

FIRED AGAIN



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IT SEEMS to me that I never did do things normally. When I learned to dance I had to go dancing every night in the week if possible; when I worked or studied I wanted no interruptions or distractions. Wherever I worked I wanted to be the highest paid man in the place or I was irritated; and of course when I drank I could never seem to stop until I was saturated. I was usually hard to get along with as a boy; if the others wouldn't play my way I'd go home.

The town we lived in when I was a child was rather new and raw, peopled largely by immigrants who seemed to be constantly getting

married with free drinks and eats for anybody who cared to come. We kids usually managed to get to these celebrations, and although supposed to have soda pop we could get ourselves one or two beers. With this sort of background and more money than was good for me, it was fairly easy to start getting drunk before I was sixteen.

After I left home I earned rather decent salaries but was never satisfied with my position, salary, or the treatment accorded me by my employer. I very seldom stayed on one job for more than six months until I was married at the age of 28, at which time I had already begun to lose jobs because of my drinking. Whenever things went wrong I knew that a few drinks would make everything rosy, my fears, doubts

and worries would vanish and I would always promise myself that the next time I would stop short of getting plastered. Somehow things seldom worked out that way though.

I was irritated by the efforts of so many doctors, ministers, lawyers, employers, relatives and friends who remonstrated with me what I was up against. I'd fall down, get up, work a while, get my debts paid (at least the most pressing ones) drink moderately for a few days or weeks, but eventually get myself so messed up in tanglefoot that I'd lose another job. In one year (1916) I quit two jobs because I thought I'd be discharged anyhow and was fired outright from five more, which is more jobs than many men have in a lifetime. Had I remained sober, any one of them would have led to

advancement because they were with growing companies and in my chosen field of engineering.

After begin discharged for the fifth time that year, I drank more than ever, cadging drinks and meals where I could, and running up a large rooming-house account. My brother took me home and my folks talked me into going to a sanitarium for thirty days. This place was operated by a physician at the time. The doctor did his best, saw that I got into good physical condition, tried to straighten out the mental quirks he thought partly responsible for my drinking, and I left with the firm resolve never to drink again.

Before I left the sanitarium I answered an advertisement for an engineer in a small Ohio town and after an interview, obtained the

position. In three days after leaving the sanitarium I had a job I liked at a satisfactory salary in a small town with basic living costs (board, room and laundry) amounting only to about 15% of my salary. I was all set, sober, working in a congenial atmosphere for a firm that had more profitable business that they knew what to do with. I made some beautiful plans. I could save enough in a few years to complete my formal education and there were no saloons in the town to trip me up. So what? So at the end of the week I was drunk again for no particular reason at all that I could understand. In about three months I was out of a job again, but in the meantime two things of major importance had happened. I had fallen in love and war had been declared.

I had learned my lesson. I knew definitely that I couldn't take even one drink. I wanted to get married so I planned very earnestly to get another job, stay sober, and save some money. I went to Pittsburgh on Sunday, called on a manufacturer of rolling -mill equipment and on Monday, got a position and went to work. I was first paid at the end of the second week, was drunk before the end of the day and couldn't be bothered with going to work the next Monday.

Why did I take that first drink? I honestly don't know. Anyhow I nearly went crazy that summer and really developed some sort of mental disturbance. The night clerk of the small hotel where I was staying saw me go about three in the morning in pajamas and slippers and had a

policeman take me back into my room. I suppose he was used to screwy drunks or he would have taken me to jail instead. I stayed there a few days and sweated the alcohol out of my system, went to the office to collect the balance of my salary, paid my room rent, and found I had just enough money to get home. So home I went, sick, broke, discouraged and despairing of ever attaining a normal, happy life.

After two weeks of idleness at home, I obtained a subordinate position with a former employer, doing the lowest grade of drafting work for several months, went to see my fiancée one or two weekends, was advanced rapidly in salary and responsibility, had a date set for the wedding and then inadvertently learned that one of the men working

under my direction was receiving about forty dollars more per month than I was, which burnt me up to such an extent I quit after an argument, took my money, packed my personal effects, left them at the corner drug store, and went downtown and got plastered. Knowing that I would be greeted with tears, sorrowful sympathy and more grief when I got home, I stayed away until I was again destitute.

I was really worried sick about my drinking so father again advanced the money for treatment. This time I took a three-day cure and left with the firm resolve never to drink again, got a better position than I'd had before and actually did keep sober for several months, saved some money, paid my debts and again

made plans to get married. But the desire for a drink was with me constantly after the first week or two, and the memory of how sick I had been from liquor and the agonies of the treatment I had undergone faded into the background. I had only begun to restore the confidence of my associates, family, friends and myself before I was off again, without any excuse this time. The wedding was again postponed and it looked very much as though it would never take place. My employer did not turn me loose but I was in another nice jam nevertheless. After considerable fumbling around mentally as to what to do I went back to the three-day cure for the second time.

After this treatment I got along a

little better, was married in the spring of 1919 and did very little drinking for several years. I got along very well with my work, had a happy home life, but when away from home with little likelihood of being caught at it, I'd go on a mild binge. The thought of what would happen if my wife caught me drinking served to keep me reasonably straight for several years. My work became increasingly more important. I had many outside interests and drinking became less of a factor in my life, but I did continue to tipple some during out-of-town trips and it was because of this tendency that things finally became all snarled up at home.

I was sent to New York on business and later stopped at a night club where I had been drunk before. I

certainly must have been very tight and it is quite likely that I was "Mickey Finned" for I woke up about noon the next day in my hotel without a cent. I had to borrow money to get home on but didn't start to bother to start back till several days later. When I got there I found a sick child, a distracted wife and had lost another job paying \$7,000 a year. This, however, was not the worst of it. I must have given my business card to one of the girls at the night club for she started to send me announcements of another clip-joint where she was employed and writing me long hand "come on" notes, one of which fell into my wife's hands. I'll leave what happened after that to the reader's imagination.

I went back into the business of

getting and losing jobs and eventually got to the point where I didn't seem to have any sense of responsibility to myself or to my family. I'd miss important family anniversaries, forget to come home for Christmas and in general wouldn't go home until I was exhausted physically and flat broke. About four years ago I didn't come home on Christmas Eve but arrived there about six o'clock on Christmas morning, minus the tree I had promised to get, but with an enormous package of liquor on board. I took the three-day cure again with the usual results but about three weeks later I went to a party and decided a few beers wouldn't hurt me; however I didn't get back to work for three days and a short while later had lost my job and was again at the bottom of

things. My wife obtained employment on a relief basis and I finally got straightened out with my employer who placed me in another position in a nearby city which I also lost by the end of the year.

So it went until about a year ago when a neighbor happened to hear me trying to get into the house and asked my wife whether I had been having some drinking difficulties. This, of course, disturbed my wife but our neighbor was not just inquisitive. She had heard of the work of a non-drinking doctor who was busily engaged in passing on the benefits he had received from another who had found the answer to his difficulties with liquor. As a result of this my wife saw the doctor. Then I talked with him, spent a few days in a local hospital

and haven't had a drink since.

While in the hospital about twenty men called on me and told me of their experiences and the help they had received. Of the twenty I happened to know five, three of whom I had never seen completely sober. I became convinced then and there that if these men had learned something that could keep them sober, I also could profit from the same knowledge. Before leaving the hospital, two of these men, convinced of my sincerity of purpose, imparted to me the necessary knowledge and mental tools which have resulted in my complete sobriety for these many years, and an assurance that I need never, so long as I live, drink anything of an alcoholic nature if I kept on the right track.

My health is better, I enjoy a fellowship which gives me a happier life than I have ever known, and my family joins me in a daily expression of gratitude.

Back