

The NIGHT CAP

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FOUNDATION STONES

We attended a school graduation last month at which the speaker used the laying of the foundation for a building as an analogous parallel to the completion of the first steps in a youngster's education in the building of a mature and worthy individual.

It occurred to us at the time that we in A. A. might well similarly regard our own first step.

The unmitigated, absolute and unqualified recognition, acceptance and admission that we are powerless over alcohol is the solid foundation upon which the other eleven steps are to rest. Without that support the balance of the program is insecure and may -- probably will -- crumble under the force of the first strong winds of adversity.

We have seen many whose structures tumbled for the lack of a better foundation. Most of them, bless their stout hearts, have returned, wounded and shaken, to lay a stronger base by replacing the shifting sands of doubt and reservations with the concrete and steel of humble conviction and determination.

It has been pointed out that it is, perhaps, easier for us who have suffered most in our drinking to accept the first step. To the younger men and women, who are merely convinced that there is something wrong and wish to straighten out their endangered lives, the admission of defeat is probably more difficult because they have not taken quite the same beating at the hands of alcohol that made us, who were knocked to our knees, bow in humble defeat.

Perhaps this is a new era and we who have successfully taken the program into our lives should prepare ourselves to meet the challenge presented by clearer-thinking younger people who are consulting Doctor A. A. logically with the advent of the first symptoms instead of calling him, as we did, to a bedside to minister to the advanced stages of the disease.

This, it would seem, calls for a more concerted concentration of our efforts to remove all doubt in the minds of new members of the absolute necessity of complete submission to the inevitable truth and striking out boldly from there.

Without this conviction our neophyte has lost his crutch and may grope unsuccessfully for a substitute support. At this stage, too, he has either become an agnostic, a pseudo-atheist or has taken an indifferent attitude toward things spiritual.

Convince him of his helplessness in the face of an alcoholic existence and he will more readily welcome a guiding hand and, in so doing, proceed inevitably to the subsequent steps. And these steps will eventually bring him the peace of mind and proud carriage which are characteristic and tacit evidence of the spiritual strength of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

When at war with Life and Conscience
We uplift our erring hands
To some God of Abstract Justice
Which no heathen -- understands.

-Bobbie M.