

# THE SALESMAN



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**I LEARNED to drink in a workmanlike manner when the law of the land said I couldn't and what started out as a young man's fun became a habit which in its later existence laid me by the heels many a time and almost finished my career.**

**'Teen years were uneventful for me. I was raised on a farm but saw little future in farming. I was going to be a business man, took a business college course, acquired a truck and stand in the city market of a nearby town, and started off. I brought produce from my folks' place and sold it to city customers and there were plenty of them with bulging pocketbooks.**

**Back of me was the normal life of a farmer's son. My parents were unusually understanding people. My father was a life-long comrade till the day of his death. The business theory I had learned in college was now being practiced and I was equipped beyond many of my competitors to be materially successful. Soon I had expanded until I was represented in all the city markers and also in another city. In 1921 we had the forerunner of the later depression and my customers disappeared. Successively I had to close my stands and was finally wiped out altogether. Being a young man of affairs, I had begun to do a little business and social drinking and now with time on my hands, I seemed to do more of it.**

**Following a year of factory work,**

**during which time I got married, I got a job with a grocer as clerk. My grocer-employer was an expert wine-maker and I had free access to his cellar. The work was monotonous in the extreme, behind a counter all day when I had been used to driving around attending to business, meeting people and building for what was a great future. I mark, too, as a milestone, the death of my father, whom I missed greatly.**

**I kept hitting the wine, with just occasional use of liquor. Leaving the grocery I went back into the produce business and out among people, went back to liquor again and got my first warning to quit before it got me.**

**I was anxious to get with a concern which would give me an opportunity to build up again, and landed a job**

**with a nationally known biscuit company. I was assigned to a good business region, covering several important towns, and almost at once began to earn real money. In a very short time I was the star salesman of the company, winning a reputation as a business-getter. Naturally I drank with my better customers for on my route I had many stops where that was good business. But I had things rather well under control and in the early days on this job I seldom wound up in my day's work with any visible effects of drinking.**

**I had a private brewery at home which was now producing 15 gallons a week most of which I drank myself. It is typical of the attitude I had toward alcohol at that time that, when a fire threatened total**

**destruction of my home and garage, I rushed to the cellar and rescued my most precious possessions-a keg of wine and all the beer I could carry, and got pretty indignant when my better half suggested that I had better get some of the needed effects out of the house before it burned down.**

**My home-brewing gradually became a bore and I began to carry home bottles of powerful bootleg whiskey, starting with half a pint as my daily after-supper allowance. For a time I kept on the job spacing my drinks en route and very little of them in the morning hours. I just couldn't wait until I got home to drink. In a very short time I became an all-day drinker.**

**Chain-store managers and quantity buyers were both my guests and**

**hosts and every now and then we had prodigious parties. Finally, in a re-organization shake-up resulting in new district managers with a pretty poor territory deal for me, I gave the company two weeks notice and quit. I had bought a home but in the year and a half following I had little income and finally lost that. I became satisfied with just enough to live on and buy the liquor I wanted. Then I landed in the hospital when my car was hit by a truck. My car was ruined entirely. That loss and my injuries plus the recriminations of my wife sort of sobered me up. When I got out of the hospital I stayed sober for six weeks and had made up my mind to quit.**

**I went back in the business where I had been a successful salesman, but with another company. When I**

**started with this concern I talked things over with my wife and made her some very solemn promises. I wasn't going to touch another drop of liquor.**

**By this time prohibition was a thing of the past and saloons and clubs where I was well known as a good customer and good spender became my patrons. I rolled up business until I was again a star, but after the first four months on the new job I began to slip. It is not unusual in the drinking experience of any man that after a time of sobriety he comes to the conclusion that he "can handle it." In no time at all liquor again became the most important thing in my life and every day became like another, steady drinking in every saloon and club en route. I would get to headquarters every night in a**

**top-heavy condition, just able to maintain equilibrium. I began to get warnings and was repeatedly fired and taken on again. My wife's parents died about this time in unfortunate circumstances. All my troubles seemed to be piling up on me and liquor was the only refuge I knew.**

**Some nights I wouldn't go home at all and when I did go home I was displeased when my wife had supper ready and equally angry when she didn't. I didn't want to eat at all and frequently when I underestimated my consumption of the amount of liquor I brought home, I made extra trips back to town to renew the supply. My morning ration when I started out was five double whiskies before I could do any business at all. I would go into a saloon, trembling**



**like a leaf, tired in appearance and deathly sick, I would down two double whiskies, fell the glow and become almost immediately transformed. In half an hour I would be able to navigate pretty well and start out on my route. My daily reports became almost illegible and finally, following arrest for driving while intoxicated and on my job at that, I got scared and stayed sober for several days. Not long afterward I was fired for good.**

**My wife suggested I go to my old home in the country, which I did. Continued drinking convinced my wife I was a hopeless case and she entered suit for divorce. I got another job, but didn't stop drinking. I kept on working although my physical condition was such as to have required extensive**

**hospitalization. For years I hadn't had a peaceful night's sleep and never knew a clear head in the morning. I had lost my wife, and had become resigned to going to bed some night and never waking again.**

**Every drunkard has one or two friends who haven't entirely given up hope for him, but I came to the point where I had none. That is, none but my Mother, and she, devoted soul, had tried everything with me. Through her, people came to me and talked, but nothing they said-some were ministers and others good church members-helped me a particle. I would agree with them when they were with me and as fast as they went away, I'd go after my bottle. Nothing suggested to me seemed to offer a way out.**

**I was getting to a place where I**

wanted to quit drinking but didn't know how. My mother heard of a doctor who had been having marked success with alcoholics. She asked me if I'd like to talk to him and I agreed to go with her.

I had known, of course, of the various cures and after we had discussed the matter of my drinking fairly thoroughly, the doctor suggested that I go into the local hospital for a short time. I was very skeptical, even after the doctor hinted there was more to his plan than medical treatment. He told me of several men whom I knew who had been relieved and invited me to meet a few of them who got together every week. I promised I would be back on deck at their next meetings but told him I had little faith in any hospital treatments.

**Meetings night, I was as good as my word and met the small group. The doctor was there but somehow I felt quite outside of the circle. The meeting was informal, nevertheless I was little impressed. It is true they did no psalm singing, nor was there any set ritual, but I just didn't care for anything religious. If I had thought of God at all in the years of drinking, it was with a faint idea that when I came to die I would sort of fix things up with Him.**

**I say that the meeting did not impress me. However, I could see men who I had known as good, hard-working drunkards apparently in their right minds, but I just couldn't see where I came into the picture. I went home, stayed sober for a few days, but was soon back to my regular quota of liquor every day.**

**Some six months later, after a terrific binge, in a maudlin and helpless state, I made my way to the doctor's home. He gave me medical treatment and had me taken to the home of one of my relatives. I told him I had come to the point where I was ready for the remedy, the only remedy. He sent two of the members to see me. They were both kindly to me, told me what they had gone through and how they had overcome their fight with liquor. They made it very plain that I had to seek God, that I had to state my case to Him and ask for help. Prayer was something I had long forgotten. I think my first sincere utterance must have sounded pretty weak. I didn't experience any sudden change, and the desire for liquor wasn't taken away overnight, but I began to enjoy meeting these people and began to**

**exchange the liquor habit for something that has helped me in every way. Every morning I read a part of the Bible and ask God to carry me through the day safely.**

**There is another part I want to talk about-a very important part. I think I would have had much more difficulty in getting straightened out if I hadn't been almost immediately put to work. I don't mean getting back on my job as a salesman. I mean something that is necessary to my continued happiness. While I was still shakily trying to rebuild my job of selling, the doctor sent me to see another alcoholic who was in the hospital. All the doctor asked me to do was tell my story. I told it, not any too well perhaps, but as simply and as earnestly as I knew how.**

**I've been sober several years, kept**

**that way by submitting my natural will to the Higher Power and that is all there is to it. That submission wasn't just a single act, however. It became a daily duty; it had to be that. Daily I am renewed in strength and I have never come to the point where I have wanted to say, "Thanks, God, I think I can paddle my own canoe now," for which I am thankful.**

**I have been reunited with my wife, making good in business, and paying off debts as I am able. I wish I could find words to tell my story more graphically. My former friends and employers are amazed and see in me a living proof that the remedy I have used really works. I have been fortunate to be surrounded with friends ever ready to help, but I firmly believe any man can get the**

**same result if he will sincerely work  
at it God's way.**

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