a former painter, he was able to obtain a job in New York as a painter, and immediately paid back his debt incurred at the institute. At this stage, he realized that he was a ready prospect for the A.A. movement, and he became very active, speaking at various meetings, and bringing in as new members several of his old acquaintances. After the conclusion of his treatment at the Marine Hospital, he had become an active A.A. member, had been sober over four months, and has returned to sea. - *Bill F.*