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## Alcoholics Anonymous Makes Its Stand Here

By ELRICK B. DAVIS

In two previous articles, Mr. Davis told of Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization of former drinkers, banded to overcome their craving for liquor and to help others to forego the habit. This is the third of a series.

### Help

The ex-drunks cured of their medically incurable alcoholism by membership in Alcoholic Anonymous, know that the way to keep themselves from backsliding is to find another pathological alcoholic to help. Or to start a new man toward cure. That is the way that the Akron chapter of the society, and from that, the Cleveland fellowship was begun.

One of the earliest of the cured rummies had talked a New York securities analyst into taking a chance that he was really through with liquor. He was commissioned to do a stock promotion chore in Akron. If he should succeed, his economic troubles also would be cured. Years of alcoholism had left him bankrupt as well as a physical and social wreck before Alcoholics Anonymous had saved him.

His Akron project failed. Here he was on a Saturday afternoon in a strange hotel in a town where he did not know a soul, business hopes blasted, and with scarcely money enough to get him back to New York with a report that would leave him without the last job he knew of for him in the world. If ever disappointment deserved drowning, that seemed the time. A bunch of happy folk were being gay at the bar.

At the other end of the lobby the Akron church directory was framed in glass. He looked up the name of a clergyman. The cleric told him of a woman who was worried about a physician who was a nightly solitary drunk. The doctor had been trying to break himself of alcoholism for twenty years. He had tried all of the dodges: Never anything but light wines or beer; never a drink alone; never a drink before his work was done; a certain few number of drinks and then stop; never drink in a strange place; never drink in a familiar place; never mix the drinks; always mix the drinks; never drink before eating; drink only while eating; drink and then eat heavily to stop the craving - and all of the rest.

Every alcoholic knows all of the dodges. Every alcoholic has tried them all. That is why an uncured alcoholic thinks someone must have been following him around to learn his private self-invented devices, when a member of Alcoholics Anonymous talks to him. Time comes when any alcoholic has tried them all, and found that none of them work.

## Support

The doctor had just taken his first evening drink when the rubber baron's wife telephoned to ask him to come to her house to meet a friend from New York. He dared not, his wife would not, offend her by refusing. He agreed to go on his wife's promise that they would leave after 15 minutes. His evening jitters were pretty bad.

He met the New Yorker at 5 o'clock. They talked until 11:15. After that he stayed "dry" for three weeks. Then he went to a convention in Atlantic City. That was a bender. The cured New Yorker was at his bedside when he came to. That was June 10, 1935. The doctor hasn't had a drink since. Every Akron and Cleveland cure by Alcoholics Anonymous is a result.

The point the society illustrates by that bit of history is that only an alcoholic can talk turkey to an alcoholic. The doctor knew all of the "medicine" of his disease. He knew all of the psychiatry. One of his patients had "taken the cure" 72 times. Now he is cured, by fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. Orthodox science left the physician licked. He also knew all of the excuses, as well as the dodges, and the deep and fatal shame that makes a true alcoholic sure at last that he can't win. Alcoholic death or the bughouse will get him in time.

The cured member of Alcoholics Anonymous likes to catch a prospective member when he is at the bottom of the depths. When he wakes up of a morning with his first clear thought regret that he is not dead before he hears where he has been and what he has done. When he whispers to himself: "Am I crazy?" and the only answer he can think of is: "Yes." Even when the bright-eyed green snakes are crawling up his arms.

Then the pathological drinker is willing to talk. Even eager to talk to someone who really understands, from experience, what he means when he says: "I can't understand myself."