

Original Big Book Stories from the First Edition

These are the original stories as they appeared in the first printing of the first edition of the Big Book. Each story has the author's name and where they first got sober or where they were from. On page 29 of the Big Book, it says, "Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God." And on page 50, it also says, "In our personal stories you will find a wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself." You'll notice the stories below conform to these descriptions. Since the first edition, some stories have been removed and others have been added. Unfortunately, some stories in our Big Book today do not even MENTION a Higher Power. Yet the original purpose for including the stories was not to help the reader to identify whether they are an alcoholic or not; they were there to help the reader on their path to a God of their own understanding. Enjoy!

Just Love, Barefoot Bill.

THE DOCTOR'S NIGHTMARE (later became "Doctor Bob's Nightmare") by Bob Smith, M.D. (Akron, OH.)

I was born in a small New England village of about seven thousand souls. The general moral standard was, as I recall it, far above the average. No beer or liquor was sold in the neighborhood, except at the State liquor agency where perhaps one might procure a pint if he could convince the agent that he really needed it. Without this proof the expectant purchaser would be forced to depart empty handed with none of what I later came to believe was the great panacea for all human ills. Men who had liquor shipped in from Boston or New York by express were looked upon with great distrust and disfavor by most of the good townspeople. The town was well supplied with churches and schools in which I pursued my early educational activities.

My father was a professional man of recognized ability and both my father and mother were most active in church affairs. Both father and mother were considerably above the average in intelligence.

Unfortunately for me I was the only child, which perhaps engendered the selfishness which played such an important part in bringing on my alcoholism.

From childhood through high school I was more or less forced to go to church, Sunday School and evening service, Monday night Christian Endeavor and sometimes to Wednesday evening prayer meeting. This had the effect of making me resolve that when I was free from parental domination, I would never again darken the doors of a church. This resolution I kept steadfastly for the next *forty* years, except when circumstances made it seem unwise to absent myself.

After high school came four years in one of the best colleges in the country where drinking seemed to be a major extra-curricular activity. Almost everyone seemed to do it. I did it more and more, and had lots of fun without much grief, either physical or financial. I seemed to be able to snap back the next morning better than most of my fellow drinkers, who were cursed (or perhaps blessed) with a great deal of morning-after nausea. Never once in my life have I had a headache, which fact leads me to believe that I was an alcoholic almost from the start. My whole life seemed to be centered around doing what I wanted to do, without regard for the rights, wishes, or privileges of anyone else; a state of mind which became more and more predominant as the years passed. I was graduated with "summa cum laude" in the eyes of the drinking fraternity, but not in the eyes of the Dean.

The next three years I spent in Boston, Chicago, and Montreal in the employ of a large manufacturing concern, selling railway supplies, gas engines of all sorts, and many other items of heavy hardware. During these years, I drank as much as my purse permitted, still without paying too great a penalty, although I was beginning to have morning "jitters" at times. I lost only a half day's work during these three years.

My next move was to take up the study of medicine, entering one of the largest universities in the country.

There I took up the business of drinking with much greater earnestness than I had previously shown. On account of my enormous capacity for beer, I was elected to membership in one of the drinking societies, and soon became one of the leading spirits. Many mornings I have gone to classes, and even though fully prepared, would turn and walk back to the fraternity house because of my jitters, not daring to enter the classroom for fear of making a scene should I be called on for recitation.

This went from bad to worse until sophomore spring when, after a prolonged period of drinking, I made up my mind that I could not complete my course, so I packed my grip and went South and spent a month on a large farm owned by a friend of mine. When I got the fog out of my brain, I decided that quitting school was very foolish and that I had better return and continue my work. When I reached school, I discovered the faculty had other ideas on the subject. After much argument they allowed me to return and take my exams, all of which I passed creditably. But they were much disgusted and told me they would attempt to struggle along without my presence. After many painful discussions, they finally gave me my credits and I migrated to another of the leading universities of the country and entered as a Junior that Fall.

There my drinking became so much worse that the boys in the fraternity house where I lived felt forced to send for my father, who made a long journey in the vain endeavor to get me straightened around. This had little effect however for I kept on drinking and used a great deal more hard liquor than in former years.

Coming up to final exams I went on a particularly strenuous spree. When I went in to write the examinations, my hand trembled so I could not hold a pencil. I passed in at least three absolutely blank books. I was, of course, soon on the carpet and the upshot was that I had to go back for two more quarters and remain absolutely dry, if I wished to graduate. This I did, and proved myself satisfactory to the faculty, both in deportment and scholastically.

I conducted myself so creditably that I was able to secure a much coveted internship in a western city, where I spent two years. During these two years I was kept so busy that I hardly left the hospital at all. Consequently, I could not get into any trouble.

When those two years were up, I opened an office downtown. Then I had some money, all the time in the world, and considerable stomach trouble. I soon discovered that a couple of drinks would alleviate my gastric distress, at least for a few hours at a time, so it was not at all difficult for me to return to my former excessive indulgence.

By this time I was beginning to pay very dearly physically and, in hope of relief, voluntarily incarcerated myself at least a dozen times in one of the local sanitariums. I was between Scylla and Charybdis now, because if I did not drink my stomach tortured me, and if I did, my nerves did the same thing. After three years of this, I wound up in the local hospital where they attempted to help me, but I would get my friends to smuggle me a quart, or I would steal the alcohol about the building, so that I got rapidly worse.

Finally my father had to send a doctor out from my home town who managed to get me back there some way and I was in bed about two months before I could venture out of the house. I stayed about town a couple of months more and returned to resume my practice. I think I must have been thoroughly scared by what had happened, or by the doctor, or probably both, so that I did not touch a drink again until the country went dry.

With the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment I felt quite safe. I knew everyone would buy a few bottles, or cases, of liquor as their exchequers permitted, and it would soon be gone. Therefore it would make no great difference, even if I should do some drinking. At that time I was not aware of the almost unlimited supply the government made it possible for us doctors to obtain, neither had I any knowledge of the bootlegger who soon appeared on the horizon. I drank with moderation at first, but it took me only a relatively short time to drift back into the old habits which had wound up so disastrously before.

During the next few years, I developed two distinct phobias. One was the fear of not sleeping, and the other was the fear of running out of liquor. Not being a man of means, I knew that if I did not stay sober enough to earn money, I would run out of liquor. Most of the time, therefore, I did not take the morning drink which I craved so badly, but instead would fill up on large doses of sedatives to quiet the jitters, which distressed me terribly. Occasionally, I would yield to the morning craving, but if I did, it would be only a few hours before I would be quite unfit for work. This would lessen my chances of smuggling some home that evening, which in turn would mean a night of futile tossing around in bed followed by a morning of unbearable jitters. During the subsequent fifteen years I had sense enough never to go to the hospital if I had been drinking, and very seldom did I receive patients. I would sometimes hide out in one of the clubs of which I was a member, and had the habit at times of registering at a hotel under a fictitious name. But my friends usually found me and I would go home if they promised that I should not be scolded.

If my wife were planning to go out in the afternoon, I would get a large supply of liquor and smuggle it home and hide it in the coal bin, the clothes chute, over door jambs, over beams in the cellar and in cracks in the cellar tile. I also made use of old trunks and chests, the old can container, and even the ash container. The water tank on the toilet I never used, because that looked too easy. I found out later that my wife inspected it frequently. I used to put eight or twelve ounce bottles of alcohol in a fur lined glove and toss it onto the back airing porch when winter days got dark enough. My bootlegger had hidden alcohol at the back steps where I could get it at my convenience. Sometimes I would bring it in my pockets, but they were inspected, and that became too risky. I used also to put it up in four ounce bottles and stick several in my stocking tops. This worked nicely until my wife and I went to see Wallace Beery in "Tugboat Annie," after which the pant-leg and stocking racket were out!

I will not take space to relate all my hospital or sanitarium experiences.

During all this time we became more or less ostracized by our friends. We could not be invited out because I would surely get tight and my wife dared not invite people in for the same reason. My phobia for sleeplessness demanded that I get drunk every night, but in order to get more liquor for the next night, I had to stay sober during the day, at least up to four o' clock. This routine went on with few interruptions for seventeen years. It was really a horrible nightmare, this earning money, getting liquor, smuggling it home, getting drunk, morning jitters, taking large doses of sedatives to make it possible for me to earn more money, and so on ad nauseam. I used to promise my wife, my friends, and my children that I would drink no more-promises which seldom kept me sober even through the day, though I was very sincere when I made them.

For the benefit of those experimentally inclined, I should mention the so-called beer experiment. When beer first came back, I thought that I was safe. I could drink all I wanted of that. It was harmless; nobody ever got drunk on beer. So I filled the cellar full, with the permission of my good wife. It was not long before I was drinking at least a case and a half a day. I put on thirty pounds weight in about two months, looked like a pig, and was uncomfortable from shortness of breath. It then occurred to me that after one was all smelled up with beer nobody could tell what had been drunk, so I began to fortify my beer with straight alcohol. Of course, the result was very bad, and that ended the beer experiment.

About the time of the beer experiment I was thrown in with a crowd of people who attracted me because of their seeming poise, health, and happiness. They spoke with great freedom from embarrassment, which I could never do, and they seemed very much at ease on all occasions and appeared very healthy. More than these attributes, they seemed to be happy. I was self-conscious and ill at ease most of the time, my health was at the breaking point, and I was thoroughly miserable. I sensed they had something I did not have, from which I might readily profit. I learned that it was something of a spiritual nature, which did not appeal to me very much, but I thought it could do no harm. I gave the matter much time and study for the next two and a half years, but still got tight every night nevertheless. I read everything I could find, and talked to everyone who I thought knew anything about it.

My good wife became deeply interested and it was her interest that sustained mine, though I at no time sensed that it might be an answer to my liquor problem. How my wife kept her faith and courage during all those years, I'll never know, but she did. If she had not, I know I would have been dead a long time ago. For some reason, we alcoholics seem to have the gift of picking out the world's finest women. Why they should be subjected to the tortures we inflicted upon them, I cannot explain.

About this time a lady called up my wife one Saturday afternoon, saying she wanted me to come over that evening to meet a friend of hers who might help me. It was the day before Mother's Day and I had come home plastered, carrying a big potted plant which I set down on the table and forthwith went upstairs and passed out. The next day she called again. Wishing to be polite, though I felt very badly, I said, "Let's make the call," and extracted from my wife a promise that we would not stay over fifteen minutes.

We entered her house at exactly five o'clock and it was eleven fifteen when we left. I had a couple of shorter talks with this man afterward, and stopped drinking abruptly. This dry spell lasted for about three weeks; Then I went to Atlantic City to attend several days' meeting of a National Society of which I was a member. I drank all the Scotch they had on the train and bought several quarts on my way to the hotel. This was on Sunday. I got tight that night, stayed sober Monday till after the dinner and then proceeded to get tight again. I drank all I dared in the bar, and then went to my room to finish the job. Tuesday I started in the morning, getting well organized by noon. I did not want to disgrace myself, so I then checked out. I bought some more liquor on the way to the depot. I had to wait some time for the train. I remember nothing from then on until I woke up at a friend's house, in a town near home. These good people notified my wife, who sent my newly-made friend over to get me. He came and got me home and to bed, gave me a few drinks that night, and one bottle of beer the next morning.

That was June 10, 1935, and that was my last drink. As I write nearly six years have passed.

The question which might naturally come into your mind would be: "what did the man do or say that was different from what others had done or said?" It must be remembered that I had read a great deal and talked to everyone who knew, or thought they knew, anything about the subject of alcoholism. This man was a man who had experienced many years of frightful drinking, who had had most all the drunkard's experience known to man, but who had been cured by the very means I had been trying to employ, that is to say, the spiritual approach. He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtedly helpful. *Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language.* He knew all the answers, and certainly not because he had picked them up in his reading.

It is a most wonderful blessing to be relieved of the terrible curse with which I was afflicted. My health is good and I have regained my self-respect and the respect of my colleagues. My home life is ideal and my business is as good as can be expected in these uncertain times.

I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.

Unlike most of our crowd, I did not get over my craving for liquor much during the first two and one-half years of abstinence. It was almost always with me. But at no time have I been anywhere near yielding. I used to get terribly upset when I saw my friends drink and knew I could not, but I schooled myself to believe that though I once had the

same privilege, I had abused it so frightfully that it was withdrawn. So it doesn't behoove me to squawk about it, for after all, nobody ever used to throw me down and pour any liquor down my throat.

If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when getting another drink.

Your Heavenly Father will never let you down!

THE UNBELIEVER by Hank Parkhurst (N.Y.)

DULL . . . listless . . . semicomatose . . . I lay on my bed in a famous hospital for alcoholics. Death or worse had been my sentence.

What was the difference? What difference did anything make? Why think of those things which were gone-why worry about the results of my drunken escapades? What the hell were the odds if my wife had discovered the mistress situation? Two swell boys . . . sure . . . but what difference would a corpse or an asylum imprisoned father make to them? . . . thoughts stop whirling in my head . . . that's the worst of this sobering-up process . . . the old think tank is geared in high-high . . . what do I mean high-high . . . where did that come from . . . oh yes, that first Cadillac I had, it had four speeds . . . had a high-high gear . . . insane asylum . . . how that bus could scamper . . . yes . . . even then liquor probably poisoned me. What had the little doctor said this morning . . . thoughts hesitate a moment . . . stop your mad turning . . . what was I thinking about . . . oh yes, the doctor.

This morning I reminded Doc this was my tenth visit. I had spent a couple of thousand dollars on these trips and those I had financed for the plastered play girls who also couldn't sober up. Jackie was a honey until she got plastered and then she was a hellion. Wonder what gutter she's in now. Where was I? Oh . . . I asked the doctor to tell me the truth. He owed it to me for the amount of money I had spent. He faltered. Said I'd been drunk that's all. God! Didn't I know that?

But Doc, you're evading. Tell me honestly what is the matter with me. I'll be all right did you say? But Doc, you've said that before. You said once that if I stopped for a year I would be over the habit and would never drink again. I didn't drink for over a year, but I did start to drink again.

Tell me what is the matter with me. I'm an alcoholic? Ha ha and ho ho! As if I didn't know that! But aside from your fancy name for a plain drunk, tell me why I drink. You say a true alcoholic is something different from a plain drunk? What do you mean . . . let me have it cold . . . brief and with no trimmings.

An alcoholic is a person who has an allergy to alcohol? Is poisoned by it? One drink does something to the chemical make-up of the body? That drink affects the nerves and in a certain number of hours another drink is medically demanded? And so the vicious cycle is started? An ever smaller amount of time between drinks to stop those screaming, twitching, invisible wires called nerves?

I know that history Doc . . . how the spiral tightens . . . a drink . . . unconscious . . . awake . . . drink . . . unconscious . . . poured into the hospital . . . suffer the agonies of hell . . . the shakes . . . thoughts running wild . . . brain unleashed . . . engine without a governor. But hell Doc, I don't want to drink! I've got one of the stubbornest will powers known in business. I stick at things. I get them done. I've stuck on the wagon for months. And not been bothered by it . . . and then suddenly, incomprehensibly, an empty glass in my hand and another spiral started. How did the Doc explain that one?

He couldn't. That was one of the mysteries of true alcoholism. A famous medical foundation had spent a fortune trying to segregate the reasons for the alcoholic as compared to the plain hard, heavy drinker. Had tried to find the cause. And all they had been able to determine as a fact was that practically all of the alcohol in every drink taken by the alcoholic went to the fluid in which the brain floated. Why a man every started when he knew those things was one of the things that could not be fathomed. Only the damn fool public believed it a matter of weak will power. Fear . . . ostracism . . . loss of family . . . loss of position . . . the gutter . . . nothing stopped the alcoholic.

Doc! What do you mean-nothing! What! An incurable disease? Doc, you're kidding me! You're trying to scare me into stopping! What's that you say? You wish you were? What are those tears in your eyes Doc? What's that? Forty years you've spent at this alcoholic business and you have yet to see a true alcoholic cured? Your life defeated and wasted? Oh, come, come Doc . . . what would some of us do without you? If even to only sober up. But Doc . . . let's have it. What is going to be my history from here on out? Some vital organ will stop or the mad house with a wet brain? How soon? Within two years? But, Doc, I've got to do something about it! I'll see doctors . . . I'll go to sanitariums. Surely the medical profession knows something about it. So little, you say? But why? Messy. Yes, I'll admit there is nothing messier than an alcoholic drunk.

What's that Doc? You know a couple of fellows that were steady customers here that haven't been drunk for about ten months? You say they claim they are cured? And they make an avocation of passing it on to others? What have they got? You don't know . . . and you don't believe they are cured . . . well why tell me about it? A fine fellow you say, plenty of money, and you're sure it isn't a racket . . . just wants to be helpful . . . call him up for me will you, Doc?

How Doc had hated to tell me. Thoughts stop knocking at my door. Why can't I get drunk like other people, get up next morning, toss my head a couple of times and go to work? Why do I have to shake so I can't hold the razor? Why does every little muscle inside me have to feel like a crawling worm? Why do even my vocal cords quiver so words are gibberish until I've had a big drink? Poison! Of course! But how could anyone understand such a necessity for a drink that it has to be loaded with pepper to keep it from bouncing? Can any mortal understand such secret shame in having to have a drink as to make a person keep the bottles hidden all over the house. The morning drink . . . shame and necessity . . . weakness . . . remorse. But what do the family know about it? What do doctors know about it? Little Doc was right, they know nothing. They just say "Be strong"- "Don't take that drink"- "Suffer it through."

What the hell do they know about suffering? Not sickness. Not a belly ache-oh yes, your guts get so sore that you cannot place your hands on them . . . oh sure, every time you go you twist and writhe in pain. What the hell does any non-alcoholic know about suffering? Thoughts . . . stop this mad merry-go-round. And worst of all this mental suffering-the hating yourself-the feeling of absurd, irrational weakness-the unworthiness. Out that window! Use the gun in the drawer! What about poison? Go out in a garage and start the car. Yeah, that's the way out . . . but then people'll say "He was plastered." I can't leave that story behind. That's worse than cowardly.

Isn't there some one who understands? Thoughts . . . please, oh please, stop . . . I'm going nuts . . . or am I nuts now? Never . . . never again will I take another drink, not even a glass of beer . . . even that starts it. Never . . . never . . . never again . . . and yet I've said that a dozen times and inexplicably I've found an empty glass in my hand and the whole story repeated.

My Lord, the tragedy that sprang out of her eyes when I came home with a breath on me . . . and fear. The smiles wiped off the kids' faces. Terror stalking through the house. Yes . . . that changed it from a home into a house. Not drunk yet, but they knew what was coming. Mr. Hyde was moving in.

And so I'm going to die. Or a wet brain. What was it that fellow said who was here this afternoon? Damn fool thought . . . get out of my mind. Now I know I'm going nuts. And science knows nothing about it. And psychiatrists. I've spent plenty on them. Thoughts, go away! No . . . I don't want to think about what that fellow said this afternoon.

He's trying . . . idealistic as hell . . . nice fellow, too. Oh, why do I have to suffer with this revolving brain? Why can't I sleep? What was it he said? Oh yes, came in and told about his terrific drunks, his trips up here, this same thing I'm going through. Yes, he's an alcoholic all right. And then he told me he knew he was cured. Told me he was peaceful . . . (I'll never know peace again) . . . that he didn't carry constant fear around with him. Happy because he felt free. But it's screwy. He said so himself. But he did get my confidence when he started to tell what he had gone through. It was so exactly like my case. He knows what this torture is. He raised my hopes so high; it looked as though he had something. I don't know, I guess I was so sold that I expected him to spring some kind of a pill and I asked him desperately what it was.

And he said "God."

And I laughed.

A ball bat across my face would have been no greater shock. I was so high with hope and expectation. How can a man be so heartless? He said that it sounded screwy but it worked, at least it had with him . . . said he was not a religionist . . . in fact didn't go to church much . . . my ears came up at that . . . his unconventionality attracted me . . . said that some approaches to religion were screwy . . . talked about how the simplest truth in the world had been often all balled up by complicating it . . . that attracted me . . . get out of my mind . . . what a fine religious bird I'd be . . . imagine the glee of the gang at me getting religion . . . phooey . . . thoughts, please slow down . . . why don't they give me something to go to sleep . . . lie down in green pastures . . . the guy's nuts . . . forget him.

And so it's the mad house for me . . . glad mother is dead, she won't have to suffer that . . . if I'm going nuts maybe it'd be better to be crazy the way he is . . . at least the kids wouldn't have the insane father whisper to carry through life . . . life's cruel . . . the puny-minded, curtain hiding gossips . . . "didn't you know his father was committed for insanity?" What a sly label that would be to hang on those boys . . . damn the gossiping, reputation-shredding, busybodies who put their noses into other people's business.

He'd laid in this same dump . . . suffered . . . gone through hell . . . made up his mind to get well . . . studied alcoholism . . . Jung . . . Blank Medical Foundation . . . asylums . . . Hopkins . . . many said incurable disease . . . impossible . . . nearly all known cures had been through religion . . . revolted him . . . made a study of religion . . . more he studied the more it was bunk to him . . . not understandable . . . self-hypnotism . . . and then the thought hit him that people had it all twisted up. They were trying to pour everyone into moulds, put a tag on them, tell them what they had to do and how they had to do it, for the salvation of their own souls. When as a matter of fact people were through worrying

about their souls, they wanted action right here and now. A lot of tripe was usually built up around the simplest and most beautiful ideas in the world.

And how did he put the idea . . . bunk . . . bunk . . . why in hell am I still thinking about him . . . in hell . . . that's good . . . I am in hell. He said: "I came to the conclusion that there is SOMETHING. I know not what It is, but It is bigger than I. If I will acknowledge It, if I will humble myself, if I will give in and bow in submission to that SOMETHING and then try to lead a life as fully in accord with my idea of good as possible, I will be in tune." And later the word good contracted in his mind to God.

But mister, I can't see any guy with long white whiskers up there just waiting for me to make a plea . . . and what did he answer . . . said I was trying to complicate it . . . why did I insist on making It human . . . all I had to do was believe in some power greater than myself and knuckle down to It . . . and I said maybe, but tell me mister why are you wasting your time up here? Don't hand me any bunk about it being more blessed to give than to receive . . . asked him what this thing cost and he laughed. He said it wasn't a waste of time . . . in doping it out he had thought of something somebody had said. A person never knew a lesson until he tried to pass it on to someone else. And that he had found out every time he tried to pass this on It became more vivid to him. So if we wanted to get hard boiled about it, he owed me, I didn't owe him. That's a new slant . . . the guy's crazy as a loon . . . get away from him brain . . . picture me going around telling other people how to run their lives . . . if I could only go to sleep . . . that sedative doesn't seem to take hold.

He could visualize a great fellowship of us . . . quietly passing this from alcoholic to alcoholic . . . nothing organized . . . not ministers . . . not missionaries . . . what a story . . . thought we'd have to do it to get well . . . some kind of a miracle had happened in his life . . . common sense guy at that . . . his plan does fire the imagination.

Told him it sounded like self hypnotism to me and he said what of it . . . didn't care if it was yogi-sim, self-hypnotism, or anything else . . . four of them were well. But it's so damn hypocritical . . . I get beat every other way and then I turn around and lay it in God's lap . . . damned if I ever would turn to God . . . what a low-down, cowardly, despicable trick that would be . . . don't believe in God anyway . . . just a lot of hooey to keep the masses in subjugation . . . world's worst inquisitions have been practiced in His name . . . and he said . . . do I have to turn into an inquisitionist . . . if I don't knuckle down, I die . . . why the low-down missionary . . . what a bastardly screw to put on a person . . . a witch burner, that's what he is . . . the hell with him and all his damn theories . . . witch burner.

Sleep, please come to my door . . . that last was the eight hundred and eighty-fifth sheep over the fence . . . guess I'll put in some black ones . . . sheep . . . shepherds . . . wise men . . . what was that story . . . hell there I go back on that same line . . . told him I couldn't understand and I couldn't believe anything I couldn't understand. He said he supposed then that I didn't use electricity. No one actually understood where it came from or what it was. Nuts to him. He's got too many answers. What did he think the nub of the whole thing was? Subjugate self to some power above . . . ask for help . . . mean it . . . try to pass it on. Asked him what he was going to name this? Said it would be fatal to give it any kind of a tag . . . to have any sort of formality.

I'm going nuts . . . tried to get him into an argument about miracles . . . about Immaculate Conception . . . about stars leading three wise men . . . Jonah and the whale. He wanted to know what difference those things made . . . he didn't even bother his head about them . . . if he did, he would get tight again. So I asked him what he thought about the Bible. Said he read it, and used those things he understood. He didn't take the Bible literally as an instruction book, for there was no nonsense you could not make out of it that way.

Thought I had him when I asked about the past sins I had committed. Guess I've done everything in the book . . . I supposed I would have to adopt the attitude that all was forgiven . . . here I am pure and clean as the driven snow . . . or else I was to go through life flogging myself mentally . . . bah. But he had the answer for that one too. Said he couldn't call back the hellish things he had done, but he figured life might be a ledger page. If he did a little good here and there, maybe the score would be evened up some day. On the other hand, if he continued as he had been going there would be nothing but debit items on the sheet. Kind of common sense.

This is ridiculous . . . have I lost all power of logic . . . would I fall for all that religious line . . . let's see if I can't get to thinking straight . . . that's it . . . I'm trying to do too much thinking . . . just calm myself . . . quietly . . . quiet now . . . relax every muscle . . . start at the toes and move up . . . insane . . . wet brain . . . those boys . . . what a mess my life is . . . mistress . . . how I hate her . . . ah . . . I know what's the matter . . . that fellow gave me an emotional upset . . . I'll list every reason I couldn't accept his way of thinking. After laughing at this religious stuff all these years I'd be a hypocrite. That's one. Second, if there was a God, why all this suffering? Wait a minute, he said that was one of the troubles, we tried to give God some form. Make It just a Power that will help. Third, it sounds like the Salvation Army. Told him that and he said he was not going around singing on any street corners but nevertheless the Salvation Army did a great work. Simply, if he heard of a guy suffering the torments, he told him his story and belief.

There I go thinking again . . . just started to get calmed down . . . sleep . . . boys . . . insane . . . death . . . mistress . . . life all messed up . . . business. Now listen, take hold . . . what am I going to do? NEVER . . . that's final and in caps. Never . . . that's net no discount. Never . . . never . . . and my mind is made up. NEVER am I going to be such a cowardly low down dog as to acknowledge God. The two faced, gossiping Babbitts can go around with their

sanctimonious mouthings, their miserable worshipping, their Bible quotations, their holier-than-thou attitudes, their nicey-nice, Sunday-worshipping, Monday-robbing actions, but never will they find me acknowledging God. Let me laugh . . . I'd like to shriek with insane glee . . . my mind's made up . . . insane, there it is again.

Brrr, this floor is cold on my knees . . . why are the tears running like a river down my cheeks . . . God, have mercy on my soul!

THE EUROPEAN DRINKER by Joe Doepler (Akron, OH.)

I WAS born in Europe, in Alsace to be exact, shortly after it had become German and practically grew up with "good Rhine wine" of song and story. My parents had some vague ideas of making a priest out of me and for some years I attended the Franciscan school at Basle, Switzerland, just across the border, about six miles from my home. But, although I was a good Catholic, the monastic life had little appeal for me.

Very early I became apprenticed to harness-making and acquired considerable knowledge of upholstering. My daily consumption of wine was about a quart, but that was common where I lived. Everybody drank wine. And it is true that there was no great amount of drunkenness. But I can remember, in my teens, that there were a few characters who caused the village heads to nod pityingly and sometimes in anger as they paused to say, "That sot, Henri" and "Ce pauvre Jules," who drank too much. They were undoubtedly the alcoholics of our village.

Military service was compulsory and I did my stretch with the class of my age, goose-stepping in German barracks and taking part in the Boxer Rebellion in China, my first time at any great distance from home. In foreign parts many a soldier who has been a bstemious at home learns to use new and potent drinks. So I indulged with my comrades in everything the Far East had to offer. I cannot say, however, that I acquired any craving for hard liquor as a result. When I got back to Germany I settled down to finish my apprenticeship, drinking the wine of the country as usual.

Many friends of my family had emigrated to America, so at 24 I decided that the United States offered me the opportunity I was never likely to find in my native land. I came directly to a growing industrial city in the middle west, where I have lived practically ever since. I was warmly welcomed by friends of my youth who had preceded me. For weeks after my arrival I was feted and entertained in the already large colony of Alsatians in the city, among the Germans in their saloons and clubs. I early decided that the wine of America was very inferior stuff and took up beer instead.

I soon found work at my trade in harness-making. It was still an age of horses. But I discovered that harness and saddle-making in America was different from anything I had known. Every man in the shop was a specialist and instead of having a variety of jobs to do every day, I was compelled to sit all day long at a bench doing the same thing endlessly. I found it very monotonous and, wanting a change, I found it when I got work as an upholsterer in a large furniture store.

Fond of singing, I joined a German singing society which had good club headquarters. There I sat in the evenings, enjoying with my friends our memories of the "old country," singing the old songs we all knew, playing simple card games for drinks and consuming great quantities of beer.

At that time I could go into any saloon, have one or two beers, walk out and forget about it. I had no desire whatever to sit down at a table and stay a whole morning or afternoon drinking. Certainly at that time I was one of those who "can take it or leave it alone." There had never been any drunkards in my family. I came of good stock, of men and women who drank wine all their lives as a beverage, and while they occasionally got drunk at special celebrations, they were up and about their business the next day.

Prohibition came. Having regard for the law of the land, I resigned myself to the will of the national legislators and quit drinking altogether, not because I had found it harmful, but because I couldn't get what I was accustomed to drink. You can all remember that in the first few months after the change, a great many men, who had formerly been used to a few beers every day or an occasional drink of whiskey, simply quit all alcoholic drinks. For the great majority of us, however, that condition didn't last. We saw very early that prohibition wasn't going to work. It wasn't very long before home-brewing was an institution and men began to search feverishly for old recipe books on wine-making.

But I hardly tasted anything for two years and started in business for myself, founding a mattress factory which is today an important industrial enterprise in our city. I was doing very well with that and general upholstering work, and there was every indication that I would be financially independent by the time I reached middle age. By this time I was married and was paying for a home. Like most immigrants I wanted to be somebody and have something and I was very happy and contented as I felt success crown my efforts. I missed the old social times, of course, but had no definite craving even for beer.

Successful home-brewers among my friends began to invite me to their homes. I decided that if these fellows could make it I would try it myself and so I did. It wasn't very long until I had developed a pretty good brew with uniformity and plenty of authority. I knew the stuff I was making was a lot stronger than I had been used to, but never suspected that steady drinking of it might develop a taste for something even stronger.

It wasn't long before the bootlegger was an established institution in this, as in other towns. I was doing well in business and in going around town I was frequently invited to have a drink in a speakeasy. I condoned my domestic brewing and the bootleggers and their business. More and more I formed the habit of doing some of my business in the speakeasy and after a time did not need that as an excuse. The "speaks" usually sold whiskey. Beer was too bulky and it couldn't be kept in a jug under the counter ready to be dumped when John Law would come around. I was now forming an entirely new drinking technique. Before long I had a definite taste for hard liquor, knew nausea and headaches I had never known before, but as in the old days, I suffered them out. Gradually, however, I'd suffer so much that I simply had to have the morning-after drink.

I became what is called a periodical drinker. I was eased out of the business I had rounded and was reduced to doing general upholstery in a small shop at the back of my house. My wife upbraided me often and plenty when she saw that my "periodicals" were gradually losing me what business I could get. I began to bring bottles in. I had them hidden away in the house and all over my shop in careful concealment. I had all the usual experiences of the alcoholic for I was certainly one by this time. Sometimes, after sobering up after a bout of several weeks, I would righteously resolve to quit. With a great deal of determination, I would throw out full pints-pour them out and smash the bottles-firmly resolved never to take another drink of the stuff. I was going to straighten up.

In four or five days I would be hunting all over the place, at home and in my workshop for the bottles I had destroyed, cursing myself for being a damned fool. My "periodicals" became more frequent until I reached the point where I wanted to devote all my time to drinking, working as little as possible and then only when the necessity of my family demanded it. As soon as I had satisfied that, what I earned as an upholsterer went for liquor. I would promise to have jobs done and never do them. My customers lost confidence in me to the point where I retained what business I had only because I was a well-trained and reputedly fine craftsman. "Best in the business, when he's sober," my customers would say and I still had a following who would give me work though they deplored my habits because they knew the job would be well done when they eventually got it.

I had always been a good Catholic, possibly not so devoted as I should have been, but fairly regular in my attendance at services. I had never doubted the existence of the Supreme Being but now I began to absent myself from my church where I had formerly been a member of the choir. Unfortunately, I had no desire to consult my priest about my drinking. In fact I was scared to talk to him about it, for I feared the kind of talk he would give me. Unlike many other Catholics who frequently take pledges for definite periods-a year, two years or for good, I never had any desire to "take a pledge" before the priest. And yet, realizing at last that liquor really had me, I wanted to quit. My wife wrote away for advertised cures for the liquor habit and gave them to me in coffee. I even got them myself and tried them. None of the various cures of this kind were any good.

My experiences differ very little from the experiences of other alcoholics but if ever a man was firmly in the grip of a power that could lead only to ruin and disgrace, I was that man.

I had the usual array of friends who tried to stop me in my drinking career. I can hear them yet. Kindly for the most part, yet blind and almost wholly without understanding, they had the approach that every alcoholic knows:

"Can't you be a man?" "You can cut it out."

"You've got a good wife; you could have the best business in town. What's the matter with you anyway?"

Every alcoholic has heard those familiar phrases from well-meaning friends. And they were my friends, too. In their way they did what they could, helped me at different times to get on my feet after a particularly bad time, aided me in unraveling my tangled business affairs, suggested this and suggested that. They all wanted to help me. But none of them knew how. Not one of them had the answer I wanted.

My wife got talking to a local merchant one day. He was known as a deeply religious man. He was undoubtedly a fundamentalist with strong leanings toward evangelistic preaching. He knew me and something of my reputation. My wife asked him to help her if he could. So he came to see me, bringing a friend along. He found me drunk and in bed. This man had never been an alcoholic and his approach to me was the familiar one of the emotional seeker after souls. Well, there I was, lying in an alcoholic stupor with occasional flashes of emotional self-pity, in pretty much the same condition as the drunk who plunges to the sawdust at the appeal of a religious orator.

Good, honest and sincere man, he prayed at my bedside and I promised to go to church with him to hear an evangelist. He didn't wait for me to come to his office, he came after me. I heard the evangelist but was not impressed. The service was entirely foreign to what I had been accustomed to in my religious observance since childhood. I have no doubt of the preacher's sincerity and seek not at all to belittle his work, but I was unaffected. So I got no answer.

There are alcoholics who have been without any consciousness of God all their lives; there are some who are actual haters of the idea of a Supreme Being; there are others, like myself, who have never given up a belief in the Almighty, but who have always felt that God is far off. And that's the way I felt. I had a closer sense of God during the mass at church, a feeling of His presence, but in everyday life He seemed to be at a distance from me and more as a righteous judge, than an all-wise, pitying Father to the human race.

Then occurred the event that saved me. An alcoholic came to see me who is a doctor. He didn't talk like a preacher at all. In fact his language was perfectly suited to my understanding. He had no desire to know anything except whether I was definite about my desire to quit drinking. I told him with all the sincerity at my command that I did. Even then he went into no great detail about how he and a crowd of alcoholics, with whom he associated, had mastered their difficulty. Instead he told me that some of them wanted to talk to me and would be over to see me.

This doctor had imparted his knowledge to just a few other men at that time-not more than four or five-they now number more than seventy persons. And, because as I have discovered since, it is part of the "treatment" that these men be sent to see and talk with alcoholics who want to quit, he kept them busy. He had already imbued them with his own spirit until they were ready and willing at all times to go where sent, and as a doctor he well knew that this mission and duty would strengthen them as it later helped me. The visits from these men impressed me at once. Where preaching and prayers had touched me very little, I was immediately impressed with desire for further knowledge of these men.

"There must be something to it," I said to myself. "Why would these busy men take the time to come to see me? They understand my problem. Like me, they've tried this remedy and that remedy but never found one that worked. But whatever it is they are using now, it seems to keep them sober."

Certainly I could see they were sober. The third man who came to see me had been one of the greatest business-getters his company had ever employed. From the top of the heap in a few years he had skidded to becoming a shuffling customer, still entering the better barrooms but welcomed by neither mine host nor his patrons. His own business was practically gone, he told me, when he discovered the answer.

"You've been trying man's ways and they always fail," he told me. "You can't win unless you try God's way."

I had never heard of the remedy expressed in just this language. In a few sentences he made God seem personal to me, explained Him as a being who was interested in me, the alcoholic, and that all I needed to do was to be willing to follow His way for me; that as long as I followed it I would be able to overcome my desire for liquor.

Well, there I was, willing to try it, but I didn't know how, except in a vague way. I knew somehow that it meant more than just going to church and living a moral life. If that was all, then I was a little doubtful that it was the answer I was looking for.

He went on talking and told me that he had found the plan has a basis of love and the practice of Christ's injunction, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Taking that as a foundation, he reasoned that if a man followed that rule he could not be selfish. I could see that. And he further said that God could not accept me as a sincere follower of His Divine Law unless I was ready to be thoroughly honest about it.

That was perfectly logical. My church taught that. I had always known that in theory. We talked, too, about personal morals. Every man has his problem of this kind but we didn't discuss it very much. My visitor well knew, that as I tried to follow God I would get to studying these things out for myself.

We talked things over a long time. I saw readily that I couldn't afford to quibble. I already believed in God, had always done so. Was ready to give my will to Him. That's what it came to.

That day I gave my will to God and asked to be directed. But I have never thought of that as something to do and then forget about. I very early came to see that there had to be a continual renewal of that simple deal with God; that I had perpetually to keep the bargain. So I began to pray; to place my problems in God's hands.

For a long time I kept on trying, in a pretty dumb way at first, I know, but very earnestly. I didn't want to be a fake. And I began putting in practice what I was learning every day. It wasn't very long until my doctor friend sent me to tell another alcoholic what my experience had been. This duty together with my weekly meetings with my fellow alcoholics and my daily renewal of the contract I originally made with God have kept me sober when nothing else ever did.

I have been sober for many years now. The first few months were hard. Many things happened; business trials, little worries, and feelings of general despondency came near driving me to the bottle, but I made progress. As I go along I seem to get strength daily to be able to resist more easily. And when I get upset, cross-grained and out of tune with my fellow man I know that I am out of tune with God. Searching where I have been at fault, it is not hard to discover and get right again, for I have proven to myself and to many others who know me that God can keep a man sober if he will let Him.

Being a Catholic, it is natural that I should attend my own church which I do regularly. I partake of its sacraments which have a new and deeper meaning to me now. I realize what it is to be in the presence of God right in my own home and I realize it deeply when I am at church. For when a man is truly trying to do God's will, instead of his own, he is very conscious of being in the presence of God always, wherever he may be.

A FEMININE VICTORY by Florence Rankin (N.Y.)

TO MY lot falls the rather doubtful distinction of being the only "lady" alcoholic in our particular section. Perhaps it is because of a desire for a "supporting cast" of my own sex that I am praying for inspiration to tell my story in a manner that may give other women who have this problem the courage to see it in its true light and seek the help that has given me a new lease on life.

When the idea was first presented to me that *I was an alcoholic*, my mind simply refused to accept it. Horrors! How disgraceful! What humiliation! How preposterous! Why, I loathed the taste of liquor-drinking was simply a means of escape when my sorrows became too great for me to endure. Even after it had been explained to me that alcoholism is a disease, I could not realize that I had it. I was still ashamed, still wanted to hide behind the screen of reasons made up of "unjust treatment," "unhappiness," "tired and dejected," and the dozens of other things that I thought lay at the root of my search for oblivion by means of whiskey or gin.

In any case, I felt quite sure that I was *not* an alcoholic. However, since I have faced the fact, and it surely is a fact, I have been able to use the help that is so freely given when we learn how to be really truthful with ourselves.

The path by which I have come to this blessed help was long and devious. It led through the mazes and perplexities of an unhappy marriage and divorce, and a dark time of separation from my grown children, and a readjustment of life at an age when most women feel pretty sure of a home and security.

But I *have* reached the source of help. I *have* learned to recognize and acknowledge the underlying cause of my disease; selfishness, self-pity and resentment. A few short months ago those three words applied to *me* would have aroused as much indignation in my heart as the word alcoholic. The ability to accept them as my own has been derived from trying, with the unending help of God, to live with certain goals in mind.

Coming to the grim fact of alcoholism, I wish I could present the awful reality of its insidiousness in such a way that no one could ever again fail to recognize the comfortable, easy steps that lead down to the edge of the precipice, and show how those steps suddenly disappeared when the great gulf yawned before me. I couldn't possibly turn and get back to solid earth again that way.

The first step is called-"The first drink in the morning to pull you out of a hangover."

I remember so well when I got onto that step-I had been drinking just like most of the young married crowd I knew. For a couple of years it went on, at parties and at "speakeasies," as they were then called, and with cocktails after matinees. Just going the rounds and having a good time.

Then came the morning when I had my first case of jitters. Someone suggested a little of the "hair of the dog that bit me." A half hour after that drink I was sitting on top of the world, thinking how simple it was to cure shaky nerves. How wonderful liquor was, in only a few minutes my head had stopped aching, my spirits were back to normal and all was well in this very fine world.

Unfortunately, there was a catch to it-I was an alcoholic. As time went on the one drink in the morning had to be taken a little earlier-it had to be followed by a second one in an hour or so, before I really felt equal to getting on with the business of living.

Gradually I found at parties the service was a little slow; the rest of the crowd being pretty happy and carefree after the second round. My reaction was inclined to be just the opposite. Something had to be done about that so I'd just help myself to a fast one, sometimes openly, but as time went on and my need became more acute, I often did it on the quiet.

In the meantime, the morning-after treatment was developing into something quite stupendous. The eye-openers were becoming earlier, bigger, more frequent, and suddenly, it was lunch time! Perhaps there was a plan for the afternoon-a bridge or tea, or just callers. My breath had to be accounted for, so along came such alibis as a touch of grippe or some other ailment for which I'd just taken a hot whiskey and lemon. Or "someone" had been in for lunch and we had just had a couple of cocktails. Then came the period of brazening it out-going to social gatherings well fortified against the jitters; next the phone call in the morning-"Terribly sorry that I can't make it this afternoon, I have an awful headache"; then simply forgetting that there were engagements at all; spending two or three days drinking, sleeping it off, and waking to start all over again.

Of course, I had the well known excuses; my husband was failing to come home for dinner or hadn't been home for several days; he was spending money which was needed to pay bills; he had always been a drinker; I had never known anything about it until I was almost thirty years old and he gave me my first drink. Oh, I had them all down, letter perfect-all the excuses, reasons and justifications. What I did not know was that I was being destroyed by selfishness, self-pity and resentment.

There were the swearing-off periods and the "goings on the wagon"-they would last anywhere from two weeks to three or four months. Once, after a very severe illness of six weeks' duration (caused by drinking), I didn't touch anything of an alcoholic nature for almost a year. I thought I had it licked that time, but all of a sudden things were worse than ever. I found fear had no effect.

Next came the hospitalization, not a regular sanitarium, but a local hospital where my doctor would ship me when I'd get where I had to call him in. That poor man-I wish he could read this for he would know then it was no fault of his I wasn't cured.

When I was divorced, I thought the cause had been removed. I felt that being away from what I had considered injustice and ill-treatment would solve the problem of my unhappiness. In a little. over a year I was in the alcoholic ward of a public hospital!

It was there that L-- came to me. I had known her very slightly ten years before. My ex-husband brought her to me hoping that she could help. She did. From the hospital I went home with her.

There, her husband told me the secret of his rebirth. It is not really a secret at all, but something free and open to all of us. He asked me if I believed in God or some power greater than myself. Well, I did believe in God, but at that time I hadn't any idea what He is. As a child I had been taught my "Now I lay me's" and "Our Father which art in Heaven." I had been sent to Sunday School and taken to church. I had been baptized and confirmed. I had been taught to realize there is a God and to "love" him. *But though I had been taught all these things, I had never learned them.*

When B-- (L's husband) began to talk about God, I felt pretty low in my mind. I thought God was something that I, and lots of other people like me, had to worry along without. Yet I had always had the "prayer habit." In fact I used to say in my mind "Now, if God answers this prayer, I'll know there *is* a God." It was a great system, only somehow it didn't seem to work!

Finally B-- put it to me this way: "You admit you've made a mess of things trying to run them your way, are you willing to give up? Are you willing to say: "Here it is God, all mixed up. I don't know how to un-mix it, I'll leave it to you." Well, I couldn't quite do that. I wasn't feeling very well, and I was afraid that later when the fog wore off, I'd want to back out. So we let it rest a few days. L and B sent me to stay with some friends of theirs out of town-I'd never seen them before. The man of that house, P-- had given up drinking three months before. After I had been there a few days, I saw that P-- and his wife had something that made them mighty hopeful and happy. But I got a little uneasy going into a perfect stranger's home and staying day after day. I said this to P-- and his reply was: "Why, you don't know how much it is helping me to have you here." Was that a surprise! Always before that when I was recovering from a tailspin I'd been just a pain in the neck to everyone. So, I began to sense in a small way just what these spiritual principles were all about.

Finally I very self-consciously and briefly asked God to show me how to do what He wanted me to do. My prayer was just about as weak and helpless a thing as one could imagine, but it taught me how to open my mouth and pray earnestly and sincerely. However, I had not quite made the grade. I was full of fears, shames, and other "bug-a-boos" and two weeks later an incident occurred that put me on the toboggan again. I seemed to feel that the hurt of that incident was too great to endure without some "release." So I forsook Spirit in favor of "spirits" and that evening I was well on the way to a long session with my old enemy "liquor." I begged the person in whose home I was living not to let anyone know, but she, having good sense, got in touch right away with those who had helped me before and very shortly they had rallied round.

I was eased out of the mess and in a day or two I had a long talk with one of the crowd. I dragged out all my sins of commission and omission, I told everything I could think of that might be the cause of creating a fear situation, a remorse situation, or a shame situation. It was pretty terrible, I thought then, to lay myself bare that way, but I know now that such is the first step away from the edge of the precipice.

Things went very well for quite a while, then came a dull rainy day. I was alone. The weather and my self-pity began to cook up a nice dish of the blues for me. There was liquor in the house and I found myself suggesting to myself "Just one drink will make me feel so much more cheerful." Well, I got the Bible and "Victorious Living" and sitting down in full view of the bottle of whiskey, I commenced to read. I also prayed. But I didn't say "I must not take that drink because I owe it to so and so not to." I didn't say "I won't take that drink because I'm strong enough to resist temptation." I didn't say "I must not" or "I will not" at all. I simply prayed and read and in half an hour I got up and was absolutely free of the urge for a drink.

It might be very grand to be able to say "Finis" right here, but I see now I hadn't gone all the way I was intended to go. I was still coddling and nursing my two pets, self-pity and resentment. Naturally, I came a cropper once more. This time I went to the telephone (after I had taken about two drinks) and called L to tell her what I had done. She asked me to promise that I would not take another drink before someone came to me. Well, I had learned enough about truthfulness to refuse to give that promise. Had I been living after the old pattern, I would have been ashamed to call for help. In fact I should not have wanted help. I should have tried to hide the fact that I was drinking and continued until I again wound up behind the "eight ball." I was taken back to B's home where I stayed for three weeks. The drinking ended the morning after I got there, but the suffering continued for some time. I felt desperate and I questioned my ability to really avail myself of the help that the others had received and applied so successfully. Gradually, however, God began to clear my channels so that real understanding began to come. Then was the time when full realization and acknowledgement came to me. It was realization and acknowledgement of the fact that I was full of self-pity and resentment, realization of the fact that I had not fully given my problems to God. *I was still trying to do my own fixing.*

That was several years ago. Since then, although circumstances are no different, for there are still trials and hardships and hurts and disappointments and disillusionments, self-pity and resentment are being eliminated. In this past year I haven't been tempted once. I have no more idea of taking a drink to aid me through a difficult period than I would if I had never drank. But I know absolutely that the minute I close my channels with sorrow for myself, or being hurt by, or resentful toward anyone, I am in horrible danger.

I know that my victory is none of my human doing. I know that I must keep myself worthy of Divine help. And the glorious thing is this: I am free, I am happy, and perhaps I am going to have the blessed opportunity of "passing it on." I say in all reverence-Amen.

OUR SOUTHERN FRIEND by Fitz Mayo (N.Y.)

TWO rosy-cheeked children stand at the top of a long hill as the glow of the winter sunset lights up the snow covered country-side. "It's time to go home" says my sister. She is the eldest. After one more exhilarating trip on the sled, we plod homeward through the deep snow. The light from an oil lamp shines from an upstairs window of our home. We stamp the snow from our boots and rush in to the warmth of the coal stove which is supposed to heat upstairs as well. "Hello dearies," calls Mother from above, "get your wet things off."

"Where's Father?" I ask, having gotten a whiff of sausage cooking through the kitchen door and thinking of supper.

"He went down to the swamp," replies Mother. "He should be home soon."

Father is an Episcopal minister and his work takes him over long drives on bad roads. His parishioners are limited in number, but his friends are many, for to him race, creed, or social position make no difference. It is not long before he drives up in the old buggy. Both he and old Maud are glad to get home. The drive was long and cold but he was thankful for the hot bricks which some thoughtful person had given him for his feet. Soon supper is on the table. Father says grace, which delays my attack on the buckwheat cakes and sausage. What an appetite!

A big setter lies asleep near the stove. He begins to make queer sounds and his feet twitch. What is he after in his dreams? More cakes and sausage. At last I am filled. Father goes to his study to write some letters. Mother plays the piano and we sing. Father finishes his letters and we all join in several exciting games of parchesi. Then Father is persuaded to read aloud some more of "The Rose and the Ring."

Bed-time comes. I climb to my room in the attic. It is cold so there is no delay. I crawl under a pile of blankets and blow out the candle. The wind is rising and howls around the house. But I am safe and warm. I fall into a dreamless sleep.

I am in church. Father is delivering his sermon. A wasp is crawling up the back of the lady in front of me. I wonder if it will reach her neck. Shucks! It has flown away. Ho, hum, maybe the watermelons are ripe in Mr. Jones patch. That's an idea! Benny will know, but Mr. Jones will not know what happened to some of them, if they are. At last! The message has been delivered.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works-." I hunt for my nickel to drop in the plate so that mine will be seen.

Father comes forward in the chancel of the church. "The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds-." Hurray! Just a hymn and then church will be over until next week!

I am in another fellow's room at college. "Freshman," said he to me, "do you ever take a drink?" I hesitated. Father had never directly spoken to me about drinking and he never drank any, so far as I knew. Mother hated liquor and feared a drunken man. Her brother had been a drinker and had died in a state hospital for the insane. But his life was unmentionable, so far as I was concerned. I had never had a drink but I had seen enough merriment in the boys who were drinking to be interested. I would never be like the village drunkard at home. How a lot of people despised him! Just a weakling!

"Well," said the older boy, "Do you?"

"Once in a while," I lied. I could not let him think I was a sissy.

He poured out two drinks. "Here's looking at you," said he. I gulped it down and choked. I didn't like it, but I would not say so. No, never! A mellow glow stole over me. Say! This wasn't so bad after all. In fact, it was darn good. Sure I'd have another. The glow increased. Other boys came in. My tongue loosened. Everyone laughed loudly. I was witty. I had no inferiorities. Why, I wasn't even ashamed of my skinny legs! This was the real thing!

A haze filled the room. The electric light began to move. Then two bulbs appeared. The faces of the other boys grew dim. How sick I felt. I staggered to the bathroom-. Shouldn't have drunk so much or so fast. But I knew how to handle it now. I'd drink like a gentleman after this.

And so I met John Barleycorn. The grand fellow who at my call made me "a hale fellow, well met," who gave me such a fine voice, as we sang "Hail, hail, the gang's all here," and "Sweet Adeline," who gave me freedom from fear and feelings of inferiority. Good old John! He was my pal, all right.

Final exams of my senior year and I may somehow graduate. I would never have tried, but Mother counts on it so. A case of measles saved me from being kicked out during my Sophomore year. Bells, bells, bells! Class, library, laboratory! Am I tired!

But the end is in sight. My last exam and an easy one. I gaze at the board with its questions. Can't remember the answer to the first. I'll try the second. No soap there. Say this is getting serious! I don't seem to remember anything. I concentrate on one of the questions. I don't seem to be able to keep my mind on what I am doing. I get uneasy. If I don't get started soon, I won't have time to finish. No use. I can't think.

Oh! An idea! I leave the room, which the honor system allows. I go to my room. I pour out half a tumbler of grain alcohol and fill it with ginger ale. Oh, boy! Now back to the exam. My pen moves rapidly. I know enough of the answers to get by. Good old John Barleycorn! He can certainly be depended on. What a wonderful power he has over the mind! He has given me my diploma!

Underweight! How I hate that word. Three attempts to enlist in the service, and three failures because of being skinny. True, I have recently recovered from pneumonia and have an alibi, but my friends are in the war, or going, and I am not. To hell with it all! I visit a friend who is awaiting orders. The atmosphere of "eat, drink, and be merry" prevails and I absorb it. I drink a lot every night. I can hold a lot now, more than the others.

I am examined for the draft and pass the physical exam. What a dirty deal! Drafted! The shame of it. I am to go to camp on November 13th. The Armistice is signed on the 11th and the draft is called off. Never in the service! The war leaves me with a pair of blankets, a toilet kit, a sweater knit by my sister, and a still greater inferiority.

It is ten o'clock of a Saturday night. I am working hard on the books of a subsidiary company of a large corporation. I have had experience in selling, collecting, and accounting, and am on my way up the ladder.

Then the crack-up. Cotton struck the skids and collections went cold. A twenty three million dollar surplus wiped out. Offices closed up and workers discharged. I, and the books of my division have been transferred to the head office. I have no assistance and am working nights, Saturdays and Sundays. My salary has been cut. My wife and new baby are fortunately staying with relatives, What a life! I feel exhausted. The doctor has told me that if I don't give up inside work, I'll have tuberculosis. But what am I to do? I have a family to support and have no time to be looking for another job.

Oh, well. I reach for the bottle which I just got from George, the elevator boy.

I am a traveling salesman. The day is over and business has been not so good. I'll go to bed. I wish I were home with the family and not in this dingy hotel.

Well-well-look who's here! Good old Charlie! It's great to see him. How's the boy? A drink? You bet your life! We buy a gallon of "corn" because it is so cheap. Yet I am fairly steady when I go to bed.

Morning comes. I feel horribly. A little drink will put me on my feet. But it takes others to keep me there.

I see some prospects. I am too miserable to care if they give me an order or not. My breath would knock out a mule, I learn from a friend. Back at the hotel and more to drink. I come to early in the morning. My mind is fairly clear, but inwardly I am undergoing torture. My nerves are screaming in agony. I go to the drug store and it is not open. I wait. Minutes are interminable. Will the store never open? At last! I hurry in. The druggist fixes me up a bromide. I go back to the hotel and lie down. I wait. I am going crazy. The bromides have no effect. I get a doctor. He gives me a hypodermic. Blessed peace!

And I blame this experience on the quality of the liquor.

I am a real estate salesman. "What is the price of that house," I ask the head of the firm I work for. He names me a price. Then he says, "That is what the builders are asking, but we will add on \$500.00 and split it, if you can close the deal." The prospect signs the contract for the full amount. My boss buys the property and sells to the prospect. I get my commission and \$250.00 extra and everything is Jake. But is it? Something is sour. So let's have a drink!

I become a teacher in a boy's school. I am happy in my work. I like the boys and we have lots of fun, in class and out.

An unhappy mother comes to me about her boy, for she knows I am fond of him. They expected him to get high marks and he has not the ability to do it. So he altered his report card through fear of his father. And his dishonesty has been discovered. Why are there so many foolish parents, and why is there so much unhappiness in these homes?

The doctors bills are heavy and the bank account is low. My wife's parents come to our assistance. I am filled with hurt pride and self-pity. I seem to get no sympathy for my illness and have no appreciation of the love behind the gift.

I call the boot-legger and fill up my charred keg. But I do not wait for the charred keg to work. I get drunk. My wife is extremely unhappy. Her father comes to sit with me. He never says an unkind word. He is a real friend but I do not appreciate him.

We are staying with my wife's father. Her mother is in critical condition at a hospital. The wind is moaning in the pine trees. I cannot sleep. I must get myself together. I sneak down stairs and get a bottle of whiskey from the cellaret. I pour drinks down my throat. My father-in-law appears. "Have a drink?" I ask. He makes no reply, and hardly seems to see me. His wife dies that night.

Mother has been dying of cancer for a long time. She is near the end and now in a hospital. I have been drinking a lot, but never get drunk. Mother must never know. I see her about to go.

I return to the hotel where I am staying and get gin from the bell-boy. I drink and go to bed; I take a few the next morning and go see my mother once more. I cannot stand it. I go back to the hotel and get more gin. I drink steadily. I come to at three in the morning. The indescribable torture has me again. I turn on the light. I must get out of the room or I shall jump out of the window. I walk miles. No use. I go to the hospital, where I have made friends with the night superintendent. She puts me to bed and gives me a hypodermic. Oh, wonderful peace!

Mother and Father die the same year. What is life all about anyway? The world is crazy. Read the newspapers. Everything is a racket. Education is a racket. Medicine is a racket. Religion is a racket. How could there be a loving God who would allow so much suffering and sorrow? Bah! Don't talk to me about religion. For what were my children ever born? I wish I were dead!

I am at the hospital to see my wife. We have another child. But she is not glad to see me. I have been drinking while the baby was arriving. Her father stays with her.

My parents estates are settled at last. I have some money. I'll try farming. It will be a good life. I'll farm on a large scale and make a good thing of it. But the deluge descends. Lack of judgment, bad management, a hurricane, and the depression create debts in ever-increasing number. But the stills are' operating throughout the country-side.

It is a cold, bleak day in November. I have fought hard to stop drinking. Each battle has ended in defeat. I tell my wife I cannot stop drinking. She begs me to go to a hospital for alcoholics which has been recommended. I say I will go. She makes the arrangements, but I will not go. I'll do it all myself. This time I'm off of it for good. I'll just take a few beers now and then.

It is the last day of the following October, a dark, rainy morning. I come to in a pile of hay in a barn. I look for liquor and can't find any. I wander to a stable and drink five bottles of beer. I must get some liquor. Suddenly I feel hopeless, unable to go on. I go home. My wife is in the living room. She had looked for me last evening after I left the car and wandered off into the night. She had looked for me this morning. She has reached the end of her rope. There is no use trying any more, for there is nothing to try. "Don't say anything," I say to her. "I am going to do something."

I am in the hospital for alcoholics. I am an alcoholic. The insane asylum lies ahead. Could I have myself locked up at home? One more foolish idea. I might go out West on a ranch where I couldn't get anything to drink. I might do that. Another foolish idea. I wish I were dead, as I have often wished before. I am too yellow to kill myself. But maybe-. The thought stays in my mind.

Four alcoholics play bridge in a smoke-filled room. Anything to get my mind from myself. The game is over and the other three leave. I start to clean up the debris. One man comes back, closing the door behind him.

He looks at me. "You think you are hopeless, don't you?" he asks.

"I know it," I reply.

"Well, you're not," says the man. "There are men on the streets of New York today who were worse than you, and they don't drink anymore."

"What are you doing here then?" I ask.

"I went out of here nine days ago saying that I was going to be honest, and I wasn't," he answers.

A fanatic, I thought to myself, but I was polite. "What is it?" I enquire.

Then he asks me if I believe in a power greater than myself, whether I call that power God, Allah, Confucius, Prime Cause, Divine Mind, or any other name. I told him that I believe in electricity and other forces of nature, but as for a God, if there is one, He has never done anything for me. Then he asks me if I am willing to right all the wrongs I have ever done to anyone, no matter how wrong I thought they were. Am I willing to be honest with myself about myself and tell someone about myself, and am I willing to think of other people. and of their needs instead of myself; to get rid of the drink problem?

"I'll do anything," I reply.

"Then all of your troubles are over" says the man and leaves the room. The man is in bad mental shape certainly. I pick up a book and try to read, but cannot concentrate. I get in bed and turn out the light. But I cannot sleep. Suddenly a thought comes. Can all the worthwhile people I have known be wrong about God? Then I find myself thinking about myself, and a few things that I had wanted to forget. I begin to see I am not the person I had thought myself, that I had judged myself by comparing myself to others, and always to my own advantage. It is a shock.

Then comes a thought that is like A Voice. "Who are you to say there is no God?" It rings in my head, I can't get rid of it.

I get out of bed and go to the man's room. He is reading. "I must ask you a question," I say to the man. "How does prayer fit into this thing?"

"Well," he answers, "you've probably tried praying like I have. When you've been in a jam you've said, 'God, please do this or that' and if it turned out your way that was the last of it and if it didn't you've said 'There isn't any God' or 'He doesn't do anything for me'. Is that right?"

"Yes" I reply.

"That isn't the way" he continued. "The thing I do is to say 'God here I am and here are all my troubles. I've made a mess of things and can't do anything about it. You take me, and all my troubles, and do anything you want with me.' Does that answer your question?"

"Yes, it does" I answer. I return to bed. It doesn't make sense. Suddenly I feel a wave of utter hopelessness sweep over me. I am in the bottom of hell. And there a tremendous hope is born. It might be true.

I tumble out of bed onto my knees. I know not what I say. But slowly a great peace comes to me. I feel lifted up. I believe in God. I crawl back into bed and sleep like a child.

Some men and women come to visit my friend of the night before. He invites me to meet them. They are a joyous crowd. I have never seen people that joyous before. We talk. I tell them of the Peace, and that I believe in God. I think of my wife. I must write her. One girl suggests that I phone her. What a wonderful idea.

My wife hears my voice and knows I have found the answer to life. She comes to New York. I get out of the hospital and we visit some of these new-found friends. What a glorious time we have!

I am home again. I have lost the fellowship. Those that understand me are far away. The same old problems and worries surround me. Members of my family annoy me. Nothing seems to be working out right. I am blue and unhappy. Maybe a drink-I put on my hat and dash off in the car.

Get into the lives of other people, is one thing the fellows in New York had said. I go to see a man I had been asked to visit and tell him my story. I feel much better! I have forgotten about a drink.

I am on a train, headed for a city. I have left my wife at home, sick, and I have been unkind to her in leaving. I am very unhappy. Maybe a few drinks when I get to the city will help. A great fear seizes me. I talk to the stranger in the seat with me. The fear and the insane idea is taken away.

Things are not going so well at home. I am learning that I cannot have my own way as I used to. I blame my wife and children. Anger possesses me, anger such as I have never felt before. I will not stand for it. I pack my bag and leave. I stay with understanding friends.

I see where I have been wrong in some respects. I do not feel angry any more. I return home and say I am sorry for my wrong. I am quiet again. But I have not seen yet that I should do some constructive acts of love without expecting any return. I shall learn this after some more explosions.

I am blue again. I want to sell the place and move away. I want to get where I can find some alcoholics to help, and where I can have some fellowship. A man calls me on the phone. Will I take a young fellow who has been drinking for two weeks to live with me? Soon I have others who are alcoholics and some who have other problems.

I begin to play God. I feel that I can fix them all. I do not fix anyone, but I am getting part of a tremendous education and I have made some new friends.

Nothing is right. Finances are in bad shape. I must find a way to make some money. The family seems to think of nothing but spending. People annoy me. I try to read. I try to pray. Gloom surrounds me. Why has God left me? I mope around the house. I will not go out and I will not enter into anything. What is the matter? I cannot understand. I will not be that way.

I'll get drunk! It is a cold-blooded idea. It is premeditated. I fix up a little apartment over the garage with books and drinking water. I am going to town to get some liquor and food. I shall not drink until I get back to the apartment. Then I shall lock myself in and read. And as I read, I shall take little drinks at long intervals. I shall get myself "mellow" and stay that way.

I get in the car and drive off. Halfway down the driveway a thought strikes me. I'll be honest anyway. I'll tell my wife what I am going to do. I back up to the door and go into the house. I call my wife into a room where we can talk privately. I tell her quietly what I intend to do. She says nothing. She does not get excited. She maintains a perfect calm.

When I am through speaking, the whole idea has become absurd. Not a trace of fear is in me. I laugh at the insanity of it. We talk of other things. Strength has come from weakness.

I cannot see the cause of this temptation now. But I am to learn later that it began with the desire for my own material success becoming greater than the interest in the welfare of my fellow man. I learn more of that foundation stone of character, which is honesty. I learn that when we act upon the highest conception of honesty which is given us, our sense of honesty becomes more acute.

I learn that honesty is truth, and the truth shall make us free!

Sensuality, drunkenness, and worldliness satisfy a man for a time, but their power is a decreasing one. God produces harmony in those who receive His Spirit and follow Its dictates.

Today as I become more harmonized within, I become more in tune with all of God's wonderful creation. The singing of the birds, the sighing of the wind, the patter of raindrops, the roll of thunder, the laughter of happy children, add to the symphony with which I am in tune. The heaving ocean, the driving rain, autumn leaves, the stars of heaven, the perfume of flowers, music, a smile, and a host of other things tell me of the glory of God.

There are periods of darkness, but the stars are shining, no matter how black the night. There are disturbances, but I have learned that if I seek patience and open-mindedness, understanding will come. And with it, direction by the Spirit of God. The dawn comes and with it more understanding, the peace that passes understanding, and the joy of living that is not disturbed by the wildness of circumstances or people around me. Fears, resentments, pride, worldly desires, worry, and self-pity no longer possess me. Ever-increasing are the number of true friends, ever-growing is the capacity for love, ever-widening is the horizon of understanding. And above all else comes a greater thankfulness to, and a greater love for Our Father in heaven.

A BUSINESS MAN'S RECOVERY by Bill Ruddell (N.Y.)

THE S. S. "Falcon" of the Red D. Line, bound from New York to Maracaibo, Venezuela, glided up the bay, and docked at the wharf in the port of La Guayra on a hot tropical afternoon early in 1927. I was a passenger on that boat bound for the oil fields of Maracaibo as an employee of the X Oil Company, under a two year contract at a good salary and maintenance. There I hoped to buckle down to two years of hard work, and save some money, but above all to avoid any long, continued drinking that would interfere with my work, because that had cost me too many jobs in the past.

Not that I was going to give up drinking entirely; no, such a step would be too drastic. But down here in the oil fields with a bunch of hard working, hard drinking good fellows, I, too, would learn how to handle my liquor and not let it get the best of me again. Such an environment would surely do the trick, would surely teach me to drink moderately with the best of them and keep me away from those long, disastrous spees. I was still young, I could make the grade, and this was my chance to do it. At last I had the real answer, and my troubles were over!

Red and I, who had become bosom shipboard companions on the way down from New York, stood at the rail watching the activity on the dock incident to getting the vessel secured alongside. Red was also on his way to Maracaibo to work for the same company, and we agreed that so long as we were going to be here overnight, we might as well go ashore together and look the town over.

Red was a swell fellow who might take a drink now and then, who might even get drunk once in a while, but he could handle his liquor and did not go to any great excesses. Thousands of other fellows like him, who have been my drinking companions from time to time, were in no way responsible for the way I drank, or what I did, or the way liquor affected me. So off we went, Red and I, to do the town-and do it we did. After a few drinks we decided there wasn't much else to do in town except to make a round of the "cantinas," have a good time, get back to the ship early and get a good night's rest. So what harm would a little drinking do now, I reasoned. Especially with one full day and two nights ahead to get over it.

We visited every "cantina" along the straggling main street of La Guayra, and feeling high, wide and handsome, Red and I decided to return to the ship. When we rolled down to the dock we found that our ship had been berthed off from the wharf about thirty feet and that it was necessary to take a tender out to her. No such ordinary method would satisfy Red and myself, so we decided to climb the stern hawser hand over hand to get on board. The flip of a coin decided that I would go first; so off I started, hand over hand, up the hawser.

Now even a good experienced sailor, perfectly sober, would never attempt such a foolhardy feat and, as was to be expected, about half way up the hawser I slipped and fell into the bay with a loud splash. I remember nothing more until next morning. The captain of the boat said to me "Young man, it is true that God looks after drunken fools and

little children. You probably don't know it, but this bay is infested with man-eating sharks and usually a man overboard is a goner. How close you were to death, you don't realize, but I do."

Yes, I was lucky to be saved! But it wasn't until ten years later, after I had time and time again tempted Fate by going on protracted benders that I was really saved-not until after I had been fired from job after job, tried the patience of my family to the breaking point, alienated what might have been many, many good, lasting friendships, taken my dear wife through more sorrow and heartaches than any one woman should bear in a lifetime; after doctors, hospitals, psychiatrists, rest cures, changes of scenery and all the other paraphernalia that go with the alcoholic's futile attempts to quit drinking. Finally I dimly began to get the realization that during twenty years of continual drinking every expedient I had tried, (and I had tried them all) had failed me. I hated to admit the fact even to myself, that I just couldn't lick booze. I was licked. I was desperate. I was scared.

I was born in 1900, my father was a hardworking man who did the very best he could to support his family of four on a small income. Mother was very good to us, kind, patient, and loving. As soon as we were old enough my mother sent us to Sunday School and it so happened that as I grew older I took quite an active interest, becoming successively a teacher and later Superintendent of a small Sunday School in uptown New York.

When the United States entered the World War in April 1917, I was under age but, like most other youngsters of that period, wanted very much to get into the fray. My parents, of course, would not hear of this but told me to be sensible and wait until I was eighteen. Being young and restless, however, and fired by the military spirit of the times, I ran away from home to join the Army in another city.

There I joined up. I didn't get into any of the actual hostilities at the front, but later, after the Armistice, served with the United States forces occupying the Rhineland, working my way up to a good non-commissioned rank.

While serving abroad I started to drink. This, of course, was entirely my own choice. Drinking by a soldier during those times was viewed with a degree of indulgence by both superiors and civilians. It seems to me, as I recall it now, that even then I wasn't satisfied to drink like the normal fellow.

Most of the United States Army of Occupation were sent back home in 1921 but my appetite for travel had been whetted, and having heard terrible stories of Prohibition in the United States, I wanted. to remain in Europe where "a man could raise a thirst."

Subsequently I went to Russia, then to England, and back to Germany; working in various capacities, my drinking increasing and my drunken escapades getting worse. So back home in 1924 with the sincere desire to stop drinking and the hope that the Prohibition I had heard so much about would enable me to do it-in other words-that it would keep me away from it.

I secured a good position, but it wasn't long before I was initiated into the mysteries of the speakeasy to such an extent that I soon found myself once more jobless. After looking around for some time, I found that my foreign experience would help me in securing work in South America. So, full of hope once more, resolved that at last I was on the wagon to stay, I sailed for the tropics, A little over a year was all the company I then worked for would stand of my continual drinking and ever-lengthening benders. So they had me poured on a boat and shipped back to New York.

This time I was really through. I promised my family and friends, who helped me get along while looking for another job, that I would never take another drink as long as I lived-and I meant it. But alas!

After several successive jobs in and around New York had been lost, and it isn't necessary to tell you the cause, I was sure that the only thing that would enable me to get off the stuff was a change of scenery. With the help of patient, long-suffering friends, I finally persuaded an oil company that I could do a good job for them in the oil fields of Maracaibo.

But it was the same thing all over again!

Back to the United States. I really sobered up for a while-long enough to establish a connection with my present employers. During this time I met the girl who is now my wife. At last here was the real thing-I was in love. I would do anything for her. Yes, I would give up drinking. I would never, never do anything to even remotely affect the happiness that now came into my life. My worries were over, my problem was solved. I had sown my wild oats and now I was going to settle down to be a good husband and live a normal happy life.

And so we were married.

Supported by my new found happiness, my abstinence this time lasted about six months. Then a New Year's party we gave started me off on a long bender. The thing about this episode that is impressed on my mind is how earnestly and sincerely I then promised my wife that I would absolutely and positively this time give up drinking-and again I meant it.

No matter what we tried, and my wife helped me in each new experiment to the best of her ability and understanding, failure was always the result, and each time greater hopelessness.

The next step was doctors, a succession of them, with occasional hospitalization. I remember one doctor who thought a course of seventy-two injections, three a week, after two weeks in a private hospital, would supply the deficiency in my system that would enable me to stop drinking. The night after the seventy-second injection I was paralyzed drunk and a couple of days later talked myself out of being committed to the City Hospital.

My long-suffering employers had a long talk with me and told me that they were only willing to give me one last final chance because during my short periods of sobriety I had shown them that I could do good work. I knew they meant it and that it was the last chance they would ever give me.

I also knew that my wife couldn't stand it much longer.

Somehow or other I felt that I had been cheated-that I had not really been cured at the sanitarium even though I felt good physically. So I talked it over with my wife who said there must be something somewhere that would help me. She persuaded me to go back to the sanitarium and consult Dr. --, which thank God I did.

He told me everything had been done for me that was medically possible but that unless I decided to quit I was licked. "But doctor," I said, "I have decided time and time again to quit drinking and I was sincere each time, but each time I slipped again and each time it got worse." The doctor smiled and said, "Yes, yes, I've heard that story hundreds of times. You really never made a decision, you just made declarations. You've got to decide and if you really want to quit drinking I know of some fellows who can help you. Would you like to meet them?"

Would a condemned man like a reprieve? Of course I wanted to meet them. I was so scared and so desperate that I was willing to try anything. Thus it was that I met that band of life-savers, Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first thing Bill told me was his own story, which paralleled mine in most respects, and then said that for three years he had had no trouble. It was plain to see that he was a supremely happy man-that he possessed a happiness and peacefulness I had for years envied in men.

What he told me made sense because I knew that everything that I, my wife, my family and my friends had tried had failed. I had always believed in God even though I was not a devout church-goer. Many times in my life I had prayed for the things I wanted God to do for me, but it had never occurred to me that He, in His Infinite Wisdom knew much better than I what I should have, and be, and do, and that if I simply turned the decision over to Him, I would be led along the right path.

At the conclusion of our first interview, Bill suggested that I think it over and come back to see him within a few days if I was interested. Fully realizing the utter futility with which my own efforts had met in the past, and somehow or other sensing that delay might be dangerous, I was back to see him the next day.

At first it seemed a wild, crazy idea to me, but because of the fact that everything else I had tried had failed, because everything seemed so hopeless, and because it worked with these fellows who all had been through the same hell that I had been through, I was willing, at least, to have a try.

To my utter astonishment, when I did give their method a fair trial, it not only worked, but was so amazingly easy and simple that I said to them "Where have you been all my life?"

That was in February, 1937, and life took on an entirely different meaning. It was plain to see that my wife was radiantly happy. All of the differences that we seemed to have been having, all of the tenseness, the worry, confusion, the hectic days and nights that my drinking had poured into our life together, vanished. There was peace. There was real love. There was kindness and consideration. There was everything that goes into the fabric of a happy normal existence together.

My employers, of course, the same as the writers of these stories, must remain anonymous. But I would be very thoughtless if I did not take this opportunity to acknowledge what they did for me. They kept me on, giving me chance after chance, hoping I suppose, that some day I would find the answer, although they themselves did not know what it might be. They do now, however.

A tremendous change took place in my work, in my relationship with my employers, in my association with my co-workers and in my dealings with our customers. Crazy as the idea seemed when broached to me by these men who had found it worked, God did come right into my work when permitted, as He had come into the other activities connected with my life.

With this sort of lubricant the wheels turned so much more smoothly that it seemed as if the whole machine operated on a much better basis than heretofore. Promotion that I had longed for previously, but hadn't deserved, was given to me. Soon another followed; more confidence, more trust, more responsibility and finally a key executive position in that same organization which so charitably kept me on in a minor position through the period of my drunkenness.

You can't laugh that off. Come into my home and see what a happy one it is. Look into my office, it is a happy human beehive of activity. Look into any phase of my life and you will see joy and happiness, a sense of usefulness in the scheme of things, where formerly there was fear, sorrow and utter futility.

A DIFFERENT SLANT by Harry Brick (N.Y.)

I PROBABLY have one of the shortest stories in this whole volume and it is short because there is one point I wish to get over to an occasional man who may be in my position.

Partner in one of this country's nationally known concerns, happily married with fine children, sufficient income to indulge my whims and future security from the financial standpoint should paint a picture in which there would be no possibility of a man becoming an alcoholic from the psychological standpoint. I had nothing to escape from and I am known as a conservative, sound business man.

I had missed going to my office several times while I tapered off and brought myself to sobriety. This time, though, I found I could not taper off, I could not stop and I had to be hospitalized. That was the greatest shock to my pride I ever had. Such a blow that I made the firm resolve to never again taste as much as one glass of beer. Careful thought and analysis went into that decision.

The doctor at this hospital told me vaguely of the work of men who called themselves Alcoholics Anonymous and asked if I wanted one of them to call upon me. I was sure I needed no outside help, but in order to be polite to the doctor and hoping he would forget it, I assented.

I was embarrassed when a chap called at my house one evening and told me about himself. He quickly sensed my slight resentment and made it plain to me that none of the crowd were missionaries, nor did they feel it their duty to try to help anyone who did not want help. I think I closed the talk by saying I was glad I was not an alcoholic and sorry he had been bothered by me.

Within sixty days, after leaving the hospital the second time, I was pounding at his door, willing to do anything to conquer the vicious thing that had conquered me.

The point I hope I have made is-even a man with everything from the material standpoint, a man with tremendous pride and the will power to function in all ordinary circumstances can become an alcoholic and find himself as hopeless and helpless as the man who has a multitude of worries and troubles.

TRAVELER, EDITOR, SCHOLAR (later revised & called "THE NEWS HAWK") by Jim Scott (Akron, OH.)

THE annual post-game banquet was winding up. The last rolling "R" of the speaker's hearty Caledonian accent died away sonorously. The company of students and alumni, all Scots, began to adjourn to the spacious bar for stronger stuff than the comparatively innocuous wines on the tables. A goal-scorer in a soccer game between my school and its centuries-old rival, I rated some popularity and the admiration of the moment expressed in famous ales and whiskey and soda. I was the son of a clergyman and just past sixteen years of age.

Waking in my hotel room the next day, I groaned. I didn't want to see or talk to anyone. Then someone raised my head and put a glass to my lips. "What you need is 'a hair of the dog that bit you', get this into you."

The smell of the stuff sickened me. I grimaced, gulped the draught down and fell back on the bed. Somehow it stayed down and in about fifteen minutes I began to feel better and managed to eat a fair breakfast. That was my first experience of the "morning after" drink.

Back to college and my apprenticeship to a well-known lawyer, the students in their various clubs and societies, tumbled enormously. I gave up the law but stayed in school to graduate. Through these college years in a city of well over a million inhabitants I learned all the better barrooms. Burns and Byron and other colorful profligates were the literary idols in the gang of "bloods" with whom I was a popular figure. I thought I was a gay dog and this was the life.

With nothing but a liberal arts education, very definitely estranged from my family and already married, soon after graduation I became a bookmaker's clerk on the British racing circuits, far better off financially than the average professional man. I moved in a gay crowd in the various "pubs" and sporting clubs. My wife traveled with me, but with a baby coming I decided to settle in a large city where I got a job with a commission agent which is a polite term for a hand-book operator. My job was to collect bets and betting-slips in the business section, a lucrative spot. My boss, in his way, was "big business." Drinking was all in the day's work.

One evening, the book, after checking up, was very definitely in the red for plenty through a piece of studied carelessness on my part, and my boss, very shrewd and able, fired me with a parting statement to the effect that once was enough. With a good stake I sailed for New York. I knew I was through among the English "bookies."

Tom Sharkey's brawling bar on 14th Street and the famous wine-room at the back were headquarters for me. I soon ran through my stake. Some college friends got me jobs when I finally had to go to work, but I didn't stick to them. I wanted to travel. Making my way to Pittsburgh, I met other former friends and got a job in a large factory where piecemakers were making good money. My fellow-workers were mostly good Saturday night drinkers and I was right

with them. Young and able to travel with the best of them, I managed to hold my job and keep my end up in the barrooms.

One of my keenest memories is of meeting Jack London who came in unannounced one night to our favorite saloon, made a rousing speech, and later set up the drinks all evening.

I quit the factory and got a job on a small newspaper, going from that to a Pittsburgh daily, long ago defunct. Following a big drunk on that sheet where I was doing leg-work and rewrite, a feeling of nostalgia made me buy a ticket for Liverpool and I returned to Britain.

During my visit there, renewing acquaintance with former friends I soon spent most of my money. I wanted to roam again and through relatives got a super-cargo job on an Australian packet which allowed me to visit my people in Australia where I was born. But I didn't stay long. I was soon back in Liverpool. Coming out of a pub near the Cunard pier I saw the Lusitania standing out in the middle of the Mersey. She had just come in and was scheduled to sail in two days. In my mind's eye I saw Broadway again and Tom Sharkey's bar; the roar of the subway was in my ears. Saying goodbye to my wife and baby, I was treading Manhattan's streets in a little more than a week. Again I spent my bankroll, by no means as thick as the one I had when I first saw the skyline of Gotham. I was soon broke, this time without trainfare to go anywhere. I got my first introduction to "riding the rods and making a blind."

In my early twenties the hardships of hobo life did not discourage me but I had no wish to become just a tramp. Forced to detrain from an empty gondola on the other side of Chicago by a terrific rainstorm which drenched me to the skin, I hit the first factory building I saw for a job. That job began a series of brief working spells, each one ending in a "drunk" and the urge to travel. My migrations extended for over a year as far west as Omaha. Drifting back to Ohio, I landed on a small newspaper and later was impressed into the direction of boy-welfare work at the local "Y". I stayed sober for four years except for a one-night carousel in Chicago. I stayed so sober that I used to keep a quart of medicinal whiskey in my bureau which I used to taper off the occasional newspaper alcoholics who were sent to see me.

Lots of times, vain-gloriously, I used to take the bottle out, look at it and say, "I've got you licked."

The war was getting along. Curious about it, feeling I was missing something, absolutely without any illusions about the aftermath, with no pronounced feeling of patriotism, I joined up with a Canadian regiment, serving a little over two years. Slight casualties, complicated however by a long and serious illness, were my only mishaps. Remarkably enough, I was a very abstemious soldier. My four years of abstinence had something to do with it, but soldiering is a tough enough game for a sober man, and I had no yen for full-pack slogging through mud with a cognac or vin rouge hangover.

Discharged in 1919, I really made up for my dry spell. Quebec, Toronto, Buffalo, and finally Pittsburgh, were the scenes of man-sized drunks until I had gone through my readjusted discharge pay, a fair sum.

I again became a reporter on a Pittsburgh daily. I applied for a publicity job and got it. My wife came over from Scotland and we started housekeeping in a large Ohio city.

The new job lasted five years. Every encouragement was given me with frequent salary increases, but the sober times between "periods" became shorter. I myself could see deterioration in my work, from being physically and mentally affected by liquor, although I had not yet reached the point where all I wanted was more to drink. Successive Monday morning hangovers, which despite mid-week resolutions to do better, came with unflinching regularity, eventually causing me to quit my job. Washington, D.C. and news-gathering agency work followed with many parties. I couldn't stand the pace. My drinking was never the spaced doses of the careful tippler; it was always gluttonous.

Returning to the town I had left three months before, I became editor of a monthly magazine, soon had additional publicity and advertising accounts and the money rolled in. The strain of overwork soon led me to the bottle again. My wife made several attempts to get me to stop and I had the usual visits from persons who would always ask me "Why?"-as if I knew! Offered the job of advertising manager for an eastern automotive company, I moved to Philadelphia to begin life anew. In three months John Barleycorn had me kicked out.

I did six years of newspaper advertising, and trade journal work with many, many drunks of drab and dreary hue woven into the pattern of my life. I visited my family just once in that time. An old avocation, the collection of first editions, rare books and Americana, fascinated me between times. I had some financial success through no ability of my own, and, when jobless and almost wiped out in 1930, I began to trade and sell my collection and much of the proceeds went to keep my apartment stocked with liquor and almost every night saw me helpless to bed.

I tried to help myself. I even began to go the rounds of the churches. I listened to famous ministers-found nothing. I began to know the inside of jails and workhouses. My family would have nothing to do with me, in fact couldn't, because I couldn't spare any of my money which I needed for drink to support them. My last venture, a book shop, was hastened to closed doors by my steady intoxication. Then I had an idea.

Loading a car with good old books to sell to collectors, librarians, universities and historical societies, I started out to travel the country. I stayed sober during the trip except for an occasional bottle of beer because funds barely met

expenses. When I hit Houston, Texas, I found employment in a large bookstore. Need I say here that in a very short time I was walking along a prairie highway with arm extended and thumb pointed? In the two succeeding years I held ten different jobs ranging from newspaper copy-desk and rewrite, to traffic director for an oil field equipment company. Always in between there were intervals of being broke, riding freights and hitch-hiking interminable distances from one big town to another in three states. Now on a new job I was always thinking about payday and how much liquor I could buy and the pleasure I could have.

I knew I was a drunkard. Enduring all the hangover-hells that every alcoholic experiences, I made the usual resolutions. My thoughts sometimes turned to the idea that there must be a remedy. I have stood listening to street-corner preachers tell how they did beat the game. They seemed to be happy in their fashion, they and the little group of supporters, but always pride of intellect stopped me from seeking what they evidently had. Sniffing at emotional religion I walked away. I was an honest agnostic but definitely not a hater of the church or its adherents. What philosophy I had was thoroughly paganistic—all my life was devoted to a search for pleasure. I wanted to do nothing except what it pleased me to do and when I wanted to do it.

Federal Theatre in Texas gave me an administrative job which I held for a year, only because I worked hard and productively when I worked, and because my very tolerant chief ascribed my frequent lapses to a bohemian temperament. When it was closed through Washington edict I began with Federal Writers in San Antonio. In those days my system was always to drink up my last pay check and believe that necessity would bring the next job. A friend who knew I would soon be broke mounted guard over me when I left my job of writing the histories of Texas cities and put me aboard a bus for the town I had left almost five years before.

In five years a good many persons had forgotten that I had been somewhat notorious. I had arrived drunk but promised my wife I would keep sober, and I knew I could get work if I did. Of course, I didn't keep sober. My wife and family stood by me for ten weeks and then, quite justifiably, ejected me. I managed to maintain myself with odd jobs, did ten weeks in a social rescue institution and at length wound up in a second-hand bookstore in an adjacent town as manager. While there I was called to the hospital in my home town to see a former partner who had insisted that I visit him. I found my friend was there for alcoholism and now he was insisting that he had found the only cure. I listened to him, rather tolerantly. I noticed a Bible on his table and it amazed me. I had never known him to be anything but a good healthy pagan with a propensity for getting into liquor jams and scrapes. As he talked I gathered vaguely, (because he was a faltering beginner then just as I am now) that to be relieved of alcoholism I would have to be different.

Some days later, after he had been discharged, a stranger came into my shop in the nearby town. He introduced himself and began to tell me about a bunch of some 60 former drinkers and drunkards who met once a week, and he invited me to go with him to the next meeting. I thanked him, pleaded business engagements and promised I'd go with him at some future date.

"Anyhow, I'm on the wagon now," I said. "I'm doing a job I like and it's quiet where I live, practically no temptations. I don't feel bothered about liquor."

He looked at me quizzically. He knew too well that didn't mean a thing just as I knew in my heart that it would be only a question of time—a few days, a week, or even a month, it was inevitable—till I would be off on another bender. The time came just a week later. And as I look back on the events of two months, I can clearly see that I had been circling around, half-afraid of encountering the remedy for my situation, half-wanting it, deferring fulfillment of my promise to get in touch with the doctor I had heard about. An accident while drunk laid me low for about three weeks. As soon as I could get up and walk I started to drink again and kept it up until my friend of the hospital, who, in his first try at the new way of life had stubbed his toe in Chicago but had come back to the town to take counsel and make a new start, picked me up and got me into a hospital.

I had been drinking heavily from one state of semi-coma to another and it was several days before I got "defogged" but subconsciously I was in earnest about wanting to quit liquor forever. It was no momentary emotionalism born of self-pity in a maudlin condition. I was seeking something and I was ready to learn. I did not need to be told that my efforts were and would be unavailing if I did not get help. The doctor who came to see me almost at once did not assail me with any new doctrines; he made sure that I had a need and that I wanted to have that need filled and little by little I learned how my need could be met. The story of Alcoholics Anonymous fascinated me. Singly and in groups of two or three, they came to visit me. Some of them I had known for years, good two-fisted drinkers who had disappeared from their former haunts. I had missed them myself from the barrooms of the town.

There were business men, professional men, and factory workers. All sorts were represented and their relation of experiences and how they had found the only remedy, added to their human existence as sober men, laid the foundation of a very necessary faith. Indeed, I was beginning to see that I would require implicit faith, like a small child, if I was going to get anywhere or so it appeared as I lay in that hospital. The big thing was that these men were all sober and evidently had something I didn't have. Whatever it was, I wanted it.

I left the hospital on a meeting night. I was greeted warmly, honestly, and with a true ring of sincerity by everyone present. That night I was taken home by a former alcoholic and his wife. They did not show me to my room and wish me a good night's rest. Instead, over coffee cups, this man and his wife told me what had been done for them. They

were earnest and obviously trying to help me on the road I had chosen. They will never know how much their talk with me has helped. The hospitality of their home and their fine fellowship were mine freely.

I had never, since the believing days of childhood, been able to conceive an authority directing the universe. But I had never been a flippant, wise-cracking sneerer at the few persons I had met who had impressed me as Christian men and women, or at any institutions whose sincerity of purpose I could see. No conviction was necessary to establish my status as a miserable failure at managing my own life. I began to read the Bible daily and to go over a simple devotional exercise as a way to begin each day. Gradually I began to understand.

I cannot say that my taste for liquor has entirely disappeared. It has been that way with some, but it has not been with me and may never be. Neither can I honestly say that I have forgotten the "fleshpots of Egypt." I haven't. But I can remember the urge of the Prodigal Son to return to his Father that he might taste of the husks that the swine did eat.

Formerly in the acute mental and physical pain during the remorseful periods succeeding each drunk, I found my recollection of the misery I had gone through a bolsterer of resolution and afterward, perhaps, a deterrent for a time. But in those days I had no one to whom I might take my troubles. Today I have. Today I have Someone who will always hear me; I have a warm fellowship among men who understand my problems; I have tasks to do and am glad to do them, to see others who are alcoholics and to help them in any way I can to become sober men. I took my last drink in 1937.

THE BACK-SLIDER by Walter Bray (Akron, OH.)

WHEN I was graduated from high-school the World War was on in full blast. I was too young for the army but old enough to man a machine for the production of the means of wholesale destruction. I became a machine-hand at high wages. Machinery appealed to me anyway, because I had always wanted to be a mechanical engineer. Keen to learn as many different operations as possible, I insisted on being transferred from one operation to another until I had a good practical knowledge of all machines in a standard machine shop. With that equipment I was ready to travel for broader experience and in seven years had worked in the leading industrial centers in the eastern states, supplementing my shop work with night classes in marine engineering.

I had the good times of the period but confined my drinking to weekends, with an occasional party after work in the evenings. But I was unsettled and dissatisfied, and in a sense disgusted with going from job to job and achieving nothing more than a weekly pay envelope. I wasn't particularly interested in making a lot of money, but I wanted to be comfortable and independent as soon as possible.

So I married at that time, and for a while it seemed that I had found the solution to my urge for moving around. Most people settle down when they marry and I thought I'd have the same experience, that my wife and I would chose a place where we could establish a home and bring up a family. I had the dream of wearing carpet slippers in a life of comparative ease by the time I was forty. It didn't work out that way. After the newness of being married had worn off a little the old wander business got me again.

In 1924 I brought my wife to a growing city in the middle west where work was always plentiful. I had been in and out of it several times before and I could always get a job in the engineering department of its largest industrial plant. I early acquired the spirit of the organization which had a real reputation for constructive education of its workers. It encouraged ambition and aided latent talent 'to develop. I was keen about my work and strove always to place myself in line for promotion. I had a thorough knowledge of the mechanical needs of the plant and when I was offered a job in the purchasing department's mechanical section I took it.

We were now resident in sort of a workers' paradise, a beautifully landscaped district where employees were encouraged to buy homes from the company. We had a boy about two years after I started with the company and with his advent I began to take marriage seriously. My boy was going to have the best I could give him. He would never have to work through the years as I had done. We had a very nice circle of acquaintance where we lived, nice neighbors and my colleagues in the engineering department and later in purchasing were good people, many of them bent on getting ahead and enjoying the good things of life while they climbed. We had nice parties with very little drinking, just enough to give a little Saturday night glow to things-never enough to get beyond control.

Fateful and fatal came the month of October in the year 1929. Work slowed down. Reassuring statements from financial leaders maintained our confidence that industry would soon be on an even keel again. But the boat kept rocking. In our organization, as in many others, the purchasing department found its work lessened by executive order. Personnel was cut down. Those who were left went around working furiously at whatever there was to do, looking furtively at each other wondering who would be next to go. I wondered if the long hours of overtime with no pay would be recognized in the cutting down program. I lay awake lots of nights just like any other man who sees what he has built up threatened with destruction.

I was laid off. I took it hard for I had been doing a good job and I thought as a man often will, that it might have been somebody else who should get the axe. Yet there was a sense of relief. It had happened. And partly through resentment

and partly from a sense of freedom I went out and got pretty well intoxicated. I stayed drunk for three days, something very unusual for me, who had very seldom lost a day's work from drinking.

My experience soon helped me to a fairly important job in the engineering department of another company. My work took me out of town quite a bit, never at any great distance from home, but frequently overnight. Sometimes I wouldn't have to report at the office for a week, but I was always in touch by phone. In a way I was practically my own boss and being away from office discipline I was an easy victim to temptation. And temptation certainly existed. I had a wide acquaintance among the vendors to our company who liked me and were very friendly. At first I turned down the countless offers I had to take a drink, but it wasn't long before I was taking plenty.

I'd get back into town after a trip, pretty well organized from my day's imbibing. It was only a step from this daily drinking to successive bouts with absence from my route. I would phone and my chief couldn't tell from my voice whether I had been drinking or not, but gradually learned of my escapades and warned me of the consequences to myself and my job.. Finally when my lapses impaired my efficiency and some pressure was brought to bear on the chief, he let me go. That was in 1932.

I found myself back exactly where I had started when I came to town. I was still a good mechanic and could always get a job as an hourly rated machine operator. This seemed to be the only thing which offered and once more I discarded the white collar for the overalls and canvas gloves. I had spent more than half a dozen good years and had got exactly nowhere, so I did my first really serious drinking. I was good for at least ten days or two weeks off every two months I worked, getting drunk and then half-heartedly sobering up. This went on for almost three years. My wife did the best she could to help me at first, but eventually lost patience and gave up trying to do anything with me at all. I was thrown into one hospital after another, got sobered up, discharged, and ready for another bout. What money I had saved dwindled and I turned everything I had into cash to keep on drinking.

In one hospital, a Catholic Institution, one of the sisters had talked religion to me and had brought a priest in to see me. Both were sorry for me and assured me that I would find relief in Mother Church. I wanted none of it. "If I couldn't stop drinking of my own free will, I was certainly not going to drag God into it," I thought.

During another hospital stay a minister whom I liked and respected came to see me. To me, he was just another non-alcoholic who was unable, even by the added benefit and authority of the cloth, to do anything for an alcoholic.

I sat down one day to figure things out. I was no good to myself, my wife, or my growing boy. My drinking had even affected him; he was a nervous, irritable child, getting along badly at school, making poor grades because the father he knew was a sot and an unpredictable one. My insurance was sufficient to take care of my wife and child for a fresh start by themselves and I decided that I'd simply move out of the world for good. I took a killing dose of bichloride of mercury.

They rushed me to the hospital. The emergency physicians applied the immediate remedies but shook their heads. There wasn't a chance, they said. And for days it was touch and go. One day the chief resident physician came in on his daily rounds. He had often seen me there before for alcoholism.

Standing at my bedside he showed more than professional interest, tried to buoy me up with the desire to live. He asked me if I would really like to quit drinking and have another try at living. One clings to life no matter how miserable. I told him I would and that I would try again. He said he was going to send another doctor to see me, to help me.

This doctor came and sat beside my bed. He tried to cheer me up about my future, pointed out I was still a young man with the world to lick and insisted that I could do it if I really wanted to stop drinking. Without telling me what it was, he said he had an answer to my problem and condition that really worked. Then he told me very simply the story of his own life, a life of generous tipping after professional hours for more than three decades until he had lost almost everything a man can lose, and how he had found and applied the remedy with complete success. He felt sure I could do the same. Day after day he called on me in the hospital and spent hours talking to me.

He simply asked me to make a practical application of beliefs I already held theoretically but had forgotten all my life. I believed in a God who ruled the universe. The doctor submitted to me the idea of God as a father who would not willingly let any of his children perish and suggested that most, if not all of our troubles, come from being completely out of touch with the idea of God, with God Himself. All my life, he said, I had been doing things of my own human will as opposed to God's will and that the only certain way for me to stop drinking was to submit my will to God and let Him handle my difficulties.

I had never looked on my situation in that way, had always felt myself very remote indeed from a Supreme Being. "Doc," as I shall call him hereinafter, was pretty positive that God's law was the Law of Love and that all my resentful feelings which I had fed and cultivated with liquor were the result of either conscious or unconscious, it didn't matter which, disobedience to that law. Was I willing to submit my will? I said I would try to do so. While I was still at the hospital his visits were supplemented by visits from a young fellow who had been a heavy drinker for years but had run into "Doc" and had tried his remedy.

At that time, the ex-problem drinkers in this town, who have now grown to considerable proportions, numbered only Doc and two other fellows. To help themselves and compare notes they met once a week in a private house and talked things over. As soon as I came from the hospital I went with them. The meeting was without formality. Taking love as the basic command I discovered that my faithful attempt to practice a law of love led me to clear myself of certain dishonesties.

I went back to my job. New men came and we were glad to visit them. I found that new friends helped me to keep straight and the sight of every new alcoholic in the hospital was a real object lesson to me. I could see in them myself as I had been, something I had never been able to picture before.

Now I come to the hard part of my story. It would be great to say I progressed to a point of splendid fulfillment, but it wouldn't be true. My later experience points a moral derived from a hard and bitter lesson. I went along peacefully for two years after God had helped me quit drinking. And then something happened. I was enjoying the friendship of understanding fellows and getting along quite well in my work and in my small social circle. I had largely won back the respect of my former friends and the confidence of my employer. I was feeling fine-too fine. Gradually I began to take the plan I was trying to follow apart. After all, I asked myself, did I really have to follow any plan at all to stay sober? Here I was, dry for two years and getting along all right. It wouldn't hurt if I just carried on and missed a meeting or two. If not present in the flesh I'd be there in spirit, I said in excuse, for I felt a little bit guilty about staying away.

And I began to neglect my daily communication with God. Nothing happened-not immediately at any rate. Then came the thought that I could stand on my own feet now. When that thought came to mind-that God might have been all very well for the early days or months of my sobriety but I didn't need Him now-I was a gone coon. I got clear away from the life I had been attempting to lead. I was in real danger. It was just a step from that kind of thinking to the idea that my two years training in total abstinence was just what I needed to be able to handle a glass of beer. I began to taste. I became fatalistic about things and soon was drinking deliberately knowing I'd get drunk, stay drunk, and what would inevitably happen.

My friends came to my aid. They tried to help me, but I didn't want help. I was ashamed and preferred not to see them come around. And they knew that as long as I didn't want to quit, as long as I preferred my own will instead of God's will, the remedy simply could not be applied. It is a striking thought that God never forces anyone to do His will, that His help is ever available but has to be sought in all earnestness and humility.

This condition lasted for months, during which time I had voluntarily entered a private institution to get straightened out. On the last occasion when I came out of the fog, I asked God to help me again. Shamefaced as I was, I went back to the fellowship. They made me welcome, offered me collectively and individually all the help I might need. They treated me as though nothing had happened. And I feel that it is the most telling tribute to the efficacy of this remedy that during my period of relapse I still knew this remedy would work with me if I would let it, but I was too stubborn to admit it.

That was long ago. Depend upon it I stay mighty close to what has proven to be good for me. I don't dare risk getting very far away. And I have found that in simple faith I get results by placing my life in God's hands every day, by asking Him to keep me a sober man for 24 hours, and trying to do His will. He has never let me down yet.

HOME BREWMEISTER by Clarence Snyder (Akron, OH.)

STRANGELY enough, or by some queer quirk, I became acquainted with the "hilarious life just at the time in my life when I was beginning to really settle down to a common-sense, sane, domestic life. My wife became pregnant and the doctor recommended the use of Porter Ale . . . so . . . I bought a six gallon crock and a few bottles, listened to advice from amateur brewmeisters, and was off on my beer manufacturing career on a small scale (for the time being). Somehow or another, I must have misunderstood the doctor's instructions, for I not only made beer for my wife, I also drank it for her.

As time went on, I found that it was customary to open a few bottles whenever visitors dropped in. That being the case, it didn't take long to figure out that my meager manufacturing facilities were entirely inadequate to the manufacture of beer for social and domestic consumption. From that point on, I secured crocks of ten gallon capacity and really took quite an active interest in the manufacture of home brew.

We were having card parties with limburger and beer quite regularly. Eventually, of course, what with all the hilarity that could be provoked with a few gallons of beer, there seemed to be no need of bridge or poker playing for entertainment. Well . . . we all know how those things go. The parties waxed more liquid and hilarious as time went on, and eventually I discovered that a little shot of liquor now and then between beers had the tendency to put me in a whacky mood much quicker than having to down several quarts of beer to obtain the same results. The inevitable result of this discovery was that I soon learned that beer made a very good wash for whiskey. That discovery so intrigued me, that I stayed on that diet almost entirely for the balance of my extended drinking career. Yes sir, the old Boilermaker and his Helper. The last day of my drinking career, I drank 22 of them between 10 and 12 A.M. and I shall never know how many more followed them until I was poured into bed that night.

I was getting along fairly well with my party drinking for quite some time however, but eventually I began to visit beer joints in between parties. A night or so a week in a joint, and a party or so a week at home or with friends, along with a little lone drinking, soon had me preparing for the existence of a top flight drunkard.

Three years after I started on my drinking career, I lost my first job. At the time, I was living out of town, so I moved back to the home town and made a connection in a responsible position with one of the larger companies in the finance business. Up to this point I had spent six years in the business and had enjoyed the reputation of being very successful.

My new duties were extremely confining and my liquor consumption began to increase at this time. Upon leaving the office in the evening, my first stop would be a saloon about a block from the office. However, as there happened to be several saloons within that distance, I didn't find it necessary to patronize the same place each evening. It doesn't pay to be seen in the same place at the same hour every day, you know.

The general procedure was to take 4 or 5 shots in the first place I stopped at. This would get me feeling fit, and then I would start for home and fireside, thirteen miles away. Well . . . on the way home numerous places must be passed. If I were alone I would stop at four or five of them, but only one or two in the event I had my mistrusting wife with me.

Eventually I would arrive home for a late supper, for which, of course, I had absolutely no relish. I would make a feeble attempt at eating supper but never met with any howling success. I never enjoyed any meal, but I ate my lunch at noon for two reasons: first, to help get me out of the fog of the night before, and second, to furnish some measure of nourishment. (My enjoyment of meals now is an added feature to the Seven Wonders of the World to me. I can still hardly believe it). Eventually, the noon meal was also dispensed with.

I cannot remember just when I became the victim of insomnia, but I do know that the last year and a half I never went to bed sober a single night. I couldn't sleep. I had a mortal fear of going to be and tossing all night. Evenings at home were an ordeal. As a result, I would fall off in a drunken stupor every night.

How was I able to discharge my duties at the office during those horrible mornings, I will never be able to explain. Handling customers, dealers, insurance people, dictation, telephoning, directing new employees, answering to superiors, etc. However, it finally caught up with me, and when it did, I was a mental, physical and nervous wreck.

I arrived at the stage where I couldn't quite make it to the office some mornings. Then I would send an excuse of illness. But the firm became violently ill with my drunkenness and their course of treatment was to remove their ulcer in the form of me from their payroll, amid much fanfare and very personal and slighting remarks and insinuations.

During this time, I had been threatened, beaten, kissed, praised and damned alternately by relatives, family, friends and strangers, but of course it all went for naught. How many times I swore off in the morning and got drunk before sunset I don't know. I was on the toboggan and really making time.

After being fired, I lined up with a new finance company that was just starting in business, and took the position of business promotion man, contacting automobile dealers. WOW . . . was that something??? While working in an office, there was some semblance of restraint, but, oh boy, when I got on the outside with this new company without supervision, did I go to town???

I really worked for several weeks, and having had a fairly wide acceptance with the dealer trade, it was not difficult for me to line enough of them up to give me a very substantial volume of business with a minimum of effort.

Now I was getting drunk all the time. It wasn't necessary to report in to the office in person every day, and when I did go in, it was just enough to make an appearance and bounce right out again. Was that a merry-go-round for the eight months that it lasted???

Finally this company also became ill and I was once more looking for a job. Then I learned something else. I learned that person just can't find a job hanging in a dive or barroom all day and all night, as jobs don't seem to turn up in those places. I became convinced of that because I spent most of my time there and nary a job turned up. By this time, my chances of getting lined up in my chosen business were shot. Everyone had my number and wouldn't hire me at any price.

I have omitted details of transgressions that I made when drunk for several reasons. One is that I don't remember too many of them, as I was one of those drunks who could be on his feet and attend a meeting or a party, engage in a conversation with people and do things that any nearly normal person would do, and the next day, not remember a thing about where I was, what I did, whom I saw, or how I got home. (That condition was a distinct handicap to me in trying to vindicate myself with the not so patient wife).

I also committed other indiscretions of which I see no particular point in relating. Anyone who is a rummy or is close to rummies knows what all those things amount to without having to be told about them.

Things eventually came to the point where I had no friends. I didn't care to go visiting unless the parties we might visit had plenty of liquor on hand and I could get stinking drunk. Fact is, that I was always well on my way before I would undertake to go visiting at all. (Naturally, this condition was also a source of great delight to my wife).

After holding good positions, making better than average income for over ten years, I was in debt, had no clothes to speak of, no money, no friends, and no one any longer tolerating me but my wife. My son had absolutely no use for me. Even some of the saloon-keepers where I had spent so much time and money, requested that I stay away from their places. Finally, an old business acquaintance of mine, who I hadn't seen for several years offered me a job. I was on that job a month and drunk most of the time.

Just at this time my wife heard of a doctor in another city who had been very successful with drunks. She offered me the alternative of going to see him or her leaving me for good and all. Well . . . I had a job, and I really wanted desperately to stop drinking, but I couldn't, so I readily agreed to visit the doctor she recommended.

That was the turning point of my life. My wife accompanied me on my visit and the doctor really told me some things that in my state of jitters nearly knocked me out of the chair. He talked about himself, but I was sure it was me. He mentioned lies, deceptions, etc. in the course of his story in the presence of the one person in the world I wouldn't want to know such things. How did he know all this? I had never seen him before, and at the time hoped to hell I would never see him again. However, he explained to me that he had been just such a rummy as I, only for a much longer period of time.

He advised me to enter the particular hospital to which staff he was connected and I readily agreed. In all honesty though, I was skeptical, but I wanted so definitely to quit drinking that I would have welcomed any sort of physical torture or pain to accomplish the result.

I made arrangements to enter the hospital three days later and promptly went out and got stiff for three days. It was with grim foreboding and advanced jitters that I checked in at the hospital. Of course, I had no hint or intimation as to what the treatment was to consist of. Was I to be surprised!

After being in the hospital for several days, a plan of living was outlined to me. A very simple plan that I find much joy and happiness in following. It is impossible to put on paper all the benefits I have derived . . . physical, mental, domestic, spiritual, and monetary.

This is no idle talk. It is the truth.

From a physical standpoint, I gained 16 pounds in the first two months I was off liquor. I eat three good meals a day now, and really enjoy them. I sleep like a baby, and never give a thought to such a thing as insomnia. I feel as I did when I was fifteen years younger.

Mentally . . . I know where I was last night, the night before, and the nights before that. Also, I have no fear of anything. I have self confidence and assurance that cannot be confused with the cockyness or noise-making I once possessed. I can think clearly and am helped much in my thinking and judgment by my spiritual development which grows daily.

From a domestic standpoint, we really have a home now. I am anxious to get home after dark. My wife is ever glad to see me come in. My youngster had adopted me. Our home is always full of friends and visitors (No home brew as an inducement).

Spiritually . . . I have found a Friend who never lets me down and is ever eager to help. I can actually take my problems to Him and He does give me comfort, peace, and radiant happiness.

From a monetary standpoint . . . in the last few years, I have reduced my reckless debts to almost nothing, and have had money to get along comfortably. I still have my job, and just prior to the writing of this narrative, I received an advancement.

For all of these blessings, I thank Him.

THE SEVEN MONTH SLIP by Ernie Galbraith (Akron, OH.)

AT FOURTEEN years of age, when I should have been at home under the supervision of my parents, I was in the United States army serving a one year enlistment. I found myself with a bunch of men none too good for a fourteen year old kid who passed easily for eighteen. I transferred my hero-worshipping to these men of the world. I suppose the worst damage done in that year in the army barracks was the development of an almost unconscious admiration for their apparently jolly sort of living.

Once out of uniform I went to Mexico where I worked for an oil company. Here I learned to take on a good cargo of beer and hold it. Later I rode the range in the Texas cow country and often went to town with the boys to "whoop it up on payday." By the time I returned to my home in the middle west I had learned several patterns of living, to say nothing of a cock-sure attitude that I needed no advice from anyone.

The next ten years are sketchy. During this time I married and established my own home and everything was lovely for a time. Soon I was having a good time getting around the law in speakeasies. Oh yes, I outsmarted our national laws but I was not quite successful in evading the old moral law.

I was working for a large industrial concern and had been promoted to a supervisory job. In spite of big parties, I was for three or four years able to be on the job the next morning. Then gradually the hangovers became more persistent and I found myself not only needing a few shots of liquor before I could go to work at all, but finally found it advisable to stay at home and sober up by the taper-off method. My bosses tried to give me some good advice. When that didn't help they tried more drastic measures, laying me off without pay. They covered up my too frequent absences many times in order to keep them from the attention of the higher officials in the company.

My attitude was that I could handle my liquor whenever I wanted to go about it seriously, and I considered my absences no worse than those of other employees and officials who were getting away with murder in their drinking.

One does not have to use his imagination much to realize that this sort of drinking is hard on the matrimonial relationship. After proving myself neither faithful nor capable of being temperate, my wife left me and obtained a judicial separation. This gave me a really good excuse to get drunk.

In the years 1933 and 1934 I was fired several times, but always got my job back on my promises to do better. On the last occasion I was reduced to the labor gang on the plant. I made a terrific effort to stay sober and prove myself capable of better things. I succeeded pretty well and one day I was called into the production chief's office and told I had met with the approval of the executive department and to be ready to start on a better job.

This good news seemed to justify a mild celebration with a few beers. Exactly four days later I reported for work only to find that they too knew about the "mild" celebration and that they decided to check me out altogether. After a time I went back and was assigned to one of the hardest jobs in the factory. I was in bad shape physically and after six months of this, I quit, going on a drunk with my last pay check.

Then I began to find that the friends with whom I had been drinking for some time seemed to disappear. This made me resentful and I found myself many times feeling that everybody was against me. Bootleg joints became my hangouts. I sold my books, car, and even clothing in order to buy a few drinks.

I am certain that my family kept me from gravitating to flophouses and gutters. I am eternally thankful to them that they never threw me out or refused me help when I was drinking. Of course, I didn't appreciate their kindness then, and I began to stay away from home on protracted drinking spells.

Somehow my family heard of two men in town who had found a way to quit drinking. They suggested that I contact these men but I retorted "If I can't handle my liquor with my own will power then I had better jump over the viaduct."

Another of my usual drinking spells came on. I drank for about ten days with no food except coffee before I was sick enough to start the battle back to sobriety with the accompanying shakes, night sweats, jittery nerves, and horrible dreams. This time I felt that I really needed some help. I told my mother she could call the doctor who was the center of the little group of former drinkers. She did.

I allowed myself to be taken to a hospital where I took several days for my head to clear and my nerves to settle. Then, one day I had a couple of visitors, one man from New York and the other a local attorney. During our conversation I learned that they had been as bad as myself in this drinking, and that they had found relief and had been able to make a come-back. Later they went into more detail and put it to me very straight that I'd have to give over my desires and attitudes to a power higher than myself which would give me new desires and attitudes.

Here was religion put to me in a different way and presented by three past-masters in liquor guzzling. On the strength of their stories I decided to give it a try. And it worked, as long as I allowed it to do so.

After a year of learning new ways of living, new attitudes and desires, I became self-confident and then careless. I suppose you would say I got to feeling too sure of myself and Zowie! First it was beer on Saturday nights and then it was a fine drunk. I knew exactly what I had done to bring myself to this old grief. I had tried to handle my life on the strength of my own ideas and plans instead of looking to God for the inspiration and the strength.

But I didn't do anything about it. I thought "to hell with everybody. I'm going to do as I please." So I floundered around for seven months refusing help from any quarter. But one day I volunteered to take another drunk on a trip to sober him up. When we got back to town we were both drunk and went to a hotel to sober up. Then I began to reason the thing out. I had been a sober, happy man for a year, living decently and trying to follow the will of God. Now I was unshaven, unkempt, ill-looking, bleary-eyed. I decided then and there and went back to my friends who offered me help and who never lectured me on my seven month failure.

But that was a long time ago. I don't say now that I can do anything. I only know that as long as I seek God's help to the best of my ability, just so long will liquor never bother me.

MY WIFE AND I by May Brice & Tom Lucas (Akron, OH.)

COMING from a farm boyhood with the common education of the little red schoolhouse, I had worked during the war and afterwards for seven years at high wages in a booming industrial town, had saved considerable money and finally

married an able, well- educated woman who had an unusual gift of common sense and for more than the average business vision, a true helpmate in every way.

In our early twenties, we were both ambitious and had boundless faith in our ability to succeed. We talked over the future all the time, exchanged ideas and really planned our way of life. Just working in a factory, even at highly-paid piece work, and saving out of my wages, did not seem to us to be the best way to go. We talked things over and decided to strike out for ourselves. Our first venture, a neighborhood grocery store, prospered. Another neighborhood store, in an ideal location at a nearby summer resort, looked good to us. We bought it and started in to make it go. Then came a business slump affecting the whole country. With fewer customers I had lots of time on my hands and was getting to like high-powered home brew and the potent liquors of prohibition days entirely too well. That didn't help the business. We finally shut up shop.

Jobs were scarce, but by persistence I again found a factory job. In a few months the factory closed down. We had again accumulated a small stake and since the job situation n showed no improvement, we thought we would try business again.

This time we opened a restaurant in a semi-rural section and for a time all went well. My wife opened up in the morning, did all the baking and cooking and waited on trade. I relieved her later in the day and stayed open late to catch every possible bit of business. Our place became a regular hang-out for groups of latecomers who showed up with a bottle now and then.

I told myself that I was the one man who could handle my liquor because I was always on my feet at closing time. I talked knowingly about spacing my drinks, about taking only a measured shot, and about the folly of gulping big drinks. Yes sir, I was never going to be one of those "rummies" who let liquor get the best of them. Young and strong, I could throw off the effects of the previous night's drinking and stand the nausea the following morning, even abstaining from taking a drink until the afternoon. But before long the idea of suffering for a few hours didn't seem so good.

The morning drink became the first act of the daily routine. I had now become a "regular." I had my regular remedy-a stiff shot to start the day and no waiting till a specified time. I used to wait for the need, soon I was craving the stuff so much that I didn't wait for that. My wife could see that it was gripping me. She warned me, gently at first, with quiet seriousness. Was I going to pave the way to losing this business just when it needed to be nursed along? We began to run behind. My wife, anxious for the goal we had set out to reach, and seeing the result if I didn't brace up, talked straight from the shoulder. We had words. I left in a passion.

Our separation lasted a week, I did a lot of thinking, and went back to my wife. Quieter, somewhat remorseful, we talked things over. Our situation was worse than I had anticipated. We got a buyer for the place and sold out. We still had some money left.

I had always been a natural mechanic, handy with tools. We moved back into town with a slim bankroll and, still determined never to be a factory hand again, I looked around and finding a workshop location with a house adjacent I started a sheet-metal shop. I had chosen a very difficult time to start up. My business practically vanished on account of the depression.

There were no jobs of any kind. We fell far behind on our rent and other obligations. Our cupboard was often bare. With every penny needed for food and shelter, and wearing old clothes with nothing new except what our two youngsters needed, I didn't touch a drop for two years. I went after business. I slugged doorbells all over the town asking for jobs. My wife rang bells with me, taking onside of the street while I worked the other. We left nothing undone to keep going, but we were still far behind, so far that at the low point we could see eviction and our belongings in the street.

I braced myself to talk to our landlord who was connected with a large real estate firm managing many properties. We were behind six months in our rent and they saw that the only way to get their back rent was to give me a couple of small jobs. My wife learned to use the tools to shape and fashion material when I was doing the installation work. The real estate firm like my work and began to give me more jobs. In those grim days, with babies to feed, I couldn't spend what little money came in for drink. I stayed sober. My wife and I even started back to church, began paying our dues.

They were thin years, those depression years. For three years in succession, Christmas in our little family was just the 25th of December. Our customers saw us as two earnest young people trying to get along and as times improved a little we began to get better jobs. Now we could hire some competent workmen and bought a car and a few small trucks. We prospered and moved into a better-equipped house.

My pockets, which hadn't jingled for years, now held folding money. The first greenbacks grew into a roll with a rubber band around it. I became well-known to real estate firms, business men, and politicians. I was well-liked, popular with everyone. Following a prosperous season came a quiet period. With time on our hands I had a drinking spell. It lasted for a month, but with the aid of my wife, I checked myself in time. "Remember how we lost the store! Remember our restaurant!" my wife said. Yes, I could remember. Those times were too recent and their memory too bitter. I solemnly swore off and once more climbed aboard the wagon, this time for nine long months.

Business kept up. It became evident that by careful handling we might eventually have something pretty good, a sufficient income to provide a good living for us all and ensure a good education for our children.

My business is seasonal. Fall and early winter are rush times. The first few months of the year are quiet. But though business slackened, I got around making contracts, lining up future work in my way. Not yet sensing any great danger, in spite of past experiences, I seldom refused the invitations of business friends to have a drink. In a short time I was drinking every day and eventually much more than I had ever done before for I always had a roll in my pocket.

At first I was even more jolly than usual when I came home in the evening to my wife and family. But the joking good fellow who was the husband and father they had known, gave place to a man who slammed the door when he came in. My wife, genuinely alarmed now as week after week went past without any sign that I was going to quit, tried to reason with me, but the old arguments didn't work this time.

Summer came on with its demand for roof repairs and spouting installations. My wife often started the men to work in the morning, did shop jobs, kept the books, and in addition, ran the house and looked after the family.

For eight months my daily routine was steady drinking. Even after slumping in bed late at night in a semi-stupor, I would get up at all hours and drive to some all-night spot where I could get what I wanted. I was going to have a good time in spite of hell and high water.

I became increasingly surly when at home. I was the boss. I was master in my own house, wasn't I? I became morose, with few lucid moments between drinks. I would listen to no arguments and certainly attempts to reason with me were futile. Unknown to me, my wife influenced some of my friends and business associates to drop in casually. They were mostly non-drinkers and generally ended up mildly upbraiding me.

"A fine lot of Job's comforters," I would say. I felt that everybody was being of little help and told myself I wasn't getting the breaks, that everybody was making a mountain out of a molehill and so, to hell with everything! I still had money and with money I could always buy bottled happiness. And still my wife kept trying. Shegot our pastor to talk to me. It was no good.

Drinking and staying drunk without cessation, even my splendid constitution began to give way. My wife called doctors who gave me temporary relief. Then my wife left me after a bitter quarrel, taking the children with her. My pride was hurt and I began to regard myself as an injured husband and an unappreciated father who, deep in his heart, just doted on his children. I went to see her and demanded to see them. I up and told her that I didn't care whether she came back or not, that I wanted the children. My wife, wise woman, thought she still had a chance to have me, save our home for the children. She threw aside her sense of injury, spoke right up to me and said she was coming back, that forbidding her the house wouldn't work, that she had helped me get what I had and was going to cross its threshold and resume its management. She did just that. When she opened the door she was appalled at the sight of it, curtains down, dishes and utensils unwashed, dirty glasses and empty bottles everywhere.

Every alcoholic reaches the end of the tether some day. For me there came a day when, physically and mentally, I was unable to make my way to a saloon for a drink. I went to bed. I told my wife for the first time that I wanted to quit drinking, but couldn't. I asked her to do something for me; I had never done this before. I realized that I needed help. Somehow in talking with a lady doctor, my wife had heard of another doctor who in some mysterious way had stopped drinking after thirty years and had been successful in helping a few other alcoholics to become sober men. As a last resort, my wife appealed to this doctor, who insisted on a certain situation before he could help; his experience had taught him that unless that situation existed nothing could be done for the alcoholic.

"Does your husband want to stop drinking, or is he merely temporarily uncomfortable? Has he come to the end of the road?" he asked my wife.

She told him that for the first time I had expressed a desire to quit that I had asked her in desperation to try to do something-anything, to help me stop. He said he would see me the following morning.

With every part of my being craving a drink, I could hardly sit still when I got up to await the visit from the man she had talked to on the phone, but something kept me in the house. I wanted to hear what this fellow had to offer and since he was a medical man I had some preconceived notions ready for him when he came. I was pretty jittery when my wife opened the door to admit a tall, somewhat brusque professional man who, from his speech, was obviously an Easterner. I don't know what I had expected, but his salutation, designed to shake me up, I can now see, had almost the same effect as the hosing with cold water in a turkish bath.

"I hear you're another 'rummy,'" he said as he smiled and sat down beside me. I let him talk. Gradually he drew me out until what I did tell him gave him a picture of my experience. And then he put it to me plainly. "If you are perfectly sure that you want to quit drinking for good, if you are serious about it, if you don't merely wish to get well so that you can take up drinking again at some future date, you can be relieved," he said.

I told him that I had never wanted anything as much in my life as to be able to quit using liquor, and I meant every word of it.

"The first thing to do with your husband," he said, turning to my wife, "is to get him to a hospital and have him 'defogged.' I'll make the necessary arrangements."

He didn't go into any further explanation, not even to my wife. That evening I was in a hospital bed. The next day the doctor called. He told me that several former alcoholics were now dry as a result of following a certain prescribed course of action and that some of them would be in to see me. My wife came to see me faithfully. She, too, had been learning, perhaps more quickly than I was doing, through talking with the doctor who by this time was getting down to brass tacks with me. My friend was the human agency employed by an all-wise Father to bring me into a pathway of life.

It is an easy matter to repeat and orally affirm a faith. Here were these men who visited me and they, like myself, had tried everything else and although it was plain to be seen none of them were perfect, they were living proof that the sincere attempt to follow the cardinal teaching of Jesus Christ was keeping them sober. If it could do that for others, I was resolved to try it, believing it could do something for me also.

I went home after four days, my mind clear, feeling much better physically and, what was more important, with something better than just will power to aid me. I got to know others of these alcoholics whose human center was my doctor. They came to our home. I met their wives and families. They invited my wife and myself to their homes. I learned that it would be well to begin the day with morning devotion which is the custom in our house now.

I was almost a year when I began to get a little careless. One day I hoisted a few drinks, arriving home far from sober. My wife and I talked it over, both knowing it had happened because I had stopped following the plan. I acknowledge my fault to God and asked His help to keep to the course I had to follow.

Our home is a happy one. My children no longer hide when they see me coming. My business has improved. And this is important-I try to do what I can for my fellow alcoholics. In our town there are some 70 of us, ready and willing to spend our time to show the way to sobriety and sanity to men who are like what we used to be.

A WARD OF THE PROBATE COURT by Bill Van Horn (Akron, OH.)

AT ABOUT the time of my graduation from high school, a state university was established in our city. On the call for an office assistant, I was recommended by my superintendent, and got the position. I was rather his choice and pride, but a few years later, I met him in a nearby city and "panhandled" him for two "bucks" for drinks.

I grew with this institution and advanced in position. I took a year off for attendance at an engineering college. At college I refrained from any hilarious celebrating or drinking.

War was declared. I was away from home on business at the State Capitol where my mother couldn't raise objections and I enlisted. Overseas I was on five fronts from Alsace up to the North Sea. Upon relief from the lines-back in the rest-area, "vin rouge" and "cognac" helped in the let down from trying circumstances. I was introduced to the exhilaration of intoxication. The old spirit, "What the hell? Heinie may have you tagged," didn't help toward any moderation in drinking then. We had many casualties but one of the real catastrophies was the loss of a pal, a lieutenant who died from the D.T.'s over there, after it was all over. This didn't slow me up and back in the States I had a big fling before returning home.

My plans were to cover up with my mother and the girl I was to marry, that I had become addicted to alcohol. But I exposed the fact on the day our engagement was announced. On the way I met a training camp buddy, got drunk, and missed the party. Booze had got over its first real blow on me. I saw her briefly that night but didn't have the guts to face her people. The romance was over.

To forget, I engaged in a super-active life in social, fraternal, and civic promotion in my community. This all outside my position in the President's Office of the State University. I became a leader-the big flash in the pan. I organized and was first commander of the American Legion Post-raised funds and built a fine memorial Club House. Was Secretary of Elks, Eagles, Chamber of Commerce, City Club, and active as an operator and officer in political circles. I was always a good fellow and controlled my drinking, indulging only in sprees in private clubs or away from home.

I was deposed from the executive position at the college by a political change in the governorship of the State. I knew the salesmanager of the Securities Division of a large Utility corporation in Wall Street, and started out to sell securities. The issues and the market were good and I had a fine opportunity. I was away from home and I began to drink heavily. To get away from my drinking associates, I managed to be transferred to another city, but this didn't help. Booze had me, my sales and commissions diminished, I remained almost in a continuous stupor on my drawing account until I was released.

I braced up, got sober, and made a good connection with a steamship agency, a concern promoting European travel and study at most all important universities in Europe. Those were the bath-tub gin days and for drinking in and about my office, I held out in this position for only a year.

I was now engaged to be married and fortunately I got another position as salesman for a large corporation. I worked hard, was successful, and drinking became periodical. I was married and my wife soon learned that I was no social drinker. I tried hard to control it, but could not. There were many separations and she would return home. I would make pledges and a sincere effort and then my top would blow off again. I began here to take sanitarium treatments to satisfy my wife and folks.

I had a great capacity for drink and work. With the help of turkish baths, bromo-seltzer and aspirin, I held to the job. I became top-notch in the entire sales force of the country. I was assigned to more special territory and finally into the market of keenest competition. I was top rate in salary, won bonus awards and was bringing in the volume. But there was always the drawback my excessive drinking made at times. I was called in once, twice, and warned. Finally I wasn't to be tolerated any longer, although I was doing a good job. I had lasted five and a half years.

I lost my wife along with my job and fine income. This was a terrible jolt. I tried for a hook-up, but I had a black eye marring a good record. I became discouraged and depressed. I sought relief with booze. There began the four black years of my life.

I had returned home to the community where I had been so prominent. these were dry days still and I hung out at the clubs with bars. I got so I would last on a job but a few days, just until I could get an advance for drinks. I began to get entangled with the law-arrested for driving while intoxicated and drunken and disorderly conduct.

My folks heard of the cure at the State Hospital. I was picked up drunk and sent there by the Probate Court. I was administered paraldehyde and came to in a receiving ward among lunatics. I was transferred to another ward of less violent cases and I found a little group of alcoholics and "junkers" (dope addicts). I learned from them the seriousness of being a ward of the Probate Court. I felt then if I ever got released the old devil alcohol would never get me in a jam like this again. In times of great distress such as this, I would pray to God for help.

I was fortunate and was released after eleven days and nights barred up in the laughing academy-"bug house." That was enough. I wanted no more of it. I took a job as manager of a club and put myself to the old acid test. I was really going to assert my will power. I even tended bar part of the time, but never imbibed a bit. This lasted about three months.

I went to an annual convention of my overseas division and came to locked up in a cheap hotel room, new shoes, suit coat, hat and purse missing. I must have slipped badly.

Then followed much drinking and trouble. After a few arrests for intoxication, the law decided another sojourn to the State Hospital would tame me. They jumped the stay this time from eleven days to eleven weeks. It was getting tough for me. I came out in good physical condition and held a fear of getting probated again, thinking the siege might be eleven months. I got another job and stayed dry for about two months and off to the races again.

I became terribly weak-couldn't eat and tried to get nourishment from booze and mostly only bootleg at that. One time, I just made it into a hospital and another time a police patrol took me to the hospital instead of the jail. I suffered badly from insomnia. As many as three shots in the arm had no effect.

I would get in shape and back at it again. I was going to battle it to the finish. The time came when I was to be paid my soldier's bonus. I had the limit or maximum coming. Friends advised my folks to send me to a Veterans Hospital before I got this money in my hands. I was probated again, held in a county jail for two weeks and sent again to the asylum. This was my summer resort for three months. I was on the waiting list for the Veterans Hospital but I got into such wonderful physical condition from eating and working our of doors that I was released.

I reached home full of resentment against my folks for their having my money tied up under a guardianship. I went out and got saturated and landed in jail-I had been free from the asylum door about eight hours. Behind bars again so soon-this was bad. However, I was freed again next day and this was my last confinement with the law. I began to use my head, I continued to drink but kept under cover or hid in the "jungles" with the bums.

In a few months an old friend came along. He located me a few times in saloons. We had been drinking pals in the early days, particularly at the club houses. He had heard of my predicament. He himself had quit drinking and looked fine. He encouraged me to visit him in a nearby city.

I wanted to quit drinking, but hadn't much faith in ever getting away from it. I agreed to go into a hospital as the patient of a doctor who had been an alcoholic for many years and was now a new man.

It is almost uncanny-in just eight days I left there a different person. This doctor in plain words was a wonderful guy-he spent many hours with me telling me his experience with alcohol. Others of his band, which was then small, visited me-told me their stories. They were all strangers to me, but treated me as a friend. I was impressed with their interest and fellowship. I learned the secret. They had a religious experience. I was willing, and renewed my acquaintance with God and acknowledged Him as a reality.

I found it easy. I came to life and have been free now for many years. I hope never to take another drink. I am building up a reputation again and nearly every day am complimented on my appearance.

I have a new outlook on life. I look forward to each day with happiness because the real enjoyment it is to me to be sane, sober, and respectable. I was existing really from one drink until the next, with no perception about circumstances, conditions, or even nature's elements. My acquaintance with God-lost and forgotten when I was a young man-is renewed. God is all-loving and all-forgiving. The memories of my past are being dimmed by the life I now aspire to.

RIDING THE RODS by Charlie Simondsord (Akron, OH.)

FOURTEEN years old and strong, I was ready-an American Whittington who knew a better way to get places than by walking. The "clear the way" whistle of a fast freight thundering over the crossing on the tracks a mile away was a siren call. Sneaking away from my farm home one night, I made my way to the distant yards. Ducking along a lane between two made-up trains that seemed endless, I made my way to the edge of the yards. Here and there I passed a silent, waiting figure. Then a little group talking among themselves. Edging in, I listened eagerly. I had met my first hoboes. They talked of places I had never heard of. This town was good. A fellow could get by on the Bowery all winter if he knew the ropes; that other town was "hostile"; thirty days for "vag" awaited you in another if you didn't hit the cinders before the road "bulls" fine-combed the train.

Then they noticed me. Somehow a new kid is always an object of interest to the adventurers of the rails. "Where ye makin' for, Kid?"

I had heard one of them mention "Dee-troit" and it seemed as good an answer as any. I had no plans, just wanted to get away-anywhere-just away!

"That Michigan Manifest will be along any minute now; I think she's moving." The tall hobo who had spoken grabbed me by the arm. "Come on, kid. We'll help you."

Suddenly I felt big. I had gotten away! The two hoboes talked, the tall one about getting work in Detroit, the other arguing for staying on the road. Then the one who had boosted me up began to quiz me. I told him I had run away from the farm. In a sort of halting way he told me not to let the train habit or it would get me until I would always want to be moving. The rocking motion of the car as the train increased speed became a cradle song in my ears. I fell asleep.

It was way past dawn when I awoke. My two companions were already sitting up and talking. The day wore on. We passed through small towns. Soon the train was threading its way between factories and huge warehouses, crossing tracks with brisk clatter, coming into a large railway yard. Brakes went on. They helped me off. We were in Detroit.

My hobo friends parted at a street corner. The tall one took me along right into town and got a room for both of us with "Mother Kelly," a kindly Irish landlady if there ever was one. "Sit tight, kid," he said. "I'll see you through as much as I can. Me to find a job."

He got a job. For almost two years he looked after me. He was always vigilant, steering me past the snares and pitfalls that are always in the path of a growing boy. This hobo, Tom Casey, who never talked much about himself except as a warning illustration of "What not to do," made me start a bank account and keep it growing. It is to him I owe the fact that I didn't become a "road kid," that I never became a hobo. Came a day when he left. The road was calling him, he explained, although that never seemed to me to be the reason. I never saw Tom Casey again, but from this man I received my first lesson in the guiding and compelling principle of the Good Life. "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

I was city-wise by his time, uncontaminated to be sure, thanks to my friend. No longer a "boy rube in the big town." I found a job quickly enough but I missed Tom. I began to hang around pool rooms and it was inevitable that I soon learned to handle a schooner of beer and an occasional "shot." Jobs were plentiful. If I didn't feel right in the morning after a night with the "corner gang" I didn't go to work. I lost jobs. My bank account dwindled, disappeared entirely. My new barroom friends were little help. I was broke.

It was summer and the park benches, hard and uncomfortable as they were, appealed to me more than the squalid "flops" of the city's slums. So I slept out a few nights. Young and full of energy, I hunted for work. The war was on and work was easy to get. I became a machine-shop hand, progressing rapidly from drill-press to milling machine to lathe. I could quit a job one day and have a new one the next with more money. Soon I again had a good boarding-house, clothes and money. But I never started another bank account. "Plenty of time for that," I thought. My week-ends were spent in my conception of "a good time," finally become regular carousals and debauches over Saturday and Sunday. I had the usual experiences of being slipped a "Mickey Finn" and getting slugged and rolled for my money. These had no deterrent effect. I could always get jobs and live comfortable again in a few weeks. Soon, however, I tired of the weary routine of working and drinking. I began to dislike the city. Somehow my boyhood days on the farm didn't seem to be so bad at a distance.

No, I didn't go home, but found work not too far away. I still drank. I soon got restless and took a freight for a Michigan city, arriving there broke late at night. I set out to look for friends. They helped me find work. Slowly I began to climb the industrial job ladder once more and eventually achieved a responsible position as a machine setter in a large plant. I was sitting on top of the world again. The sense of accomplishment I had now told me that I had earned

the right to have enjoyable week-ends once more. The week-ends began to extend to Tuesday and Wednesday until I frequently worked only from Thursday to Saturday with the bottle always in my mind. In a vague sort of way I had set a time to quit drinking but that was at least fifteen years away and "What the hell!" I said to myself. "I'm going to have a good time while I'm young."

Then I was fired. Piqued, I drank up my last pay check and when I got sober again found another job-then another-and another in quick succession. I was soon back on the park benches. And once more I got a break when everything seemed dark. An old friend volunteered to get me a job driving a bus. He said he would buy me a uniform and give me the hospitality of his home if I would promise to quit drinking. Of course I promised. I had been working about three days when the bus line superintendent called me into his office.

"Young fellow," he said, "In your application you state that you don't use alcoholic liquors. Now, we always check a man's references and three of the firms you have worked for say you're a highly capable man, but you have the drink habit."

I looked at him. It was all true, I admitted, but I had been out of work such a long time that I had welcomed this job as an opportunity to redeem myself. I told him what I promised my friend, that I was sincerely doing my best and not drinking a drop. I asked him to give me a chance.

"Somehow I think you are in earnest," he said. "I believe you mean it. I'll give you a chance and help you to make good."

He shook my hand in friendship and encouragement. I strode from his office with high hope. "John Barleycorn will never make a bum out of me again," I told myself with determination.

For three months I drove my route steadily with never a hitch. My employers were satisfied. I felt pretty good. I was really on the wagon this time, wasn't I?

Yes indeed, I was on the wagon for good.

I soon repaid my debt to my friend for his stake in me and even saved a little money. The feeling of security increased. It was summer and, hot and tired at the end of the day, I began to stop in at a speakeasy on my way home. Detroit beer was good then, almost like old-time pre-prohibition stuff. "This is the way to do it," I would say to myself. "Stick to beer. After all, it's really a food and is sure hits the spot after a trick of wheeling that job around in this man's town. It's the hard liquor that gets a man down. Beer for mine."

Even then with all the hard lessons of bitter experience behind me I did not realize that thinking along that line was a definite red light on my road in life-a real danger signal.

The evening glass of beer led, as usual, to the night when I didn't get away from the bar until midnight. I began to need a bracer in the morning. Beer, I knew from experience was simply no good as a bracer-all right as a thirst quencher perhaps, but lacking action and authority the next morning. I needed a jolt.

The morning jolt became a habit. Then it got to be several jolts until I was generally pretty well organized when I started to work. Spacing my drinks over the day I managed not to appear drunk, just comfortable, as I drove along the crowded thoroughfares of the city. Then came the accident.

On one of the avenues a man darted from between parked cars right in my path. I swung the bus sharply over to keep from hitting him but couldn't quite make it. He died in the hospital. Passenger and sidewalk witnesses absolved me completely. Even if I had been completely sober I couldn't have cleared him. The company investigation immediately after the accident showed me blameless but my superiors knew I had been drinking. They fired me-not for the accident-but for drinking on the job.

Well, once more I felt I had enough of city life and found a job on an upstate farm. While there I met a young school-teacher, fell in love with her and she with me. We were married. Farm work was not very remunerative for a young couple so we went successively to Pontiac, Michigan and later to an industrial city in Ohio. For economy's sake we had been living with my wife's people, but somehow we never seemed able to get ahead. I was still drinking but not so much as formerly, or so it seemed to me.

The new location seemed ideal-no acquaintances, no entanglements, no boon companions to entice me. I made up my mind to leave liquor alone and get ahead. But I forgot one boon companion, one who was always at my elbow, one who followed me from city to farm and back to city. I had forgotten about John Barleycorn.

Even so, the good resolutions held for a time-new job, comfortable home, and understanding helpmate, they all helped. We had a son and soon came another. We began to make friends and moved in a small social circle of my fellow-workers and their wives and families. Those were still bootleg days. Drinks were always available but nobody seemed to get very drunk. We just had a good time, welcome surcease after a week of toil. Here were none of the rowdy debauches that I had known, I had discovered "social drinking" how to "drink like a gentleman and hold my liquor." There is no point in reiterating the recurrence of experience already described. The "social drinking" didn't hold up. I became the bootlegger's first morning customer. How I ever managed to hold the job I don't know. I began to receive

the usual warning from my superiors. They had no effect. I had now come to an ever-deepening realization that I was a drunkard, that there was no help for me.

I told my wife that. She sought counsel of her friends and my friends. They came and talked with me. Reverend gentlemen, who knew nothing of my problem, pointed me to the age-old religious formula. I would have none of it. It left me cold. Now, with hope gone, I haunted the mean thoroughfares of speakeasy districts, with my mind on nothing but the next drink. I managed to work enough to maintain a slim hold on my job. Then I began to reason with myself.

"What good are you?" I would say. "Your wife and children would be better off if they never saw you again. Why don't you get away and never come back? Let them forget about you. Get away-get away anywhere-that's the thing to do."

That night, coatless and ahtless, I hopped a freight for Pittsburgh. The following day I walked the streets of the Smoky City. I offered to work at a roadside stand for a meal. I got the meal, walked on, sat down by the roadside to think.

"What a heel I've turned out to be!" I soliloquized. "My wife and tow kids nack there-no money-what can they do? I should have another try at it. Maybe I'll never get well, but at least I can earn a dollar or two now than then-for them."

I took another freight back home. Despite my absence, my job was still open. I went to work, but it was no go. I would throw a few dollars at my wide on payday and drink up what was left. I hated my surroundings, hated my job, my fellow-workers-the whole town. I tried Detroit again, landing there with a broken arm. How I got it I'll never know for I was far gone in drink when I left. My wife's relatives returned me to my home in a few days. I became morose, mooning around the house by myself. Seeing me come home, my wife would leave a little money on the table, grab the children and flee. I was increasingly ugly. Now, all hope was gone entirely. I made several attempts on my life. My wife had to hide any knives and hammers. She feared for her own safety. I feared for my mind-feared that I was breaking-that I would end up insane. Finally the fear got so terrible that I asked my wife to have me "put away" legally. There came a morning when, alone in my room, I began to wreck it, breaking everything in sight. Desperate, my wife had to employ the means I had suggested to her in the depths of alcoholic despair. Loath to have me committed to the state asylum, still trying to save something from the wreckage of my life and hers, she had me placed in a hospital, hoping against hope to save me.

I was placed under restraint. The treatment was strenuous-no alcohol-just bromides and sleeping potions. The nights were successions of physical and mental agony. It was weeks before I could sit still for any length of time. I didn't want to talk to anyone and cared less to listen. That gradually wore off and one day I fell into casual conversation with another patient-another alcoholic. We began to compare notes. I told him frankly that I was in despair, that no thinking I had ever been able to do had shown me a way of escape, that all my attempts to try will power (well meaning persons ahd often said, "Why don't you use your will power?"-as if will power were a faculty one could turn on and off like a faucet!) had been of no avail.

"Being in here and getting fixed up temporarily," I told him bitterly, "Is no good. I know that only too well. I can see nothing but the same old story over again. I'm simply unable to quit. When I get out of here I'm going to blow town."

My fellow-patient and new found acquaintance looked at me a lont time in silence and finally spoke. From the most unexpected quarter in the world, from a man who was in the same position I was in, from a fellow-alcoholic, came the first ray of hope I had seen.

"Listen, fellow," he said, looking at me with ten times the earnestness of the many good citizens and other well-intentioned persons who had tried their best to help me. "Listen to me. I know a way out. I know the only answer. And I know it works."

I stared at him in amazement. There were several mild mental cases in the place and, little as I knew about their exhibitions of tendencies, I knew that even in a normal conversation, strange ideas might be expected. Was this fellow [erhaps a bit balmy-a wee bit off? Here was a man, an admitted alcoholic like myselef, trying to tell me he knew the remedy for my situation. I wanted to hear what he had to suggest but made the reservation that he was probably a little "nutty." At the same time I was ready to listen, like any drowning man, to grasp at even a straw.

My friend smiled, he knew what I was thinking. "Yes,' he continued. "Forget that I'm here. Forget that I'm just another 'rummy.' But I had the answer once-the only answer."

He seemed to be recalling his very recent past. Looking at me earnestly, his voice impressive in its sincerity, he went on. "For more than a year before coming here I was a sober man, thoroughly dry. I wasn't just on the wagon. I was dry! And I would still be dry if I had stuck to the plan which kept me sober all that time."

Let me say here that he later went back to the very plan he told me about and has since been sober for more than a year for the second time.

He told me his own story briefly and went on to tell me of a certain cure for alcoholism-the only certain cure. I had anticipated hearing of some new treatment, some newly discovered panacea that i had not heard of, something which

no doubt combined drugs and mental healing. But it was neither one nor the other; it was certainly not a mixture of any kind.

He spoke of some 30 men in my town who were ready to take me by the hand and call me by my first name. They would be friends without canting or ranting. He told me they met once a week to talk over their experiences, how they tried to help each other, how they spent their time in helping me like me.

"I know it sounds strange, incredible, maybe," he said. "I slipped, got drunk after being sober for a year, but I'm going back to try again. I know it works."

Helpless, without faith in myself or anyone else, entirely doubtful that the fellow really had something, I began to ask questions. I had to be interested or go crazy.

"How do you go about this—where do I have to go?" I asked.

"You don't have to go anywhere," he said. "Someone will come to you if you want them to." He didn't go into any detail, just told me that much and little more. I did some thinking that afternoon. Calling one of the nurses I asked her to get in touch with my wife and have her come to see me that evening.

She came during visiting hours. She expected, I know, to hear me plead for instant release from the place. I didn't talk about that. In my lame way I told her the story. It made little impression.

"It doesn't sound right," she said. "If this plan—and for the life of me I don't quit get it from what you've told me—if this plan is successful, why is this fellow back here himself?"

I was stumped. I was too ignorant about the thing myself to be capable of explaining it clearly to her. "I don't know," I said. "I'll admit it sounds queer, the way this fellow is and all that, but somehow I feel there's something to it. Anyway, I want to know more about it."

She went away skeptically. But the next day I had a visitor, a doctor who had been himself and alcoholic. He told me little more about the plan. He was kindly, didn't offer any cut and dried formula to overcome my life-long difficulty. He presented no religious nostrums, suggested no saving rituals. Later he sent some of the other ex-problem drinkers to see me.

A few days later my fellow-alcoholic was released, and shortly afterward I was allowed to go home also. Through the man who had first told me of the plan I was introduced to several ex-problem drinkers. They told me their experiences. Many were men of former affluence and position. Some had hit even lower levels than I had.

The first Wednesday evening after my release found me a somewhat shame-faced but intensely curious attendant at a gathering in a private home in this city. Some forty others were present. For the first time I saw a fellowship I had never known in actual operation. I could actually feel it. I learned that this could be mine, that I could win my way to sobriety and sanity if I would follow a few precepts, simple in statement, but profound and far-reaching in their effect if followed. It penetrated to my inner consciousness that the mere offering of lip-service wasn't enough. Still ignorant, still a little doubting, but in deadly earnest, I made up my mind to make an honest effort to try.

That was several years ago. The way has not been easy. The new way of living was strange at first, but all my thoughts were on it. The going was sometimes slow; halting were my steps among the difficulties of the path. But always, when troubles came, when doubts assailed and temptation was strong and the old desire returned, I knew where to go for aid. Helping others also strengthened me and helped me to grow.

Today I had achieved, through all these things, a measure of happiness and contentment I had never known before. Material success has mattered little. But I know that my wants will be taken care of.

I expect to have difficulties every day of my life, I expect to encounter stops and hindrances, but now there is a difference. I have a new and tried foundation for every new day.

THE SALESMAN by Bob Guitt (Akron, OH.)

I LEARNED to drink in a workmanlike manner when the law of the land said I couldn't and what started out as a young man's fun became a habit which in its later existence laid me by the heels many a time and almost finished my career.

Teen years were uneventful for me. I was raised on a farm but saw little future in farming. I was going to be a business man, took a business college course, acquired a truck and stand in the city market of a nearby town, and started off. I brought produce from my folks' place and sold it to city customers and there were plenty of them with bulging pocketbooks.

Back of me was the normal life of a farmer's son. My parents were unusually understanding people. My father was a life-long comrade till the day of his death. The business theory I had learned in college was now being practiced and I was equipped beyond many of my competitors to be materially successful. Soon I had expanded until I was represented in all the city markets and also in another city. In 1921 we had the forerunner of the later depression and my customers

disappeared. Successively I had to close my stands and was finally wiped out altogether. Being a young man of affairs, I had begun to do a little business and social drinking and now with time on my hands, I seemed to do more of it.

Following a year of factory work, during which time I got married, I got a job with a grocer as clerk. My grocer-employer was an expert wine-maker and I had free access to his cellar. The work was monotonous in the extreme, behind a counter all day when I had been used to driving around attending to business, meeting people and building for what was a great future. I mark, too, as a milestone, the death of my father, whom I missed greatly.

I kept hitting the wine, with just occasional use of liquor. Leaving the grocery I went back into the produce business and out among people, went back to liquor again and got my first warning to quit before it got me.

I was anxious to get with a concern which would give me an opportunity to build up again, and landed a job with a nationally known biscuit company. I was assigned to a good business region, covering several important towns, and almost at once began to earn real money. In a very short time I was the star salesman of the company, winning a reputation as a business-getter. Naturally I drank with my better customers for on my route I had many stops where that was good business. But I had things rather well under control and in the early days on this job I seldom wound up in my day's work with any visible effects of drinking.

I had a private brewery at home which was now producing 15 gallons a week most of which I drank myself. It is typical of the attitude I had toward alcohol at that time that, when a fire threatened total destruction of my home and garage, I rushed to the cellar and rescued my most precious possessions—a keg of wine and all the beer I could carry, and got pretty indignant when my better half suggested that I had better get some of the needed effects out of the house before it burned down.

My home-brewing gradually became a bore and I began to carry home bottles of powerful bootleg whiskey, starting with half a pint as my daily after-supper allowance. For a time I kept on the job spacing my drinks en route and very little of them in the morning hours. I just couldn't wait until I got home to drink. In a very short time I became an all-day drinker.

Chain-store managers and quantity buyers were both my guests and hosts and every now and then we had prodigious parties. Finally, in a re-organization shake-up resulting in new district managers with a pretty poor territory deal for me, I gave the company two weeks notice and quit. I had bought a home but in the year and a half following I had little income and finally lost that. I became satisfied with just enough to live on and buy the liquor I wanted. Then I landed in the hospital when my car was hit by a truck. My car was ruined entirely. That loss and my injuries plus the recriminations of my wife sort of sobered me up. When I got out of the hospital I stayed sober for six weeks and had made up my mind to quit.

I went back in the business where I had been a successful salesman, but with another company. When I started with this concern I talked things over with my wife and made her some very solemn promises. I wasn't going to touch another drop of liquor.

By this time prohibition was a thing of the past and saloons and clubs where I was well known as a good customer and good spender became my patrons. I rolled up business until I was again a star, but after the first four months on the new job I began to slip. It is not unusual in the drinking experience of any man that after a time of sobriety he comes to the conclusion that he "can handle it." In no time at all liquor again became the most important thing in my life and every day became like another, steady drinking in every saloon and club en route. I would get to headquarters every night in a top-heavy condition, just able to maintain equilibrium. I began to get warnings and was repeatedly fired and taken on again. My wife's parents died about this time in unfortunate circumstances. All my troubles seemed to be piling up on me and liquor was the only refuge I knew.

Some nights I wouldn't go home at all and when I did go home I was displeased when my wife had supper ready and equally angry when she didn't. I didn't want to eat at all and frequently when I underestimated my consumption of the amount of liquor I brought home, I made extra trips back to town to renew the supply. My morning ration when I started out was five double whiskies before I could do any business at all. I would go into a saloon, trembling like a leaf, tired in appearance and deathly sick, I would down two double whiskies, fell the glow and become almost immediately transformed. In half an hour I would be able to navigate pretty well and start out on my route. My daily reports became almost illegible and finally, following arrest for driving while intoxicated and on my job at that, I got scared and stayed sober for several days. Not long afterward I was fired for good.

My wife suggested I go to my old home in the country, which I did. Continued drinking convinced my wife I was a hopeless case and she entered suit for divorce. I got another job, but didn't stop drinking. I kept on working although my physical condition was such as to have required extensive hospitalization. For years I hadn't had a peaceful night's sleep and never knew a clear head in the morning. I had lost my wife, and had become resigned to going to bed some night and never waking again.

Every drunkard has one or two friends who haven't entirely given up hope for him, but I came to the point where I had none. That is, none but my Mother, and she, devoted soul, had tried everything with me. Through her, people came to me and talked, but nothing they said—some were ministers and others good church members—helped me a particle. I

would agree with them when they were with me and as fast as they went away, I'd go after my bottle. Nothing suggested to me seemed to offer a way out.

I was getting to a place where I wanted to quit drinking but didn't know how. My mother heard of a doctor who had been having marked success with alcoholics. She asked me if I'd like to talk to him and I agreed to go with her.

I had known, of course, of the various cures and after we had discussed the matter of my drinking fairly thoroughly, the doctor suggested that I go into the local hospital for a short time. I was very skeptical, even after the doctor hinted there was more to his plan than medical treatment. He told me of several men whom I knew who had been relieved and invited me to meet a few of them who got together every week. I promised I would be back on deck at their next meetings but told him I had little faith in any hospital treatments. Meetings night, I was as good as my word and met the small group. The doctor was there but somehow I felt quite outside of the circle. The meeting was informal, nevertheless I was little impressed. It is true they did no psalm singing, nor was there any set ritual, but I just didn't care for anything religious. If I had thought of God at all in the years of drinking, it was with a faint idea that when I came to die I would sort of fix things up with Him.

I say that the meeting did not impress me. However, I could see men who I had known as good, hard-working drunkards apparently in their right minds, but I just couldn't see where I came into the picture. I went home, stayed sober for a few days, but was soon back to my regular quota of liquor every day.

Some six months later, after a terrific binge, in a maudlin and helpless state, I made my way to the doctor's home. He gave me medical treatment and had me taken to the home of one of my relatives. I told him I had come to the point where I was ready for the remedy, the only remedy. He sent two of the members to see me. They were both kindly to me, told me what they had gone through and how they had overcome their fight with liquor. They made it very plain that I had to seek God, that I had to state my case to Him and ask for help. Prayer was something I had long forgotten. I think my first sincere utterance must have sounded pretty weak. I didn't experience any sudden change, and the desire for liquor wasn't taken away overnight, but I began to enjoy meeting these people and began to exchange the liquor habit for something that has helped me in every way. Every morning I read a part of the Bible and ask God to carry me through the day safely.

There is another part I want to talk about—a very important part. I think I would have had much more difficulty in getting straightened out if I hadn't been almost immediately put to work. I don't mean getting back on my job as a salesman. I mean something that is necessary to my continued happiness. While I was still shakily trying to rebuild my job of selling, the doctor sent me to see another alcoholic who was in the hospital. All the doctor asked me to do was tell my story. I told it, not any too well perhaps, but as simply and as earnestly as I knew how.

I've been sober several years, kept that way by submitting my natural will to the Higher Power and that is all there is to it. That submission wasn't just a single act, however. It became a daily duty; it had to be that. Daily I am renewed in strength and I have never come to the point where I have wanted to say, "Thanks, God, I think I can paddle my own canoe now," for which I am thankful.

I have been reunited with my wife, making good in business, and paying off debts as I am able. I wish I could find words to tell my story more graphically. My former friends and employers are amazed and see in me a living proof that the remedy I have used really works. I have been fortunate to be surrounded with friends ever ready to help, but I firmly believe any man can get the same result if he will sincerely work at it God's way.

FIRED AGAIN by Wally Gillam (Akron, OH.)

IT SEEMS to me that I never did do things normally. When I learned to dance I had to go dancing every night in the week if possible; when I worked or studied I wanted no interruptions or distractions. Wherever I worked I wanted to be the highest paid man in the place or I was irritated; and of course when I drank I could never seem to stop until I was saturated. I was usually hard to get along with as a boy; if the others wouldn't play my way I'd go home.

The town we lived in when I was a child was rather new and raw, peopled largely by immigrants who seemed to be constantly getting married with free drinks and eats for anybody who cared to come. We kids usually managed to get to these celebrations, and although supposed to have soda pop we could get ourselves one or two beers. With this sort of background and more money than was good for me, it was fairly easy to start getting drunk before I was sixteen.

After I left home I earned rather decent salaries but was never satisfied with my position, salary, or the treatment accorded me by my employer. I very seldom stayed on one job for more than six months until I was married at the age of 28, at which time I had already begun to lose jobs because of my drinking. Whenever things went wrong I knew that a few drinks would make everything rosy, my fears, doubts and worries would vanish and I would always promise myself that the next time I would stop short of getting plastered. Somehow things seldom worked out that way though.

I was irritated by the efforts of so many doctors, ministers, lawyers, employers, relatives and friends who remonstrated with me what I was up against. I'd fall down, get up, work a while, get my debts paid (at least the most pressing ones) drink moderately for a few days or weeks, but eventually get myself so messed up in tanglefoot that I'd lose another

job. In one year (1916) I quit two jobs because I thought I'd be discharged anyhow and was fired outright from five more, which is more jobs than many men have in a lifetime. Had I remained sober, any one of them would have led to advancement because they were with growing companies and in my chosen field of engineering.

After being discharged for the fifth time that year, I drank more than ever, cadging drinks and meals where I could, and running up a large rooming-house account. My brother took me home and my folks talked me into going to a sanitarium for thirty days. This place was operated by a physician at the time. The doctor did his best, saw that I got into good physical condition, tried to straighten out the mental quirks he thought partly responsible for my drinking, and I left with the firm resolve never to drink again.

Before I left the sanitarium I answered an advertisement for an engineer in a small Ohio town and after an interview, obtained the position. In three days after leaving the sanitarium I had a job I liked at a satisfactory salary in a small town with basic living costs (board, room and laundry) amounting only to about 15% of my salary. I was all set, sober, working in a congenial atmosphere for a firm that had more profitable business than they knew what to do with. I made some beautiful plans. I could save enough in a few years to complete my formal education and there were no saloons in the town to trip me up. So what? So at the end of the week I was drunk again for no particular reason at all that I could understand. In about three months I was out of a job again, but in the meantime two things of major importance had happened. I had fallen in love and war had been declared.

I had learned my lesson. I knew definitely that I couldn't take even one drink. I wanted to get married so I planned very earnestly to get another job, stay sober, and save some money. I went to Pittsburgh on Sunday, called on a manufacturer of rolling-mill equipment and on Monday, got a position and went to work. I was first paid at the end of the second week, was drunk before the end of the day and couldn't be bothered with going to work the next Monday.

Why did I take that first drink? I honestly don't know. Anyhow I nearly went crazy that summer and really developed some sort of mental disturbance. The night clerk of the small hotel where I was staying saw me go about three in the morning in pajamas and slippers and had a policeman take me back into my room. I suppose he was used to screwy drunks or he would have taken me to jail instead. I stayed there a few days and sweated the alcohol out of my system, went to the office to collect the balance of my salary, paid my room rent, and found I had just enough money to get home. So home I went, sick, broke, discouraged and despairing of ever attaining a normal, happy life.

After two weeks of idleness at home, I obtained a subordinate position with a former employer, doing the lowest grade of drafting work for several months, went to see my fiancee one or two weekends, was advanced rapidly in salary and responsibility, had a date set for the wedding and then inadvertently learned that one of the men working under my direction was receiving about forty dollars more per month than I was, which burnt me up to such an extent I quit after an argument, took my money, packed my personal effects, left them at the corner drug store, and went downtown and got plastered. Knowing that I would be greeted with tears, sorrowful sympathy and more grief when I got home, I stayed away until I was again destitute.

I was really worried sick about my drinking so father again advanced the money for treatment. This time I took a three-day cure and left with the firm resolve never to drink again, got a better position than I'd had before and actually did keep sober for several months, saved some money, paid my debts and again made plans to get married. But the desire for a drink was with me constantly after the first week or two, and the memory of how sick I had been from liquor and the agonies of the treatment I had undergone faded into the background. I had only begun to restore the confidence of my associates, family, friends and myself before I was off again, without any excuse this time. The wedding was again postponed and it looked very much as though it would never take place. My employer did not turn me loose but I was in another nice jam nevertheless. After considerable fumbling around mentally as to what to do I went back to the three-day cure for the second time.

After this treatment I got along a little better, was married in the spring of 1919 and did very little drinking for several years. I got along very well with my work, had a happy home life, but when away from home with little likelihood of being caught at it, I'd go on a mild binge. The thought of what would happen if my wife caught me drinking served to keep me reasonably straight for several years. My work became increasingly more important. I had many outside interests and drinking became less of a factor in my life, but I did continue to tipple some during out-of-town trips and it was because of this tendency that things finally became all snarled up at home.

I was sent to New York on business and later stopped at a night club where I had been drunk before. I certainly must have been very tight and it is quite likely that I was "Mickey Finned" for I woke up about noon the next day in my hotel without a cent. I had to borrow money to get home on but didn't start to bother to start back till several days later. When I got there I found a sick child, a distracted wife and had lost another job paying \$7,000 a year. This, however, was not the worst of it. I must have given my business card to one of the girls at the night club for she started to send me announcements of another clip-joint where she was employed and writing me long hand "come on" notes, one of which fell into my wife's hands. I'll leave what happened after that to the reader's imagination.

I went back into the business of getting and losing jobs and eventually got to the point where I didn't seem to have any sense of responsibility to myself or to my family. I'd miss important family anniversaries, forget to come home for Christmas and in general wouldn't go home until I was exhausted physically and flat broke. About four years ago I

didn't come home on Christmas Eve but arrived there about six o'clock on Christmas morning, minus the tree I had promised to get, but with an enormous package of liquor on board. I took the three-day cure again with the usual results but about three weeks later I went to a party and decided a few beers wouldn't hurt me; however I didn't get back to work for three days and a short while later had lost my job and was again at the bottom of things. My wife obtained employment on a relief basis and I finally got straightened out with my employer who placed me in another position in a nearby city which I also lost by the end of the year.

So it went until about a year ago when a neighbor happened to hear me trying to get into the house and asked my wife whether I had been having some drinking difficulties. This, of course, disturbed my wife but our neighbor was not just inquisitive. She had heard of the work of a non-drinking doctor who was busily engaged in passing on the benefits he had received from another who had found the answer to his difficulties with liquor. As a result of this my wife saw the doctor. Then I talked with him, spent a few days in a local hospital and haven't had a drink since.

While in the hospital about twenty men called on me and told me of their experiences and the help they had received. Of the twenty I happened to know five, three of whom I had never seen completely sober. I became convinced then and there that if these men had learned something that could keep them sober, I also could profit from the same knowledge. Before leaving the hospital, two of these men, convinced of my sincerity of purpose, imparted to me the necessary knowledge and mental tools which have resulted in my complete sobriety for these many years, and an assurance that I need never, so long as I live, drink anything of an alcoholic nature if I kept on the right track.

My health is better, I enjoy a fellowship which gives me a happier life than I have ever known, and my family joins me in a daily expression of gratitude.

THE FEARFUL ONE by Archie Trowbridge (Akron, OH.)

WHEN I was 21, I was taken suddenly and violently ill and was ill for seven years. As a result of this illness I was left with a poorish nervous system and a curious phobia. As this has a large place in my story, I will try to explain it clearly. After I had been ill some months, I grew strong enough to get out of doors a little each day, but found I couldn't get farther than the nearest corner without becoming totally panic stricken. As soon as I turned back home the panic would vanish. I gradually overcame this particular phase of the trouble by setting myself longer distances to walk each day. Similarly I learned later to take short street car rides, then longer ones, and so forth, until I appeared to be doing most of the things other people do daily. But the things I did not have to do each day, or at least frequently, remained unconquered and a source of great but secret embarrassment to me.

So I went on for years, planning always to sidestep the things I was afraid of, but concealing my fear from everyone. Those years of illness were not all total invalidism. I made a good living part of the time, but was continually falling down and having to get up and start over again. The whole process gave me a licked feeling, especially when, towards the end of my twenties, I had to give up the presidency of a small company which was just turning the corner to real success. Shortly after this I was successfully operated on and became a physically well man. But the surgeon did not remove the phobia, that remained with me.

During the period of my illness I was not especially interested in liquor. I was not a teetotaler, but I was just a "social drinker." However, when I was about thirty, my mother died. I went to pieces as I had become very dependent on my parents through my illness. When I began to get on my feet again I discovered that whiskey was a fine relief from the terrific nervous headaches I had developed. Long after the headaches were gone, however, I kept discovering other difficulties for which whiskey was a grand cure. During the ensuing ten years I once, by sheer will power, remained dry for five weeks.

I had many business opportunities during those ten years which, although I tried to keep them in my grasp, slipped through my fingers. A lovely wife came and went. She tried her best and our baby's birth put me on my mettle for all of six months, but after that, worse and more of it. When my wife finally took the baby and left, did I square my shoulders and go to work to prove to her and to the world that I was a man? I did not. I stayed drunk for a solid month.

The next two months were simply a drawn-out process of less and less work and more and more liquor. They ended eventually at the home of a very dear friend whose family were out of town. I had been politely but firmly kicked out of the house where I had been boarding, and although I seemed to be able to find money to buy drinks with, I couldn't find enough to pay advance room rent anywhere.

One night, sure my number was up, I chucked my "pride" and told this friend a good deal of my situation. He was a man of considerable means and he might have done what many men would have in such a case. He might have handed me fifty dollars and said that I ought to pull myself together and make a new start. I have thanked God more than once that that was just what he did not do.

Instead, he took me out, bought me three more drinks, put me to bed and yanked me bodily out of town the next noon to a city 200 miles away and into the arms of one of the most extraordinary bunch of men in the United States. Here, while in the hospital, men with clear eyes and happy faces came to see me and told me the story of their lives. Some of

them were hard to believe, but it didn't take a lot of brain work to see they had something I could use. And it was so simple. The sum and substance of it seemed to be that if I would turn to God, it was very probably that He could do a better job with my life than I had.

When I got out of the hospital, I was invited to stay in the home of one of the fellows. Here I found myself suddenly and uncontrollably seized with the old panic. I was in a strange house, in a strange city, and fear gripped me. I shut myself up in my room. I couldn't sit down, I couldn't stand up, I couldn't lie down, couldn't leave because I had nowhere to go and no money to take me. Any attempt at reasoning accomplished nothing.

Suddenly in this maelstrom I grasped at a straw. Maybe God would help me-just maybe, mind you. I was willing to give Him a chance, but with considerable doubt. I got down on my knees-something I hadn't done in thirty years. I asked Him if He would let me hand over all these fears and this panic to Him. I lay down on the bed and went to sleep like a baby. An hour later I awoke to a new world. I could scarcely credit my senses, but that terrible phobia which had wrecked my life for eighteen years, was gone. Utterly gone. And in its place was a power and fearlessness which is a bit hard to get accustomed to.

All that happened nearly eight years ago. In those six months a new life has opened before me. It isn't that I have been cured of an ordinarily incurable disease. I have found a joy in living that has nothing to do with money or material success. I know that incomparable happiness that comes from helping some other fellow get straightened out. Don't get me wrong. We are not a bunch of angels. None of us has any notion of becoming such. But we know that we can never go completely back to old ways because we are traveling upward through service to others and in trying to be honest, decent, and loving toward the world, instead of sliding and slipping around in a life of drinking, cheating, lying and doing what we like.

TRUTH FREED ME! by Paul Stanley (Akron, OH.)

IN MAY 1936, after a prolonged period of alcoholism, my friends, my associates, my superiors, and those people who really loved me in spite of embarrassments too numerous to mention, finally left me because they had come to the conclusion that I didn't have any idea of doing or trying to do the right thing.

I was a spineless individual who didn't care a rap for anyone or anything-I was hopeless and knew it-and then in my extremity, The Divine Comforter, "Truth" came to me in a barroom where I had spent the major portion of six weeks.

The Divine Comforter, in my experience, came in the guise of a former drinking companion whom I had assisted home on several occasions. Because of physical infirmities brought about by alcoholic excess, he had been unable to walk a distance of three blocks to his home unassisted, when I last saw him. Now he approached me, and to my amazement he was sober and appeared greatly improved in physical condition.

He induced me to take a ride with him, and as we rode along told me of the marvelous thing that had come into his life. He had more than a practical idea of my difficulties, he also had a logical and practical idea as to how they might be overcome.

He started the conversation by explaining acute alcoholism and stated very bluntly that I was an alcoholic. This was news to me in spite of the fact that I had promised everybody East of the Mississippi, if they would take time to listen, that I was through with drink. At the time I made these promises, I honestly wanted to quit drinking, but for some unknown reason hadn't seemed able to. He told me why I failed.

He then suggested that I accompany him to a local doctor who had been helpful to him. It took forty-eight hours of persuasion and quite a few drinks to fortify myself, but I finally agreed to go. The doctor turned out to be one who had been an alcoholic himself, and in gratitude for the release he had found and because he understood the true meaning of the phrase "Brotherly Love" was spending a great portion of his time helping unfortunate individuals like myself.

With the help and advice of these two individuals and two or three associates, I was able, for the first time in two and a half years, to stay sober for six weeks, and then disastrously tried the beer experiment. For some time I couldn't get hold of myself, but gradually came out of hiding and exposed myself again to this influence which had been so helpful.

July 2, 1936, I again contacted the two individuals, and since that day I have never had a drink. However, because of the difficulties I encountered as the result of the beer experiment, I was unable for some time to find reality in this new way of life. I was doubtful, fearful, full of self-pity, afraid to humiliate myself.

This unreality lasted until December 11th, when I was faced with the absolute necessity of raising a sum of money. For the first time came the realization that I was faced with a difficulty from which I seemed unable to extricate myself. Of course, I took time out to bemoan the fact that "after all I'd done, this had to happen to me" but on the advice of my wife, I reluctantly went to a banker.

I told him my story completely. I went to him believing that my need was money. I went there as a last resort to attempt to pry it loose to meet my needs. My need was not money, but again I had been led to the proper source. After having related my story to the banker, who knew my reputation not only as an alcoholic but as an individual who didn't pay

his bills, he said, "I know something of what you are trying to do, and I believe you are on the right track. Are you right with the Father who knows your needs before you ask? If so, you are not dependent upon this bank or any individual in it, or any rules by which we operate, because your help comes from an ever present and all powerful Father. I am going to do everything I can to secure this loan for you. However, I don't want anything that happens here to throw you off the track, I want you to leave here feeling that you have done everything you could to secure those funds, and go about your business. Your business is business with God's work. I don't know whether that calls for you to go and collect a bill, sell some new contract, or to sit quietly and pray, but your Father knows and if you will but permit Him, He will direct you."

I had again found reality. My needs were met from another entirely unexpected source.

The manifestations of this ever present Power in my experience since 1936 are too numerous to mention. Let it suffice to say that I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities I have had of seeing and knowing "TRUTH."

SMILE WITH ME, AT ME by Harold Sears (N.Y.)

AT THE age of eighteen I finished high school and during my last year there my studies were dropping away to be replaced by dancing, going out nights, and thinking of a good time as most of the boys of my age did. I secured a job with a well known telegraph company which lasted about a year, due to the fact I thought I was too clever for a \$7.00 a week job which did not supply me with enough money for my pleasures, such as taking girls out, etc. I was not at all satisfied with my small wages.

Now, I was a very good violinist at the time and was offered jobs with some well known orchestras, but my parents objected to my being a professional musician although my last year in high school was mostly spent playing for dances and giving exhibition dances at most of the fraternity affairs. Now naturally I was far from satisfied with my seven dollars a week wages, so when I came across a boy neighbor of mine on the subway one night (by the way I read in the newspaper that this same boy died four days ago) he told me he was a host in a celebrated Restaurant and Cabaret, and that his salary ran \$14.00 per week and he made \$50.00 a week in tips. Well, think of being paid for dancing with the carefree ladies of the afternoon and receiving all that sum, and me working for only \$7.00 per. The following day I went straight uptown to Broadway and never did go back to my old job.

This was the beginning of a long stretch of high-flying as I thought, only to find out when I was forty-one years old to be very low-flying. I worked in this restaurant until I was twenty-one, then we went into the world war. I joined the navy. My enlistment pleased the owner of my cabaret so much that he offered me a good job at the end of my federal service.

The day I walked in to his establishment with my release from active duty, he said, "You are my assistant manager from now on." Well, this pleased me as you can imagine and my hat from then on would not fit.

Now, all this time my taste for liquor was constantly growing although it was no habit and I had no craving. In other words, if I had a date and wanted a drink with the girl friend I would, otherwise I would not think of it at all.

In six months time I found I was too good for this job and a competitive restaurateur, or a chain of the best well-known night clubs offered me a better position which I accepted. This night life was starting to tell and show its marks and together with the slump in that sort of business at the time, I decided to apply for a job with a well known ballet master who drilled many choruses for Broadway shows.

I was this man's assistant and I really had to work very hard for the little money I received, sometimes twelve hours or more a day, but I got the experience and honor which was just what I was looking for. This was one time when my work interfered with my drinking. This job came to an end one evening when I was drinking quite heavily. A certain prominent actress inquired of Professor X, my boss, if I would be interested to sign an eighty week contract for a vaudeville tour. It seems she could use me as a partner in her act. Now, a very nice woman, Miss J. who was office clerk and pianist for the boss, overheard the conversation and told both Mr. X and Miss Z that I would not be interested.

On hearing this I went out and drank enough to cause plenty of trouble, slapping Miss J. and doing an all round drunk act in the studio.

This was the end of my high-flying among the white lights. I was only twenty-four years old and I came home to settle down; in fact I had to. I was broke both financially and in spirit.

Being a radio operator in the navy, I became interested in amateur radio. I got a federal license and made a transmitting radio set and would often sit up half the night trying to reach out all over the country. Broadcasting radio was just in its infancy then, so I began to make small receiving sets for my friends and neighbors. Finally I worked up quite a business and opened a store, then two stores, with eleven people working for me.

Now here is where Old Barleycorn showed his hidden strength. I found that in order to have a paying business I had to make friends, not the kind I was used to, but ordinary, sane, hard working people. In order to do this I should not drink, but I found that I could not stop.

I will never forget the first time I realized this. Every Saturday, my wife and I would go to some tavern. I would take a bottle of wine, gin, or the like, and we would spend an evening dancing, drinking, etc. (This was fourteen years ago.)

I was practically a pioneer in the radio business and that must account for people putting up with me as they did. However, within three years time I had lost both stores, I won't say entirely due to my drinking, but at least if I had been physically and mentally fit, I could have survived and kept a small business going.

Now from this time up to about a year ago, I drifted from one job to another. I peddled brushes, did odd jobs such as painting, and finally got established with a well known piano company as assistant service manager.

Then came the big crash of 1929 and this particular company abolished their radio department. For two years I worked for one of my old competitors who owned a radio store. He put up with my drinking until I was in such a physical breakdown that I had to quit.

All this time my troubles at home were getting worse. My whole family blamed my failure on the alcoholic question and so the usual arguments would start the instant I came in the house. This naturally made me go out and drink some more. If I had no money, I would borrow, beg, or even steal enough for a bottle.

My wife fortunately went to business which was our only salvation. Our little boy was six years old at the time and due to the fact we needed someone to care for him during the day we moved in with my family. Now the trouble did start, because I not only had my wife to face every evening, but three of the elders of the family.

My wife did everything for me she possibly could. First she got in touch with a well known psychiatrist and I went faithfully to him for a few months. This particular doctor was such a nervous individual, I thought he had the St. Vitus' dance and I really thought he needed some kind of treatment more than I did. He advised hospitalization from three months to a year.

Well, this was all out of order as far as I was concerned. In the first place I had an idea that my wife wanted to put me away in a state institution where maybe I would be stuck for the rest of my life. In the second place, I wanted to go, if anywhere, to a private institution and that was far beyond our financial means. In the third place, I knew that that would be no cure, because I reasoned that it would be like taking candy out of a young child's reach. The instant I would come out a free man I would go right back to old Alky again. In this one thing I found out later I was perfectly right.

What I thought and wanted at the time was "not to want to want to take a drink." This phrase is a very important link in my story. I knew this could only be done by myself, but how could I accomplish it? Well, this was the main question.

The point was always that when I did drink, I wanted all the time not to, and that alone wasn't enough. At the time I felt like a drink, I did not want to take it at all, but I had to, it seemed. So if you can grasp what I mean, I wished I would not want that drink. Am I nuts, or do you get me?

To get back to the doctor. If anything, these visits made me worse, and worst of all, everyone told me I wanted to drink and that was all there was to that. After going to as many as six or eight other doctors, some of my own friends advised my wife to make her plans for the future as I was a hopeless case, had no backbone, no will power, and would end up in the gutter.

Well, here I was, a man with much ability, a violinist, a radio engineer, a ballet master, and at this point took up hair dressing, so that added one more to the list. Can you beat it? I knew there must be some way out of all this mess. Everyone told me to stop my drinking, but none could tell me how, until I met a friend and believe me he turned out to be a true friend, something I never had until this past year.

One morning, after one of my escapades, my wife informed me I was to go with her to a public hospital or she would pack up and leave with our boy. My father, being a physician for forty years, put me in a private New York hospital. I was there ten days and was put in physical shape, and above everything else put on the right path to recovery and happiness.

My friend first asked me if I really wanted to stop drinking, and if I did, would I do anything no matter what it was in order to? I knew there was only one thing left to do if I wished to live and not enter an insane asylum where I knew I would eventually wind up.

Making up my mind that I would, he said, "Fine." And went on to explain the simple steps to take. After spending an hour or two with me that day he returned two days later and went into the subject more thoroughly. He explained he had been in the same hospital with the same malady and after taking these steps after his discharge, had not taken a drink in three years and also there were about sixty others that had this same experience. All these fellows got together on Sunday evenings and brought their wives and everybody spent a very pleasant time together.

Well, after I met all these people, I was more than surprised to find a very interesting, sociable, and friendly crowd. They seemed to take more interest in me than all of my old fraternity brothers or Broadway pals had ever done.

There were no dues or expenses whatsoever. I went along for about fourteen weeks, partly keeping these ideas, and so one afternoon I thought it would do no harm to take a couple of drinks and no more. Saying to myself, "I have this thing in hand now, I can be a moderate drinker." Here I made a fatal mistake. After all my past experience, again I thought I could handle the situation only to find out one week later it was the same old thing. I repeated the same thing over again and another week again.

Finally I was back at the hospital, although I went under protest. My wife had expected to take two weeks vacation in the country with me, but instead had to use this money for the hospital expenses. During my one week stay, I held this as a grudge against her. The result was I got drunk three days after I was discharged from the hospital. And she left me for two weeks. During this period of time I drank heavily, being upset not only over her absence, but perfectly at sea as to how I could ever get back on my feet and make a new start again.

There was no mistake about it there was something that I failed to do in those simple steps. So I carefully went over each day as best I could since my first drink after the fourteen weeks of sobriety, and found I had slipped away from quite a few of some of the most important things which I should do in order to keep sober.

Certainly I was down now-ashamed to face my new friends-my own family giving me up as lost and everyone saying, "The system didn't work, did it?"

This last remark was more than too much for me. Why should this fellowship of hard working fellows be jeopardized by me? It worked for them. As a matter of fact, not one who has kept faithfully to it has ever slipped.

One morning, after a sleepless night worrying over what I could do to straighten myself out, I went to my room alone-took my Bible in hand and asked Him, the One Power, that I might open to a good place to read-and I read. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

That was enough for me-I started to understand. Here were the words of Paul a great teacher. What then if I had slipped? Now, I could understand.

From that day years ago, I gave, still give and always will give time everyday to read the word of God and let Him do all the caring. Who am I to try to run myself or anyone else?

A CLOSE SHAVE by Harry Zoelers

THE year 1890 witnessed my advent as the youngest of five sons to a fine Christian mother and a hard working blacksmith father. At the age of eight my father used to send me after his pail of beer and it was by lapping the foam off the beer that I first discovered that the taste was much to my liking. By the time I was fourteen, at which time I quit school, I had found that wine and hard cider were also pleasing to my palate. The next six years I spent learning the art of barbering and by the end of this period I had become both a proficient barber and an earnest drinker.

During the next 10 or 12 years I was able to acquire several lucrative shops, some with poolrooms and restaurants attached. It seemed quite impossible however for me to stand prosperity so I would drink myself out of one situation, get myself together a bit, develop another, and then repeat the performance.

The time came when I could no longer refinance myself so I began to float about the country, getting a job here and there as I could, but invariably I got fired in a short time because of my unreliability.

My marriage, which occurred in 1910 about the time I started my successful ownership of shops, resulted in our having a family of ten children who were usually desperately in need because I used my slender income for booze instead of providing for them.

I finally secured a job in a shop in a town of about 4,500 people, where I now live. My reputation for drinking soon became more or less generally known. About this time a deacon and the pastor of one of the local churches used to come in the shop for their work and were constantly inviting me to church and Bible classes, which invitations irritated me very much. I earnestly wished they would mind their own business.

I finally did accept one or two invitations to social functions at the home of one of these men, and was received so cordially that the barrier between us was partially lowered.

I did not stop drinking however, though my feeling toward these men was kindly. They at last persuaded me to go to a nearby town to have a talk with a doctor who had had a great deal of experience with this type of trouble. I listened to the man for two hours, and although my mind was quite foggy, I retained a good deal of what he said. I feel that the combined effort of these three Christian gentlemen made it possible for me to have a vital spiritual experience. This occurred in March, 1937. I have had no trouble since.

For about six years previous to this time I was never at any time completely free from the influence of liquor.

Since that time I have regained the love of my family and the respect of the community, and can truthfully say that the past few years have been the happiest of my life.

I have busied myself a great deal during these few years in helping others who were afflicted as I was, and the combined efforts of the deacon, the pastor, and myself, have resulted in nine other men finding a way out of difficulties which were identical with mine. I feel this activity has played an important part in my mastery of this most devastating habit.

EDUCATED AGNOSTIC by Norman Hunt (from Darien, CT.)

WHY go into the drinking pattern that is so much the same with all of us? Three times I had left the hospital with hope that I was saying goodbye forever. And here I was again.

The first day there I told the kindly doctor that I was a thoroughly hopeless case and would probably continue to return as long as I could beg, borrow, or steal the money to get in. On the second day he told me that he knew of something that would keep me off liquor for life. I laughed at him. Yes, indeed, I would do anything or take anything that would produce such results, but there wasn't anything. On the third day a man came to talk with me. He was an alcoholic who had stopped! He talked about alcoholism and a spiritual way of life. I was deeply impressed by his seriousness, but nothing that he said made sense to me. He spoke about God, and a power greater than one's self. I remember being very careful not to say anything that might shake his faith in whatever it was he believed! I was deeply grateful to him for taking the trouble to talk with me, but what he had was not for me. I had thought much about religion and had come to rather definite conclusions. There was no God. The universe was an inexplicable phenomenon. In spite of my sorry state and outlook, there were many beautiful things in life, but no beauty. There were truths discoverable about life, but no truth. There were people who were good, kind, considerate, but no such thing as goodness. I had read rather extensively, but when people began to talk in such ultimates I was lost. I could find in life no eternal purpose nor anything that might be labeled "divine guidance." War, illness, cruelty, stupidity, poverty and greed were not and could not be the product of any purposeful creation. The whole thing simply didn't make sense.

About this I felt no deep emotion. I had struggled with the problem during late adolescence, but had long since ceased to give it anxious thought. Many people believe in a god of some sort and worship him in various ways. That was excellent. I thought it nice that so many people, poor misguided souls, could find so simple a solution to their problems. If this world proved too hopelessly disillusioning they could always seek comfort in a more pleasant existence promised in a world to come, where wrongs would be righted and justice tempered with tender mercy would prevail. But none of that was for me. I had enough courage and intellectual honesty to face life as I saw it without recourse to a self-erected deity.

The next day another man visited me. He, too, had been an alcoholic and stopped drinking. He pointed out that I had found myself unable to handle my liquor problem by myself. He had been in the same position, yet he hadn't had a drink in over three years! He told me of other men who had found sobriety through the recognition of some power beyond themselves. If I cared to I was to consider myself invited to a gathering the following Tuesday where I would meet other alcoholics who had stopped.

With the knowledge I now have, it is hard for me to recall how screwy the whole thing sounded—the blind leading the blind, a union of drunks, all banded together in some kind of a spiritual belief! What could be more idiotic! But . . . these men were sober! Nuts!

I returned to my despairing wife with this incoherent story of a bunch of drunks who had found a cure for their alcoholism through some kind of spiritual exercise and who held regular meetings where, as far as I could figure out, they went through some kind of spiritual exercise! She was very nearly convinced that my mental balance had now been completely and probably permanently destroyed. The only rational support I could find for giving it a try was that it was vouched for by the kindly doctor whom she had met on several occasions at the hospital. That and the fact that nothing else worked.

May I stop at this point and address a few sentences direct to agnostic or atheistically inclined alcoholics: You can't take less stock in the references made to God in this book than I would have if this book had been available to me at that time. To you those references have no meaning. They have simply used a name that people give to a fond delusion. All your life, except possibly in early childhood, when you conceived of an enormous figure with a flowing white beard somewhere beyond the clouds, it has meant nothing. You have now too much intelligence and honesty to allow of such delusions. Even if you could, you are too proud to affirm a belief now that you are in desperate trouble, that you denied when things were rosy. Or, you might possibly persuade yourself to believe in some creative force, or algebraic "X," but what earthly good would an "X" be in solving such a problem as you face? And, even admitting, from your knowledge of psychology, it is possible you might acquire such delusions, how could you possibly believe in them if you recognized them as delusions? Some such thinking must have been going on in your mind as you have weighed these incredible experiences against your own inability to cope with a problem that is gradually destroying your

personality. Rest assured that such questions were in my mind. I could see no satisfactory solution to any of them. But I kept hard to the only thing that seemed to hold out any hope, and gradually my difficulties were lessened. I have not given up my intellect for the sake of my soul, nor have I destroyed my integrity to preserve my health and sanity. *All I had feared to lose I have gained and all I feared to gain I have lost.*

But to conclude my story: The following Tuesday, hardly daring to hope and fearful of the worst, my wife and I attended our first gathering with former alcoholic slaves who had been made free through the rediscovery of a power for good, found through a spiritual attitude toward life. I know that I have never before been so inspired. It was not anything that happened. Because nothing happened. Nor yet by anything that was said, but more by an atmosphere created by friendliness, sincerity, honesty, confidence, and good cheer. I couldn't believe that these men could have been drunks, and yet gradually I learned their stories, alcoholics every one!

That was, with me, the beginning of a new life. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to put into words the change that has taken place in me, I have since learned that with many members the change has been almost instantaneous. This was not the case with me. I was tremendously inspired at first, but my basic thinking was not altered that evening nor did I expect any profound change. I felt that while the spiritual aspect of what these men had was not for me, I did believe strongly in the emphasis they put on the need to help others. I felt that if I could have the inspiration of these gatherings and if I could have an opportunity to try to help others that the two together would reinforce my own willpower and thus be of tremendous assistance. But gradually, in a manner I cannot explain, I began to re-examine the beliefs I had thought beyond criticism. Almost imperceptibly my whole attitude toward life underwent a silent revolution. I lost many worries and gained confidence. I found myself saying and thinking things that a short time ago I would have condemned as platitudes! A belief in the basic spirituality of life has grown and with it belief in a supreme and guiding power for good.

In the process of this change I can recognize two immensely significant steps for me. The first step I took when I admitted to myself for the first time that all my previous thinking might be wrong. The second step came when I first consciously wished to believe. As a result of this experience I am convinced that to seek is to find, to ask is to be given. The day never passes that I do not silently cry out in thankfulness, not merely for my release from alcohol, but even more for a change that has given life new meaning, dignity, and beauty.

ANOTHER PRODIGAL STORY by Ralph Furlong (from Springfield, MA.)

"HELLO, Pal."

"Hello, Buddy!"

"Have a drink?"

"Got one!"

"Come over on the next stool I'm lonesome. Hell of a world."

"You said it, brother,-hell of a world."

"You taking rye? Mine's gin. God, I'm up against it now!"

"How's 'at?"

"Oh, same old hell-hell-hell. She's going to leave me now!"

"Your wife?"

"Yeah. How am I going to live? Can't go home like this; too damn drunk to stay out. Can't land in jail-will if I stay out-ruin my business-business going anyway-break her heart. Where is she you ask? She's at the store, working I guess, probably eating her heart out waiting for me. What time is it? Seven o'clock? Store's been closed an hour. She's gone home by now. Well, what the hell. Have one more-then I'll go."

That is a hazy recollection of my last debauch. Several years ago now. By the time my new "bar fly friend" and I had soaked up several more, I was shedding tears and he, in the tender throes of drunken sympathy, was working out a guaranteed plan whereby my wife would greet me with great joy and out-spread arms as soon as "we" got home.

Yes "we" were going to my home. He was the finest fixer in the world. He knew all about how to handle wives. He admitted that!

So, two drunks, now lifetime buddies, stumbled out arm in arm headed up the hill towards home.

A draft of cool air cleared some of the fog away from my befuddled brain. "Wait a minute, what's this so-and-so-plan of yours? I got to know about it," I said. "I got to know what you're going to say and what I say."

The plan was a honey! All he had to do was to lead me up to the apartment, ring the bell, ask my wife if I was her husband, and then tell her he had found me down at the river about to jump from the bridge and had saved my life.

"That's all there is to it," he kept mumbling over and over, "works every time-never fails."

On up the hill we staggered, then my "life saver" got a better idea that would clinch the deal. He'd have to go home first and put on clean linen. Couldn't let the nice lady see a dirty shirt.

That sounded all right. Maybe he'd have a bottle at his home. So we stumbled up to his place, a dreary third floor back room, on a third rate street.

I have a hazy recollection of that place, but have never been able to find it since. There was a photograph of a quite pretty girl on his dresser. He told me it was a picture of his wife and that she had kicked him out because he was drunk. "You know how women are," he said.

Some fixer!

He did put on a clean shirt all right and then reached into a drawer and pulled out a .38 calibre revolver. That gave me quite a sobering shock. I reached for the gun realizing in a hazy way that here was trouble.

He began to pull the trigger and every moment I expected to hear an explosion, but the gun was empty. He proved it!

Then he got a new idea. To reconcile my wife and make her happy, he would tell her the gun was mine, that I stood on the bridge, with the gun at my head and that he snatched it away just in time to save my life.

God Almighty must have, at that moment, granted me a flash of sanity. I quickly excused myself while he was completing his toilet and, on the pretext of phoning my wife, rushed noisily down the stairs and ran down the street with all my might.

Some blocks away I came to a drug store, bought a pint of gin, and drank half it in several large gulps, staggered on up to my apartment, and tumbled into bed, fully dressed and dead drunk.

This wasn't any new terror for my wife. This sort of thing had been going on for several years, only I was getting worse and worse with each drunken spree and more difficult to handle.

Only the previous day I had been in an accident. A Good Samaritan saw my condition and got me away quickly, before the police came, and drove me back to my home.

I was dreadfully drunk that day and my wife consulted a lawyer as preliminary to entering divorce action. I swore to her that I wouldn't drink again and within 24 hours, here I was in bed dead drunk.

Several months previously I had spent a week in a New York hospital for alcoholics and came out feeling that everything would be all right. Then I began to think that I had the thing licked. I could practice a little controlled drinking. I knew I couldn't take much but just one drink before dinner. That went all right, too. Sure I had it licked now! The next step was to take one quick one at noon and cover it up with a milk shake. To make it doubly sure, I'd have ice cream put into the milk shake, and the n, so help me, I don't know what the next step down was, but I surely landed at the bottom with an awful, heartbreaking thud.

The next morning was June 7th. I recall the date so well because the sixth is my daughter's birthday. And that, by the grace of God, was my last spree.

That morning I was afraid to open my eyes, surely my wife would have kept her promise and left me. I loved my wife. It is a paradox I know, but I did and do.

When I did stir, there she was sitting at my bedside.

"Come on," she said, "get up, bathe, shave and dress. We're going to New York this morning."

"New York!" I said, "To the hospital?"

"Yes."

"I haven't any money to pay a hospital."

"I know you haven't," she said, "but I arranged it all last night over long distance and I'm going to give you that one chance, once again. If you let me down this time, that's all there is."

Well, I went into that hospital again feeling like a whipped cur. My wife pleaded with the doctor to please do something to save her husband, to save her home, to save our business, and our self-respect.

The doctor assured us that he really had something for me this time that would work and with that faint hope, we separated; she to hurry back home, 150 miles away, and carry on the work of two people and I to sit trembling and fearful there in what seemed to me, a shameful place.

Four days later a man called on me and seemed interested to know how I was coming along. He told me that he, too, had been there several times but had now found relief.

That night another man came. He, too, had suffered the same trouble and told how he and the other fellow and several more had been released from alcohol.

Then the next day a fine fellow came, and in a halting but effective way, told how he had placed himself in God's hand and keeping. Almost before I knew it, I was asking God to clean me up.

I suppose there are many who feel a strong resentment against such a spiritual approach. Some of Alcoholics Anonymous whom I have met since that day tell me they had difficulty in accepting a simple, day to day, plan of faith. In my case I was ripe for such an opportunity, perhaps because of early religious training. I have always, it seems, had a keen sense of the fact and presence of God.

That, too, like loving my wife and at the same time hurting her so dreadfully, is paradoxical, but it's a fact. I knew that God, was there with infinite love and yet, somehow, I kept on drifting further and further away. But now I do feel that my heart and mind are "tuned in" and by His grace there will be no more alcoholic "static."

After making this final agreement (not just another resolution) to let God to be first in my life, the whole outlook and horizon brightened up in a manner which I am unable to describe except to say that it was "glorious."

The following day was Monday and my non-drinking friend insisted that I check out from the hospital and come over to his home in Jersey. I did that and there I found a lovely wife and children all so "happy about the whole thing."

The next night I was taken to a meeting, at the home of an ex-problem drinker in Brooklyn, where to my surprise, there were more than 30 men like myself, telling of a liberty of living unmatched by anything I had ever seen.

Since returning to my home, life has been so different. I have paid off the old debts, have money enough now for decent clothes and some to use in helping others, a thing which I enjoy doing but didn't do when I had to contribute so generously to alcohol.

I am trying to help other alcoholics. At this writing there are four of us working, all of whom have been kicked around dreadfully.

There is no "cocky" feeling about this for me. I know I am an alcoholic and while I used to call on God to help me, my conclusion is that I was simply asking God to help me drink alcohol without its hurting me which is a far different thing than asking him to help me not to drink at all.

So here I stand, living day to day, in His presence, and it is wonderful-This prodigal came home.

THE CAR SMASHER (later became "He Had To Be Shown") by Dick Stanley (Akron, OH.)

DURING the first week of March, 1937, through the grace of God, I ended 20 years of a life made practically useless because I could not do two things.

First, I was unable to not take a drink.

Second, I was unable to take a drink without getting drunk.

Perhaps a third as important as the other two should be added; my being unwilling to admit either of the first two.

With the result I kept trying to drink without getting drunk, and kept making a nightmare of my life, causing suffering and hardship to all those relatives and friends who tried so hard to help me and whom, when I was sober, I took the greatest pleasure in pleasing.

The first time I drank anything strong, or in greater quantity than a glass of beer, I got disgustingly drunk and missed the dinner which had been arranged for me in honor of my coming marriage.

I had to be taken home and remained in bed the following day; more sick than I thought a human could be and live. Yet, until five years ago I periodically did the same thing.

Making money was always pretty easy when I was sober and worked.

All right when sober-absolutely helpless with a drink aboard. But I seemed to have had the idea that making money or a living was something to take or let alone.

I got into the real estate business-began to neglect business, sometimes with four houses under construction, wouldn't see any of them for a week or even longer-sometimes paid good money for an option, then forgot to exercise it. I made and lost plenty of money in the market.

Understand, I wasn't actually drunk all of this time but there seemed always to be an excuse to have a drink, and this first one, more and more often lead to my becoming drunk. As time went on, periods between drunks got shorter and I was full of fear; fear that I wouldn't be able to do anything I agreed to do; fear of meeting men; worrying about what they might know of my drinking and its results; all of which made me quite useless whether I was sober or drunk.

Thus I drifted. Breaking promises to my wife, my mother, and a host of other relatives and friends who stood more from me and tried harder than humans should be expected to, to help me.

I always seemed to pick the most inopportune time for a binge. An important business deal to be closed might find me in another city. Once when entrusted to purchase for a large customer, I agreed to meet his representative in New York. I spent the time waiting for a train in a bar; arrived in New York tight; stayed tight the week; and came home by a route twice the distance from New York.

Worked weeks, by long distance, wire, letters, and personal calls, to contact possible business connections under proper conditions and finally succeeded, only to show up tight or get tight and insult the man whose friendship, or respect meant so much.

Each time there was the feeling of regret, inability to understand why, but a firm determination that it would never happen again-but it did-in fact the periods between became increasingly shorter, and the duration of each binge longer.

During the aforementioned period, I had spent thousands of dollars, my home was broken up; half a dozen cars smashed up; I had been picked up by police for driving while intoxicated-plain drunk; had sponged and borrowed money; cashed rubber checks; and made such a general nuisance of myself that I lost all the friends I had. At least they felt unwilling to be a party to financing me while I made a more complete ass of myself. And I, on my side was ashamed to face any of them when I was sober.

My friends secured jobs for me; I made good on them for a time. I advanced quickly to night superintendent in a factory but it wasn't long until I was missing, or worse, turning up drunk; was warned-warned again; finally fired. I was later rehired as a factory hand and mighty glad to have it-advance again-then back to the bottom-always the same process.

I drank continuously and when I drank, sooner or later, and generally sooner, I got drunk and threw everything away.

During the early part of 1935 my brother secured my release from the city jail. On that day by sincere but non-alcoholic friends I was shown what might be done about my drinking with the help of God.

I asked for this help, gratefully accepted it, and in addition to losing my desire for drink, asked for and received the same help in other matters. I began to earn my living and in my new found security, was unashamed to meet people I had avoided for years with happy results.

Things continued well, I had two or three advancements to better jobs with greater earning power. My every need was being met as long as I accepted and acknowledged the Divine Help which was so generously given.

I find now, as I look back, that this period covered about six or eight months, then I began to think how smart I was; to wonder if my superiors realized what they had in me; if they were not pretty small about the money they paid me; as these thoughts grew, my feeling of gratefulness grew less. I was neglecting to ask for help-when I received it as I always did, I neglected to acknowledge it. Instead I took great credit for myself. I began to take credit for the non-drinking too-it came to me strongly that I had conquered the drinking habit myself-I became convinced of my great will power.

Then someone suggested a glass of beer-I had one. This was even better than I thought-I could take a drink and not get drunk. So another day, another beer until it was regular every day. Now I was indeed in the saddle concerning drink-could take it or leave it alone. Just to prove it to myself, I decided to march right past the place I usually stopped for beer, and I felt pretty good as I went to the parking lot for my car. The longer I drove the greater was my pride that I had finally licked liquor. I was sure I had-so sure in fact that I stopped and had a beer before I went home. In my smugness I continued to drink beer and began occasionally to drink liquor.

So it went until inevitably, "as darkness follows the sun," I got drunk and was right back where I had been fifteen years before, slipping into a binge every now and then-never knowing when they would come-nor where I would wind up.

This lasted about eight months-I didn't miss much time from work-did spend one ten day stretch in the hospital after a beating I got while drunk-was warned a few times by my superiors-but was "getting by."

In the meantime I had heard of some men who, like myself, were what I had always scoffed at being-alcoholics. I had been invited to see them, but after twenty years of drinking, I felt there was nothing wrong with me. *They* might need it; *they* might be queer; but not me. I wasn't going to get drunk again.

Of course I did, again and again, until these men not only contacted me but took me under their wing.

After a few days of "degoofing" in a hospital, these men came to me one by one and told me of their experiences. They didn't lecture-didn't tell me I should quit. But they did tell me *how* to quit. THAT WAS IMPORTANT and simple too.

Their suggestion was that we simply acknowledge we had made a pretty dismal failure of our lives, that we accept as truth and act upon what we had always been taught and known, that there was a kind and merciful God; that we were His children; and, that if we would let Him, He would help us.

I had certainly made a mess of my life. From the age of 20 I had thrown aside everything God had seen fit to endow me with. Why not avail myself of this all wise, ever-present help?

This I did. I ask for, accept, and acknowledge this help, and know that so long as I do, I shall never take a drink and what is more important, though impossible without the first, all other phases of my life have been helped.

There are, it seems to me, four steps to be taken by one who is a victim of alcoholism.

First: Have a real desire to quit.

Second: Admit you can't. (This is hardest.)

Third: Ask for His ever present help.

Fourth: Accept and acknowledge this help.

HINDSIGHT by Myrow Williams (N.Y.)

FIRE! Still, I got a new and better job. One which gave me more time to relax and where drinking was permitted during working hours. People were beginning to criticize my drinking habits and I scoffed at them. Hadn't I earned ten thousand dollars that year? And wasn't this the middle of the depression? Who were they to say that I couldn't handle my liquor? A year of this and I was fired.

Other jobs followed with the same net result. After each experience of this kind I would sit down and figure out the reason why it happened. I always found a good reason, and usually people accepted it and gave me another chance. For weeks, sometimes months, I wouldn't touch a drop and because I could do this, I reasoned that there was a real excuse for that last bender, and since that excuse no longer existed I could start to drink moderately again.

I usually did-for a while. Then I would step up the consumption about one glass per day until I reached the stage where all of the past unhappy experiences associated with drinking were brought back to my mind. Soon I was crying in my beer, full of self-pity, and off again to a flying start toward a floundering finish.

How many times this happened, I don't know. I don't even want to know. I do know that during this period I completely smashed nine new automobiles and was never scratched. Even this didn't convince me that there might be a God who was looking out for me in answer to the prayers of others. I made many friends and abused them terribly. I didn't want to, but when it was a question of a friendship or a drink, I usually took the drink.

In a final effort to escape, I went to New York thinking I could leave my reputation and troubles behind me. It didn't work. I was hired by eight nationally known organizations and fired just as quickly when they had checked my references. The world was against me. They wouldn't give me a chance. So I continued my drinking and took any mediocre job I could get.

Occasionally I dropped into a church half hoping that I might absorb something, anything, that might help a little bit. On one of these visits I saw and met a girl who I felt could be the answer to all of my problems. I told her all about myself and how I felt sure that with her friendship and love everything could and would be different. Although born in New York she was "from Missouri." I would have to show her first. She had seen other girls try to reform men by marrying them and she knew it didn't work.

She suggested praying and having faith and a lot of things that seemed silly at the time, but I really got down to business and started doing some serious bargaining with God. I prayed and prayed. In all earnestness I said, "If You will get this girl for me then I'll stop drinking for You." And "If You will only get me my original job back, I'll drink moderately for You."

I soon found out that God didn't work that way because I didn't get the girl or the job.

Six months later I was sitting in a small hotel on the west side of New York full of remorse and desperate because I didn't know what would happen next. A middle-aged man approached me and said in a very sincere voice, "Do you really want to stop drinking?" Immediately I answered "Yes," because I knew that was the correct answer. He wrote down a name and address and said "When you are sure you do, go and see this man." He walked away.

I began to think, "Did I really want to quit? Why should I? If I couldn't have this girl and I couldn't ever have a good job again, why in the hell should I quit?" I tucked the address into my pocket along with a nickel for subway fare, just in case I ever decided to really quit. I started drinking again, but could get no happiness or release regardless of the number of drinks.

Occasionally I would check up to see if the address and the nickel were still safe, because I was being tortured with one thought this girl had given to me. "You must be decent for your own sake. And because you want to be decent, not because some one else wants you to be."

A week later I found myself in the presence of the man whose address was in my pocket. His story was incredible. I couldn't believe it, but he had the proof. I met men whose stories convinced me that in the ranks of men who had been heavy drinkers I was a n amateur and a sissy.

What I heard was hard to believe but I wanted to believe it. What's more I wanted to try it and see if it wouldn't work for me.

It worked, and is still working. For weeks I was bitter against society. Why didn't some one put me wise to this before? Why did I have to go on like that for years making my parents unhappy, abusing friends, and passing up opportunities? It wasn't fair t hat I should be the instrument to make people unhappy.

I believe now that I was given this experience so that I might understand and be of use in helping others to find a solution to this and other problems.

When I decided to do something about my problem, I was reconciled to the fact that it might be necessary for me to wash dishes, scrub floors, or do some menial task for possibly many years in order to re-establish myself as a sober, sane, and reliable per son. Although I still wanted and hoped for the better things in life, I was prepared to accept whatever was due me.

Once I became sincere, good things began to happen to me. My first experience in overcoming fear was three weeks later when I applied for a position with a national organization. After numerous questions I was finally asked why I had left the company I ha d been with six years. I replied that I had been fired for being a drunk. The manager was flabbergasted and so completely astounded by the truth that he refused to believe me. I referred him to my former employer but he refused to write him-but he did give me the job.

It has been six and a half years since I made that decision. Those years have been the happiest years of my life. The little girl, who was big enough to tell me the nasty truth when I needed it, is now my wife.

Eight months ago I went to another city to set up a new business. I had sufficient money to last me several months. What I wanted to accomplish could have been done under ordinary circumstances in about two weeks. The obstacles I have encountered and over come are hard to enumerate. At least twenty times I have been sure that I would be doing business within the next twenty-four hours and at least twenty times something has happened which later made it seem that the business never would get started.

While I am writing this I happen to be at the low point of the twenty first time. Money is exhausted. All recent developments have been unfavorable, everything seems on the surface to be wrong. Yet I am not discouraged. I am not blue. I feel no bitterness toward these people who have tried to obstruct the progress of the business, and somehow I feel because I have tried hard, played square, and met situations, that something good will come from this whole experience. It may not come the way I want it, but I sincerely believe that it will come the way that it is best.

ON HIS WAY by Horace Popsy Mahar (N.Y.)

IN EARLY youth I believe I had some of the tendencies which lead to alcoholism. I refer to attempted escapes from reality.

At fifteen and sixteen, although free at home to drink small amounts of beer and wine, I drank considerable quantities of stronger liquors at school and other places. Not enough to cause serious worry, but enough apparently to give me occasionally what I thought I wanted. Escape? A feeling of superiority? I do not know.

I then decided I'd had enough of school, which decision was probably shared by the schools. The next few years were spent in civil engineering work, travel, sports, and a little idleness, and I seem to have avoided alcoholic difficulties of the more pronounced kind.

Immediately before marriage and in the short time before sailing for France, alcohol began to take a real part in my life. A year and a half in war time France postponed the inevitable and the post war period of hopes and plans brought me nearer and nearer to the point where I eventually found myself to be an alcoholic. Not that I would have admitted it then, having the alcoholic's usual facility for deception, both to self and others.

Divorced, sometimes suspecting that drinking was the basis for most of my troubles but never admitting it, I had enough left in health, interests of various kinds, and luck to carry on with considerable success.

About this time I stopped all social drinking. I became a periodical drunkard, the sprees lasting from three days to three weeks and the dry intervals lasting from three weeks to four months.

During one of the best years, I made a happy marriage and the age of thirty-five found me with the following: a beautiful little home presided over by a kind, understanding, and lovely wife; a partnership in a firm I had helped to found years before; more than a comfortable income; many luxuries and many friends; opportunity to follow my interests and hobbies; a love of my work; pride in my success; great health; optimism; and hope on the credit side. On the other hand, I had a growing, gnawing fear of my recurring trouble.

I slipped by far too easy stages to the bottom in less than eight years. Not a pleasant place, the bottom. Sometimes I slept in a cheap hotel or rooming house, sometimes a flop house, sometimes the back room of a police station and once in a doorway; many times in the alcoholic ward at a hospital, and once in a subway toilet. Sometimes decently fed, clothed, and housed, I worked at my business on commission with a large firm; sometimes I dared not appear there cold, hungry, with torn clothes, shaking body and muddled brain advertising what I had become. Helpless, hopeless, bitter.

Sometimes I was apparently on the way back, and sometimes writhing in bed for days at a time, terrorized by the fear of insanity and by the spectres of people without faces, people with horrible faces, people grimacing and laughing at me and my misery. Tortured by dreams from which I would awake with a scream of agony and bathed in cold sweat. Tortured by day dreams of what might have been, dreams of the kindness, faith and love that had been heaped upon me.

Due to this last however, and to what little remained of my former self and perhaps to some lingering power of spiritual faith, I became somewhat better. Not well, but better.

This helped me to take stock and to try to do some clear thinking. I found my inventory somewhat mixed, but as my thoughts became clearer, I grew much better and at last arrived at that point where for the first time in several years I could see some light and hope ahead of me. Through a haze of doubt and skepticism I began to realize, partly at least, many things in myself which had greased the path I had pursued, and some vague thoughts and ideas came to me that are now crystallizing with the help of the men I have been happy to join.

What thoughts and ideas? The answer is short, although the road to it is long and tedious.

My intelligence, instead of drawing me further away from spiritual faith is bringing me closer to it. I no longer react in quite the same way when my will and desires are apparently frustrated.

The simple words "Thy Will Be Done" and the simple ideas of honesty and of helping others are taking on a new meaning for me. I should not be surprised to find myself coming to the astounding conclusion that God, whoever or whatever He may be, is eminently more capable of running this universe than I am. At last I believe I am on my way.

AN ALCOHOLIC'S WIFE by Marie Bray (Akron, OH.)

I HAVE the misfortune, or I should say the good fortune of being an alcoholic's wife. I say misfortune because of the worry and grief that goes with drinking, and good fortune because we found a new way of living.

My husband did not drink, to my knowledge, for several years after we were married. Then we started on an occasional Saturday night party. As I drank nothing except an occasional highball I soon became what was called a "wet blanket." The parties became more frequent and more often I was left at home.

I would sit up and wait for him. As each car passed the house I would return to walking the floor and crying and feeling so sorry for myself, thinking, "Here I am left at home to take care of the baby and him out having a good time."

When he did return sometimes on Sunday and sometimes a week later, it usually called for a scene. If he was still drunk I would put him to bed and cry some more. If he was sober it would mean I would say all the things I had been thinking and cry some more. He usually got drunk again.

I finally went to work as the bills worried me. I thought if I worked and got the bills paid he would quit drinking. He had no money in the bank but would write checks as he knew I would pay them for the boy's sake and in the hopes that each time would be the last.

I thought I should have a lot of credit, as I was paying his bills, taking care of the house and baby, besides my work, making as much money as he was, doing without things I wanted so he could have a good time.

I always went to church and thought I was living a Christian life. After my husband came in contact with Alcoholics Anonymous I thought our troubles were over as I was sure all our trouble was his drinking.

I soon found out that there was a lot wrong with me. I was selfish with my money, time, and thoughts. I was selfish about my time because I was always tired and had no time left for my family's pleasure or to do God's work. All I did was go to Sunday School and Church on Sunday with the boy and thought that was all God wanted me to do. I would be irritable and lose my temper and say all manner of things which usually called for another drunk and me pitying myself all over again.

Since giving my husband's problem to God I have found a peace and happiness. I know that when I try to take care of the problems of my husband I am a stumbling block as my husband has to take his problems to God the same as I do.

My husband and I now talk over our problems and trust in a Divine Power. We have now started to live. When we live with God we want for nothing.

AN ARTIST'S CONCEPT by Ray Campbell (N.Y.)

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which can not fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance-that principle is contempt prior to investigation.

--HERBERT SPENCER"

THE above quotation is descriptive of the mental attitudes of many alcoholics when the subject of religion, as a cure, is first brought to their attention. It is only when a man has tried everything else, when in utter desperation and terrific need he turns to something bigger than himself, that he gets a glimpse of the way out. It is then that contempt is replaced by hope, and hope by fulfillment.

In this personal story I have endeavored to relate something of my experience in the search for spiritual help rather than a description of the neurotic drinking that made the search necessary. After all, the pattern of most alcoholic experiences fits a pretty general mold. Experiences differ because of circumstances, environment, and temperament, but the after effects, both physical and mental, are almost identical. It makes but little difference how or why a man becomes an alcoholic once this disease manifests itself. The preventive measures adopted for alcoholic tendencies in the future will have to be found in a more progressive program of mental hygiene and medical research than is now obtainable. It is important that at present we believe there is only one sure pathway to recovery for any alcoholic.

In my own case I was not entirely ignorant of the causes that led me into excessive drinking. In a desperate effort to eliminate these causes, to find a means to better mental and physical health, I investigated the alcoholic problem from every angle. Medicine, psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis absorbed my interest and supplied me with a great deal of general and specific information. It led me in the end, however, to the fact that for me here was a mental and physical disease that science had placed in the category of "incurables." Briefly, all that this study and research ever did for me was to show something about WHY I drank. It substantiated a fact I had known all along, that my drinking was symptomatic. It did point out a road to better mental health but it demanded something of me in return that I did not have to give. It asked of me a *power* of self-will but it did not take into consideration that this self-will was already drugged with poison-that it was very sick. Intuitively I also knew that a person constrained to temperance by the domination of will is no more *cured* of his vice than if he were locked up in prison. I knew that somehow, some way, the mental stream, the emotions, must be purified before the right pathway could be followed.

It was about this time that I began "flirting" with religion as a possible way out. I approached the subject in a wary, none too reverent, attitude. I believed in an omnipotent God or Deity, but the orthodox approach through the church, with its dogma and ritual, left me unmoved. The more I struggled to gain an intelligent grasp upon spiritual development, the more confused I became. On the other hand a purely materialistic viewpoint that postulated a "mechanical order of things" seemed too negative even to entertain. As an artist I had spent too much time communing with nature-trying to place upon canvas or paper my emotional feelings, not to know that a tremendous spiritual power was back of the universe. There was, however, so much that seemed illogical or sentimental about religion in general-so many doubts assailed me, so many problems to be confronted-yet there was within myself a strong and urgent desire for spiritual satisfaction. The occasional periods in which I felt a spiritual emotion, I immediately examined with all the ardor of the inveterate analyst. Was this emotion just a form of religious ecstasy? Was it fear? Was it just blind belief or had I tapped something?

"Most men," wrote Thoreau, "lead lives of quiet desperation." It was the articulation of this despair that led to my drinking in the beginning. Religion, so far, had only added to my desperation. I drank more than ever.

A seed had been planted, however, and a short time afterward I met the man who has for the past five years devoted a great deal of time and energy to helping alcoholics. Looking back on that meeting, the simplicity of his talk with me is amazing. He told me very little but what I already knew, in part, but what he did have to say was bereft of all fancy spiritual phraseology-it was simple Christianity imparted with Divine Power. The next day I met over twenty men who had achieved a mental rebirth from alcoholism. Here again it was not so much what these men told me in regard to their experiences that was impressive, as it was a sense or feeling that an invisible influence was at work. What was it this man had and these other men exemplified without their knowing? They were human every-day sort of people. They certainly were not pious. They had no "holier than thou" attitude. They were not reformers, and their concepts of religion in some cases were almost inarticulate. But they had *something!* Was it just their sincerity that was magnetic? Yes, they certainly were sincere, but much more than that emanated from them. Was it their great and terrible need, now being fulfilled, that made me feel a vibratory force that was new and strange? Now I was getting closer and suddenly, it seemed to me, I had the answer. These men were but instruments. Of themselves they were nothing.

Here at last was a demonstration of spiritual law at work. Here was spiritual law working through human lives just as definitely and with the same phenomena expressed in the physical laws that govern the material world.

These men were like lamps supplied with current from a huge spiritual dynamo and controlled by the rheostat of their souls. They burned dim, bright, or brilliant, depending upon the degree and progress of their contact. And this contact could only be maintained just so long as they obeyed that spiritual law.

These men were thinking straight-therefore their actions corresponded to their thoughts. They had given themselves, *their minds*, over to a higher power for *direction*. Here, it seemed to me, in the one word "Thought"-was the crux of the whole spiritual quest. That "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" and so is his health, his environment, his failure, or his success in life.

How foolish I had been in my quest for spiritual help. How selfish and egotistical I had been to think that I could approach God *intellectually*. In the very struggle to obtain faith I had lost it. I had given to the term faith a religious significance only. I had failed to see that faith was "our common everyday manner of thinking." That good and evil were but end results of certain uniform and reliable spiritual laws. Obviously, my own thinking had been decidedly wrong. Normal most of the time, it was abnormal at the wrong times. Like everyone's thinking, it was a mixture of good and bad, but mainly it was uncontrolled.

I had been sticking my chin out and getting socked by spiritual law until I was punch drunk. If one could become humble, if he could become "*as a little child*" before this powerful spiritual thought force, the pathway could be discovered.

The day I made my first efforts in this direction an entire new world opened up for me. Drinking as a vicious habit was washed completely out of my consciousness. I have never even been tempted to take a drink since. As a matter of fact there are so many other things within myself that need correction that the drink habit looks silly in comparison. Please do not assume that all this is but an exposition of spiritual pride. A chart of my spiritual progress would look like the "graph" of a business that had been hit by everything but an earthquake. But there has been progress. It has cured me of a vicious habit. Where my life had been full of mental turmoil there is now an ever increasing depth of calmness. Where there was a hit or miss attitude toward living there is now new direction and force.

The approaches of man to God are many and varied. My conception of God as Universal Mind is after all but one man's approach to and concept of the Supreme Being. To me it makes sense, opens up a fascinating field of endeavor and is a challenge, the acceptance of which can make of life the "Adventure Magnificent."

THE ROLLING STONE by Lloyd Tate (Akron, OH.)

AFTER the breaking up of our home, my Father went west and took up his work and became fairly successful.

Then it was decided that I should be sent to a preparatory school so to a midwestern school I was sent. It didn't last long for I got into a jam and left.

I went to Chicago, wrote my Father and he sent me fare to come on west, which I did. I started in to High School after I got there, but I had no companionship, for my Father was away most of the day and when he came in he always spent the evenings reading and studying.

This all caused me to become very bitter towards anything religious, because I felt that I was only in his way when he wanted to read his religious books and he took only enough interest in me to leave a dollar on the dresser each morning to buy my meals with. It caused me to become so hostile towards anything religious that I formed a hatred against religion which I was to carry for years.

During the time which I spent by myself, I had found that I could buy wine and loaf around saloons and it wasn't long before I had formed a taste for drink. I was only about fourteen years old then, but I looked eighteen.

When vacation time came I wanted to go to San Francisco. My father willingly let me go and after seeing the sights of that city I decided I wanted to go to sea and see the world, so it was only a short time before I found myself signed as an apprentice at sea and leading a new life.

In the meantime my mother had married again. I knew she was well taken care of so my letters were few and my visits home were years apart, and through the selfish interest I had taken in myself I never gave a thought to how worried she might be over me. I had become a person wrapped up in my own life only and giving no thought of anyone else.

Starting to sea out of San Francisco brought me in and out of port there a great deal so I considered San Francisco my home, and as I had arrived there about 1905 I knew the old San Francisco of before the earthquake where the lid was off and vice flourished at all times.

In my young life I saw all and knew all and considered myself well able to play the game as others did. I developed into a steady drinker and, when going to sea, was sure I took enough liquor along to take care of me for the trip. When we arrived at a foreign port we would go ashore and proceed to see the sights which mostly started at the first saloon. If American liquor was not to be had or was too high in cost then we would drink their native drink, and as I look back it hardly seems possible that I have a brain left to remember with for I have done about everything possible to destroy it by over-indulgence in alcohol.

I have been to most of the ports in this world; have stayed in some for some time; have put in a winter in Alaska; lived in the tropics; but no time did I ever find a place where I could not get liquor.

I quit the sea when I was just past 20. I had become interested in construction work, also had studied some art and learned the Freco decorating trade. Eventually I went into the building trade and have followed that ever since.

I had always made good wages or made good at contracting, but was ever a rolling stone, never staying in one place long and drinking just the same as in my seafaring days.

I had always a certain respect for myself and I carried my liquor well for years; knew enough not to make a show of myself and stopped when I had enough.

Then came the war. I was 29 years old and was in Texas when I went into the army and went overseas from there. After leaving Texas I found out that we were stopping in my home town for an hour and I received permission to call my mother when we arrived there, so fortunately I was able to get her down to the train before I left. I had not been home in 11 years and I then told her if I came back alive I would come home to stay.

I had not been in the service long before I was a high ranking non-commissioned officer, for I had learned army discipline years before in the army transport service and while in this country and when behind the lines in France this gave me a chance to get my liquor when my buddies couldn't.

But when we got to the front lines it was the first time in years that I was unable to get my daily share of alcohol but, when it was possible, I never missed.

On into Germany for six months where I made up for lost time. "Schnapps" was barred to American Troops but I got mine. After coming back to the U.S. I received an honorable discharge and came back to my home and mother.

Then I started trying to break away from liquor but it did not last. The last few years found me in all kinds of mixups for I had at last developed into an alcoholic.

When I drank I would get to the state where it required a doctor to straighten me out. The times I have had to rely upon doctors are numerous. I even tried sanitariums for relief. I had plenty of suffering thrown in but still I would drift back again to that first drink and off again I went.

I wanted to quit but each time I drank it was worse than before. The misery that my mother went through was unbelievable for I had become her sole support. I was willing to try anything if I could only get a release from this curse. I knew it was breaking up my home and I was losing everyone that was dear to me.

For a few months I was successful in discontinuing drinking. Then all of a sudden I fell again. I lost my position and thought I was through.

When I was told of a doctor who had been successful in overcoming alcohol and was asked to go and see him in a nearby city, I consented but with a feeling that it was just another cure.

From him and a number of other men, however, I found it was possible to become a man again. He suggested my entrance into a hospital to clear my mind and build me up. Meals had become a thing of the past for me. I had lost all appetite for food but forced myself to eat a little to survive.

This doctor told me that unless I was sincere in wanting to quit drinking, I would be wasting his time and mine and also money in doing this. My answer was I would try anything that would release me.

I went into the hospital and started to build my body up again through proper nourishment, and my mind through a different method than I had ever known of.

A religious awakening was conveyed to me through some unseen force. I at one time would have laughed at such a possibility because I had tried it and failed because I had not applied it properly. I, at last, was shown the way by these men to whom I am now most grateful.

I am now 50 years old, unmarried, have become sane and sensible again, have made my mother happy and brought back those who were dear to me, have made many new friends, mix where I never mixed before, received back my old position. I have the respect of my fellow men and have learned how to actually live and really enjoy life. It has been nearly six and a half years since I have found this new life and I know as long as I do the few things that God requires me to do, I never will take another drink.

LONE ENDEAVOR by Pat Cooper (from California)

As a mother looked idly through a small medical journal, an article written by a doctor on alcoholism caught her attention. Anything in reference to this subject was worthy of perusal, for her son, an only child, had been drinking uncontrollably for years. Each year of his drinking had added new heartaches, though every small ray of hope had been investigated, and though he had tried desperately to stop. But little had been accomplished. He was occasionally able to remain sober for short periods at a time, but things constantly became worse.

So this mother read the short medical article with a heavy heart, for she was constantly on the alert to find something which might prove helpful to her son.

The article gave only a vague hint of the solution found by many alcoholics, which is fully covered in this book, but the mother immediately wrote to the doctor explaining her heart-breaking problem, and requesting further information. She felt there must be help somewhere, and surely if other men had recovered from alcoholism, her son also had a chance.

The doctor turned her letter over to Alcoholics Anonymous. It ended as follows:

"God knows if you can help my son, it will bring happiness to many of us who love him and ache with him in his futile effort to overcome his problem. Please accept my gratitude for whatever you may be able to do and let me hear from you."

A few days later the following letter was sent to this mother. It was our initial effort to help others through the book alone:

"About a hundred men, here in the East, have found a solution for alcoholism that really works. We are now preparing a book hoping to help others who suffer in the same way, and are enclosing a rough copy of the first two chapters. As soon as possible we will forward rough copy of the rest of the proposed book."

We received no answer for some time, and later wrote again:

"We are sending you a pre-publication multilith copy of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. We would appreciate hearing about your son's condition and his reaction to this volume, as this is the first time we have had an opportunity of trying to help an alcoholic at long distance. Won't you please write us? Sincerely, Alcoholics Anonymous"

After another period of silence from the far west, during which time we began to think this book was inadequate without personal contact, we received a long letter from the son, himself. A letter which we feel will be of tremendous help to others who live in distant places, who feel alone and totally unable to work this program out by themselves. A letter which encompasses a man's solitary effort to take what we had to offer and carry the program through alone. Alone except for one book and the help which printed pages could give; alone until he had tried our program of recovery and found spiritual comfort and help.

He wrote as follows:

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your letters and for ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. I have read this book from cover to cover and it is really the first time I have read anything dealing with alcoholism that made sense and showing understanding of the problems of the alcoholic."

I found the personal stories very accurate as pertaining to my own experience; any one of them might have been my own story

I started drinking in 1917 when I was 18. I enlisted in the army, soon became anon-commissioned officer, went overseas as a sergeant. I associated with older men, drank, gambled, and ran around with them, sampling everything France had to offer.

Upon my return from France I continued drinking. At that time I could get plenty tight at night, get up in the morning and go to work feeling O.K. The following fifteen years were one drunk after another which, of course, as they got worse, meant one job after another. Police Department truck driving, etc. Then in an attempt to get away from it all I enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps. In 13 months time I drank very little and was promoted to Gunnery Sergeant, a rank that usually takes 10 or 12 years to obtain, if ever. I started drinking again. In six months I was reduced to Line Sergeant. I transferred to get away from my former associates.

Then came several years in China. China of all places for a man who wanted to stay away from booze. My four years over, I did not re-enlist.

Came more jobs selling automobiles, real estate, etc. Then down to odd jobs. I was drinking so much no one could take a chance by giving me a steady job, such as I could easily have handled if I left the liquor alone. I married and the booze split that up. My mother was a nervous wreck. I was getting arrested for drinking three or four times a year. I had myself committed on two different occasions to State Hospitals, but soon after discharge, I was back at it again. Two years ago I went to a private hospital for a liquor cure. A week after getting out I was curious as to what would happen if I took a drink. I took it -- nothing happened. I took another -- why go further. I went back to the private hospital,

came out and was O.K. for a few months -- then at it again.

Now previous to this and at the time of these cures, I was working at a State Hospital for the insane. I saw continually the effects of liquor but did it help me to leave it alone? No -- it did not. But it did make me realize that if I did not, I would end up in the bug-house and someone else would be carrying the keys. After several years of working at mental institutions always in a violent ward, on account of my six feet 2 inches and 210 lb., I realized there was too much nervous tension and every couple of months I would blow up and be off drunk for a week or ten days.

I left mental work and got a job at the County General Hospital where I am now in a medical ward. We get quite a few patients with D.T.s, all broken out with wine sores, etc. I steadied down a bit, but not enough. I was off sick for several days every six or eight weeks.

I married again. A good Catholic girl whose people were used to having liquor, especially wine around the house always. She of course could not understand about my drinking -- as far as that's concerned, neither could I. And all this time my poor mother and wife became more and more worried.

Mother had heard of your wonderful work and wrote a doctor. You answered with letters, and finally the book. Before the book arrived and after reading the chapters I knew that the only way to combat this curse was to ask the help of that greater Power, God. I realized it even though I was then on a binge!

I contacted a friend of mine who is liaison officer of the Disabled Veterans of the World War. He made arrangements for my care in a State Sanitarium which specializes in alcoholism. I wanted to get the liquor out of my system and start this new idea right. I explained my absence as Flu and under the care of the head psychiatrist spent most of the time from Sept. 1, 1938 till Jan. 15, 1939 at the hospital having my appendix removed and a ventral hernia fixed up.

Six weeks ago I returned from the sanitarium and your book was here waiting for me. I read, more than that I pored over it so as not to miss anything. I thought to myself, yes, this is the only way. God is my only chance. I have prayed before but I guess not the right way. I have followed out the suggestions in the book, I am happier this moment than I have been in years. I'm sure I have found the solution, thanks to ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.

I have had talks with another man, an attorney, who was at the sanitarium when I was. He has my book now and he is very much enthused.

I go down to the sanitarium every week for a checkup and medicine which they give me, just a tonic, no sedatives. The manager has asked me to contact some of his patients along our line. How I told him I would appreciate his letting me do so!

Would you put me in touch with some A.A.s out here? I know it would help me and help me to help others.

I hope you can make sense out of this letter. I could write so much more but this I have written just as it popped into my head.

Please let me hear from you."

This man's lone struggle was impressive. Wouldn't the story of his solitary recovery be helpful to many others who would have to start out by themselves with only this book to aid them?

So we immediately sent him a wire:

JUST RECEIVED LETTER. MAY WE HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO USE LETTER ANONYMOUSLY IN BOOK AS FIRST EXAMPLE OF WHAT MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT PERSONAL CONTACT. IMPORTANT YOU WIRE THIS PERMISSION AS BOOK IS GOING TO PRINTER.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

His wire arrived next day:

PERMISSION GRANTED WITH PLEASURE. LOTS OF LUCK.

ACE – SEVEN – ELEVEN (this is the only story from the original manuscript that never made it into the Big Book)

High school studies irked me early. I was an imaginative kid and when a small carnival came to town it seemed pretty glamorous to me. Not very big, skinny and looking like a victim of malnutrition, I made an admirable “Cigarette Fiend” for one of the side-shows, as one of the concession men told me when he propositioned me. I had a dandy hacking cough and looked very convincing on the platform as the spieler told the crowd how many hundred coffin-nails I smoked every day, how doctors had given me up and I sure surely marked for the Grim Reaper. At every telling point in the ballyhoo, I would cough as if I would croak any minute. I was tickled. I was fooling people.

That idea of fooling the people, which had its start with the carnival side-show, later dominated my whole life. I was a smart guy living by my wits, making my living by beating the other fellow. Thrown among carnival folks, I soon acquired their ways. I learned to take on a drink or two occasionally and on one night in a middle-western town got so loaded I woke up the next morning in a pigpen. How I got there I don’t even remember. I had been sick during the night and I’ve often wondered why the pigs tolerated me. Shortly afterward I quit the show and returned home.

My father was a pharmacist so I studied to follow in his footsteps, however, on the eve of taking the state board examinations, I was ordered to report for military service. Army life contributed to the formation of my character in an important way. Like most of the boys, I didn’t expect to be lucky enough to be alive when hostilities were over, so I began to live from day to day. In time of war the soldier is a gambler and tomorrow is something he is never quite sure about.

I was never more than ordinarily lucky and I knew that I couldn’t get all the money I wanted by depending on luck, so I began to master the art of manipulating dice and cards. I became passionately interested in the basic arts of the profession of crooked gambling. Conscience bothered me somewhat at first, but the voice was stilled as I was soon making more money than the commanding officer of the encampment. Soon I had a house with a lady in charge outside of government property and laid in a stock of liquor and beer. My place became so popular that I was making money such as I hadn’t dreamed of. I was the only real, genuine “doughboy” – I was making the dough and plenty of it.

The war ended and I returned home. I had experienced easy living and I certainly couldn’t see a future of rolling pills and making up prescriptions from medical latin. I had plenty of money and in my home town began to know and be known by the gambling fraternity, the town sports, the bookies and operators. But something kept me from making any connection with that crowd professionally in my home town. I knew how hurt my people would be, so I lit out for pastures new.

Downstate was a hell-roaring river town with almost a century old reputation for being a gambler’s paradise. It was practically never a closed town except in sporadic elections of reform administrations. I allied myself with one of the best known operators in a saloon, dealing poker, craps and blackjack. I made plenty of money. I developed a strong habit of stimulating myself with liquor.

Even that exciting existence dulled after a time and I felt I ought to see the country so, finding myself a clever and congenial partner, I took to riding the “name trains” from coast to coast, always with the best the Pullman company could offer. I had an excellent wardrobe, the best-looking baggage I could get – all the essentials for the front so necessary in the profession of a train-sharper. Prohibition was now with us, and the kind of whiskey I drank was \$20.00 and more by the quart. Our plan of operation was in the best technique, based on the opening of offering something for nothing which is sure-fire appeal to human cupidity.

Traveling eventually became tiresome. I went home once more. I was now very definitely a professional but I didn’t have to tie up with any outfit in particular. Working when the mood seized me, drinking steadily every day, I did not escape the fate of every gambler, getting into trouble with the authorities now and then, but always getting by because I well knew the value of protection, which was just a business proposition with me and thoroughly justifiable.

For the first time in my life, however, money failed me when I was incarcerated for eight months after hiring the best available mouthpiece and placing the needful where it seemed it might do me good to the tune of more than \$5000. Even when I went behind the bars I still had plenty left. Through influence I became cook for the superintendent of the prison which opened the way to liquor for me, and I managed to be comfortably jingled most of the time I was in the pen.

When I was out on the bricks again, I decided to give my home town a wide berth for a while and went to one of the largest cities in the country to resume operations.

I wasn’t much given to contemplation. Long ago I had dropped any idea that there was a God. If I ever gave any thought to myself being in this world for any other purpose than to make all the money I possibly could, I do not recall it.

I drank heavily with sober periods few and far between. In this city I operated for four years during which time I was steadily slipping in any control over liquor I might once have had. I had my first experience of hospitals, taken there helpless from continued drinking. The best medical talent in the city was always in attendance. Hospital followed

hospital and I finally went from one sanitarium to another. My business still gave me a considerable income. My economic position was not bad. By this time I had married but that had no steading influence on me.

Back I went to my home town and then my troubles really started. My domestic situation became very disagreeable. Gambling even almost lost its appeal for me and that had been my life. I quit everything to take up drinking seriously. I knew that I was a drunkard, had no hope of ever overcoming the desire for liquor, now far more necessary to continued existence than the food I ate. My wife heard of a cure at a state institution – the state insane asylum to be frank – and, unknown to me, got a court order to have me sent there. Two deputies hauled me out of bed one day and took me to the county jail for temporary lodgement. I had many friends and even the law didn't want me to be sent to the bughouse. I got as far as the county jail twice for brief periods, being released on my promise to do something about my drinking. I didn't do anything about it. When I got out all I wanted was liquor.

So eventually to the bughouse I went, assigned to the alcoholic ward. I spent four months there. During that time I had no trouble getting liquor because I still had money. Again I was released. Once out, I wrecked my car, driving while intoxicated, and it seemed that I might get a stiff jail sentence so when it was suggested that I might avoid that by going back to the asylum, I accepted.

The bughouse had no terrors for me. I knew I could always get a supply of liquor and stay half stupefied most of the time. In the institution I became a nuisance to officials, attendants, and doctors. I had been in and out of the place so often that even the sincere professional medical men and psychologists had given me up. Suggestion, kindness, everything had been tried. They now regarded me as incorrigible, said nothing could be done for or with me and discharged me in a very short time.

In two months I was back again. This time I was treated like any insane person, was punished for infractions, any branches of discipline. I could still get all the liquor I wanted through my financial reserve and that was all I cared about.

I used to talk with another inmate about this drinking business. He was a man who had lost one good job after another, had fallen from a good professional position to the status of a hobo. This fellow knew and had lived in almost every railroad jungle from coast to coast and had finally been slammed into the bughouse because his family didn't want to read about his death someday as a friendless wanderer. To me he confessed that he had tried for years to quit. I told him I had long ago discovered I couldn't and that now I didn't give a damn. But this time when I was sent back to the asylum, he wasn't there.

About the middle of my last confinement I was surprised by a visit from this fellow. He had kept me in mind and had come a considerable distance to see me. I was half-drunk when he called on me and didn't have even the haziest idea of what he was talking about. But he asked me if I would try to follow instructions if he was successful in getting me out. Half-heartedly I told him I would, but I had no access to what money I had and make a real job of drinking.

Shortly after that, my sister visited me and persuaded the authorities to let me go. They were glad to do so, being sick and tired of me. They were glad of the short respite they thought my absence would give them, I guess.

When I got home, doped with sedatives I was put to bed and managed to get a little rest. The next day my former fellow-inmate and recent visitor came from a neighboring town to see me. I was very nervous and jittery and my mind was continually on the bottle while he was talked. My natural distrust of all human beings seemed diminished a little while he was talking, for I knew his story and we had something in common. He was pretty definite in his statements and finally elicited from me a promise to try to follow a certain plan which he now proposed to explain to me. He stressed the fact that his drinking career had been very similar to mine and much more miserable because it had made a homeless bum out of him whereas I had never been in straitened financial circumstances. I told him I would give it a trial if at all possible and invited him to keep on talking.

He began by pointing out what I couldn't dispute, that I had no faith in anything, man, or God, that all my life I had lived as I pleased without any moral scruples or misgivings whatever. I admitted that I had.

"What you need is a definite religious experience," he said.

"That's the bunk," I said. "I knew there was some angle like this. Count me out. If I've got to turn around and join a church and sing hymns and holler 'Amen' when some long-bearded jasper, who spends six days out of the week skinning suckers, legally begins to pray in meeting, I don't want any part of it."

"You don't have to do that," he said. "And, anyway, the long-bearded slicker is no concern of yours. Your problem is yourself."

My friend was new to this job of helping the other fellow, but I couldn't get away from the fact that he was now sober and that he had got that way and was being kept that way by a religious experience. He made me a proposition.

"I'll come for you Wednesday night," he said. "I'll take you to where a bunch of guys who used to be pickled practically all the time meet every week. You can see and listen and judge for yourself."

With my friend I attended that meeting. I was cordially received. I knew a good many of them and listened attentively, but I say quite honestly it left me cold. Not that it was like a church service. No, it wasn't like that at all. When some stories had been told it ended up with the Lord's prayer, then everybody sat around and visited. I was beginning to get a little scared. Now, I thought is when they'll put the works to a guy; along about this time one of these mugs is going to get me in a corner and ask me about my soul.

Nothing of the sort happened. They invited me back again. Others asked if they could come to see me, when I'd be in and so forth. My pal stuck pretty close to me that week. Some of the gang turned up at my home and told me how they had been helped to quit drinking. I went back to the next meeting and the next and the next again. Gradually I began to see what it was all about. I listened carefully for I was not definitely interested. More or less unconsciously I was seeking for something. I didn't know it then, but I was surely seeking God. Now, I didn't find God suddenly. You must remember that God was never in any of my plans. The former cynical, gambler-slicker who didn't even believe much that there was honor among thieves, gradually learned that Love is the law of God. I, who had strictly followed the injunction that you should never give a sucker an even break, had to learn that God demands we be honest if we are to follow his teachings.

I am writing this in the Thanksgiving season. It is a great privilege to have the fine human friendship and association of this gang of former drunks. It is an even greater privilege when I can be of service in helping some guy to a remedy which is his for the taking.

But if friends and fellowship were to disappear tomorrow I don't think I would be dismayed. Back of all that there is the knowledge that I have a Divine Father – that as long as I try to walk as He has laid down for me to do throughout my life, nothing of ill can befall me, that if I wish I can be sober for the rest of my days.

I have a simple little job on which I make less in a month than I formerly made in a day, but that doesn't worry me. I know there is something far better than mere dollars. There isn't a gambling house of note that wouldn't be glad to have me as an operator, for the owners know I'm capable, that I can bring and keep business. In fact, some who know, think I would be a greater asset than ever for they have confidence that I would make an honest accounting of receipts.

No, I don't have much money nowadays, but I don't need any. I am quite sure that God doesn't want me to go back to the green tables and the shaded lights again. It might even be possible that I could go back to my former profession and stay sober, but I doubt it. Accustomed to coldly calculating the odds all my life, I'm of the opinion that they would be definitely against me.

His Will must be my bet – There's no other way!

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