

tired face a smile, a grave expression, or just a frown. He sat in this manner for quite a while, oblivious to the noise and the world around him, being completely immersed in the pool of his reverie.

After a time he came back to the world of reality, and rousing himself with effort from his chair, he left the office and proceeded slowly down the stairs and again felt himself surrounded by the vital sounds and pungent odors of the docks. He escaped them and in the swirling mist of the night, made his way home.

As he mounted the stony steps of his home, he turned to look out to sea. A low roll of fog was speedily closing in on the narrow entrance to the harbour and the south-side hills were already plunged under its pall; not too far off he could see the cathedral's massive towers looming up in the darkness like two giant beacons, a little distance further away was city hall, his home for a number of years. Now it was all over. He wanted a rest, God knows he needed it. He felt himself leaning on the hard concrete post of the house and only realized it when it shot its coldness into his back. He quickly retreated and stepped inside the door, took off his cloak, **shook it, placed his hat on the shelf, passed on from the vestibule into the living room.**

That night as he lay in bed he began to think how much things had changed since first he had set foot on those shores, and how all of his old friends had now passed on to their eternal reward, leaving him alone in a world which neither understood nor was willing to understand him; his soul realizing that it was part of an age that was passed, departed that night from this earth to give the body a rest after so many years of toil.

—CYRIL BYRNE '60

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Of all the sundry societies in existence today, perhaps the least known and certainly one of the most useful is Alcoholics Anonymous. This unique association is a spiritual program in which the members, admitting they are powerless over alcohol, and that their lives have become unmanageable, turn their will and their lives over to God. Too many alcoholics have greater faith in science than in God. They will first try medical and psychiatric aid or almost anything, and will turn to God only when every other purely human means has failed.

The true alcoholic is not a wilful but a compulsive drinker—any man or woman who having taken one drink cannot guarantee his or her sobriety. There is no such thing as an ex-alcoholic—once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. A true alcoholic does not get drunk for any conscious reason as does the drunkard. A man may get drunk often but still not be an alcoholic.

Today more and more women are becoming alcoholics. At the beginning of the A.A. movement, 16% of the members were women. At the beginning of the movement, seldom was there a member of A.A. under forty. Today there are many in their teens and early twenties.

Medical science does not pretend to know why certain drinkers become alcoholics while others do not. Father Ralph Pfau, a noted authority on alcoholism in the United States and himself an alcoholic, feels after talking to thousands of people so affected that this disease strikes those who had long felt insecure, either from being over-pampered or over-neglected as children. He does not think that most had turned to drink to avoid feelings of physical, mental or spiritual inferiority.

Alcoholism is the fourth most devastating and dreadful disease in the world today. Due to the many thousands of alcoholics hospitalization is impossible even if it were feasible. It is because of this fact that A.A. looms up as a unique phenomenon in society.

Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in Akron, Ohio, in 1935, by a New York stock broker who had just recently been relieved of his drink obsession, and was aided in his enterprise by an Akron physician, also an alcoholic. The founder was not a formal member of any church. Instead he was a sick and terrified drunk who, after praying to God for release from his torments, soon found himself writing down the twelve rules.

A.A. is not allied with any denomination or sect or any other kind of organization. It is simply a fellowship of men and women who are alcoholics and who share with others their experiences and hope with a view to solving their common problem. From a humble beginning it has had miraculous results. Men and women who had long been the despair of families, friends, priests and ministers have become reborn spiritually, mentally, and physically through the A.A. program and become dignified, responsible citizens. Father Pfau states that there is no danger of a Catholic member having to do anything contrary to the Church's teachings and no danger of a Catholic losing his faith. On the contrary, the A.A. program has inspired many fallen-away Catholics to return to the Church.

Regarding the percentage of cures for those in A.A., Father Pfau states that about 75% ultimately stay sober for keeps. 50% stay sober from the first day of their program and never take another drink. Another 25% backslide one or more times before eventually winning out. Another 25% fail.

Father Pfau cites five reasons for the success of A.A. First, it approaches the problem from all three levels, spiritual, mental, and physical. Second, it gives each member a confidence that he or she can achieve sobriety because so many other members have. Third, the deep conviction is implanted that "once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic," and that at best alcoholism can be arrested but never

cured. Fourth, the aim of placing security on the only true source of security, Almighty God. Fifth, the application of the time-valued group therapy, peculiarities seldom understood by non-alcoholics. This fifth factor is very important. Prior to joining A.A., these alcoholics were for the most part social outcasts, hated by most people. Now they enjoyed a social life with others who had undergone the same agonies and all recognizing that they were unable to take that first drink.

The following comments were made recently by Dr. Kirby Collier, a psychiatrist before a meeting of the Medical Society of New York State. "I have felt that A.A. is a group unto themselves and their best results can be had under their own guidance as a result of their philosophy. Any therapeutic or philosophic procedure which can prove a recovery rate of 50% to 60% must merit our consideration."

From a modest debut, A.A. groups are now working in each province of Canada, each of the United States, British Isles, Scandinavia, South Africa, South America, Mexico, Australia and is rapidly becoming world-wide. A.A. accepts no money from outsiders, refusing even bequests, and insists on public anonymity of its members. Its meetings are informal and consist chiefly in stories of past failures through drink of members themselves. A good-will collection is taken up at each meeting to defray the cost of rental and other incidental expenses. One chairman presides for a month, then he in turn appoints the next chairman. Its only purpose is to help alcoholics get and keep their sobriety and be happy in that sobriety.

That in a nut shell is A.A.—happy sobriety.

—ARTHUR O'SHEA '62

THE NEWEST STAR

Two summers ago, I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Alaska, a recent addition to the United States of America. This opportunity was given me by the U.N.T.D.

Our one and only stop was Juneau, the capital city of Alaska. Juneau is situated on the mainland of the Gastinau Channel which separates this city from Douglas Island. These two cities, separated by a modern bridge, form the nucleus of the 11,000 population of this Gastinau Channel community. The livelihood of the inhabitants comes chiefly from fishing and forestry, with mining, transportation, and trade, adding to the economy. Modern buildings, homes, and schools, plus a definitely cosmopolitan air, surprise many visitors who usually expect a frontier town. Mount