

Biography: "Our Southern Friend"

John H. F. (Fitz) M., Cumberstone, Maryland.

(p. 226 in 1st edition, p. 460 in 2nd edition, p. 497 in 3rd edition, and p. 208 in 4th edition. In the first three editions it appeared under the section "They Nearly Lost All.")

They Lost Nearly All

"Pioneer A.A., minister's son, and southern farmer, he asked, 'Who am I to say there is no God?'"

Fitz' date of sobriety was October 1935. He was Bill's second or third success at 12th stepping after he returned from Akron in 1935. The first was Hank P. ("The Unbeliever" in the 1st edition), and the second probably William R., "A Business Man's Recovery" in the 1st edition.)

Fitz has been described as a blue blood from Maryland. Alcoholism may have run in his mother's side of the family. Fitz was, reportedly, quite handsome, with chiseled features. He had the quiet, easy charm of the landed gentry. Indeed, he was quite the Southern gentleman. Lois W. said Fitz was an impractical, lovable dreamer. His intellectual, scholarly qualities gave him common ground with Bill who - like Fitz - was also a dreamer.

He was the son of an Episcopalian minister. Alcoholism may have run in his mother's side of the family. They never drank at home, but when Fitz took his first drink when at college, he discovered that it removed his fear and sense of inferiority.

He attempted to enlist during World War I, but could not pass the physical. This added to his sense of inferiority.

He had a good job with a large corporation until the Great Depression. Later he worked at various jobs: traveling salesman, teacher and farmer. But he couldn't stop drinking. He was drunk when his mother-in-law died, when his own mother died, when his child was born.

His wife had heard of Towns Hospital in New York and urged him to go there. Finally he agreed.

Another patient told him about a group of men who were worse than he was but who didn't drink any more. This patient had tried the program but had slipped. He knew it was because he hadn't been honest. He asked Fitz if he believed in God. Fitz did not. Later, in his bed, the thought came: "Can all the worth while people I have known

be wrong about God?" He took a look at his own history and suddenly a thought like a Voice came: "Who are you to say there is no God?"

Bill & Lois W. and Fitz M. and his wife became devoted friends, and visited one another often. Fitz frequently came up for the Tuesday night meeting at the Wilson home in Brooklyn. It was while Bill and Lois were visiting Fitz in Maryland in the summer of 1936 that Bill C., committed suicide. (See page 16 of the Big Book.) And Fitz, as well as Hank P. often joined Bill and Lois at Oxford Group house parties before A.A. broke away from the Oxford Group.

During the writing of the Big Book, Fitz insisted that the book should express Christian doctrines and use Biblical terms and expressions. Hank and Jim B. opposed him. The compromise was "God as we understood Him."

When the group was trying to decide on a name for the book, Fitz, because of his close proximity to Washington, was asked to go to the Library of Congress and find out how many books were called "The Way Out." His sister, Agnes, came to the their assistance when the printer refused to release the book he was holding - the first printing of Alcoholics Anonymous. Agnes loaned A.A. \$1,000, the equivalent of nearly \$12,000 today.

Fitz later started A.A. in Washington. Florence R. ("A Feminine Victory" in the 1st edition) joined him in Washington. It was Fitz who was called on to identify her body when she died. He sent one of his early sponsees (who never recovered) to see his old friend Jim B. in Washington ("The Vicious Cycle") when Jim was just coming off a binge.

In World War II, Fitz at last was able to join the Army, where he was found to be suffering from cancer. He died October 4, 1943, eight years after he stopped drinking. Fitz is buried on the grounds of Christ Episcopal Church at Owensville, MD, where his father had once been pastor. He is buried just a few feet from Jim B.

Our Southern Friend

Page 208

Comment: Read page 56, from "We Agnostics", Fritz Mayo has a Spiritual Experience.

1. What profession does Fritz' father hold, and is getting to work an easy ordeal?
2. How does his father regard mankind?
3. Is it a long time before his father reaches home, and what affectionate term is used to describe the car? (2 sentences)
4. How was the drive, and what did some thoughtful person do to make it a little more comfortable?
5. What family occasion is next?
6. According to Fritz, what event holds him back?

(P)

7. What is immediately after supper?
8. Where is Fritz' room?
9. What condition expedites the process?
10. How is the rest of his bedtime ritual? (rest of the paragraph)

(P)

11. Where does Fritz find himself?
12. Who is the minister?
13. How attentive is Fritz during the sermon? (rest of the paragraph)

(P)

14. What quote is offered, similar to our family Foglight prayer?
15. a.) What does Fritz do next?
 - b.) Is he suffering from a Spiritual Malady?
 - c.) Is his ego in check?
16. Where does he board at college, and what conversation ensues? (2 sentences)

1. What is Fritz' gut reaction to alcohol?
2. Was our southern friend exposed to drinking culture much, during childhood?
3. What was his maternal influence?
4. What happened to Fritz' Uncle, as a result of drinking?

Comment: Is it possible that Fritz' Uncle was an alcoholic?

5. Did this instance prove to be the elephant in the room?
6. Was he curious about alcohol?
7. What rule did he set for himself?

Comment: Do you see this rule as holding strong?

8. Did the peer pressure dissipate?
9. How did ego manifest at that time?
10. What stages did he experience with his first drink? (5 sentences)
11. What did booze do FOR him?
12. What came next?
13. What was the result of more alcohol?
14. Who arrived next?
15. Under the influence, was he an introvert?
16. How was the party?
17. What else did booze do FOR him? (4 sentences)

(P)

18. How did his first drunk progress? (4 sentences)
19. What changed?
20. Where did he go to?

21. a.) What conclusion did he come to with respect to the amount he drank?
b.) What other conclusion did he come to with respect to how quickly he drank?

22. What did the obsession of the mind sell him? (2 sentences)

(P)

23. Who did he meet? *Comment: John Barleycorn is a term for alcohol. Dictionary?*

24. Despite his resolution to drink like a gentleman, how does he sum up what alcohol did FOR him? (rest of the paragraph) *Comment: Does this match your experience?*

(P)

1. Was it easy for Fritz to graduate?
2. a.) Did he try for himself?
b.) Who did he try for?
3. What circumstance saved him from failing out?

(P)

4. How long is left?
5. Is his final exam a tough feat?
6. What is his exam technique? (6 sentences)
7. Is he suffering from the obsession of the mind? *Comment: This is what alcohol is doing TO him.*
8. How does the Spiritual Malady come into play? (3 sentences)
9. Is he paralyzed?

(P)

10. What does he do, and where does he go? (2 sentences)
11. What remedy does he consult?
12. With booze in his system, what can he do now?
13. How is this different, compared to when he was alcohol deficient?
14. What does alcohol do FOR him? (4 sentences)
15. What does his alcoholic disease of perceptions tell him?

(P)

16. Is he malnourished, and is this a theme? (2 sentences)
17. What did his condition prevent him from doing?
18. How is progression manifesting? (3 sentences)
19. What happens, when he takes a drink? (2 sentences) *Comment: phenomenon of craving.*

(P)

20. Now, under a draft, what is he granted? (2 sentences)
21. What happens next? (2 sentences)
22. What material, and internal, conditions remain?

1. Is he working late?
2. What assignment does he attend to?
3. Is the “old fierce determination to win” coming back?
(P)
4. What disaster happened? (4 sentences)
5. What materialized for his career?
6. Is he overworked and underpaid? (2 sentences)
7. How has his family grown?
8. What is the result of this stress?
9. What ominous warning is he presented with?
10. How is he in a bind? (2 sentences)
(P)
11. Is his solution nearby?
(P)
12. Does his work take him out of town?
13. What kind of day is it?
14. What is his intention? (2 sentences)
(P)
15. But then, what happens next? (5 sentences)
16. How quickly does his decision to go to bed change?
17. What kind of alcohol does he prefer?
18. Despite a massive intake of overproof liquor, how progressed is his tolerance?
(P)
19. What is his next point of awareness, and how does he feel? (2 sentences)
20. Does he face the “hair of the dog”?

Comment: Because liquor is still in his system from the night before, the phenomenon of craving is still present.

21. What happens, as the result of the phenomenon of craving?
(P)
22. What does Fritz change his profession to? (3 sentences) *Comment: Geographic?*

(P)

1. Is alcohol taking a toll on our southern friend?
2. Who has been brought in to help out?
3. Where is Fritz at, with respect to the Spiritual Malady? (2 sentences)

(P)

4. What does the emotional pain rocket him towards? (3 sentences)
5. How is the disease of alcoholism affecting his family? (4 sentences)

(P)

6. Where are they living?
7. What other duress is everyone under?
8. What does he need to sleep? (4 sentences)
9. How does the remainder of his mother-in-law's life play out? (4 sentences)

(P)

10. What other fatal illness is on his mind?
11. What stage is she at, and where is she?
12. Is his tolerance sky high?
13. What lie does he tell himself? (2 sentences)

(P)

14. Where does he go, and what is the first thing he gets?
15. a.) He does what do go to sleep?
b.) He does what to wake up?
16. Where does emotional pain and the phenomenon of craving take him? (4 sentences)

Comment: Emotional pain is a manifestation of the Spiritual Malady.

17. What is there, when he comes to?
18. Is Fritz living the experience of Bill W.? (rest of the paragraph)

Comment: Re-read page 6, final paragraph.

19. Where does he find himself?
20. What news greets his consciousness?