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Alcoholics Anonymous Makes Its Stand Here

By ELRICK B. DAVIS

In previous installments, Mr. Davis has told of Alcoholics Anonymous, an informal society of drinking men who have joined together to beat the liquor habit. This is the last of five articles.

No Graft

It is hard for the skeptical to believe that no one yet has found a way to muscle into Alcoholics Anonymous, the informal society of ex-drunks that exists only to cure each other, and make a money-making scheme of it. Or that someone will not. The complete informality of the society seems to be what has saved it from that. Members pay no dues. The society has no paid staff. Parties are "Dutch." Meetings are held at the homes of members who have houses large enough for such gatherings, or in homes of persons who may not be alcoholics but are sympathetic with the movement.

Usually a drunk needs hospitalization at the time that he is caught to cure. He is required to pay for that himself. Doubtless he hasn't the money. But probably his family has. Or his employer will advance the money to save him, against his future pay. Or cured members of the society will help him arrange credit, if he has a glimmer of credit left. Or old friends will help.

At the moment members of the Cleveland Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous are searching the slum lodging houses to find a man, once eminent in the city's professional life. A medical friend of his better days called them in to find him. This friend will pay the hospital bill necessary to return this victim of an "incurable" craving for drink to physical health, if the society will take him on.

The society has published a book, called "Alcoholics Anonymous," which it sells at \$3.50. It may be ordered from an anonymous address, Works Publishing Co., Box 657, Church Street Annex Postoffice, New York City; or bought from the Cleveland Fellowship of the society. There is no money profit for anyone in that book.

It recites the history of the society and lays down its principles in its first half.

Last half is case histories of representative cures out of the first hundred alcoholics cured by membership in the society. It was written and compiled by the New York member who brought the society to Ohio. He raised the money on his personal credit to have the book published. He would like to see those creditors repaid. It is a 400-page book, for which any regular publisher would charge the same price.

Copies bought from local Fellowships net the local chapters a dollar each.

The Rev. Dr. Dilworth Lupton, pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, found in a religious journal an enthusiastic review of the book by the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick, and sent it to the president of the local Fellowship. It has been similarly noted in some medical journals.

The Foundation

To handle the money that comes in for the book, and occasional gifts from persons interested in helping ex-drunks to cure other "incurable" drunks, the Alcoholics Foundation has been established, with a board of seven directors.

Three of these are members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Four are not alcoholics, but New Yorkers of standing interested in humane movements. Two of them happen also to be associated with the Rockefeller Foundation, but that does not associate the two foundations in any way.

First problem of the Cleveland Fellowship was to find a hospital willing to take a drunk in and give him the medical attention first necessary to any cure. Two reasons made that hard. Hospitals do not like to have alcoholics as patients; they are nuisances. And the society requires that as soon as a drunk has been medicated into such shape that he can see visitors, members of the society must be permitted to see him at any time. That has been arranged. The local society would like to have a kitty of \$100 to post with the hospital as evidence of good faith. But if it gets it, it will only be from voluntary contributions of members.

Meantime the members, having financed their own cures, spend enormous amounts of time and not a little money in helping new members. Psychiatrists say that if an alcoholic is to be cured, he needs a hobby. His old hobby had been only alcohol. Hobby of Alcoholics Anonymous is curing each other. Telephone calls, postage and stationery, gasoline bills, mount up for each individual. And hospitality to new members. A rule of the society is that each member's latch string is always out to any other member who needs talk or quiet, which may include a bed or a meal, at any time.